

WENDIP CAVING GROUPNEWSLETTER No. 71JANUARY 1969Is This Your Last?

Is this newsletter going to be your last? Subs, (30/- for members and probationary members over 18, everyone else 15/-) were due on January 1st. Please send to Tony Fitzgibbon, 265 Eastcote Road, Ruislip, Middx. make cheques etc (crossed) payable to "Wendip Caving Group."

Cover Competition

The competition for the Newsletter is now well under way, and there has been a good response so far. The closing date for entries is 28th Feb, and the prize is a half bottle of whisky or gin. So hurry up your entry may be the winner!

The National Caving Association

After many years a national caving body has been formed. This took place at the last A.G.M. of the Regional Councils. I hope that this long discussed body will soon prove that the apprehension that some of our members had about it were unfounded and that it will bring great benefits to the field of Speleology.

Editor.

Green Shield

A second shelf for saucepans has been added to the kitchen. The five new Green Shield Stamp pans have now been christened. Keep saving your stamps, and give them to Joan on Thursdays, or to Val at the cottage.

Cave Paintings

A series of Stone-age cave paintings has been found at Ardines on the Asturian coast of Spain.

French Cavemen come up joking after 3 months

Two Frenchmen M. Jacques Chabert, and M. Philippe Englender, have spent three months 200ft underground in an experiment to live "outside time", emerging from the Ollivier Cave, 40 miles north of Nice, on 15th Jan. The two men lived separately in igloo-type shelters designed to resemble future moon dwellings.

Annual General Meeting and Dinner

The annual general meeting of the Group will be held at the Cottage, Nordrach-on-Mendip, on Saturday, March 22, 1969, starting at 4pm. Nominations for committee posts and proposals to amend the Constitution and Rules must reach the Secretary not later than Thursday, February 20, 1969. Nominations and proposals must be in writing, and nominations must have the written agreement of the nominee endorsed on them. The annual dinner will be held after the A.G.M. Details will be circulated shortly.

(Brian Mee) Secretary

For Those Who Care

The committee, at its next meeting on Feb 18 will consider the applications for probationary membership of:-

David Graves, 45 Bull Lane, Bracknell, Berks .

Carl Ruxton, 25 Church Road, Chavey Down, Ascot, Berks.

Peter Johnson has been elected a full member of the Group also Bob Knot's new address is Cedar Farm, Wet Lane, Draycott, Nr. Cheddar, Somerset.

Non Caving News For Cavers By Our Political Correspondent

Are you fit enough to be a professional ?

Minimum qualifications for professional caving instructors (scouts, outward bounders etc) under discussion include the ability to climb a 200 ft pitch 'without undue exertion'; swim 50 yds in caving clothes, not to mention 5 years intimate experience (caving) of one area and knowledge of two other regions the annual meeting of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs was told last month. The aim of the professional instructors is to approve standards both for themselves and for amateurs instructing their organisations.

Welsh Cave Nationalism

There are moves afoot in Wales to set up a Council of Nationalism.

Caving Clubs in Wales. Initial proposals required member clubs to belong only to the Welsh Council. But there is opposition to this from clubs with interests both in Wales and elsewhere. M.C.G. feels that some sort of associate membership (as the CNCC

has) might be the answer.

Talking of Correspondents

We would like to welcome back to these shores, an established member of this Group, who has been our Kenyan Correspondent for the last two years. What if you haven't read any news from Kenya? Then either he didn't write much, or you haven't read much. Anyway, welcome back John Evans.

MEET PROGRAMME

Feb 1/2 -- Derbyshire

Feb 15/16 -- Rescue Practice

March 8/9 - South Wales - D.Y.O. - O.F.D. etc.

March 22/23 - Annual General Meeting.

Note In view of the large numbers attending away meets, it is essential that members inform their Meet Sec of their intention to attend the meets

B.S.H.

Pintreee

Will members please note that visitors must pay 10/- deposit on the Pintreee Key, and that the key must be returned to the cottage immediately after the trip. If there is no one at the cottage or the deposit is not there, they can get their 10/- back on application to the Meet Sec (address attached to Key) provided that the key is returned promptly to the cottage. Any unreturned key deposits must be posted to the Meet Sec as soon as possible after the weekend.

B.S.H.

Rescue Practice

As members of the M.R.O. the Mendip Caving Group is expected to do at least two practice rescues a year. The last practice in December had to be cancelled because five members backed out at the last minute two days before the practice. Please don't let this happen again on Feb 15. A victim has already been selected and it should be a pleasure to rescue this damsel from the depths of an easy cave. (She even looks good in a goon suit.) So please support the Rescue Practice on Feb 15.

B.S.H.

Helmets

The Meet Sec has a small number of Texolex helmets for sale 25/- each.

EXPEDITION 1969

During July this year we hope to take two mini-buses to Austria to do some caving and festering. The exact area has yet to be decided, so anyone with knowledge of caving in Austria please contact the Meet Sec. The approximate cost will be £23, this will include all travel, fares, and camping fees during the trip. It does not include food, drink and other luxury items. We will leave Brentford at 7.00pm on July 4 - Drive to Dover, catch the midnight boat- camp first night in Germany, and reach the campsite in Austria by the second night. On the return journey we leave Ostend on the 10.30 am boat and return to Brentford at about 6.30pm.

A non returnable deposit of £5 is required from all prospective members of the expedition as soon as possible. As numbers will be limited to 20 the first 18 deposits will secure places.

Brian Hillman.

Club Digs

The committee is anxious to ensure that this year M.C.G. digs on Mendip will be actively worked. We cannot justify hanging on to a dig that is not being actively worked, and we may be asked to relinquish sites that other clubs want to dig.

What is proposed, is for someone to accept responsibility for a dig, and to ensure that it is dug actively. This person will be required to report to the committee twice a year as to the state of the dig, and the work done. The committee is prepared to consider the purchase of any special equipment required for the efficient and safe working of any dig being operated under the scheme described above.

The present list of club digs is given below, and any member willing to accept responsibility for a dig is asked to let the Meet Sec know in writing as soon as possible.

Blackmoor - Upper Flood Swallet
" Middle flood Swallet
" Shaft
August - Sand Passage
Longwood Valley Dig
Knapp Hill

Timber Hole
Bone Hole
Coopers Hole

B. S.H.

Longwood

Members are reminded that the only approved routes for access to Longwood Cave are via

- (1) From Velvet Bottom
- (2) The field footpath from Fir Lane to the east of Lower Farm and then down to the valley footpath by way of the wooded spur into which a stile gives access from the field above.

THERE IS NO ACCESS OR PARKING IN LOWER FARM

C.R.G. Symposium on Cave Photography

8th March 1969, Vaughan College, Leicester, commencing at 10am. Cost is 15/- (full time students 7/6d.)

All aspects of cave photography, both cine and still, will be covered. An evening session is being planned to show complete caving films.

Book Now with Pete Mathews.

Back in Business - The Speleologist

A new Speleologist is out at the new price of 3/6d. Remember it cost 4/6d back in 1965! Under new editors the layout has been changed, but they were still using up old news. The next issue should be better still.

Cave Comment by Oxfwr Dcu

Big Brother at the Cave Entrance

Beware caver number NCA 123456, are your boots clean enough to enter NCA cave 23B/65(N)? "Sorry lad your permit is not up to date (Not paid your national levy for 1984?) and anyway your boiler suit is torn back left - These aren't the good old days of caving free for all, you know, now the National Body has organised everything for you".

Far fetched perhaps, but the recent change of name of the 'Regional Councils for Caving in Great Britain' to the NATIONAL CAVING ASSOCIATION is one step further towards organisation. True that the change of name was not accompanied by any change in powers (neither body has, or had, any except the duty to disseminate information) - but with a name like 'The National Caving Association' who can doubt it's aspirations?

In 1964 MCG was one of the clubs that favoured the setting up of a Southern Council of Caving Clubs rather than join a national association; in 1966 MCG's secretary was a delegate to the first meeting of the Regional Councils. All along we have opposed a national body - how could one small committee represent the views of all cavers - especially as they, of all people, have dozens of divergent views.

No gentle caver, take time off occasionally from your digging, sometimes let your Nife cell remain uncharged and turn your mind to the politics of caving. Otherwise that cave 'just about to go' will stay closed while the Cave Politicians, regulate it, tax it, license it and when you get to the bottom you will find not a virgin passage, but Big Brother awaiting you. 1984 is only 15 years away!

From a Caver who has turned his mind to Cave Politics

The recent formation of The National Caving Association has come at a time when British Caving is badly in need of a national body to represent all cavers in this country.

I stress the word all because there are and will be increasingly more and more cavers who do not belong to clubs and yet have their caving influenced by the actions of clubs. It is important that their views should not be neglected.

On a broad and more important front a body representing all the country's cavers can negotiate more authoritatively with international, national government, and local bodies, than individual clubs can ever hope to. Increasingly external pressures are making caving a more difficult sport to pursue, land access rights and local water boards are continually limiting access to caves, and even closing them. Surely a national body has more hope of ensuring that our interests in such matters than can be achieved at club level.

Also a national body drawing on the human and monetary resources (presumably clubs or individuals would contribute to this body) would be in a far stronger position to pursue the various cave sciences and rescue and other techniques than the present few individuals can. Perhaps also money could be used to sponsor expeditions to areas further afield than Europe.

One of the main arguments against a national body appears to be a fear that such a body would introduce its own rules regarding access etc., to the detriment of club and individual; surely external forces are already doing this, and only with a democratically elected national body can we hope to counteract this.

Finally it should be noted, other European countries have national bodies as also does the United States. Other sports in this country also have national representative bodies: so why shouldn't we! Then we could possibly avail ourselves of the services of the minister of Sport.

Dave Heddon

Christmas on Mendips

Six of us, Pete Mathews, Don Vosser, Ken Newcombe, and Ann, Pete Goddard and Joan forfeited a sophisticated London-type Christmas and escaped to Nordrach. There's not a lot to report, much of our time having been spent at local hostelries or consuming roast chestnuts snatched from the stove-top. A good Christmas lunch at "The Crown", a brisk Boxing Day walk over Blackdown to Durrington, and a slow jog by five of us on horseback, seem to have been the main events. Not to be forgotten, however, is the brave piece of digging done by Pete Mathews in Upper Flood Swallet, followed by a short trip there by Ken (to see what work Pete had done). As we were leaving on Saturday afternoon Greg, Wally, Dave and a friend arrived, just in time to scrounge all our left over food.

Joan Goddard

Developments in Sand Passage

Following the disappointing situation in Fountain Passage dig it was only natural that we should once again divert our interest towards Sand Passage in the hope of finding a major extension in August Hole.

Towards the end of last year Vic Ingram and Bill Jones made considerable progress, reporting an upward trend of the passage into clean boulders. This immediately aroused the attention of Tony Knibbs, John Miriam and myself; consequently we visited the dig a few weeks ago and after "gardening" and a bit of boulder loading could see an inviting black space beyond. Unfortunately my Wife kept going out every time I laid on my stomach or back and Mig's light also looked rather sick, so three tired cavers bid a sorrowful retreat.

The following weekend John and I returned again to Sand Passage, whilst Mig was stuck in Lyffleet biting his nails. That final crawl was made wider and after removing one offending boulder we were in, but after only 15 to 20 feet of open passage way over clay and jammed boulders the roof lowered, or rather the debris rose until the two met, effectively blocking the way on.

Further progress depends on removing the crawl into the open section to facilitate the removal of the blocking material, so how about it all you MCG members?

Blackmoor Flood Swallet (re-named Blackmoor mud Swallet?)

Ever since this cave was found in July last year people have been reluctant to dig in the terminal passage. This is probably due to the glutinous black mud which covers the floor and in order to travel in a forward direction requires movements similar to those used in the breast stroke.

The mud lies at an average depth of 6" over approximately 40 feet of passage ending in a muddy pool no more than 2 feet deep, held back by a thick calcite flow. This cannot be smashed comfortably until the mud is removed and taken out of the cave, or stored in it in large polythene bags. Once again your help is needed.

Greg Smith

Membership

Ian Graham, 223A Carr Rd, Northolt, Greenford, Middx.
and Brian Finch, Eggleton Cottage, Chavey Down Road,
Bracknell, Berks.
have applied for probationary membership of the MCG and their applications will be considered at the next committee meeting.

Newsletter

The next n/1 will be published on the 6th March, and on the first Thursday of each month thereafter. It will only be posted by-monthly in future to save postage costs.

CO. ITTEE

Secretary: Brian Lee, 91 Evelyn Drive, Winger, Middx. 01-428.1975
Treasurer: Tony Fitzgibbon, 265 Eastcote Rd, Luislip, Middx.
Meet Secretary: Brian Hillman, 22 Linley Court, Thicket Rd,
Botton Surrey. 01-643.2933.
Recorder: Pete Mathews, 155 Maccliffie Way, Northolt, Middx.
Teckmaster: Les Newcomb, 29 Clonmel Rd, Fulham, S.W.6.
01-85.5965
Cottage Garden: Greg Smith, 151 Hagdon Lane, Watton, Herts.
AT 29606.
Editor: Bryan Pittman.

Printed and Published by B.A. Pittman, 19 Boston Gardens,
Brentford, Middlesex. 01-980.6595.

Suppliment

Reward

The Phunton Tackle Gobbler has struck again. Not only has the Tilley Lamp dissappeared, but the club's large carbide lamp has also gone from the cottage! If any one knows of its whereabouts, please inform Ken.

Annual Dinner

Those wanting tickets for the annual dinner who will be unable to attend on Thursday evenings, should write to the secretary within the next three weeks.

Erratum

The first two lines of p6 should read:

In 1964 MCG was one of the clubs thatfavoured the sett
ing up of a Southern Council of Caving Clubs rather than join a
.....

The first two lines of page 7 should read:

Finally it should be noted, other European countries
have national bodies as also does the United States.Other.....
