

JHP Goddard

MCG

MENDIP CAVING GROUP NEWS NOVEMBER 1969 NO 79

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT FIRST LONDON GENERAL MEETING

Thirty-six members struggled all the way to Ealing town hall to the first half yearly meeting to be held away from Somerset. The meeting was moved to enable elections to be held following a number of resignations from the committee due to members having other commitments.

NEW COMMITTEE ELECTED

Peter Mathews succeeds Brian Hee as secretary and Brian Hee becomes Editor of the newsletter. They were both unopposed as were: Ron Saunders, treasurer; Peter Hunt, meet secretary and Tony Buchan, cottage warden.

The result of the election for the other two posts was that Joan Goddard beat Roger Wallington to become recorder and John Miriam was successful over Philip Ingold to become tacklemaster.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

A new distribution system for the newsletter will start with the next issue. Full details are enclosed together with labels which must be completed by every one wanting future issues of the newsletter.

NO MORE MENDIP HYGNS

The half-yearly meeting decided that future HYGNS would be held in London and that annual meetings would be held in Somerset.

OTHER DECISIONS TAKEN AT EALING

A number of other important decisions were taken at the meeting:

Committee told to look hard at the land fund

The committee was told to take a long hard look at ways of raising money for the land fund. In five years the increase has been only £50 a year.

Tony Knibbs was appointed to begin an investigation into land prices and possible sites. He will report to the committee.

### A new way of quelling cottage noise

The meeting agreed a committee proposal to select one member each weekend to act as cottage warden and direct the energies of members and guests in clearing up as well as collecting cottage fees.

It was emphasised that disturbances by members could be immediately quelled by concerted action by all those present in the cottage.

### Tackle to be more accessible

A better lock will secure the tackle cupboard, but all full members can obtain keys from the tacklemaster on payment of a deposit. Those who break-in will be leapt upon (probably from a great height).

### MCG still doesn't want to join national association

A resolution by Bryan Pittman to test opinion as to whether there has been a change of mind by members about the NCA was overwhelmingly defeated. Members still cannot see any advantages that are not more than offset by the disadvantages of extending the powers of the association.

### A SECOND CHANCE TO BECOME A POLITICAL PRISONER

Pete Mathews, having failed to be arrested in Czechoslovakia, is now proposing a 1970 group expedition to Poland. Those interested should talk to Pete specifying size of wrist (for handcuffing).

### CROWN YOUR CHRISTMAS

Bookings have been made at the Crown in Wells for Christmas. Those staying at the cottage who would like more than beans for lunch please see Pete Mathews.

### HOW TO FIND OUT ABOUT THAT NEAR-ARMCHAIR CAVING

"Speleology in the south-east" is the subject of Harry Pearman's (CSS) talk at the annual meeting of the Cave Research Group in London. All welcome at Bedford College, Regent's Park on Saturday November 15 at 4 p.m. Harry will be concentrating on new finds in Bury St Edmunds. There will be a dinner afterwards. Details from Pedro.

### LAND FUND REACHES £250

At the last audit there was £250 in the land purchase fund and £72 in the general fund. In six months collection averaged only one pound a week.

DEADLY SNAKE LURKS IN WAIT FOR CAVERS from Mike Nightingale  
New South Wales, Oct 21

I went with the Australian Speleo Group to have another crack at Easter Cave in the Augusta area and to look for new discoveries in the Yallingup region. We arrived to be told that the first chap in the hut had received a nasty scar from a Tiger snake which had chased him out of the hut. One sometimes meets Tiger snakes - among the deadliest in the world - down caves where they lurk after falling down entrance shafts. The next morning found us trogging down Easter which was at its lowest recorded water level during a drought. The party of ten split into two, one group to try and push a series of sumps and the other to find a way through a large boulder pile. I, being a coward without a wet suit, settled for the dry job.

Coloured tape marked route

We hung bits of coloured tape at various strategic places as we worked our way in and out of every nook and cranny, but alas nothing except some of the beautiful helictites which abound in the cave, and some lovely white flowstone.

The wet party returned after discovering two more sumps and we turned our attention to the first duck, which was completely dry. Beyond it was a very large bedding plane, where, in spite of people crawling in every direction, we all went round in circles. But there is hope as there are vast areas of false flooring which snake as you crawl about.

Old man of Yallingup

In the Yallingup area an old man, who knew a great deal about the area, showed us some very old collapsed dolines, which, although cave-less offered great scope to the digger. On a headland half a mile from the sea was a blow-hole which was supposed to gush forth great volumes of air at certain times. With mounting excitement we spent the afternoon pulling out rocks, but eventually the shaft got too narrow to make descent possible. A quarter of a mile away is hole where smoke is alleged to be sucked down to reappear out of one of the dolines.

Mike is about to begin a 3,000 mile overland hitch-hike to Sydney after working for five months with an oil exploration company. Temperatures of over 100 every day persuaded him to move.

PLEASE MAKE COPY INEDIBLE

The new Editor will welcome copy for the newsletter. But certain items for this issue have had to be omitted because they were consumed by the Editor's dog before typing. Please brush off all food scraps before posting your news!

## IT HAD TO COME

We have had love-ins, sit-ins talk-ins and now, of course, cave-ins. It happened in Swilloon's hole in the presence of Fred Davies, but whether he was a caver-in or a getter-out is none too clear. Rumour has it that it was for charity - not, we are sad to relate, The Old Cavers Drinking Fund (Contributions for that should be sent to the Editor)

## SIX STUCK IN STOKE

Six people had to be rescued from Stoke Lane last month after being trapped by floodwaters.

## SHOULD WELSH RESCUE ORGANISATION CHANGE ?

South Wales Caving Club have invited other groups to consider providing rescue teams to operate in areas distant from Penwyllt. 'But,' organiser Dr R.M. Williams warns: 'It would be expensive to set up other rescue bases and a levy on cavers could become necessary'.

## 'PROTECT NEW CAVE - OR IT STAYS SECRET' from Julian Lash

Canadian speleologists who have discovered a new cave in British Columbia, have been sworn to secrecy not to reveal the cave's whereabouts until the Canadian Government agrees to preserve it from vandals. The cave, 4000ft long, is said to contain every known type of formation. Once action to preserve the cave has been taken, the public will be welcome to visit it say the Victoria club who discovered it.

## SHOULD THERE BE SOMEWHERE TO GO ON PRIDDY GREEN ?

The wells council has suggested that there should be toilets for cavers on Priddy Green. They do not think the RDC should pay for them though and looking for someone else to do their dirty work.

## PROFESSIONAL CAVERS MAY GET TOO PROFESSIONAL

The British Association of Caving Instructors - the few professionals concerned with the sport - has drafted a syllabus for a cave instructor. The proposal takes a page and a half of foolscap, but includes such requirements as: 'The instructor shall have caved in at least 25 separate systems in three areas ... shall have climbed 150ft pitches.... and taken part in underground activities over ten hours long.... have a knowledge of weather forecasting.... and hold lifesaving and first aid certificates.

The Southern Council, to which we belong, has suggested that BACI joins the national association who could test aspiring instructors.

## GOOD DAY OUT FOR TRAIN SPOTTERS

Surface surveyors wandering down the Longwood Valley cannot help but notice the activity at Rhino Rift. This is now being dug by East Somerset CC and John Cornwell who have recently introduced a fine new railway.

## BLASTED HOLE

by Pete Mathews

Following the collapse of the original shaft at Gargill Pot (that's the polite name for Twin Titty Dig), a massive effort was launched to sink a new shaft. Luke Devenish was in charge and rock drills and compressors were brought in to drill seven  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inch holes - one 30ft deep.

Some very scientific blasting followed with delayed detonators etc resulting in a 20ft deep shaft 4ft 6 in wide all sunk in three weekends - Let's hope it goes somewhere.

## FIRST AUSTRIAN RESCUE COURSE

For the first time the Austrian Alpine Club is organising a mountain rescue course for British Climbers. The techniques taught will be the same as used by the Austrian MR teams.

Two courses of a fortnight's duration each costing £60, start on July 4 and August 29, 1970. Travel in a sleepcoach included.

## IS THIS YOUR TROUBLE TOO ?

asks Pete Mathews

My ex-HCB cell always did seem a bit on the dim side and although it gave a good twelve hours light on trial on the surface, this never seemed to happen underground. Apart from that it always seemed quite good - well, quite good value for money considering it cost only a quid. And except, too, when going round sharp left hand corners it always seemed to go out !

Flushing out the cells and refilling with clean electrolyte did not seem the complete solution so I decided to overhaul the headset and cell top. In vivo across the cable ends with cell disconnected and everything switched-off gave a resistance reading of five ohms (about the same as the bulb, in fact) which improved somewhat when the whole thing was left to dry out - it was damp from a c-a-v-i-n-g trip!

Wagging the cable about gave a resistance between the red and black cable somewhere between 100 ohms and dead short. I fitted a new cable - can now see where I am going - in fact I am de-lighted !

DON'T MISS the symposium on cave surveying, Vaughan College, Leicester, March 7, 1970

## SIXTEEN IN RESCUE PRACTICE

By Greg Smith

The patient reports

Sixteen members turned-out for the rescue practice down Longwood last month. The object was to retrieve an injured caver from the bottom of the main chamber - the limit of previous rescues in the cave - and take him to the surface.

On this practice, a folded blanket lining the bottom of the carrying sheet greatly increased the comfort of the patient. It gave comfort from sharp projections when the party stopped and provided extra insulation for the body.

As usual during the trip, the carrying sheet progressively slipped from under the victim and this meant that the patient had to take the weight on his elbows while being hauled up the main pitch. At the narrow short chimney before shower bath the sheet was adjusted so that the patient's feet took the weight, but this would not have been possible if the legs had been injured.

Greg wants a crutch seat

I think that the most effective way of stopping the victim sliding down the carrying sheet would be to devise some sort of crutch seat made from a rope sling or webbing.

The bottom of the ten-foot-pitch was reached without too much trouble, but as time was running out the practice stopped at that point with the intention of completing the last 150ft sometime in the near future. Dave Irwin offered guidance on behalf of NRO.

## JOHN MORRIS

We were shocked to hear of the death at Weston of John Morris, a caver with Axbridge and later a member of Shepton, who had many friends in MCG. He was 48.

## RESERVOIR HOLE EXTENDED

Willie Stanton (Essex) has made a small breakthrough in Reservoir Hole which has revealed a 100-ft high rift chamber.

## GB CAVERN CLOSED BY BOULDER MOVEMENT

Most people know by now that the usual route to the Great Chamber in GB and the Ladder Dig Extension have been closed by boulder movement. No visits have been made to the cave since this happened.

UBSS are at present investigating ways of improving access by visiting clubs to GB. Non-member clubs of CCC have to use a leader.

## 'ALIEN' CAVERS MAY BRING SALMON DISEASE

Cavers from other regions may bring the salmon disease 'UDN' to the Mendips says the Bristol Waterworks Company. While they are not being banned, cavers from other areas are not being encouraged.

## FORTHCOMING MEETS

November 22/23 . . . . Mendip work weekend  
 December 6/7 . . . . . Derbyshire (provisional)  
 December 20/21 . . . . Mendip (St Cuthberts)  
 December 25 . . . . . Mendip lunch 'The Crown'

Review  
 FOR DEVON LADS

In 'Caves of Plymouth and district' by R.G. Jeffery (Plymouth CG special publication no 4, 82pp) is described well over 100 caves along the Devon coast. These occur in the reef limestone which outcrops south of Plymouth. Area maps are provided for most of the caves and there are plenty of sketch surveys to about grade 4. All in all this is just the book for those members who have parents to visit in this part of the world. -P.M.

## PERMISSION STILL AWAITED FOR BLACKMOOR DIG

Bristol Waterworks Co have still not formally granted MCG permission to dig at Upper Flood Swallet. This is only one of several decisions awaited from the company which is at present refusing to authorise any new excavations for caves.

## LOOKEY-LOOKEY ON LONGWOOD ROUTE

The secretary of OCC has again asked Bristol Waterworks Co to provide a stile in Longwood Valley on the agreed approach route to the cave. The way is at present barred by barbed-wire.

## COMMITTEE

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