

NEWS

TACKLING THE TACKLE PROBLEM: NO MORE

TACKLE ON MENDIP by John Miriam

MCG MEMBERS will have noticed recently that the rare species known as MCG TACKLE (believed by some to have become extinct) is now being seen in ever increasing abundance. The first batch of 100ft was taken to Easter at the spring bank holiday and given a trial run by Jim Eyres, whowrote about dangerous tackle in 'Descent'.

'Toy ladder' comment

Jim was quite impressed by the lightweight toy ladder (as he described it) and his only criticism was that on long pitches of 1,000 ft or so like Epos, one-eighth inch wire tends to make for a bouncy climb.

Tackle booking system

I do not propose to continue the system of storing tackle on Mendip which led to its gradual and mysterious disappearance. A tackle booking system has been introduced and a week or two's notice will be required to have it available. Although I will usually have a small amount of tackle available on Thursday evenings for 'chance' loan.

How to look after it

The useful life of all kinds of tackle depends largely on the way in which it is treated and so please observe a few simple rules which have been ignored in the past.

- \* DON'T DRAG UNPROTECTED ROPE THROUGH CRAWLS  
This causes 80% of its wear - use a tackle bag
- \* DON'T TWIST LADDER WHEN YOU ROLL IT UP . It's easier not to and it saves the tackle
- \* USE ONE OF THE NEW SHORT TETHERS when pitching ladder from a rawlbolt
- \* RETURN TACKLE IN CLEAN CONDITION

Amount available

The tackle available by the end of next month will be 210ft of ladder and 26 tethers of 3/16" wire in different sizes. A further 130 ft of ladder will be ready in the next few months. YOU HAVE PAID FOR IT - LOOK AFTER IT

Membership news

NEW MEMBER

Clive Wheatley, of 90 Salisbury Road, Harrow, Middx, has been accepted as a probationary member

UPDATED

John Evans has been elected a full member

GOING FARAWAY

Julian Lash is moving to Canada shortly. He is offering for sale all his goods and chattels: furniture, electrical fittings, photographic enlarging apparatus, a 15cwt van and a selection of motorcycles all at bargain prices. Please contact Julian direct at 149 Chairborough Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.

Peter Munt is also going to Canada, although he says 'Don't cheer, I'm coming back'. His position as meet secretary has been taken by John MacMillan. John's full address and telephone no appear on the back page.

MAKE A DATE

The date of the half yearly meeting has been fixed for Saturday, October 31, 1970. As agreed at the agm the meeting will be held in the cottage at Nordrach-on-Mendip.

OLD MEMBERS MEET MOOTED

There has been an idea mooted that the Group should hold a meet for old members. 'Old' in this context refers more to venerability in terms of caving than mere years.

The meet secretary promises that it would be held at an 'easy' cave in every sense of the word. A possible date would be that of the half yearly meeting on October 31.

The old members meet would be a chance for a get-together as well as an opportunity to see what the Great Flood (two years ago, not two thousand) has done to your favourite cave.

If you - or someone you know - is interested, fill in the form on the back page of the newsletter and send it off today.

Don't be ashamed of being a has-been, here's one has been, who isn't  
(Ed).

## CAVE BUYING TAKES A STEP FURTHER

THE SUBCOMMITTEE of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs looking into the possibility of buying caves to keep them open for cavers has put forward some proposals. They centre on a system of 'shares' which clubs would be offered to buy in proportion to membership. After issue shares could be resold in the same way as industrial stocks and shares are.

## CHARTERHOUSE MAY GET GRANT

THERE is a possibility that the Charterhouse Caving Committee which controls access to GB, Longwood and other caves, may get a grant to cover its administrative and insurance expenses. At present the eleven member clubs (of which MCG is one) pay an annual levy to cover these charges which sometimes is as high as £13 pa per club.

## CAVERS DID NOT POLLUTE WATER

Somerset County Council allegations of water pollution by cavers have been disproved by cave scientists.

Club news

## COTTAGE SEARCH TO BE INTENSIFIED

The committee decided at its last meeting that the search for a new cottage must go ahead more speedily. A map - marked in area squares - will soon appear on the cottage wall and members will be asked to investigate areas systematically.

## What to look for

The sort of thing we have in mind is a house, probably empty at present which is probably in a poor state of repair and without a damp course and is probably without mains water. Ron Saunders, our legal eagle, writes that a house in this state may well be the subject of a 'demolition order' and while it may not be suitable for use as a dwellinghouse, it could be converted for our use.

The other possibility is a house in a similar poor state of repair but still occupied. This could be subject to a 'closing order' which means that it cannot be relet, but the only way you are likely to find one of these is by asking knowledgeable local people - like the landlords of pubs. That should appeal to a large proportion of our membership as a fruitful line of activity!

## HAVE YOU SEEN STARS IN DAYTIME ?

A LINE of enquiry being pursued by one of our more eminent universities has revealed that people emerging from mine shafts in daytime (looking from dark to light) can often see stars in daytime when they are invisible to other people. Next time you emerge from some deep Yorkshire hole - or even Longwood/August - take a look.

## REVIEW

Wessex Journal April, 1970 contains articles on Wookey 20 and beyond, by Tim Reynolds and Diver Meets Digger by Jim Hanwell which discusses the St Cuthberts-Wookey Hole link and contains some information on the geology of the two areas. J. C. R.

Craven FC Journal 1969 deals mainly with the fortunes (and misfortunes) of CFC during the period 1968 and 1969 and contains three articles on original work done by the club: Dave Judson's expedition to the Grotta di Monte Cucco in Italy - a spectacular cave 2,570 ft deep with 15 ladder pitches totalling 2,000 ft and another on the club's extension to Birks Fell Cave in Langstordale. This is 2 miles long, 455 ft deep and probably worth a visit. J. M.

Cornish Mining, by Bryan Earl explains the changes in technique used over the years (26s 6d, 118pp) EM

Cornish Engine Houses, a second Pictorial Survey, is what it says (16s 6d, 64 pp) by H. C. Ordish. EM

Gravitational and Geomagnetic investigations in Surinam and their structural implications (J. van Boeckel Geologisch Minjbouwkundige Dienst Paramibo, Surinam) discusses at length the problems of surveying this difficult area covered by thick vegetation and well weathered. It is an interesting case study which reveals the limitations of gravitational and geomagnetic techniques and shows the need for complementary seismic surveys. Surinam, for those who don't know is in what used to be called Netherlands Guinea. EM

A new Caves of Mendip is planned for the autumn by Nick Barrington (who compiled the previous two editions) and Willy Stanton. JC?

## ROD STEIGER'S ON OUR SIDE

Quote of the week : "To win your battle in this society, you've got to have your cave. Then food. Then some kind of mate. After that, everythings a luxury." Rod Steiger, actor. (Didn't we always say so?)

## PETE MATHEWS REPORTS . . .

## A DRY BANK HOLIDAY IN YORKSHIRE

The Spring Bank Holiday spent at Greenclose, NPC's headquarters, was exceptionally dry: streams were reduced to trickles, sumps to ducks and ducks to puddles.

After a breakfast which was remarkable only for its earliness, expense and tastelessness (specially selected by Greg Smith) the entire company of Messrs Evans, Hookins, Phil Ingold, Smith Wallington and Mathews, headed over the fells. On arrival outside the hole known as Disappointment Pot, we changed, but what is this fancy dress our secretary's wearing? a wet suit, indeed. The passages of Dis proved a little tighter than the usual run of Yorkshire entrances, especially to the tackle-laden. The duck was quite low (a foot of air) but still gave us a good soaking. Pitches were rigged with as much tackle as we could leave behind (they are 25, 25 30 and 55). At the end of the 55 - the entrance to the main system - some returned along the same route, others grovelled in the mud of Hensler's Passage and emerged via Bar Pot. While waiting for the winch, we enjoyed a wash under Britain's highest showerbath.

## SAVED BY NO TACKLE

Undaunted by the accident on the boulder slope of Juniper Gulf at Easter, a small party led by Jin Eyres disappeared down all the pitches except the final one of 180 ft, where we fortunately ran out of tackle. A long series of traverses connect the Juniper Pitches which is one of the old 'classic' pots formed in one single fault.

## EARLY TO RISE

THOSE capable of rising at 6.30 managed to take an enjoyable trip down Simpson's and out of the Valley entrance. A small party returned through Simpsons after dropping the tackle from the final pitch.

The party which was up at 6.30 was challenged to a game of rugby by NPC after the Simpson's trip and didn't leave the Dales until 7pm.

## CHEAP AT HALF THE PRICE

Seeking dinner at the 'Shoes one night (the Flying Horsehoes to the uninitiated) we were offered Pie, Mash and peas at six bob. On arrival in the restaurant we met a couple in the midst of a first class row who left - leaving their sweet and cheese. The barman poked his head round the door and said he thought six bob was a bit dear and after eating what the couple had left, we paid 3s 6d.

## JUNIPER GULF - A personal view by Greg Smith

You can't help admitting that Juniper Gulf has a handsome entrance - a winding 70 ft rift which nurses a flowing green shrub; just below its middle lip - a juniper tree, one assumes.

Beneath the first ladder there is an unstable boulder pile which it's best to avoid by climbing into the rift passage beyond where traversing on ledges above the streamway begins. The whole cave is formed by this single rift running almost in a straight line.

Sometimes it is necessary to straddle or use a body jam where the ledges peter out and this is quite difficult when carrying loads of tackle. Pitches of 40ft and 80ft split up the traverses. Below the 80 ft pitch there is a choice of 170 ft or 200 pitches, or with cunning miscalculation it is possible to turn off 50ft short and be out clutching a cool pint within two hours.

## Prisoners opened the ear of Dioysios

ONE of the sights of Syracuse in Sicily is the fifth century (bc) Greek Theatre cut in solid limestone. Adjacent are huge quarries of the same date - some open, some enlargements of huge limestone caves quarried by prisoners of war and political prisoners. Underground quarries, including the Ear of Dionysios, were used to keep 7,000 Athenians for months.

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Editor, printer and publisher of the newsletter

Brian Mee, 91 Evelyn Drive, Hatch End, Pinner, Middx, HA54RN  
 Spelling errors in this issue are not spelling errors (!) but typing mistakes

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### Contributions

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome and should be addressed to the Editor. He will endeavour to acknowledge all correspondence. All contributions are accepted on the understanding that they may have to be shortened because of shortage of space.

### Publication

The newsletter is usually published on the last, penultimate or first Thursday of each month, except when bank holidays intervene when publication will usually be on the second or third Thursday after the first Thursday of the month, that is when it varies from the normal.

POLISH EXPEDITION NOW UNDER WAY

As this newsletter goes to press ten members of the Group and two CSS people led by Roger Wallington and Peter Mathews are on their way to Poland by road for a fourteen day trip taking in visits to caves in the West Tatra region in the east of the country.

A report from those who don't take their plane spotters notebooks will appear in the next newsletter.

WATCH OUT FOR NEXT FRIDAY'S DAILY TELEGRAPH MAGAZINE

The Daily Telegraph Magazine due for publication on Friday, September 11 is planned to contain a feature on the problems encountered by BBC producer Derek Smith in filming caving sequences in Gaping Gill

THIS IS THE NEXT NEWSLETTER AFTER THE LAST ONE

No, you have not missed an/some newsletters, this is the next newsletter to be published after the July one. -- Pressure on the Editor from other directions has prevented him giving the job his full attention. Applications for the post should be addressed.....

HOSPITAL AFTER MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT

Arthur Spain is in hospital with a compound fracture of his right leg after a motorcycle accident. Brian Hillman wishes his friends to know that he has recently discovered that cars drive in both directions down most country lanes. Seat belts saved him, his passengers and the car behind from a more serious accident at Ystradfellte recently.

GM DETAILS

Details of the agenda for the half yearly meeting are published with this newsletter. Proposals include increases to subscriptions in 1971 and action for the vacant post of meet secretary.

SUMPER EXTRAORDINARY

Those who have discovered that acting meet secretary John MacMillan is a practised diver of Swildons sump one have put him to frequent use and in the past few weeks he has made dozens of trips leading parties through.

EXCAVATOR TO DIG YORKSHIRE SHOW CAVE

An ambitious attempt to discover what lies beyond the known end of Stump Cross Show Cave is being made by the owner using an excavator to dig 50 ft deep

## MCG NEWS

### HOW TO USE THE LIBRARY

BY Joan Goddard

Gradually the library is being indexed and put into order. Individual articles are not at present being indexed, but this may be done later.

Part of the library is in London and part on Mendip :

ON MENDIP in the cottage : Keys are available with all committee members. Only the top shelf of the library cupboard has been indexed. There are three sections : 1) books, 2) reprints and pamphlets and 3) journals, newsletter series etc. Within each sections items are kept in order of author or club alphabetically. Please return books etc to their proper places.

A small red card-index box on the top shelf will tell you if the book you seek is on Mendip. Please do not remove items without telling me.

IN LONDON there is a large collection of MCG library books and journals. To visit them at 24 Swan Close Hanworth contact Joan on a Thursday evening.

### FOR SALE FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Back issue of the Speleologist : Vol 2 , 9 10/11, 1966, 14, winter 1966, 10, 12/1 1970, 11, spring 1967. Vol 3 19, autumn 1969 (originally 2s6d, 3s6d etc)

REVIEW: A look at recent additions to the MCG library

British Caver Vol 54, autumn 1970. Britain's first speleological journal published by Gerrard Platten from 1936. This is issue was the last he produced - he was typing the stencils when he dies earlier this year. Tony Oldham has succeeded him and will therefore cease Mendip Caver from v5,8/9  
-JCG

Studies in Speleology v2, pt2, 1970 for 1969 (Wm Pengelly Cave Trust Ltd) contains : Glacier Caves in Washington State - an interesting new field of speleology; Cave Systems of the Tanga Limestone, Tanzania, including mention of the influence of former sea levels and the caves' formation and the development of Cave Research Foundation, a US organisation set up in 1957-JCG

Geophysical Prospecting 1969 or 1970. An extract by Dusan Arandjelovic outlines a method of tracing groundwater flows in karst using a time bomb thrown down a swallow hole and listening by geophones to noise of the delayed explosion when it has travelled downstream. This experiment was carried out in Yugoslavia and if it is extended, caving in the area is not to be recommended -BM

UBSS Proceedings v12, 2, March 1970. Contains mainly archaeological articles (Westbury-sub-Mendip, Gough(s and Glastonbury Lake Village, but there is a concise account of Porth yr Ogof in Breconshire. This is well illustrated contains a grade 4C survey and deals with all aspects of the cave and its history -JC G



## MCG NEWS

### CLUB COULD BENEFIT FROM YOUR INCOME TAX

Treasurer Ron Saunders is investigating whether members would be prepared to promise to pay subscriptions for a minimum of seven years, perhaps at a reduced rate. Income tax normally paid by the member would then be repaid to the Group. If you would like to help MCG in this way, please contact Ron (address back page)

### MEETS PLANNED

Here is a list of forthcoming club meets. Anyone interested should contact John MacMillan (address back page)

September 12/13	Mendip, GB Cavern
" 19	Yorkshire, Little Hull (with NPC )
October 4	Mendip, Shatter Cave, Fairey Cave Quarry (limited to 6)
18/19	Yorkshire, Lost John's Cavern
Easter, 1971	Penyghent Pot
August BH "	Lost John's

### BEWARE OF BUCHAN'S BOYS

A party of Tony Buchan's scouts will be at the cottage in November, probably on the second weekend, be warned . . .

### RAFFLE GIFTS SOUGHT

Tony Ingold, who is organising the MCG's Christmas, Michaelmas or Derby raffle is seeking prizes. Offers to him at 3 Suffolk Way, Canvey Island, Essex.

Wait for a fortnight though as he is at present holidaying in the steps of his leader in the Scilly Isles (He has just been elected chairman of his local Labour party).

### SIGN SEIZED

The landlord of the Castle of Comfort Inn was recently seeking information as to who stole his pub signs. Information to Pete Mathews (wait until he gets back from Poland).

### ADDRESS CHANGES

A new address list is attached to the newsletter. Note changes to Bryan Pittman and Tony Ingold. Other corrections to the secretary, please.

Sec's Spot

Box Mines Threats to completely seal the mine seem to have been finally averted. The local authorities have been blocking the main entrances one by one. The only remaining way in "the Backdoor" which is on private land has been spared. The landowner has promised a right of way to the mine provided the entrance is locked and gated.

A key to this entrance will shortly be available at the cottage.

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Locked Out ?  
cottage.

A couple of yale keys were recently found at the  
Apply the Sec.

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Pinner Chalk Mine At the last committee meeting it was decided to extend our public liability policy to provide cover of £100,000, which is the minimum required by the local council for official visits to the mine. Hitherto, members trips down the mine have usually been unofficial. Though, we have on occasions arranged extension of our insurance for the benefit of parties of guests. The insurance company are no longer keen on doing this free of charge and we have decided to pay to obtain the minimum cover.

Anyone wishing to make an official visit to the mine (ie with the permission of the local council) is therefore, covered by our insurance indemnifying the London Borough of Harrow against all claims arising from the visit - the minimum cover required is £100,000.

ooo0ooo

A quick estimate shows that 35% of our members have been caving in Yorkshire this year. And, we haven't had a club meet there yet !

Telephone Directory If you want your number included then make sure you fill in the sheet on the notice board.

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So he started to climb out of the hole. He pulled with his front paws, and pushed with his back paws, and in a little while his nose was out in the open again...and then his ears...and then his front paws... and then his shoulders... and then - " Oh, help", said Pooh. " I'd better go back." " Oh, bother !" said Pooh. " I shall have to go on." " I can't do either !" said Pooh. " Oh, help and bother !"

Winnie-the-Pooh , A.A.Milne

## Findon Well - The Bottom

There are two reasons for this short article which is mainly taken from the last Chelsea S.S. Newsletter. Firstly, a number of A.C.G. members have taken an active interest in the project. And, secondly, it enables me to try out a typewriter we are thinking of buying. ++

Findon, for those that don't know, is the site of a 4th century Roman well. It was descended by Trevor Dore in 1961 and in the March of that year the idea of excavating and probing the centuries of silt was begun. At that time the depth was a mere 63 feet.

At 0213 hours on Sunday morning the 28th June the bottom was reached at 262 feet. It was certainly appropriate that the person who was first to reach the bottom was Harry Pearman. He not only started the dig in 1961 but has continued with unabated zeal ever since.

The early excavators descended by electron ladder and the spoil was raised by half a dozen people running across the field with a rope. At the finish there was a motor winch, digging shelter, overhead gantry, air - conditioning, telephone and electric lighting.

An idea of the efficiency of the dig during its later sessions can be gained by the results of the final dig.

Initial depth	76.02 m.
Final depth	79.71 m.
Depth increase	3.69 m.
Human descents	10
Number of bucket loads	117½

Duration of excavation 18 hr. 13 min.

Speleologically, this was quite a unique excavation both for the duration and depth attained. Was it all worth it? Well this remains to be seen. Throughout the excavation many interesting archaeological finds have been made. The earliest dated finds were, of course, found last. Even on the final weekend the spoil taken out took something like 50 manhours just to wash.

Now the digging is complete we look forward to the final write up of the Findon Well Saga - let's hope it doesn't take so long.

PRM

..oo0oo..

(++ We have now purchased the typewriter, hence this newsletter Ed.)

MCG News

ROUND AND ROUND SWILDONS

Ron Saunders

A first impression . . .

I've never seen the entrance stream so low - it was a hot summer morning and the sweat dripped out of my sleeves, which just about doubled the flow of water in the entrance.

The dry way was very dry and not much water going over the 20; the swim once past sump one was only half its distance before the Cheddar flood. It seemed arduous baling the mud sump for one member of the party without a wet suit. The greasy chimney was very greasy and much easier for the short legged than us long 'uns.

I reckon that the trip was about my limit and at the entrance I was glad of a helping hand out. True never that I am I found relaxing on Priddy Green afterwards with a sausage roll the most enjoyable part of the day! Omar Khayan would I think have put it differently . . .

The Rubiyat of Swildons Round Trip

Here with a sausage roll upon the grass  
A can of beer, a cigarette and three  
Good friends telling of the double troubles  
Is paradise on Priddy Green.

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COMMITTEE

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