



FEBRUARY 1981

NO 137

#### VALE - JIM FRY

Jim Fry died on the 30th December following a stroke on Christmas Eve. With Jim's passing the club has lost a very dear and good friend. He will be sadly missed.

Jim will surely be remembered for a long time to come as one of the characters of Mendip. Like all characters he certainly was a bit of a rogue. A great gambler in his younger days, he would never refuse a bet - a boast few would dare to make. Even in recent years he often decided bills on the toss of a coin.

A number of Mendip figures have been remembered by the caving community. In most cases their connection with caving has been by way of their business or their role as landowners. Few have gone out of their way to help a caving club in the way Jim has done. He had no interest in caving, he thought we were all daft, and was probably right. But, he was aware of our enthusiasm, and gave us every help. The Axbridge and later our own club were grateful to Jim for letting us erect a cottage on his land, when most landowners showed only indifference.

Jim has given immense help to the club, and will always be remembered for his great generosity.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his widow and family.

#### THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Mendip Caving Group will be held in the New Cottage at 7.30pm on Saturday 4th April. Details of the agenda will be available nearer the day. Remember nominations for Committee posts, proposals to change the Constitution and Rules and special items for the Agenda must reach The Secretary by 14th March

ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Dinner will take place at The Star Hotel, Wells. The cost of tickets is to be settled in the next week or two at around £6 = £7 for beef in red wine.

Ticket will be available from Committee Members. Only a limited number of tickets will be available to Non Members. If you want to bring any friends along (other than wives, girlfriends, mistresses etc.) then there will be a short slide show about the Dinner, of our Cottage building activities. Should you have any slides which you may consider suitable please contact Pete Maresh.

DECORATING THE NEW COTTAGE

Cottage decorating will commence at the beginning of February, and it is hoped that it will be completed by the end of the month. A number of members volunteered their services over the P.T.M. and a large attendance is expected on 7th/8th Feb weekend. There will also be work parties on 17th/18th Feb and the week commencing Saturday 20th Feb to 1st March. More volunteers are still required for the middle weekend. There will be lots of finishing work to do in the last week, so if you can make all or part of the week you will be most welcome.

Most brushes and materials will be provided, however should Members be able to lend large brushes, paint pads, empty paint tins or paint kettles, and dust sheets it would be appreciated. We will also require large quantities of rags.

A Haining Schedule & Colour Scheme will be displayed in the New Cottage for Members guidance.

COTTAGE CRITICISMS

If you have any means, or preferably constructive suggestions regarding the cottage, then please feel free to express them. It is after all your cottage. Incidentally, letters are greatly appreciated and much easier to read.

Remember, it is your cottage and in the long run it is up to you to look after it. Members are expected to be strict and supervise visitors when ever necessary.

MEET SECRETARY

John Macmillan has had to resign as Meet Secretary due to family commitments. I am sure the club would wish to join me in thanking John for all his past efforts as Meet Secretary and welcome Jonathan Roberts who has been co-opted in his place.

## OVERCROWDING AT THE COTTAGE

You may find it hard to believe, but record numbers of visitors want to stay at the old cottage. The Committee have been getting a few complaints about overcrowding, and wish to apologize for any inconvenience this has caused. As a reminder:

1. Only one guest party may be booked for any weekend.

2. The size of visiting groups is limited to 10. Exceptionally on say away meets, the Committee may book larger groups, when notice will be given in the Newsletter.

3. The first weekend of the month is reserved for members and (prospective members).

4. Members are entitled to sponsor one guest whilst staying at the Cottage - more may be brought at the discretion of the Cottage Warden.

Generally, things get out of hand when several people bend the rules at the same time:

Our kind hearted Cottage Warden books in 14, they abuse this and bring 18, 8 members turn up, one brings 6 friends, next weeks guests turn up a week early, a party kicked out of the Belfry turn up on the doorstep ..... it does happen.

Perhaps the current situation merely reflects the very tight restrictions now applied by most other Mendip clubs. If overcrowding is a problem now, then the prospects of getting a bed in the New Cottage must seem remote.

Please try to keep to the rules, they are for your own benefit. Hopefully, the coming weeks should show a marked improvement.

## CASUAL VISITORS.

Members are reminded that they have no authority to book in casual visitors calling at the cottage. You cannot be sure that others may be booked in and arriving late. It is important too that guests have a recognized leader, who is prepared to accept responsibility for the party. Obviously some difficulty might be experienced where callers come from a club offering reciprocal arrangements or where they are prospective members. Some common sense is required. One should not, for example, find an itinerant club booked in on a Members Weekend, as happened recently. A group of prospective members, who had also booked in, arrived to find their beds taken.

MEET PROGRAMME

Due to impending cottage work, no trips have been arranged for the near future, save for the 14/15 March South Wales O.F.D. & Dan Y Cgof trip which Denise Samuels is leading. Those wishing to go to South Wales that weekend are reminded to contact her.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

FEBRUARY

- W/E Friday 6th Members Only Painting New Cottage + Barrel
- " " 13th Imperial College Painting New Cottage
- " " 20th Tony Snell Painting New Cottage Members Painting
- " " 27th Dance at Westbury Painting New Cottage Week

village hall Velvet Bottom Band

MARCH

- W/E Friday 6th Members Only
- " " 13th
- " " 20th Meet Weekend
- " " 27th

APRIL

- W/E Friday 3rd Members Only A.G.M. & DINNER
- " " 10th
- " " 17th Members Only Easter
- " " 24th

The above list shows cottage bookings that Wayne has at the moment. Where guests have been booked in their numbers do not exceed the capacity of the guest room.

PAUL ESSER MEMORIAL LECTURE

This year the speaker is Margaret Rule F.S.A. Director of the Mary Rose Trust. She will be speaking on the search, discovery, survey and salvage of Henry VIII's flagship which sank in the solent. The lecture will take place on Wednesday 11th February in Arthur Tyndall Avenue. Admission free but get there early. Anyone travelling some distance is advised to reserve a seat by phoning Oliver Lloyd (68 - 3229)

CAVES OF NORTH WALES

Caves of North Wales, 1980 Edition by Tony Oldham (£3 + 31p p&p). This new edition contains a list of 143 sites.

## QUARRING BIASTS MALAYSIA'S UNDERGROUND EAST

Ziauddin Sardar reported in the New Scientist recently, that Environmental Groups in Malaysia have launched a nationwide campaign to save the prehistoric Caves at Salayang, four miles north of Kuala Lumpur, which are threatened with collapse through quarry blasting.

Batu Caves is the name of the complete ecosystem which includes Temple Cave, Dark Cave, Museum Cave, Fallen Cave, Sakai Cave and the Quarry Caves. It is known that the Quarry Caves have now been completely destroyed and it is also believed Sakai Cave also. Now the entire complex is threaten by extensive quarrying at three sites.

The caves support a large variety of rare plants and at least two which can not be found anywhere else in the world. They are also the habitat for several species of bats, frogs, lizards, snakes and other animals. They also have a deep religious significance for the Hindus of Malaysia in the shrine in Temple Cave.

Despite the fact that the Batu Caves were given the status of a National Monument in the Third Malaysian Plan, the quarrying activities that generate 3000 tonnes of limestone and 13 tonnes of dust per day now threaten the caves with collapse and destruction. Of the three Quarries operating in the Batu Caves area, the Public Works Department Quarry is located only 400 yds from the Temple Cave. It has been operating since 1973 and produces some 300,000 tonnes of crushed rock every year. The other two quarries - the Dolomite Industries Quarry and the Kennelton Quarry - began their operations in 1954 and 1959 respectively. Dolomite is blasting some 528 yards from the Dark Caves. The two private quarries are reported to pay an annual royalty of £300,000 to the Selangor State Government.

According to Kiew Boon Haeng of the Malaysian Nature Society, the quarrying has damaged stalagmites in one of the caves: "This is the first of four stages that would lead, if unchecked, to the ultimate destruction of the caves. Shock waves from the quarry blasting have resulted in the thinning of roofs in some caves, making them vulnerable to collapse".

In the past few years, groups such as the Malaysian Nature Society, the Batu Caves Protection Association, Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM - Friends of the Earth Malaysia) and the Environmental Protection Society, have shown their concern over the deteriorating state of the caves. Earlier this year, SAM initiated a "Save Batu Caves" campaign. It has already sent out several hundred petitions to the federal and state authorities under this campaign, and several people have staged

a fast in front of the caves in a dramatic bid to get the authorities to stop the quarrying activities.

In 1978, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, in a special report to the Selangor Government, warned that blasting at one of the quarries caused seismic disturbance in the cave area, and could endanger the existing structure of the caves. Public concern grew in March last year when several scientists reported that frequent rumblings and rockfalls in the caves could lead to a major collapse or landslide. Cracks were also found in the cave walls. At the same time, a geological report to the state government, prepared by the Tourist Development Corporation, recommended that the blasting at Batu caves should halt.

These reports prompted the Selangor government's announcement that all quarrying activities would stop by 19th June 80; new quarry sites were allocated to the companies.

In July the Selangor government gave an extension to activities at the two Batu quarries until 31 December because the alternative quarry site at Sungai Long, Kajang, lacks roads and electricity. This caused something of an uproar in Malaysian environmentalist circles.

The state government gave in a little to public pressure by announcing on 9th September that the two private quarries have been asked to stop blasting immediately in certain areas near the caves. Kennison Quarry, which has been blasting in seven areas, was asked to limit its blasting to the four areas farthest from the main caves; Dolomite was asked to close one of its three blasting areas.

However, SAM argues that to stop blasting at certain points will not make any great difference to the existing situation. Even if the blasting stopped at once, SAM argues the risk of a collapse inside the caves still exists, as their structure is already seriously weakened. If there is no dramatic collapse within the next few months the continuing process of weakening caused by shock waves and tremors may still lead to a deepening of cracks, more rock falls and collapses.

However the Deputy State Secretary (Chairman of the Government's Batu Caves Special Committee) has declared the government will stand firm on its decision whatever the protesters do. SAM declared 12 October 80 a day of protest against quarrying at Batu Caves. 300 environmentalists gathered in front of the caves. The Save Batu Caves Group now plans to intensify its campaign with regular weekly fasts and a regular vigil in parts of the caves.

Peak National Park Study Centre  
Losehill Hall

**MINES OF THE PEAK**

6th/8th March 81

A weekend course at Losehill Hall  
Surface walks and underground visits to include Ecton Hill  
lead and copper mines. Goodluck Mine. Magpie Mine. Peak  
District Mining Museum. Led by Jim Rieuwerts and  
Dr Trevor Ford.

Further details from: Peter Townsend, Principal, Peak  
National Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton,  
Derbyshire, S30 2WB. (SAE please)

**XEROPERM**

Xeroperm is a new copy material recently launched by Rank Xerox. The main advantage of xeroperm is that if anything, even grease or oil is spilt on your copy all you have to do is wash it under the tap. Xeroperm is a plastics based paper and is absolutely waterproof.

The main application is seen as copying for industrial / production environments. It is also the very thing for outdoor use in all weather conditions. It is ideal too for copying surveys for use underground. If it gets too muddy you can clean it up by diving in the odd sump!

**CORRECTION**

TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT DECEMBER 80 Page 2

NIFE Charging Rates should read :-

0.5 ampere for 40 hours

0.9 ampere for 22 hours

1.75 ampere for 11.5 hours





ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Once again it is time to consider the Committee you want for the coming year. Give the matter serious thought, it is your club, and your money which is at stake.

NOMINATIONS

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

TREASURER \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

MEET SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

TACKLE MASTER \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

COTTAGE WARDEN \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

EDITOR \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

RECORDER \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

Nominations for Hon. Officers should reach the Secretary by the 14th March. Please ensure that nominees are prepared to stand. If you have any special item for discussion, again, this should be submitted as soon as possible.

I.D. McKechnie,  
30 Brittain Road,  
Hersham,  
Surrey.

