

" When I said blow it up and let's collect on the insurance.....
I meant the old cottage ".

Mendip Caving Group Newsletter

MENDIP CAVING GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO 131

APRIL 1980

EDITORIAL When I produced my first Newsletter some nine months ago I made two comments. The first of these was that I would continue as a co-opted Editor until someone else offered to take over. Although I have enjoyed producing the Newsletter, I have not been able to bring it out on a regular basis, so that some issues have followed each other rapidly but others have been separated by long delays.

Therefore, as I know that another member is willing to stand for the post at the AGM, this will be my last edition.

My other comment was that an Editor should edit the Newsletter, and I am pleased to be able to say that nothing in this issue (except the editorial) was written by me. However, the only member to send me anything for publication was Pete Matthews, and this Newsletter would therefore not have appeared if it was not for him. On behalf of my successor, could I ask more members to contribute?

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have helped and have contributed in the past nine months, especially: Tony Knibbs, the Committee, Bernard Reeves, Ron Saunders, John Roberts, anyone else that I've missed out and finally, Calor Gas, without whom the New Year special edition would not have been possible.

CUTHBERTS LEADERS - The group is looking for members to become leaders for St. Cuthberts. The recent lack of caving by the group probably means there can't be many of us who have done the necessary ten trips down Cuthberts (or alternatively if they have ten free weekends) then please contact Wayne Hiscox.

1980 SUBS - One or two members have not yet paid subs for this year. Eric Dowley will still accept subs, and at the same time will give you a covenant form, if you haven't completed one already.

COTTAGE PROGRESS A Cottage Progress Meeting was held at the Beehive Brentford on 21 February. Other than events recorded elsewhere in this newsletter, the meeting elected an ex gratia payment of £50 to be paid to Wayne for his work in clearing up the mess. It can only be a token of our gratitude. Wayne received delivery of a WBC hive and colony of bees the following week. I know he has been keen on keeping bees for a while now, and hope he remembers the group everytime he gets stung.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING The AGM of the group will be held at the
Cottage, Nordrach on Mendip on Saturday
19 April 1980 at 2.30pm.

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the previous General Meeting, 28 April 1979
- 3 Hon. Officers Reports

Secretary - Pete Matthews
Treasurer - Eric Dowley
Meet Sec. - John MacMillan
Tacklemaster - Phil Ingold
Cottage Warden - Wayne Hiscox
Editor - Martin Rowe
Recorder - Malcolm Cotter

Hon. Auditors report will be given with that of the
Treasurer.

- 4 Election of officers for 1980/81

Secretary - A.J. Knibbs, P.R. Matthews
Meet Sec. - J. MacMillan
Treasurer - E. Dowley
Tacklemaster - J. Mirriam
Editor - B. Pittman
Recorder - A. Cox, G. Smith
Cottage Warden - W. Hiscox

- 5 Cottage Progress

(i) Resume of events
(ii) The new drawings
(iii) Outline of future plans
(iv) Financial situation
(v) Repayment of members loans

- 6 Any other bussiness

- 7 Close of meeting
-

The Annual Dinner is to follow at the Hunters Lodge Inn
at 7.30 for 8 o'clock. The main course is beef cooked in red wine.
A coach has been arranged to call at the cottage at about 7 o'clock.
There is a bar extension until 11.30pm

COTTAGE PROGRESS The old new cottage is no more. The last heaps of rubble were trundled away by a contractor for hardcore. The cost to us was £450 plus the value of scrap. Most of the worthwhile fittings such as tiles, electrical goods, etc. were already removed and are stored in the old cottage. Plans to clear the site ourselves were thwarted by lack of support. It seems unbelievable to look across Jim's yard and see nothing except a flat site. Let us hope that it wont look that way much longer.

Meanwhile the new cottage is taking shape. For those members in far places, we have now collected £30 000 on the insurance. I said it is news for distant members because news travells fast. The money is largely invested at 17.25% an the money market on three months demand. We should be especially grateful to Ron, and Ron's firm, for placing this investment within hours of receiving the cheque.

Although £30 000 may sound a lot I don't think we will get much change at the end of the year. It should just about build a cottage rather like the one we lost. Indeed we may well be faced with a few chores such as painting if the money runs out, as it probably will. On this account we are most grateful to the National Playing Fields Association who are prepared to extend the period of thier loan should we find ourselves in financial difficulties.

The high interest rate we are receiving is certainly not profit. It reflects the high level of inflation and will simply match the increases in building costs through any delays. In this respect it relieves the pressure on us to get the job started. Fortunately, the Group is not liable for Corporation Tax on this interest; a further reflection on our perspicacity in registering as a charity.

Roger Wallington has recently completed his modifications to the drawings together with making the necessary specifications. We are now in a position to receive tenders for the reconstruction prior to placing a contract. Building work should then begin shortly afterwards. There is every prospect of us moving in for a New Year's Eve party! The Group are greatly indebted to Roger for this work. He has been under considerable pressure to complete it, unfortunately no one could really help him in this task.

Following the destruction of the old new cottage the Group was served with a dangerous building order. In other words, they were setting out to pull it down and send us the bill for doing so. They were beaten to it by Wayne and Ken Fry who pulled down most of the structure between them. Again the Group must be very grateful to these two for saving unnecessary expenditure.

P.R.M.

REPAYMENT OF LOANS Although we may be a rich club at the moment, I don't think this will last very long. One or two members have suggested we take the opportunity to repay outstanding loans now. If we do I fancy we will run out of funds during the rebuilding programme. Basically, the £30 000 we have from the insurance is to rebuild the cottage, not show a profit!

The value of club labour is very high in monetary terms and perhaps should not be forgotten. There may be some advantage to be gained in leaving, say, painting, wiring, glazing etc. to members. This would have two benefits. Firstly, it would allow members to make some practical contribution to the cottage. Secondly, the money saved could well be used to repay loans. Think about it and air your views at the AGM. It is difficult to be precise until we get quotes.

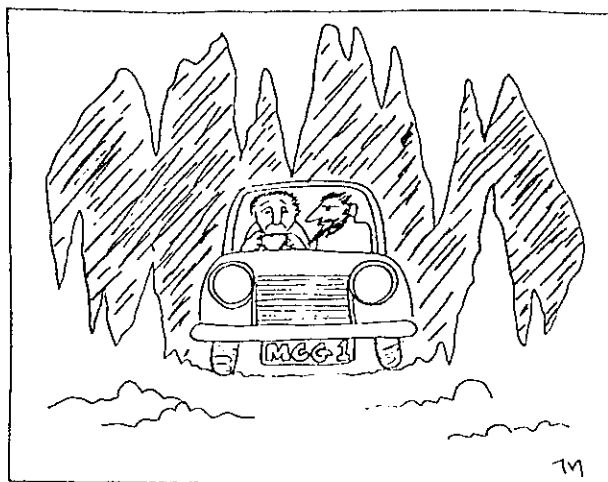
IF YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT IT'S LIKE - IT'S CHANGED ANYWAY!

It might be old news to some folks, but the changes in Swildons in Swildons are quite confounding to those of us who haven't been down there for a couple of years.

The Water Chamber is a different place following the well - publicized boulder movements. Those traversing over the Well are in for a shock - the stream has cut down its rubble bed and you now squeeze up through the bottom. More recently, a new dry route has been excavated connecting the top of the Wet Way to the top of Jacobs Ladder, easily the best way down.

Meanwhile, at G.B. the U.B.S.S. seem to be changing locks on a weekly basis (they all use the same key!). A request has been made for more gentle handling. The other route in, via the pothole at the head of the Gorge is really becoming too unstable to be recommended.

Since the collapse of the fill higher up the Gorge, the lower part of the streamway can no longer take flood water. As a result, Ladder Dig is flooded with increasing frequency. This has led to considerable movement in the boulder ruckle under Great Chamber. The boulder ruckle is becoming increasingly hazardous and should be avoided by novices or anyone without a BS kite - mark helmet.



"If there isn't an underground carpark in Priddy, we could be in trouble"

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS include :-

Ian McKechnie, 30 Brittain Rd, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 4LR

PROBATIONARY MEMBERS include :-

Linda Yeats, 42, Dordrecht Rd, Acton, London W3

DIARY NOTES

Council of Southern Caving Clubs AGM at the Hunters, May 17

BCRA AGM/Symposium on Hydrology, Ingleton Community Centre, June 21, 2o'clock

BCRA Annual Conference, Nottingham University, Sept 20-21 1980

BCRA Winter Metting, "Cave Diving" at Crickhowell, Dec 6 1980

NEW BOOK "Caves of Derbyshire" by Ford and Gill, £2.95 (Dalesman)
This is a new completely revised edition.

We desperately need to replace some of the furniture in the cottage, as several of the old armchairs are being used as nests for mice. Can members therefore look out for second-hand furniture (preferably mouse-proof). In the meantime, beware of mouse traps.

MEETS PROGRAM Now that there is no longer any excuse not to go caving, John MacMillan is arranging a full meets program. The following trips are planned:

- 19 April Mendip- St Cuthberts. (AGM weekend)
- 31 May Yorkshire- Easegill
- 21 June South Wales- OFD, DYO
- 19 July Yorkshire- Stream Passage
- 26 July Yorkshire- Lost Johns
- 4 Oct South Wales- OFD, DYO.

MCG CAVING SHOP. Phil Ingold is currently negotiating discounts on all types of caving gear (The interest on £30,000 should provide some money for purchasing group tackle!). I'm sure Phil would be willing to include orders for individual members.

GROUP ORGANISATION

COMMITTEE

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WEEKLY MEETINGS of the Group are held every Thursday evening at the BEEHIVE HOTEL, 227 High Street, Brentford, Middlesex.

CAVING ACCOMMODATION is available at the Group's Mendip headquarters cottage:
The Stirrup Cup, Nordrach-on-Mendip,
Blagdon, Somerset. (NGR ST55/5150.5605).

29 beds are available, together with cooking facilities and other amenities including caving library. Guest bookings must be made to the Cottage Warden.