

MENDIP CAVING GROUPNEWSLETTER No.72MARCH 1969The Mendip Tackle Thieves Strike Again

During the course of a recent meet on Mendip the following items of tackle were missed:-

- 1 20ft ladder,
- 6 tethers of various lengths,
- 1 karabiner.

The missing tackle was not left in anyone's car and one can only presume that it was stolen. It is a sad fact, but one cannot trust fellow cavers, for these are the only people that can be held responsible.

In recent months there has been an ever increasing number of thefts from cars parked on Priddy Green and at the 'Hunters'. Losses include ropes, ladders, and lighting equipment. Guard against this sort of thing by keeping valuables out of sight - preferably they should be locked away in the boot. Keep an eye open for suspicious people near cavers car's. The best way to stopping these thefts is to catch the culprits red handed.

Our club lost 200 feet of lifeline and one ladder during 1968 - they are thought to have been stolen from the cottage. Keep tackle locked away (especially during the weekend).

Tackle is also being removed from caves. This is very foolish, and could easily result in an accident! Such thefts have been especially frequent in Swildon's. Could this be a case for fixed ladders and chains?

The care of club equipment is the responsibility of the borrower. If you take X amount of tackle out, then you should make sure that you bring back X amount of tackle, (and lock the cupboard during the meantime). For the greater part I think these losses can be avoided and are largely due to plain carelessness.

Ta!

The club would like to express its thanks to Dave Everett of Westminster for returning a bag of M.C.G. tackle found recently outside Cuckoo Cleaves. The said bag contained a 20ft ladder, six tethers and a karabiner. Thanks again Dave.

Cold

You certainly will be if we don't install a new stove before next winter. The present thermal generator has done good service, but is past its best. Do you know of a source of free stoves? If it comes to it we might even be prepared to buy one!

Cover Competition

All the entries for the Newsletter Cover Competition are to be judged by the committee at the next committee meeting, and the result will be announced at the A.G.M.

Welcome

The committee wish to welcome Ian Graham, Brian Finch, Carl Burton, and David Graves, as probationary members of the B.G.G. Alan Jackson of 191a Carr Road, Northolt, Middlesex, will be considered for probationary membership at the next committee meeting.

Jumble Sale

The club is to hold a jumble sale on Sat 12th April at Ealing Town Hall. Everyone's help will be needed at the Town Hall both in the morning and the afternoon. Above all we need your jumble, so start collecting now.

Blackmoor Shaft

This summer the club is going to place a lid on Blackmoor Shaft: the lid will consist of pre-cast, reinforced concrete beams. Any member with specialised knowledge or with enough strength to lift a shovel of cement is asked to help in the coming weeks.

Meet Program

March 8th/9th	South Wales
March 22/23rd	Mendip - A.G.M. & Dinner.
April 4th/7th	Yorkshire
April 18th/19th	Mendip - Work Weekend
May 3rd/4th	Derbyshire.

It should be noted that the London Meet scheduled for April 19th has been postponed, and the weekend April 18/19th will now be a Work Weekend. It should also be remembered that it is essential that members notify the Meet Secretary of their intention to join an away meet.

B. S. H.

Rescue Practice

On Saturday 15th February nine hardy souls braved the cold and bad weather forecasts to drive to Mendip for the club Rescue Practice. It was decided that it was impractical to hold it in Longwood August because too few members turned up.

When the pubs closed after Saturday lunch we all changed into our wet suits and dragged an unwilling Gina down Cuckoo Cleaves. We established telephone contact with the surface, broke Gina's leg, splinted it up in the pneumatic splint and laced her up in the drag stretcher. The long hard drag to the surface was begun which was to involve some very compromising positions between Gina and some of the married members of the club. The victim was finally extracted from the entrance tube some three hours later, just in time for a hot meal and a trip to the pub.

Brian Hillman.

Peaceful Weekend

Arrive Friday night - Turn water on, O.K. waste.

It has been heard...

From the windswept moors north of the M1 come tales of a new cave. Langcliffe Pot (near Mossdale) is rumoured to be somewhere between three and five miles long according to the source of information.

Above Braida Garth in Kingsdale there is also another new cave known as Growling Hole which features a 250ft pitch.

News from Baltimore

Robby and Pam Charnock have written to Brian Mee recently, asked whether we have finally managed to dig ourselves out from the mountains of snow that we are reported to have had? In Baltimore they have not had much snow, but the temperature has rarely reached 32deg.!

They have been regularly attending local Grotto (club) meetings where they discuss caving activities. In fact Robby has given several lectures on English Cave Research recently. However though he would like to give some slide shows about Mendip Caves, as yet he has not been able to gather together enough slides for the purpose. Should anyone in the club have a suitable selection of Mendip slides that they might lend to Robby please would they write to him at the following address.

Mr R. Charnock, 2202 Pinewood Ave, Baltimore, MD21214. U.S.A.

Chislet Colliery

Early in January I was fortunate in visiting a Kent coal mine. There are three coal mines still working in the Kent coal field, Chislet, Tillmanstone and Bettishanger, with shafts varying between 1500 and 2000 ft deep.

We arrived at the Chislet Colliery at 8.45 on the Saturday morning, and after signing blood chits we were issued with Edison cells and helmets. The mine has two shafts 1500ft deep about 50yds apart. The cages are double deckers, and take a total of 30 people. The theory is that if you are packed like sardines, you can't get thrown about as the cage descends. A very smooth decent was made in about 50 seconds, and we found ourselves in a tunnel about 20ft by 20ft with whitewashed walls. A $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walk brought us to a train which took us a further $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to a junction of routes. We continued on foot for another $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles alongside a conveyer to the face. The mine is changing over to a retreat system of mining, and the face that we were looking at was working to this principle. Two parallel straight tunnels are driven into the coal 50yds apart and 450yds long. A cross tunnel links the ends. A conveyer is installed in one of the tunnels and along the cross tunnel. A machine called a plough is installed in the cross tunnel, this machine traverses back and forth along the face shoving a 9" layer of coal from the face on to the conveyer. As the face proceeds back along the side tunnels, the conveyer is shortened and the pit props are removed allowing the roof to collapse to within 15ft of the actual face. It is quite frightening to see the roof falling just 15ft from where you are standing under a supported roof. A 7ft 6" face is being worked, including a 2ft band of shale right across the middle of the face.

The pit is at present under threat of closure, unless they can meet a target of 800 tons per shift before March. They work two shifts a day and do maintenance work during the third shift. The pit started producing coal in 1920.

Brian Hillman

Fancy That!

In 1967 R. D. Cubbon of Border Caving Group, during a trip down Pinetree Pot found an Isotomidae. Not an ordinary Isotomidae but just think of it, a *Folsomia Candida* Willem. Added to this there was a Gammaridae *Rivulogammarus Pulex* L and a Limnephilidae *Stenophylax* sp larva found down Longwood Swallet.

4 Here's a note about the first time I saw a...
...and a pathologic...
...1997.

Where can you get all this information? It is all found in the latest CRG Transactions Volume Number 3 entitled "Hypogean Fauna and Biological Records for 1967".

The moral of all this is next time you go caving take along a great big tin of D.D.T."

Mendip Karst Hydrology Research Project - Phase III (Wessex C.C.)

The third section of this work deals with the area around Burrington. Attempts were made to define the catchment areas of the risings at Rickford and Langford. Although it was not possible to link specific sinks with the risings, some extremely interesting results emerge.

The sinks tested were Read's Cavern, West Twin Brook Swallet (Flange Swallet), East Twin Brook Swallet, Ellick Farm Sink, Ubley Hill Pot and Burrington Ham, (this was only percolation trace) With the exception of Ubley, which was only traced to Ricford, all the sinks were traced to both Langford and Ricford. Other rising in the area were also tested but did not produce positive results.

	<u>Time taken to risings(hrs)</u>	
<u>Sink</u>	<u>Langford</u>	<u>Rickford</u>
Read's C.	44	4-
East Twin	17	6
West Twin	17	19
Ellick Farm	4-	4-
Ubley Hill	-	4-

The short flow times are very encouraging and probably indicate the presence of radose passage. It is difficult to explain the 44 hrs journey from Reads to Langford(3000ft) when the water reached Ricford a mile and a half away in only four hours.

East Twin Swallet (Burrington)

A CRG Grade 6D survey has been prepared by Dave Irwin. Copies are available through the cave survey scheme (Joan) at about 3/6d. As a result of the comparison between this survey and the old version by UBSS it is clear there have been one or two changes. An avom near the floor level has disappeared as has a connection between the entrance tube and the stream inlet passage.

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Decent (Vol. 1. 1967)

The new magazine for cavers and potholers has now been available for a short while. It is still only available to advance order unfortunately. If you want a copy of this fine magazine then rush along and give your name to Pete Mathews.

The magazine is a good buy for most members since about a third of it is devoted to Mendip and most of the rest is general or deals with other areas in Southern England. Most of the contributors, like the editor are members of Chelsea, S.S.

This publication is most welcome and although it is only starting in a small way, it nevertheless fills a large gap. Its future depends on YOU!

Shepton Mallet C.C. Jnl (Series 4 No6) (39pp @ 2/-)

Some of the problems of foul air in caves are discussed. The author suggests as a possible solution for diggers the use of wide bore rubber tube connected to a face mask (Perhaps a hand or convection driven air pump might make a more comfortable alternative?)

Short articles give information on the present situation at Fairy Cave Quarry and on last year's floods.

The main article (23pp.) consists of a detailed description of the caves of Lundy Island. Incidentally this is the third article on Lundy in recent Shepton journals.

Bradford P.C. Jnl Vol.5 No.2 (42 pp.@ 2/-)

The discovery of Whitsun Series, Gaping Gill occupies 11 pages and makes enthralling reading.

Westminster S.G. Jnl Vol.5 No12

This contains three pages on the St Girons area in the Pyrenees.

Exeter U.S.S. (Vol.5 No.2)

Yet more gossip and scandal from Harold Bear.

Speleological Philatelists

They will no doubt, be interested in a short article in Stop Press, Oct 1968 (Sydney S.S.) Some 42 stamps are described which feature caving motifs. Certainly an unusual branch of speleology.

King John's Hunting Lodge, Axbridge

The neglected looking corner house on Axbridge Square dates from about 1500, It is unfortunate that there is no evidence to show any connection with King John. The name seems to originate from its former role as an ale house. For many years the building has stood empty but has now been taken on by the National Trust and will shortly house the museum of the Axbridge Caving Group.

C.R.G.

The Southern Meeting of the C.R.G. is to be held in Wells on April 19.

Meet Sec

Brian Hillman says there has been no response so far to his appeal for Dig Leaders. Well diggers if you want digs, dig this! He also wishes it to be known that he is no longer available on his Leatherhead telephone number.

Address Change

Craven Pothole Club, D.C.Mellor, 9 South View, Farnhill
Nr. Keighley, Yorks.

Fred Young's address

Wanstead Cottage, Shipham, Winscombe, Somerset.

Next Newsletter

This will be published on Thursday 10th April all articles to reach the editor by 27th March.

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