

M E N D I P   C A V I N G   G R O U P

NEWSLETTER 106   NEWSLETTER 106

COMMITTEE

SECRETARY Pete Mathews: 155 Radcliffe Way, Northolt, Middx.  
Phone: 01.841.8769

TREASURER Ron Saunders: Rylstone, 21 Rushmoor Ave, Hazlemere,  
Bucks,  
Phone. Penn 3487

\* MEET SECRETARY Bill Jones: 91 St. Saviours Road, Croydon, Surrey.  
01 689 1529

COTTAGE WARDEN Wayne Hiscox: 80 Raleigh Road, Southall, Middx.  
Phone 01.574 1836

TACKLEMASTER John Miriam: Glenville, Wheeler Lane, Witley, Surrey.  
Phone. Wormley 2981

RECORDER Greg Smith: 131 Hagden Lane, Watford, Herts  
Phone Watford 29606

EDITOR Bryan Terry: 54 Brunswick Crescent, New Southgate  
London N.11.1EB.

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WEEKLY CLUB are held at the "Royal Oak" New Road, Brentford,  
MEETINGS: Middx. (behind Brentford Football Club Ground)  
every Thursday night until closing time.

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COTTAGE: Stirrup Cup, Nordrach-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Somerset.  
ACCOMMODATION for over 30 people -all essential  
services.  
Guests charged at 20p per night (or 20p day fee)  
Guest party bookings through the cottage warden.

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\* ~~RESCUE WARDEN Bill Jones: Address Above~~

EDITORIAL-NOTE

The Editor wishes to apologise for the cock-up in NEWSLETTER 105 concerning the meet programme. As most of you probably realised the accomodation did not fit the location of the proposed trips. This was partly due to a surfeit of Newcastle Brown imbibed the night before I compiled the newsletter, and Bill Jones' illegible hieroglyphics. Unless we have some hard members who wish to traversethe whole of the Yorkshire Dales, I suggest you consult the amended programme in this edition.

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As you will see from this edition, my "Letters to the Editor" idea died a horrible death. The one rather pallid letter I did receive is printed herein. Please help to get this scheme off the ground and send your letters with your articles to the Editor. The address is inside the front cover.

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I have also been asked to test the response of members to the idea of having T-shirts, car-stickers and badges, advertising the M.C.G. Further details if anyone is interested. This is your chance to air your views on this contraversial subject.

Bryan Terry.

There is still a dearth of articles for the newsletter. Could anyone who has copy to submit please let me have it by the third week in June. This will enable me to include it in NEWSLETTER No.107.

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Just to emphasise how exacting being an editor can be, I would like to print an error I spotted on the front page of the Evening News. It was in an article reporting the Queens Birthday. "Passers-by were startled by low-flying pets today in Whitehall".....

Those bloody corgis get everywhere.

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## Sleets Gill Cave - Wharfedale

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Present - M.C.G.

Steve Conquest + 2 Northern Cavers  
Pete Lingwood

At Easter, we accompanied two northern cavers on a visit to Sleets Gill Cave.

After a short climb up the valley side, the impressive entrance of the cave becomes visible. It is a phreatic tube passage which descends at about 60° for 90ft down and into the hillside.

At the bottom is a short flat-out crawl which sometimes blocks up with stones and gravel if the cave has flooded. Once through the crawl the passage opens up. To the right is a sump, which is still being pushed, and to the left is the main passage which provides upright walking.

This main passage is wholly phreatic and of almost circular section. There are some good formations hanging from the roof, but due to occasional total flooding, they tend to be somewhat muddy looking.

Towards the end of the main passage, which eventually ends in a choke, a hole in the floor on the left-hand side leads down to an active streamway.

Once through the hole, it leads to a flat-out crawl through water and further on this becomes Hydrophobia Passage - approx 24 ins high with about 15 ins of water.

After a short crawl in Hydrophobia Passage a fork to the right leads into a passage of similar size to the main passage. At the end of this passage, we were informed, the floor rises steeply towards the surface, and at the top are emergency supplies in the event of the cave flooding. This is the only place that water does not reach.

After a short rest, during which time we took some photographs, we retraced our steps and emerged into the daylight.

We used 100ft of rope, belayed to a tree at the entrance, as a very usefull handline for the climb out, and wetsuits should be worn if venturing into Hydrophobia Passage.

In wet weather, the whole cave, with the exception of the emergency bivouac, can flood completely. Then, water issues up out of the entrance tube to produce the waterfalls marked on the 1" O.S. map.

A short but interesting trip, well worthwhile in settled weather and you are in the vicinity.

& Peter Lingwood  
& Steve Conquest.

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### VARIATION ON A THEME

I've just heard from one of my various sources, of a new cocktail recipe. It comes from America, The Orient Express Bar actually, and its a variation of the tried and trusted "Screwdriver" (Vodka and Orange). Its a concoction of sloe gin, vodka, orange juice, and Southern Comfort. To order it you ask for a Sloe Comfortable Screw.

Ed.

## GENERAL NEWS

News is still coming in about the THRUPE LANE breakthrough. The East Mendip Caving Club have been digging a little way away from where the water sinks and this is where the breakthrough occurred. The newly discovered section of cave is very wet and it is reported that three streams unite in the cave. Three pitches have also been discovered. The first two of 60ft each and the last of 130ft. No calcite formations have yet been discovered.

This breakthrough now makes the cave approx 1,200ft long with a vertical reach of approx 400ft. If these figures are anywhere near correct, this means Thrupe Lane contains the deepest underground pitch on Mendip. It would also appear that the chances of further pitches being discovered are pretty remote. This is because the lowest point of the cave reached is only 50 odd ft above the level of its resurgence some three miles away.

I must emphasise that information is still quite vague and **this** may be incorrect but it would seem that another major cave has been discovered on Mendip. A rewarding result for the diggers concerned.

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The lock is now back on the entrance of Longwood. The lid has also been repaired so please don't forget to take a key. This damage was the result of vandalism.

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NHASA are digging in Frog Valley in an effort to gain entry to the far reaches of Stoke Lane. They are also going to re-dig WALDEGRAVE SWALLET. Waldegrave Swallet is about the last major sink on West Mendip, excluding the sinks on the north flank of Blackdown, which has yet to reveal a cave.

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Digging at Bone Hole has been continued by ourselves. As well as cleaning up the old dig, a new shaft is being sunk near the entrance.

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Willie Stanton is reported to have discovered a very high aven in Reservoir Hole which reaches close to the level surface above the gorge thus making the cave one of the deepest on Mendip.

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East Mendip C.C. have now sunk a shaft about 60ft deep at Warren Farm. Interesting archaeological finds have been made (e.g. human skulls). A clearly detectable air current is now being followed. This is an interesting project in a virtually untouched area. The site is in a fault which could possibly be part of the Manor Farm complex.

Wessex are investigating a deep, water-filled passage in Cuckoo Cleeves cave, recently discovered by them.

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Cont/....

General News - Cont/.....

For our last bit of news we focus our attention on Yorkshire, where it has been reported that a major find has been discovered in Echo Pot on Fountains Fell. A pitch of over 300 ft, (330ft has been rumoured at) has been discovered. This is reached after a nasty tight wet section, possibly a duck. More details when further information is available.

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NEW MEET PROGRAMME

June 15/16	Bull Pot of Witches	8 persons at Bull Pot Farm.
July 13/14	Birks Fell Cave	Camping
August 24 -) September 1)	Assynt, Sutherland	Grampian Speleological Group Cottage (Provisional)
September 7/8	Juniper Gulf	(Provisional) Camping
September 28/29	Lost Johns	8 Persons at Bull Pot Farm
Oct 12/13	Agen Allwedd	Whitewalls
Nov 2/3	Rescue Practice	Mendip

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EXCHANGE & MART

2 cell Nife top in exchange for Edison contact set-  
Apply, Johnny Mac.

FOR SALE. 1 36" "Super Bolenium" boiler suit. Brand new 1.50  
Apply Ed.

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Mendip Caving Group

Cave Surveys

The following surveys are available from Miss H.P. Saunders, 21, Rushmore Avenue, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP15 7NT.

The prices quoted are less postage, and postage and packing will be charged at the following rates:

For 1 survey .....	10p
" 2 surveys.....	15p
" 3 or 4 Surveys.....	17p
" 5 or 6 "	20p
" 7 to 10 "	25p
" over 10 "	30p

The surveys are dispatched folded approximately 8" x 10" or 9" x 12"; if they are required unfolded, a further 20p must be enclosed to cover cost of the tube and extra postage.

SURVEYS

	<u>new pence</u>
Caves of Cheddar Gorge	35
Cooper's Hole	20
Eastwater Cavern, sheet 1	25
sheet 2	25
Goatchurch	15
Lamb Leer Cavern	20
Longwood/August, sheet 1 (Plan)	35
sheet 2 (upper series)	15
sheet 3 (sections)	20
Pinetree Pot	20
St. Guthbert's Swallet, plan and addendum	25
sections	20
sheet 4, small scale plan 1970	17
Stoke Lane Slocker	35
Swildon's Hole (1965)	35
Ubley Hill Pot	15
Read's Cavern	10
Shatter Cave	17

The following surveys can be obtained, but with a delay of about a week to 10 days:

Browne's Hole	10
Holwell Cave Sections	15
Threaplunds Cave, Cracoe	20
Yordas Cave	15
Balch Caves, 20 sheets	40
Pate Hole	15
Quaking House Cave	15
Washfold Pot, Selside	20

ALSO AVAILABLE

Mendip Caving Group Journal	34	(incl.p&p)
Caves of Wales	50	} incl.p&p)
Caves of Mendip (Old Edition)	35	
Caves of Derbyshire	50	

The Treasurer has asked me to publish the following list of people who have forgotten to pay their cottage fees during the last year or so. Could anyone appearing on the list please pay up and help the clubs finances to become even more healthy.

1972

Mike Lovell	10/11 June, 1972		10p
John Pudduck	23/4 March	C53837	15p
Janet Pudduck	"	"	20p
Pete Virgo	30 March	C53838	15p
Anne Virgo	"	"	20p
Elaine Churchill	13 April	C53840	20p
B Finch	Easter 3 days	C53841	45p
B Finch	6/7 April	C53839	15p
Ken James(G. Smith)	21/2 July	D78654	20p
John Evans	30 June/ 1 July	Unnumbered	30p
A Evans	"	"	40p
Bill Jones	Christmas	D78676/7	30p
Alan Wicks	"	D78677	60p

1974

R Baker	18/19 January	D78681	40p
L Johnson	"	"	40p
D Duff Cole	"	"	40p
Bill Jones	1/2 February	D78683	30p
Scabendon C.	16/17 February	D78685	16x2x20=6.40p
V Beedle	17 February	D78685	20p
B. Pittman	17 February	D78685	15p
A. Pittman	17 "	"	15p

Unpaid Dinner Tickets.

A Wicks	2 . 50p
A Moll	2 . 50p

Quote of the Month

THE TIME: TEN MINUTES AFTER CLOSING TIME.  
 THE SCENE: Upper Swildons, EMERGING AFTER DESPERATE TRIP TO FIND WAY-ON BLOCKED BY PARTY OF 8 YEAR OLDS  
 CHERUBIC FACED LITTLE GIRL WITH SMOULDERING HAIR TO BILL JONES  
 "Excuse me mister, are you here to see we get out OK?"  
 BILL JONES TO LITTLE GIRL  
 "Not if I can bloody help it!"

ELIANEA GEM

For anyone interested the N.P.C. are having a Penyghent meet on the 6th July.



## UPPER FLOOD SWALLET

## PROGRESS TO DATE

Following the "breakthrough" into 10ft of crawlable passage early in November '73 work has continued steadily.

The task of improving height was tackled with gusto. The presence of a void made blasting more effective and it was possible to use the 3ft drill manufactured by Wayne, to great advantage. For sometime past we have found, that by alternating a rotary drill with an impact drill, speeded up the shot-hole boring process. Unfortunately our 2½ft star drill broke, so that beyond 18ins, holes had to be made with the brace and bit only.

By the end of January '74 we had reached the end of the crawl. Fortunately the passage did not close down completely, as on previous occasions, but continued as a slit along the left wall (North Side).

In early February, following wet weather, the cave took a large stream. The first dam, with the plug out, overflowed to a depth of about 1 inch. Water trickled into the cave in numerous places so that the end of the cave was taking on impressive stream, without water backing up.

An interesting observation made during these wet conditions (recorded in cottage log) was that the maximum water flow in the cave did not coincide with the maximum height of the pond outside. It was observed that flow in the cave slackened, although the pond level rose.

In very wet weather the inlet from behind the 1st steps appears to account for much of the flow in the cave. This suggests that when water rises above a certain level in the pond an overflow occurs and enters the cave. On the day when the flow observations were made, this particular inlet had slackened, so that reduction in flow could not be fully accounted for by a rapid reduction of drip water in the cave.

The following weekend, the stream in the cave was not exceptional although the pond level was high. During this very wet spell, the pond rose to about 3ft below the 1968 flood overflow level.

The working face is now some 5ft beyond the end of the November '73 crawl, and a lower portion continues for several feet further. At this point it is possible to probe forward for about 10ft with resistance. At the full extent of the probe some obstruction can be felt, but of course, its nature cannot be deduced. On probing about 2ft upwards into a clay pocket above the face, a small void can be detected. The evidence thus obtained, suggests that there is still some way to go before our hopes of a breakthrough can materialise.

We are now faced with a very serious spoil disposal problem. The passage between the 3rd chamber is now filled to crawling height. The only appreciable storage space left is the widened passage nearest the face. With careful stacking, this could possibly accommodate about 100 bucket loads. This represents about 5ft forward progress. A large spoil shifting party is thus required as soon as possible. Limited space is still available by the 2nd dam, and by the 2nd steps. The two chambers should be retained as spoil-free areas - they are about the only places which have been preserved so far from cave miners. If anybody is interested in helping out please contact Malcolm Cotter who will be most pleased to hear from you.

Despite the fact that no large breakthroughs have been unearthed, our prospects in the valley remain bright. There still remains the other site, hardly dug, and who knows, this could lead to the main pre-mining swallet.

Cont/...

UPPER FLOOD SWALLET Cont/....

Our failure to date in finding relatively long stretches of open cave is because we have not yet found the main post-glacial wet cave. When we do enter the main stream course we should find that in-fill deposits have mainly been re-excavated.

Although Upper Flood should eventually reach a main drainage cave, at least one major obstruction must be ahead, since there is still no suggestion of a draught. However what we may lose in not having a "longrun" on passing obstructions, we may gain in finding good formations in any chambers therein.

M. Cotter.

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LIBRARY NEWS

The caves of Assynt by Alan Jeffreys has at last been received by the library. Containing maps, surveys and descriptions, of all Sutherland caves, it is a must for anyone contemplating a trip to this area. Obtainable from the Grampian Speleological Group, 8, Scone Gardens, Edinburgh EH8 7DQ, price 40p.

Volume 9 No 2 of CRG transactions is missing from the library. Since it contains a complete survey of the Lancaster-Easegill system, the recorder would dearly like to have it back.

The "CAVES of SKYE" are described in BCRA transactions No.2 with surveys and photographs. Also included are "Studies in Ogof Ffynon Ddu", "Solution in East Mendip", "Aven de la Punta Majorca" and "Caves of Strydpoort Mountains, Transvaal"

If you want to know more about the Dry Way to Wookey 9, Willie Stantons' article in the latest Wessex Journal reveals all. In the same publication, Fred Davies writes the first part of an article on Cowsh Aven, and a hopeful link to the surface by this route.

Coming Soon. Copies of "The Limestone and Caves of North West England" by A Waltham for sale to members plus one copy for the library.

Greg Smith.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed,

hour hydrological hobservant honarary secretary (Ref UFS NEWSLETTER No.105) seems to have missed the most hobvious conclusion from his hobservations: Maybe the water from the dig flows into the valley lake.

Greg Smith.

Maybe some new form of osmosis - ed.

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RIFT POT - ALLOTMENT 14.4.74.

Present:-	M.C.G	N.P.C
	John Miriam	Karate Bill
	Greg Smith	Tiger
	John MacMillan	Dennis Milburn + 1 Guest

On a warm Sunday afternoon we drove up to Crummack and parked there. This privilege now costs 10p per car. After a short walk through the clints and over the Allotment wall, we reached Rift Pot. This pot is situated near Jockey Pot and Marble Sink.

The entrance, not surprisingly, is a rift about 60 ft long but it is not until the bottom is reached that the vastness of the Rift can be seen. We threaded 110ft of ladder down the west side of the rift - they belay being the bedrock 15ft up on the surface. The ladder hung awkwardly for 40ft in a narrow rift, but the last 50ft was free-hanging into the chamber where daylight still penetrated. After a couple of short 20ft pitches we landed on a boulder ruckle. We descended through this for about 20ft onto a mass of huge blocks. Ahead was a large shaft which leads up to Long Kin East Pot.

P.U. states this pitch is 150ft deep, for which 120ft of ladder is required, but for some reason John Miriam put 170ft of ladder down. John was the first to descend, attached to 160ft of line and he reported that the ladder was freehanging all the way. All went well until 150ft of lifeline had been paid out and the line party assumed John was at the bottom. At this point a torrent of unintelligible shouting ascended the shaft - this lasted for some time. (The discerning reader will have already spotted the deliberate mistake). Another line was tied on which allowed John to descend the remaining 20ft. Greg, Bill and myself then descended the shaft which was completely dry - a most unusual occurrence. This last pitch is very reminiscent of the big pitch in Black Shiver. After a little climb over a mud bank the rift narrows down to a low crawl with a gravel floor.

The return to the surface was accomplished without incident and at 6.45pm we were queuing outside the nearest hostelry. We were immediately ushered in to sample some Yeats and Jacksons.

John B. MacMillan.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my leader; I shall not want  
He maketh me descend deep holes: He leadeth me beside the raging  
waters  
He restoreth my confidence: He leadeth me in the path of drunkenness  
to the Hunters Inn  
Yea, thou I thrutch through tight squeezes in the shadow of death  
I will fear no evil  
For thou art with me: thy nife cell and rope they comfort me.  
Thou anointest my head with texolex: my Kings Brew runneth over.  
Surely drunkenness and insanity shall follow me all the days of my  
Life:  
I will dwell in the M.C.G. cottage for ever.

with apologies to David.

Pete Lingwood