



Mendip Caving Group Newsletter

MENDIP CAVING GROUP MEMBERSHIP No. 115 JANUARY, 1976

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COTTAGE WARDEN

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EDITOR

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WEEKLY CLUB
MEETINGS

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

COTTAGE

Stirrup Cup, Nordrach-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Somerset

ACCOMMODATION

for over 30 people - all essential services.
Guests charged 30p per night or day fee.
Members Cottage fees are now 20p per night or day.
Guest party bookings through the cottage warden.

EDITORIAL NOTE

As you may realise newsletter 115 has been a long time in arriving. This has been for a variety of reasons; originally it was lack of articles, and my compositor having a baby has kept me somewhat busy with other things. Anyway I have now amassed quite a lot of material and this edition is important in its content and its appeals. For many of you who are not in regular contact with the club, are probably wondering how much progress has been made on the new cottage project. This N/L will explain a lot and put you in the picture. Also Bone Hole has been the source of many enquiries. The work is going well, very well in fact, but because of the large topical content of this edition and the fact that some legal and political loose ends are still being tidied up I have not done a main article on it, but hope to have one for No.116. Which is planned for late February.

Another feature you will notice is the photograph. I hope to make a regular feature of this in future editions. Thanks must go to Steve Conquest for this achievement.

Keep sending those articles in please.

Bryan Terry

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CLUB NEWS

The editor and his wife are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Melanie Ann, born on the 9th October, 1975 weighing 6lbs 4ozs. The date of the barrel to commemorate the christening will be the 6th March. This is a club members only weekend on Mendip. I must add however that this is subject to the stove being in working order.

Congratulations to Helen Saunders and Phil Ingold on their wedding on 11th October. Their New Address is 31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3QJ.

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The recorder has asked me to publicize the fact that he is short of A4 Box files, and if anybody has got any that are surplus to requirements or have access to a cheap source of supply would they please contact him (address and phone number in front cover.)

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The new stove is still out of action at the cottage - this is due to the fact that there are no fire bricks. These are now on order and things should be back to normal fairly soon. The stove was made by Pat Walsh.

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The weekend 7th February has been set aside for work to clear the site of the new cottage. Its clearly a case of many hands make light work and Wayne will be pleased to see you all down there. There might even be a barrel on.

Bill Jones has managed to get hold of some Nife spares at an auction. Any interested party should contact him for more information.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Annual General Meeting and Dinner will be held on Saturday 27th March 1976.

The menu and cost of tickets will be published in the next newsletter and as usual tickets will be available from the Secretary.

The AGM will as usual be held at the cottage but a 2.00 pm start is envisaged to enable us to get through the large amount of business on hand. The largest single item under discussion will be the cottage.

Proposals for the Committee and Amendments to the Constitution and Rules should reach the Secretary before the end of February, either by phone or in writing.

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CHARITY

The group has now been registered as a Charity No. 270088 with effect from 16th August, 1975, the governing instrument being the Constitution and Rules adopted on 1st March, 1975, and the objects "For the benefit of the public, the furtherance and Scientific Study and Conservation of Caves."

Four Trustees have been appointed by the Group whose duty it will be to act personally and together on decisions concerning the Group. The Charity Commission publishes a hand book - "Responsibility of Charity Trustees" copies of which have been made available to the Trustees.

The Trustees are:-
Malcolm Cotter
Peter Mathews
Ronald Saunders
Patrick Walsh

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RATE RELIEF

Until 1st April, 1975 our Group had received the benefit of a discretionary rate relief granted by the Clutton R.D.C. which had resulted in a saving of about 50% of the rate. When the new Mendip District Council was formed, it was decided that in the first year the discretionary reliefs would be continued for a period of 12 months only, and at the end of that time, we were required to pay a full rate which amounted to £46.73. We tried to convince the Mendip D.C. that the discretionary relief should be continued because we had in no way changed our activities but when this was unsuccessful, we explained that for Corporation Tax purposes we had been accepted as a charitable body although the registration of the charity had not at that time been completed.

The council has now granted us mandatory relief as a charity under Section 40(1) of the General Rate Act 1967, with the result that our rates have now been reduced to £26.76. Whilst we must expect to have higher rates to pay when we have our new cottage, nevertheless we should still receive nearly 50% mandatory relief.

There is a short fall of £520 between the total estimated cost of site purchase and building the cottage and the amounts which we have in hand, promised loans and gifts and Sports Council grant. The Sports Council has enquired how we propose to raise the difference and in order to expedite final approval of the Grant, it is proposed that we shall cover the short fall by guarantees from our Members. Will all the Members who are willing to give guarantees in addition to promised gifts or loans
Cont/.....

please let our Treasurer know how much they would be prepared to guarantee. We hope that by the time the work is finished, we shall have raised sufficient funds so that we need not have recourse to the guarantees.

Since I was furnished with above information the Sports Council has given us the grant and we now have the go ahead to purchase the land and build the cottage.

Ron Saunders.

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COTTAGE WARDEN'S APPEAL

As most of you probably know we have got the go ahead to start building the new cottage. The first item on our agenda in the building programme is the removal of the old Axbridge hut. This will take place on the W/E of 7th February. Jim Fry is kindly providing a tractor and chains in the hope of dragging the hut into a new position. The building area has then to be levelled and the foundation trenches dug and concrete laid.

For this work the Group will need the following tools.

- A) 2 wheelbarrows - heavy duty builders type.
- B) 3 spades
- C) 1 hosepipe
- D) 2 large buckets
- E) 2 each bricklayers trowels - large and small
- F) 2 metal floats
- G) Scaffolding poles, boards and clips
- H) 3 ladders - 2 extendable and one stepladder.

We will also need to purchase as much secondhand building materials as possible, especially timber and pantiles. If anybody can help, please contact Wayne Hiscox as soon as possible.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MONEY MATTERS

As many of you know, the Club has need of approx £500 over and above the Land Purchase Fund total and the Agreed Loans/Gifts asked for many months back. To get the necessary grant from the Sports Council. They have agreed to pay half the building costs but need assurance from the Club that the rest of the cash will be forthcoming.

There are several ways of getting this cash but every way must of necessity depend upon the co-operation of every Club member active or otherwise and with this in mind listed are the various alternatives:-

See over page.

MONEY MATTERS!

1. Each member to loan or give a further sum of money to the Club over a fixed period of time (min. 2 years).

This of course depends very much upon the financial state of each person and is therefore suspect.

2. The money to be raised by holding some non-caving function Jumble Sale, outdoor activities etc.

not to be recommended as the sum raised is usually small and the work involved generally great.

3. The possible manufacture and/or obtaining of caving items Ladders, Belays etc at wholesale prices and offering for sale at a reasonable price outside the Club to Schools, Scouts etc

Probably O.K. in the long term.

4. By holding some sort of sponsored effort that can be participated in by all members such as the scouring of Cheddar Gorge for rubbish over a weekend and gaining sponsorship from the retailers in Cheddar,

It has possibilities and could almost certainly raise the required sum if the necessary ground-work is carried out first.

5. (A suggestion put forward by Malcolm Cotter).

Each member spends over a weekend on Mendip possibly up to and beyond £10, this sum broken down into Transport, Food, Beer, Sundries, Accommodation etc. Now if each individual was to sacrifice one active weekend in the near future and instead had non-spending weekend at Home, 60 members would raise £600 - Some Thought.

Anyhow these are a few suggestions and if anybody has any constructive comments to make on them or possible workable alternatives I for one would be glad to hear them and in addition if the committee will discuss these and other possible ways of raising the where-withall, I will undertake to set the machinery in motion with any other willing volunteers.

If the scheme can get off the ground, and provided someone or several people can act as guarantors then the cash from the Sports Council will be forthcoming whenever we need it.

It is up to all of us to see that it does.

Arthur Spain.

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DIARY DATE.

Paul Esser Memorial Lecture:

Physics Dept. Bristol University.

8.15 pm on FEBRUARY 18th.

Lecture by Dr. Tony Waltham on Caves and Ice.

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Congratulations to Bill Jones for producing another fine and varied Meet Programme.

MEET PROGRAMME 1976

JAN 17/18 DALE BARN CAVE, QUAKING POT (YORKSHIRE.)
FEB 21/22 LANCASTER POT & COUNTY POT, MAGNETOMETER POT
(YORKSHIRE)
March 20/21 DAN-YR-OGOF, PANT MAWR (SOUTH WALES)
EASTER
APRIL 16/17/18/19 GIANTS HOLE, OXLOW CAVERNS, HILLOCKS MINE
SPEEDWELL MINE & CAVERN (DERBYSHIRE)
MAY 15/16 CHERRY TREE HOLE, SCOSKA CAVE (YORKSHIRE)
MAY 27
June 6 CAVING IN COUNTY CLARE (IRELAND)
JUNE 19/20 PEN-Y-GHENT POT (YORKSHIRE)
JULY 17/18 DOW CAVE & PROVIDENCE POT, LANGSTROTH POT
(YORKSHIRE)
AUG 28
SEPT ? ANNUAL EXPEDITION ?
SEPT 25/26 GRANGE RIGG POT & CHRISTMAS POT, RUMBLING HOLE
(YORKSHIRE)
OCT 23/24 C&F.D. OGOF-Y-DARREN CILAU (SOUTH WALES)
NOV 6/7 RESCUE PRACTICE (MENDIP)
NOV 20/21 SHORT DROP - GAVEL POT, MOHOLE (YORKSHIRE)
DEC 11/12 NOTTS POT, BULL POT (YORKSHIRE)

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CHANGES OF ADDRESS

HON SEC: PETE MATHEWS,
31 Brewhouse Hill,
Wheathampstead,
Herts.

Tel-Phone, WHEATHAMPSTEAD 2521 - Works WELWYN GARDEN CITY 23434
Ex 3449.

THE NOMADS, Ian & Penny BRAMBLE,
56 Housesteads House,
Carlisle,
Cumbria.

(No Postcode Yet.)

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LOST JOHN'S ENTRANCE
M.C.G. MEET 1974

M.C.G. Goes Sumping.

M.C.G. Meet - September 1975.

ROWTEN POT - KINGSDALE MASTER CAVE EXCHANGE.

It was with some trepidation, not only because of the caving, but the usual Friday night pastime as well, that an MCG contingent of would-be "sumpers" drove into Kingsdale on a dull Saturday morning in September. All the evenings of discussing sump lengths, depths and anything to do with liquid including ale, were behind us. We were about to attempt that which we had been drinking(!) about, and dreading, for weeks.

The main party for the attempt on the sumps finally broke into two unenthusiastic groups, who, after prolonging changing to the maximum, could no longer find anything to delay them on the surface.

Five of us chose to descend Rowten Pot, as this would ensure the longest time to approach the point at which we would have to dive and, anyway, 260 ft of ladder climbing to the surface is enough incentive to opt for the way out through the sumps. The remainder of the party decided to go in Valley Entrance, as they could delay a little farther whilst waiting for us to tackle Rowten Pot.

So, four of us, Greg Smith, Richard Norris, Pete Lingwood, and myself eventually found ourselves, uneventfully at the bottom of the 150ft pitch. The fifth member, a "Pennine" man, had kindly volunteered (bribed, think, with the promise of an evenings' free beer) to line us all down and wait to line up the exchange party.

The next pitch of 60ft was duly tackled and Greg sent on his way. He stepped off the ladder at the bottom and attempted to continue a further 30ft free climb on the remaining 1ft of lifeline. At this he was bodily hauled back to the ladder by the three of us and, with much whistle blowing and explanations drowned in the crashing water, was politely requested to untie.

I followed him down and there met Neil Brooker, who had come from Valley Entrance via the sumps, his face beaming with a smug satisfaction of achieving what we had yet to do.

The rest of the group descended with the usual procedures and rejoined Greg, myself and Bill Jones, who had also come from the entrance with Neil. Bill then departed after Neil leaving us to our fate.

After a short scramble and climb we were on the verge of the final roped drop down to the lowest level of the pothole. We had left the water at the last climb and here the silence was eerie after the characteristic crashing of water on the previous pitches.

After the rope pitch we rejoined the water, flowing sedately along a short passage, following it to the final depressing sump pool.

Here, we apprehensively fitted our masks and made last minute adjustments. We decided who would be first through the sumps. After acclimatising himself to the water temperature and taking up

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Rowten - Kingsdale Exchange - Cont/.....

the tension on the guide line, Greg took a breath and was gone, leaving a faint ripple on the foam covered surface.

Then Richard took up the line and waited for Greg's Signal. It came. Richard took a breath, but floundered and returned. He had the guideline twisted round his ankle. A few steadying moments later he again took the line and then disappeared into the sump. My turn! I nervously adjusted my facemask whilst waiting for the line to tug. It did. I took a breath and ducked into the sump entrance. I had to wriggle to get into the passage proper, but the roof raised slightly and widened out, further than my light would penetrate. The line seemed to disappear a long way a head into the peat stained water. A magnificent feeling of isolation here. No sensation of cold, or sound, of fear. One of splendid suspension. Then the line rose through the surface, and I pulled up into an airbell to join Greg and Richard. I tugged the line back to Pete and we then excitedly discussed our impressions of the 27ft sump we had just dived. The opinions were unanimous. Superb! Pete arrived and we look around us. We were in a large airbell with classic scalloping on the walls. Impressions of remoteness and depth.

The next sump is 12ft long. Similar approach to the first. Less nervous now, more composure to look about. True phreatic development with an elliptical roof. Then suddenly surface into a small chial.

One more sump to tackle. No problems here. Done if before. Quick breath and through. Only 6th long. Achievement complete, Welcome Kingsdale Master Cave. The others join me. The small chatter becomes a babble of voices, the nervous relief now flooding out in a torrent of words.

Then someone is heard approaching along the passage and Malcolm Cotter, Roger Saunders and Charlie Ruddick appear. They should have been with Neil and Bill but decided to go and explore Swinsto Final Chamber. Now they had no hope of exiting via the sumps and ROWTEN as Bill and Neil would already be ascending and detackling.

Anyway, they decided to borrow our facemasks to go through the sumps and return. Richard, Pete and myself left Greg as chaperone to the latecomers and commenced the return to the surface as we were beginning to feel cold.

On an uneventful exit to the Valley Entrance we met Ron Saunders Rob Penn & Steve (a club guest) and a friendly Yorkshireman who was escorting them on their first visit to the cave.

Jubilation of our successful passing of the sumps, not to mention our very presence of course, must have been obvious for Ron congratulated us profusely. So to the surface where eventually the rest of the club gathering joined us.

The whole group then climbed the scars on the pretext of helping Bill and Neil detackle Rowten Pot, but really just to look, thereupon, we were met with some explicit language. They had already succeeded in bringing up the tackle themselves.

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Rowten - Kingsdale Exchange - Cont/....

To complete the day's caving and round off a visit to Rowten, some of the party decided to do the Rowten Cave through trip. A journey of some 200 yds. back onto the moor behind the main Rowten Shaft.

We who stayed on the surface became worried when, after 10 minutes, no one had appeared at the Rowten Cave entrance.

Half an hour later, a very perplexed group of MCG cavers emerged from Jingling Cave Entrance; a quarter of a mile away, having followed Malcolm Cotter's insistent directions that they were going the right way.

Eventually all the tackle was carried down to the cars amongst much self-congratulation and joviality. We drove back to Green Close with a magnificent caving trip behind us and a good evening, getting wet on the inside, before us.

Steve Conquest.

Postscript.

A good club turnout this, with the following present:-
one guest and

Ron Saunders	Greg Smith	Malcolm Cotter
Roger Saunders	Bill Jones	Charlie Ruddick
Rob Penn	Richard Norris	Neil Brooker
Steve Conquest	Pete Lingwood.	

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WESSEX WATER AUTHORITY ANNOUNCES MENDIP
DYE TESTING CONTROLS

In an effort to prevent indiscriminate water tracing experiments on the Mendip Hills, the Wessex Water Authority have announced control measures on the use of dyes. They state that there are obvious dangers of pollution of a public water supply (even if only visually, it should be added) and that the scientific value of tracing runs can be lost if unnotified trials are attempted. The eight point control procedure is detailed in a leaflet issued by the WWA.

The leaflet, MENDIP DYE TRACING, is obtainable from

The Director of Resource Planning,
Techno House, Redcliffe Way,
Bristol, BS1 6NY.

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Joke

Heard about the moron who sat up all night studying for his blood test.

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A special commendation for bravery above and beyond the call of duty must surely go to Wayne who recently cleared the blocked up bog pit outside the cottage. Unfortunately we can't find anyone with a strong enough stomach to pin a medal on him.

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G.B. ACCESS

After the locks being changed on this cave, bookings can only be made through the Meet Sec. There will be an official protest to Oliver Lloyd about this as it contravenes the agreement made with other members of U.B.S.S.

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AROUND AND ABOUT

OFD. On the 8th November, 1975 it was reported that the boulder choke immediately at the end of the traverses in OFD III is very unstable following a recent collapse. Please take the utmost care when negotiating it.

Vague rumours have been heard of a possible sumped connection between Little Neath River Cave to Bridge Cave.

Another very vague rumour has it that a member of Wessex is believed to have been killed during a 100ft prussik somewhere in Spain.

CAVES OF DERBYSHIRE - Ferrata Re Merlin's Cave (Eyam) the 8ft Duck should read 60ft sump. Oops!

Strans Gill and Pasture Gill Pots have been closed by the landowner Dale Head Pot requires booking through the Pen-y-ghent Secretary.

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Snowdon National Park is considering charging for going into the mountains! Possibly in the form of parking fees, in order to get funds for the repair and upkeep of the paths, which are suffering serious wear and tear. They certainly have a problem on their hands. This could affect cavers in respect of access to mines.

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Sports Grants

From Figures published by NCA the grant aid received per head of participants is canoeing about 300 pence, Mountaineering 130 pence, Sub Aqua 150 pence and caving about 6 pence.

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