
MENDIP CAVING GROUP NEWSLETTER

No. 117

SEPTEMBER 1976

COMMITTEE:

SECRETARY

Pete Mathews: 31 Brewhouse Hill,
Wheathampstead, Herts.

TREASURER

Ron Saunders: Rylstone, 21 Rushmoor Ave.
Hazlemere, Bucks.

MEET SECRETARY &
RESCUE WARDEN

Bill Jones: 91 St. Saviour's Road,
Croydon, Surrey.

COTTAGE WARDEN

Wayne Hiscox: 47 Lansbury Drive,
Hayes, Middx.

TACKLEMASTER

John Miriam: 25a Cole Park Road,
Twickenham, Middx.

RECORDER

Greg Smith: 16 Nield Road,
Hayes, Middx.

EDITOR

Steve Conquest:
4 Woodpecker Close,
Edmonton N9 7ND.

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WEEKLY CLUB MEETINGS: are held at the "Royal Oak" New Road, Brentford, Middx.
(behind Brentford F.C. 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.
Guest party bookings through the cottage
warden.

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Editorial

As many of you know, and have no doubt hotly discussed, this will be the first publication of any club news since March 1976.

This has been due to a combination of circumstances, not least of which, Brian Terry now has family commitments as well as having to work in Northern parts for almost the entire summer and remainder of the year. These commitments, particularly the one of having to work away from home, has unfortunately forced Brian to resign his position as Editor.

I am sure that the club will be sorry to hear the news, as Brian has put in a great deal of work and effort into the Newsletter. We wish him well for the future and offer thanks for producing an excellent series of Newsletters.

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This is the first Newsletter since March and I am certain that plenty of news and information will be available for publication in the next few issues now that I can, hopefully, resume normal service.

This edition is of necessity a slim one, being my first and wanting to publish various news items as quickly as possible.

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CLUB NEWS

Meeting

There will be an Extraordinary General Meeting on 16th October, 1976 at the cottage.

Agenda is enclosed.

Postal Votes

Members are reminded that the Secretary can accept postal votes under Rule 9(f). These must be in writing and in such a form that the member's views are quite clear and unambiguous. They must be received in sufficient time for any queries to be clarified and voting rights to be granted by the committee.

The final right of inclusion rests with the Chairman.

Thursday Meeting Place

At long last the moans and groans about the lack of facilities at the Royal Oak can cease. New premises have been found and pronounced satisfactory. (Fuller's Beers!)

The new venue is:

The Six Bells,
High Street,
Brentford.

A room will be available for our use on alternate Thursdays, but the saloon bar can accommodate members who attend when the room is in use.

THIS IS NOW THE OFFICIAL CLUB MEETING VENUE.

Ron Saunders and Greg Smith will attend the Royal Oak this week, i.e. (Thursday 30th Sept) to inform any members arriving there, thereafter this copy of the Newsletter should have reached all members.

MENDIP MARATHON

Fortunately for all Sat. Sept. 11th dawned clear and bright, had it not the planned Mendip Hills and Gorges Trek could well have been a failure - The best laid plans etc!

However at 07.30 out of our present cottage appeared Neil and Bernie en route for Black Down followed by several groups armed with maps, rucsacs and assorted clobber until the last party left at 09.00. Surely this must be something of a record to get practically everybody in gear before 9 o'clock. Our Marshalls having been briefed as to their various roles off we set to the 1st check point at Sandford.

The first stretch of eight miles across some of the loveliest of the Mendips with the sun shining was a pleasure, plucking large ripe blackberries on the way which grew in abundance along most of the route. Arriving at Sandford we (the last party) were greeted by the Msrahalls and offered drinks with the accompaniment of "Where have you been". Undaunted on we went to our next check point at Loxton making a small diversion at Banwell to the New Inn - very welcome. Passing over the new M5 we could see in the distance the bridge we would have to cross coming back the other way, still I'm sure a walk across Loxton Hill was more preferable than along the motorway. On reaching Loxton, coming off the footpath a strange sight greeted us; namely June and Reg Saunders with June walking backwards! Being gallant gents, a lift was offered but declined, still she made it to the check point a total of 15 miles which is no mean achievement with very sore feet, well done June.

The next section looked formidable with the prospect of climbing 200 metres to the top of Wavering Down. It was worth it however because it offered a splendid view in all directions. An hour or so later we descended to check point 3 to find the previous party still there. We joined forces at this point (only to part later on) and tackled the next stage which although not that long was beginning to tell on us, a long stretch of rough track followed by tarmaced road for 3 miles. By the time check point 4 was reached one was beginning to doubt the wisdom of the scheme, however we urged each other on.

The next stretch took us past the stock car stadium and down the rough track towards Cheddar passing Simon manfully plodding at his own pace with the aid of a stick, not bad for someone whose ankle has recently healed after breaking. Arriving about 5.00 p.m., definitely very weary, an ice cream and a prayer to delay the threatening rain, off we trundled again up the hill towards Bradley Cross, right at Bradley cottage and up a grass track and bingo we missed the route. An hour later having wearily climbed over gates, fences, through brambles and up hills we came to Carslake Farm, took some bearings and eventually sighted the previous party, Ron, Malcolm and Reg S. who were on the correct path.

The rest of the journey past the last check point and the long march towards Priddy was accomplished in a daze. Never have we felt so exhausted and I'm sure that went for many of us.

Arriving at Priddy Green, and being whisked away to our various places of abode, both campsite and cottage was the biggest relief felt for a long time to know that it was all over - 30 miles of hard slog. I understand that many people crashed out early that evening - another record?

However, it was and is an outstanding success financially, an estimated £420 to be collected by the 17 participants and there are several members who would have done the trek but were unable to for various reasons, so to them I say read on to the next article.

Certainly without the very able assistance of Tony Knibbs this project would probably never have got off the ground so thanks to you Tony and also very many thanks to the ladies who did an excellent job in marshalling our progress and offering encouragement to all as well as ferrying those who were unable to continue.

Well folks £400 odd pounds is not going to be enough to meet our future financial commitments so sometime in the not too distant future another money raising scheme will be planned so I hope you will all support it in some way or another.

Arthur Spain.

Next Article

Mendip Hills and Gorges Trek Mk. II

It has been suggested that several people who were unable to attend the Trek Mk I on Sept. 11th may wish to have a go themselves, so subject to agreement from those people the date of Sat. Nov. 6th has been put forward and because daylight will disappear around 5.30 p.m. a distance of 24 miles is envisaged which means going along a similar route to the original but terminating at Cheddar.

If there is enough interest would those concerned contact Tony Knibbs or myself for Sponsor Forms and any information.

Remember the Club still needs cash and this is a good way of earning it.

A. Spain.

SPECIAL REQUEST

Would all the participants in the walk collect their sponsor's cash as quickly as possible and pass on to Ron Saunders.

The money is needed urgently now to pay for building materials on the cottage.

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S. R. T.

In the wake of the massive expansion of SRT into caving I have only just begun to use it as a procedure, particularly for ascending. Although there appears to be a wealth of information about ropes and equipment for the techniques there is a distinct paucity of practical advice on how to use them.

After finding no really valuable information from the publications I have read I set about to learn prusiking the hard way, Doing it myself on short pitches. In so doing I have gained some invaluable experience and developed a method, whilst not claiming it as necessarily original, I have not seen in books or being used by anyone else.

The method consists of using two prusikers, one harness, two tape slings, three krabs and, of course, a suitable rope.

One prusiker is used conventionally as being 'free', for use with one krab and sling as the foot loop. The second prusiker is linked between the tape sling, used as a 'nappy' seat, and the chest harness, using a krab respectively on seat and chest harness. This arrangement should fit snugly to the body.

The prusikers are then attached to the rope, ensuring that the foot loop prusiker is above the body prusiker. Tension on the rope is then taken up by sliding up the foot prusiker and then standing up in the loop, whence the body prusiker will automatically follow up the rope. A rhythm can then be established of standing up on the foot loop, then sitting on the body harness whilst sliding up the foot loop, then standing again and so on.

Initially, one hand will be required to pull the rope down through the body prusiker, but as the weight of rope below increases the higher one ascends, this becomes unnecessary further up the pitch.

A few comments about the equipment I have used might be useful: The harness mentioned earlier was made as described by Brian Smith in Descent No.30 and works and wears well.

The rope is my own (sorry, ours! Pete Lingwood owns half), and is Terylene 16 plait - 10mm dia., matt finish.

I use the Clog Expedition Ascender. Whilst being almost identical to the Jumars, I find them more comfortable and robust. The Jumars I have used tended to feel coarse in action and could not accommodate a fully grasping hand on the handle.

I have used polythene hosepipe, split axially, and slid onto the rope, as a prime protector against rope abrasion and layers of sacking where the rope/rock contact is lighter. This rope protection against abrasion is of the utmost importance. A sketch overleaf illustrates the principle.

This equipment and technique I used recently on a quick trip into Gaping Gill via the 110 ft Bar Pot route and very enjoyable it proved to be, the abseil on this type of rope being particularly exhilarating.

Steve Conquest.

ATTENTION M.C.G. MEMBERS

Caving Supplies, run by Philip Brown, offers 5% discount on orders over £5 for MCG Members.

Philip Brown-Caving Supplies
Mail Order Dept/Head Office
84 Chatsworth Road
Cheam
Sutton
Surrey 01-644-2727

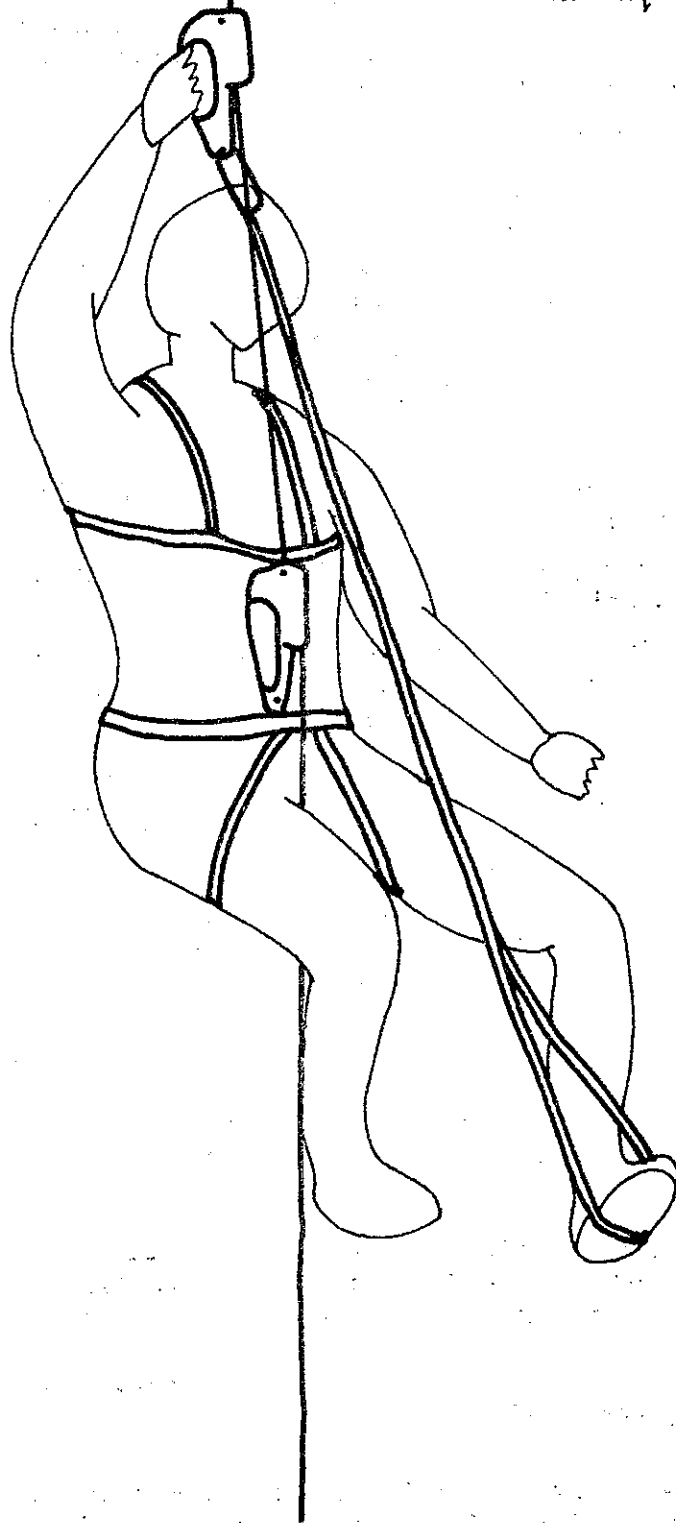
Christopher Bradshaw
Counter Sales & Hire
9 Colles Road
Wells
Soms. 0749-74382

Most items of equipment are available for hire at reasonable prices (phone Chris to ensure availability) and hire charges will be waived if equipment is purchased new within 24 hrs of returning hired goods.

ILLUSTRATION OF
PRINCIPLE

CHEST/SIT HARNESS AND
SINGLE FOOT LOOP

S.J. Conquest 1976



CLUB MEETS PAST

Spring Bank Holiday week saw a contingent of MCG members arriving in County Clare, Ireland, for a 'spot' of caving.

A thoroughly enjoyable week was had by all whilst some caves and potholes were visited.

Rumour has it that Bill Jones, found, dug and filled in a new pot all in one day. Nothing official has been declared.

(Seriously, though, what about some detailed information and description on the caves and pots visited.

Ed.)

August Bank Holiday saw a party of MCG members determined to go underground into the Gaping Gill System.

Eventually, the grim determination reaching a climax, a party descended and bottomed Stream Passage Pot, connecting with the Main Chamber, GG., and exiting the same way.

(Again, what about a descriptive article for this trip? I understand it was a good one! Ed.)

CLUB MEETS FUTURE

23/24 October 1976.	OFD OGOF-Y-DARREN CILAW
6 November 1976.	Rescue Practice
20/21 November 1976.	Short Drop Cave - Gavel Pot Mohole
11/12 December 1976.	Notts Pot Bull Pot

ANNOUNCEMENT

Since the article on SET, and hence the information on Caving Supplies, was printed, Caving Supplies have now ceased to trade from Chatsworth Road and through Chris Bradshaw in Wells, Soms.

Phil Brown has moved his whole operation to Derbyshire for purposes of expansion and more efficient trading.

The advertisement discounts still apply as described, except that the address is now:-

Phil Brown
Caving Supplies
London Road
Buxton
Derbyshire.

Tel: 0298 5040

MENDIP CAVING GROUP



PATRON: THE MARQUESS OF BATH

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

A meeting of the Group is to be held at the Cottage, on Saturday, 16th October 1976 at 4.00 pm.

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the 1975 A.G.M.
2. Cottage Report ;
 - i) Financial Position
 - ii) Progress Report
 - iii) Programme of work for the winter
 - iv) Brief Outline of Building Plans for 1977
 - v) Fund Raising Activities
3. Proposed Alterations to the Constitution
 - i) Rule 6 Subscriptions
".....Annual rates;- Full and probationary members over 18 yrs old - £3 ", increase subscription to read ".....£5"
N.B. other classes of members remain unchanged at £1
 - ii) Rule 9 General Meetings
A proposal to increase notice of general meetings was held over from the last A.G.M. The redraft was unavailable for inclusion in the Agenda.
4. Any Other Business
5. Close of Meeting

NEXT MEETING The Annual General Meeting is to be held on Saturday, 26th March 1977

PRM
15/9/76