

## SUBS UP PROPOSAL FOR AGM

It is mooted that a proposal to increase MCG subs in 1971 will be put before the annual meeting on March 21. The proposed rise will be 10s for members over 18 to £2 and by 5s to £1 for associates and members under 18.

The meeting is planned to start at 3.30 pm at the cottage at Nordrach-on-Mendip. (Agenda appears on page six)

## JOHN MACMILLAN UPGRADED

John MacMillan, of 31 Little Reeves Avenue, Amersham, has been appointed a full member.

## AMERICANS TUNE IN TO STALAGMITE ORGAN

Leland Sprinkle has an organ with a difference: He has harnessed dozens of stalagmites in Luray Caves, Virginia to make a musical instrument. He got the idea from seeing a guide strike a formation and extract a humming noise from it.

He has spent hours tuning the stalagmites - filing them and using a tuning fork to get the notes accurate. Each formation is then connected to an organ keyboard. When the organist presses a key a rubber hammer strikes the appropriate stalagmite and a note is produced. It can be played manually or by a device like a pianola.

## GET YOUR DINNER TICKETS NOW

The annual dinner at the Star, Wells, has been arranged for March 21 (following the AGM). A coach will operate from and back to the cottage.

Dinner tickets price 25s (125p) are available from all committee members.

There is a rumour of some free ale - donated by Robbie and Pam Charnock, who paid a fleeting visit to the UK from the USA recently, but who did not have time for a Thursday evening visit. They still haven't done any caving since their arrival in the States - too cold in winter and too hot in summer.

#### MYSTERY TOUR

Roger Wallington has booked a crossing to the Continent for the end of July for the Group expedition. The final destination is still uncertain, but it is hoped to take in southern Poland - with or without business visas.

#### WELSH MEETING

The southern general meeting of CRG is to be held at Abercrave Welfare Centre, Swansea Valley at 5 pm on June 27. Discussion subjects still to be announced.

#### LAST CHANCE TO SEE AUSTRIA SLIDES

If you still have not seen the Austrian expedition 1970 slides there will be a chance on Monday April 6 at Pete Mathews's house. Arrive early and you can armchair your way under Yorkshire as well. Names to Pete, please.

#### HIGHER PRICE SURVEYS

To meet the higher costs of printing, the Mendip Survey Scheme has increased its prices. Revised prices appear on the notice board at the cottage and at the Royal Oak. Details from Joan Goddard.

#### SAVE ON POWER COSTS

A switch has been fitted to the water heater circuit at the cottage. Please switch-off the power when there will be no demand for hot water, ie at night or when everyone goes out.

#### BEST BUYS

Geology A colourful chart illustrating the chief divisions of geological time, evolution of plant and animal life, climate and types of rocks deposited as well as the thickness and age of different rocks is available from Joan Goddard in exchange for a donation to the lpf.

Survey A survey of Smeltmill Beck Cave, Brough Westmorland, is available from Holywarps SG, S.D. Hodgson, Greenlawns, Grammar School Lane, Northallerton, Yorks, price 6s 0d inc pp.

#### WANTS

Librarian Joan Goddard will always welcome donations of binding tape etc for the library, coloured card suitable for covers, loose leaf files or folders and all sorts of box files.

Green shield stamps are always in demand for the cottage (they hold it up). To committee members, please.

## MENDIP IS FOR LOVING AND CHERISHING

ANYONE can drive to Somerset of a weekend and with the aid of a BDI crawl about muddy holes in the ground.

BUT there is more to being a member of the MCG - or any caving club - than that. The difference between a crawler-about-of-muddy-holes and caver is that caver knows all that there is to be known about Mendip, its history and its present-day life - now in some danger of being eroded away by Bristol commuters and hordes of weekend tourists.

HOW many members know where Romulus and Remus are, who put them there and why, where Pride Evans lived or for that matter what 'BDI' means ?

THESE thoughts are prompted by a re-reading of the new Wessex biography of H.E. Balch (you must at least have heard of him !) and a vision of lots of new members who are either underground, in the Hunters or on there way back to London at 70 mph.

GENTLE caver stop, wander and wonder once in a while.

Ogofwr Ddu

+ In the MCG library

## SOUTH WALES MEET UNDER CAVLS

The sheep from the goats are to be sorted at the South Wales meet on March 7-8 planned to do Dan-yr-Ogof and OFD. The meet will be in TENTS. SWCC regret the cottage is fully booked. Goats give their names to Pete Munt, please.

## LONG TETHER

Tacklemaster John Miriam obtained committee agreement to make 200 feet of tether at a cost of about £18. 100ft of new ladder will be available before Easter and the rest soon afterwards.

## NEW PORNOCAVIC BOOK

There is no truth in the rumour that the new manual of caving techniques is sub-titled CAVER SUTRA

## MATTRESSES SOUGHT

New single mattresses are sought for the cottage. The existing ones would benefit from shaking and turning after use.

Caving

CARS AT THE TOP MEAN QUEUES BELOW by Joan Goddard

Joan Goddard, John Miriam, Tony Knibbs and Ray Mansfield with some Shepton members planned a quick trip to Longwood/August. Their enthusiasm was dampened on arrival at the road to Lower Farm by the sight of enormous numbers of cars parked on the verges. At the cave, a party was emerging and we waited half-an-hour for them to complete the process. Once on our way down through a very wet 'showerbath' we waited for yet another party to pass. The Shepton members went to August, John went to see the Longwood main chamber and Joan kept nice and dry at the top of the pitch. We joined the queue to leave the cave - and it took an hour to reach the surface.

Moral: Don't go down Longwood when there are lots of cars on the surface unless you want ½hr caving to 1½hrs queueing.

MELTING POT : LOOK WHAT YOU MISSED

Take a Spanish senorita, a Swiss fraulein an English miss, a Scotsman and four Englishman and you have the contents of Goatchurch cavern one recent weekend during a trip in which Ron Saunders participated. Other than the fact that the mixture separated on return to the surface he doesn't say who they were, and who are we to ask (except we obviously missed something.

Letter to the EditorWHAT PRICE SURVIVAL ?

The recent article in The Speleologist may have prompted you to ask 'Could a case of exposure happen on a trip in which I am involved?'. I feel that more of us ought to think about this - especially when taking parties of comparative beginners.

I feel that it would not be too much to ask the club to make available two to three survival bags at 32s 6d each available to any member to take on trips - folded and packed they take up very little room.

Anyone who was to suffer exposure on the wrong side of a sump would take a very long time to get warm unless dry clothes were to be taken by the party.

If you were to be trapped underground due to rising water it could be many hours before it was possible to get out and several hours in soaking clothes could affect the hardest of us. Wet suits are not infallible: without exercise the body temperature can quickly drop.

- Arthur Spain

## DIESEL OIL INCREASES EXPLOSIVE POWER

A recent development in explosive techniques has been to add diesel oil to ammonium nitrate. It is useful as a low cost and very efficient blasting agent for rocks. This and a review of investigation into the mechanism of the breaking up of the rocks after detonation is contained in a recent issue of Mining and Minerals Engineering (in the library)

## NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

Two fine publications outlining the latest developments in South American caving have just been received from Sociedad Venezolana de Espeleologia. They are both in Spanish :

El Guacharo (60 pp) takes its name from the longest cave in Venezuela (6,800 m long) contains a number of articles, some quite old, on the growth of calcite formations and speleothems. There is also a comprehensive review of caving publications from all over the world.

Boletin (90 pp) gives details of the latest discoveries and archaeological work.

## GETTING WARMER

The cottage warden has sought approval to replace the present central heating system by one of similar design. Finding one that old is proving difficult - but we are trying.

## EASTER TREAT

Don't miss the August/Longwood cave-clear-up over the Easter Bank holiday (March 27-30). Own dustpans and brushes please

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