

## 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, who wrote 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. B.

Craven FC Journal 1969 deals mainly with the fortunes (and misfortunes) of CFC during the period 1966 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 Langstorphdale. 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 E. 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. BM

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

**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 'ole 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 Dionysios

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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 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.