

Annual general meetingSUBS UP IN SPIRE OF CONSTITUTION BREACH
COTTAGE FEES UP, TOO

THE PROPOSAL to increase subscriptions to £2 and £1 was amended at the meeting to increase them to £2. 10 (250p) and £1 (100p). As the revised figure was not circulated in advance of the meeting it is, strictly speaking, unconstitutional. But it was carried by a majority of ten. Members will be asked to take a second look at the rise

Cottage fees were increased to 3s 0d (members and 4s 0d (non-members) and the new rates took effect from the AGM weekend.

Treasurer Ron Saunders, who reported £296 in the Land fund and £187 in the general fund, is investigating the possibility of introducing a subs-by-seven-year-covenant scheme which could gain us about 30% from standard rate income tax payers.

Other points from the meeting were :

Lack of interest in meets prompted Pete Munt to suggest that nobody loved him. It was unanimously agreed that he was as much loved as his predecessors - if not more so - but that caving was a wet and horrid sport.

An idea to raise money by a raffle and the selling of Christmas cards is to be investigated.

Half yearly meetings are to be held on Mendip, and not in London following last year's trial.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE NEWSLETTERS GONE ?

The Editor regrets that, because of the recent addition to his family (although he doesn't look any thinner), a trip abroad, many hours spent consuming ale instead of typing, spring fever and lots of other wildly improbable excuses there has been an interruption to the normal flow of newsletters. Normal service will be resumed. . . .

MRS SPEED

We regret to report the death, in February, of Mrs Emily Speed, proprietor of the New Inn at Priddy. She was a good friend of cavers, whose passing leaves something missing from the Mendip scene.

SECRETARIES AREN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE

We have learned, with some surprise, that secretary Pete Mathews has been seen not only caving, but caving with alacrity. One observer reports that his speed, lack of fatigue and the mere fact that he was still conscious at the end of a Cuthberts trip left him gasping. This behaviour is not what we expect of our committee.

CONGRATULATIONS

Best wishes to the BEC on the opening of the new Belfry. Lucky with Messrs John Evans and Alan Wicks around MCG, will never face the problem of a cottage fire, fire drill is still being carried out at regular intervals.

NOTTINGHAM NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The BSA's national conference is to be held on September 11-13 at the University of Nottingham. Likely lecture topics are : Pierre St Martin (D. Gill), Mining in Yorkshire (D. Carlisle), Geomorphology of the Astrakas Plateau in Greece (AC Waltham), Discovery and exploration of the Bury St Edmunds Chalk Mines (CSS)

TO BE BEAUTIFUL

Norton St Philip and Axbridge are two of the seven Somerset towns and villages named to be conservation areas. 1970 is European Conservation Year in which 20 countries are trying to focus attention on the way we are affecting the land in which we live

BIRTHS

To Lyn and Pedro Mee, a daughter Fiona Caitlin Claire on April 6.

NAMES NOW FOR POLISH EXPEDITION

Roger Wallington, who is organising the 1970 trip expected to take in Poland, not to mention Czecho-Slovakia and all sorts of other places, wants names and deposits before the beginning of June. The trip is timed to leave Brentford on the evening of September 4 returning on September 20. Details from Roger at 113 Upton Court Road, Slough, Bucks.

ARE YOU STILL AN MCG MEMBER ?

If you haven't paid your subs for 1970 you are well on the way to being retired. Ron Saunders will be pleased to collect 30s 0d (or 15s 0d)

THE MENDIP SCENE : CHANGES AT THE NEW INN, PRIDDY

The news, on page one, of the death of Mrs Emily Speed at the age of 82, brings to an end 260 years of occupation of the inn by her family. Mrs Speed, and her husband Oliver while he was alive, were good friends of the Group and Priddy and Mendip will not be the same again.

The only concession the New Inn made to the twentieth century was the addition of a fruit machine, which stood as incongruously as an elephant in the Great Gorge of GB: it shouldn't have been there; but otherwise the New Inn was as natural as any cave.

Let us hope that it stays that way.

YOU AREN'T SHATTERED, JUST BEFOOLED

Do you get puffed climbing the long ladder in the main chamber of Lamb Leer. You might not be as unfit as you thought - it could be the high Carbon Dioxide content in the air. The MRO is to carry out an investigation into cave foul air. It is most likely to be found in areas where there is not running water.

Eleven caves on Mendip are known to contain CO₂: Banwell and Stactite, Brownes, Contour, Dalimores, Eastwater, GB, Hunters Hole, Lamb Leer, Nine Barrows Swallet, St Cuthberts and Swildons.

MCG's RESCUE WARDEN

Bill Jones has been appointed MCG's rescue warden. He will be organising a practice later in the year if you aren't careful.

Juniper Gulf

Paul Cornelius was injured when a boulder pile moved in Juniper Gulf.

GB not to be relocked

Following a rescue after four Croydon cavers locked themselves in the GB ladder dig the door was sawn off and is not to be replaced. The MRO advise against ever locking yourself in a cave.

Gerard Platten

Gerard Platten, Editor of the British Caver for many years has died at the age of 71,

The Speleologist

The Speleologist has again ceased publication, according to a report we have received. Its demise is believed to be due to lack of money.

REVIEW

BY Joan Goddard

OGOF FFYNNON DDU is a 57 page book with a two-sheet survey (scale 1: 1,250). It is divided into three parts, historical, descriptive (the area, the caves and other caves in the area) and theoretical dealing mainly with cave formation and the geomorphology of OFD.

At 30s 0d it is expensive, but a copy has been purchased for the MCG library.

SOME MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DINARIC KARST by Ivan Gams is a short article from the Geographical Journal Dec 69 with a list of 111 caves and potholes and their locations on a small map.

ULSA EXPLORATION JOURNAL Oct 69 (Univ of Leeds SA) 73pp has been purchased for the library partly by means of a donation from G.eg Smith. It contains a wealth of information on Yorkshire caves covering Leck and Casterton, Kingsdale, Chapel-le-Dale, Allotments, Fountain and Fenyghent, Nidderdale and the Northern Pennines. 4 photographs and 16 surveys

SMCC JOURNAL 8 Dec 69 includes a history of the sump in Cuthberts and the story of the breakthrough to Cuthberts 2

ALSO RECEIVED WCC Journal 127 Vol 11, Belfry Bulletin 262 and ACG newsletter March 1970

CONSERVE IN 1970

1970 is European Conservation year aimed at preserving our rural environments. Obtain more details from the Countryside Commission 1 Cambridge Gate, Regents Park, NW1

COURSES ABOUT CAVING

The National Scout Caving Centre, Whernside Manor nr Sedbergh in the West Riding runs weekend and weekday caving courses on basic principles and on cave leadership, Non-scouts may take part at slightly increased rates (typically £5 a weekend or £17 a week). Details from the Editor.

FAREWELL CHRIS

Chris Reynolds, an associate member of many years standing, has resigned. He was particularly interested in the Devon caves and APCRC. He is seeking a University post and hopes to continue caving.

A HIGHLY DEVELOPED LIMESTONE AREA

Mike Nightingale,

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, May 18. New Zealand is the most highly developed limestone area I have seen. It would delight any Mendip digger to the point of frustration - he wouldn't know where to begin!

I have just joined the Auckland SG - a very civilised organisation which holds weekly meetings in a pub (very rare in this part of the world). At Waitomo, 130 miles from Auckland where the club has its luxurious field headquarters there is hardly a flat area to be seen and so many shakeholes that one doesn't know where to start. So one doesn't - the caves that are open are still little explored. The ones I have seen have been large enough to stand up in, formations are good and there are even glow worms in some. The chances of meeting another party underground are 100 : 1 against.

Mike's address is 33 Allenby Avenue, Devonport, Auckland, NZ.

WHICH SURVEYING TOOLS ?

Pete Mathews

Cave Surveying Symposium

Leicester. North and south vary even on the tools they recommend for surveying. Bryan Ellis advocated the Mendip cave surveying unit and Dave Brook favoured the newer Suunto instruments.

Paddy O'Reilly outlined the objectives behind the massive survey of OFD - a grade IV survey was attempted using hand-held Silva compasses and electromagnetic fixes at strategic points. The survey took two years with 55 trips totalling 1,100 man hours. A total of 3,000 stations were established and the results were analysed by computer.

High-light of the symposium was Tony Waltham on survey interpretation. He explained the differences between phreatic and vadose systems and how they affect the shape of the survey. The vadose cave passage was typically angular strongly influenced by joints and faulting. In elevation they were strongly dependent upon gravity, dip and the presence of, say, shale bands.

Phreatic passages follow the tortuous routes and abrupt vertical changes of such caves as Swildons' chain of sumps.

GOOD BUYS

Every Mendip enthusiast will want a reprint of the 1 in OS map 76 (Bath & Wells) first produced in 1817 - 15s 0d from David & Charles.

WELSH CLUBS FAVOUR GATING

A large majority of Welsh clubs are in favour of gating caves to conserve them it was revealed by a vote at the last meeting of the Cambrian Caving Council. The Welsh clubs have appointed a conservation officer to liaise on conservation matters.

FOXES HOLE INTERESTING

A new system in the Ludlow area, Track Hill, Foxes Hole is expected to prove interesting.

FORESTRY COMMISSION MOVE TO CHARGE FOR CAVING

The Forestry commission has proposed an annual fee of £10 to be paid by some body to operate access arrangements on commission land. It is not clear at present which areas this will affect.

TOO FAR TO COME

James Glover, who has moved back to Scotland, has offered some new excuse to avoid caving on Mendip - he says its too far to come.

CHAMPION CLIMBERS

Peter Mathews has devised a scheme to make everyone a champion ladder climber - ladder practices at a local fire station. Names to him, please.

ELEVEN RESCUES LAST YEAR

There were eleven rescues reported by the MRO last year, none with any serious consequences. Morals: tell people which cave you are visiting (and then go down it), take sufficient lights and don't get lost.

KNIGHT ERRED

Simon Knight has joined the MCG elite who have turned over their motors - in his case outside his front door.

EASTER IN YORKSHIRE

NPC did a grand job entertaining the Group at Easter. Trips were arranged to Ireby Cavern, Lost John's, Gavel Pot and lots of surface surveying when snow permitted.

Just before Easter the Happy Wanderers opened up Pippikin, Pot to the disgust of NPC who were digging adjacent Nippikin Pot. Seven miles of passage are claimed to give access to the Leck Fell Master Cave.

INSTRUCTORS REVISE THEIR IDEAS

The British Association of Caving Instructors has revised its original stiff proposals for cave leaders and instructors in the light of comments from clubs and organisations in Britain. But the new requirements are still stringent enough to deter all but the most enthusiastic, although BACI stresses that their tests are only for those who wish to instruct at recognised centres and do not encroach on club caving.

Typical requirements are for 25 days caving as a minimum and experience of at least 25 different systems including some with at least four pitches totalling 150 ft or so.

BACI is running a weekend course on May 30/31 and a week course from September 12.

FOR THE UNINITIATED....A LEADER'S EYE VIEW Allan Wicks

"HOW LONG WILL THIS THING TAKE ?". Oh, it d ends, write it up on the board as about three hours... we, # go down one way and come up the other... it's not too bad... you'll survive!.

Right, now we've got ladders and ropes... mustn't forget the belays... make sure I don't carry everything. Fity we don't have as many tackle bags around as we used too, then perhaps we're lucky even finding any ladder ... Right, ready, let's g.

It's not the sort of classic entrance that one expects, but that's what makes caving so interesting, everyone is different. Doesn't look much does it ? You climb down here, OK ? Lights on main beam, follow me down when I tell you (He shouldn't be too much trouble)

Where do I go now ? Just come down, you can't fall anywhere except on top of me. Now use the right side down, inch your way feeling with your feet.... Now this part is head first, just watch and do everything I do 'cos it's tight. When you get to the puddle, bend yourself left and push upwards.. right ? Here we go.

As I said the first bit's tight, now just follow me down headfirst and wait while I fix the ladder

(Loud roars of water are heard from further on in the cave as the party creeps on into the gloom)

Not through the water, surely ? Don't worry, the water makes more noise than there really is (quiet laugh). It's rather tight, but don't worry, just accept the fact that you are going to get wet. /continued on page eight.

For the uninitiated (from page seven)

Hell, it's wet, just feel your way through until you feel a rift beneath you and lower yourself into it towards the right, it's wet and tight but there are plenty of footholds. Can you hear me (he must be alright, at least that's how I interpret the silence)

Which way on ? Through the tube, it's wet, but you won't drown, (the water roars above everything, I do prefer wet caves to dry ones).

We climb through the water, don't worry, you'll stay warm if you keep moving. But make sure you are on the rungs before you make your next move.

OK ? Just follow the stream down, the more upright you can stay, the better grip you will get.

As you can see, we've come to the tributary stream, we can follow the main stream, or we can go upstream into the chambers... let's go that way, it will keep you warmer.

Let's start our way back, roll up the ladder, up the pitch, into a muddy chamber, through a squeeze and traverse here to avoid a waterfall.

Up the nasty squeezey climb, up here. There used to be a lot of water here but the flood made it very Mendip caves including this one a lot easier. Here we are again, back where we started from. Just the reverse of coming down, watch for footholds....

Ah, bliss, daylight....

EDITOR'S NOTE By now you must know which cave it was, mustn't you ? Well, if this brings back memories go down to Lower Farm, don your clobber and descend. Here's one reader who got lost once or twice.

TO CONTRIBUTORS Pressure on space in this issue has been at a premium and a number of gems have had to be omitted. Delay in publication has also meant that a number of news stories have become outdated and these too have been omitted. Back to normal next month.

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