



MAY 1981

NO 140

COTTAGE PROGRESS

Well what a month, it began with the most significant A.G.M. yet, the first held in our new cottage, was followed by the best Annual Dinner ever, and ended with the Group moving into the New Cottage from the old hut imbued with a new enthusiasm for Caving! However there is still a lot more to do if the New Cottage is to be ready for the Official Opening on 6th June.

Last weekend 12 members and 10 guests attended the New Cottage Move In. A lot of effort was put into cottage preparation and transferring equipment and materials from the old hut. The bunks in the Ladies Room, Guest Room and half these in the Foreman's Lounge have been varnished and fitted with bed frames from the old hut for the present with mattresses to suit. There are eight bunks in the Foreman's lounge which still require some rubbing down where splintered and rough then being given one more coat of gloss varnish. This should be less than one hours work for six people. The slatted shelves under the kitchen work surfaces also need varnishing. It is imperative that the varnishing is completed as soon as possible preferably this weekend 9/10 May. There is ample gloss varnish, brushes and empty paint tins under the stairs ready for use.

The cooking facilities are now operational. John Miriam has fitted four boiling rings, one free standing double burner with grill, and one of the three in set double burners, two more have been ordered but they have not been delivered yet. For the moment the gas supply has to be turned on at the beginning of a weekend and turned off at the end of a weekend by the manual valve in the gas store the key to the store is in the kitchen, don't lose it it is the only key at present! Don't forget to shut off the gas when leaving the cottage empty for short periods during weekends at the valve under the kitchen worksurface by the inset double burner. A gas solenoid valve and latched relay will be fitted soon which will obviate the need to shut off the gas manually in the gas store.

The road access and car park are still not prepared, partly due to the recent bad weather, so cars will have to be parked on the verges for the moment. As a result the site is quite maddy and it is inadvisable to use the back entrance to the lounge for the moment.

The old hut is still not completely cleared, and it is hoped that Members attending this coming weekend will be able to finish clearing it. There are several

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N.G.R. ST55/5150.5605

Guest Bookings to be made with the Cottage Warden.

WEEKLY MEETINGS Thursday Evenings at the BEEHIVE HOTEL
227 High Street, Brentford, Middlesex.

CHANGE OF THURSDAY EVENING VENUE?

Many Members are dissatisfied with the Beehive at present.
The Fox and Hounds/Mawson Arms (two pubs knocked into one) next to Fullers
Griffin Brewery in Chiswick on the A4 at the Hogarth Roundabout is being considered
as an alternative for Thursday meetings. We will continue at the Beehive at least
till the beginning of June. Should anyone have any other pubs in mind please let
us know.

items of value such as the winch, chipboard, gas bottles and the old bunk timber, which could be put in Ken's horse box for the present subject to his permission being obtained first. The existing battery charger is to be transferred from the old hut to the new tackle store this weekend, and will continue in use until Don Vosper has finished making the new battery charger. So get down to Mendip this weekend - YOUR COTTAGE NEEDS YOU!

AMMETER REQUIRED

Don Vosper requires a 0 - 5 Amp Moving Coil Ammeter for the battery charger mentioned in the above report if anyone has one suitable please contact Don.

ANNUAL DINNER

This year's Annual Dinner was considered a huge success by all who attended. Infact probably the best we have ever had.

The Cottage Dismantling Slide Show followed by John and Wayne's duet then that hilarious mooth spitting competition between Eric and Ron, to be followed by that fantastic Melodrama. Val Knight then sang two music hall songs in a marvelous Edwardian dress and hat she made herself. Eric finishing with another of his annual after dinner jokes finishing when Members were surprised by the call 'Your coach has arrived'. To this they replied 'But we've only just got here!'. However reluctantly they boarded the coach realising all good things come to an end quicker than expected sometimes.

Our thanks must extend to the Management of The Star Hotel for the quality and service of the Dinner which everyone agreed was excellent.

THIEVES BREAK INTO MEMBERS CAR!

It is often thought misfortunes always befall others. The warning printed in the last Newsletter about theiving from cars on Mendip came too late for Don Vosper and Tony Knibbs.

Don took Tony to Longwood and parked his car while they went to the Oxbows on a pre A.G.M. trip. When they returned, they found thieves had broken into Don's car and stolen his calculator and Tony's car keys. It was fortunate that they did not take any of Dons musical instruments. However having reported the incident to the police they missed the start of the A.G.M.

Losing his car keys on a Saturday afternoon could have been very unfortunate but for Ken Fry helping him by supplying and fitting a replacement steering lock and key which he just happened to have. We are very indebted to the Frys.

CAVERS CATCH CAR THIEVES

Two B.E.C. Members apprehended a couple of gypsies breaking into a car parked at Longwood on Saturday 11th April and held them till the police arrived. It is understood that they had a boot full of stolen gear at the time. Then two more people were apprehended in a second incident. Their car was chased across Mendip and on to the A38. Being unable to gain on the thieves the registration number of the car was reported to Churchill Police Station. As a result two persons were later detained by the police in connection with this incident.

Although it is hoped that this problem will now abate, it is by no means certain that all the culprits have been caught. So remain on your guard!

NEW COTTAGE REQUIRES MATTRESSES

Should any member know of a supply of 2 1/2" wide mattresses suitable for the bunks in the New Cottage could they please advise any Committee Member who will then make suitable arrangements for collection if necessary.

MEMBERS OPINION PLEASE

Westminster School have requested a Guest Booking for the first weekend in October, for 12 boys and 4 adults which is their Annual Expedition weekend. This is normally a Members Only Weekend and it is also about the time we have our Half yearly Yearly General Meeting. Could Members please let the Committee know their feelings on this matter.

NEWSLETTER TYPEWRITER

This page has been typed on the club's Imperial Typewriter which the Editor has only recently retrieved. Wider spacing of lines is not possible on this machine. Are the lines too close for legibility? Members Comments Please.

Report on Committee Meeting Held at the New Cottage on 25 April

Officers Present :- Secretary, Meet Secretary, Cottage Warden, Tacklemaster, Recorder, Editor. The Treasurer was unable to attend.

Secretary Tony Knibbs is reviewing our position as regards contact with other local and national caving organisations.

Ian McKechnie)
Mike Low) Have all been accepted as Full Members
Denise Samuel)

Lamb Leer Key was sent to us but fell out of envelope in post! Still no Key!

Treasurer Tony Knibbs read Eric's report in his absence

As a result Cottage Fees of 50p for Members and £1.00 for non Members were confirmed subject to review at later committee meetings if cottage expenditure is higher than expected.

Cottage Warden Wayne reported that cars must only be parked on the New Cottage site from 1.5.81. and that a boundary wall should be built as soon as the boundary had been clarified. 'It won't take long to build a drystone wall with cement' said he. Everyone collapsed laughing!

Wayne is to make a Notice Board and Arthur Spain is making a Trips Board. Cleaning equipment is required such as dust pans, brushes, mops, buckets, and a vacuum cleaner. It was noted Cerebus have received Planning Permission for their new hut we wish them good luck.

It was agreed the following notice should be put in the next Newsletter

MEMBERS SHOULD BE REMINDED THAT THE COTTAGE IS THEIR
COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND EACH MEMBER SHOULD
CONSIDER THEMSELVES GUARDIANS OF THE GROUP'S ASSETS

Recorder Jonathan Roberts said Library contents to be put in the loft until Library ready.

Tacklemaster Phil Ingold is to purchase 100' of 10mm Nylon Lifeline

Any Other Business Val Knight was to be approached regarding Buffet arrangements for Official Cottage Opening on June 6th. It was agreed that this would be open to guests invited through the Committee.

Quote of the Month

I'll be glad when I'm old enough to retire from caving.

Don Vosper August Streamway.

LONGWOOD/AUGUST SYSTEM (AGAIN)

Following two trips to the lower end of the August Streamway earlier this year, it was decided to pick up the threads of the Group's previous work in the Oxbows area. Apart from Renolds Passage which is providing such slow and tedious progress for Pete and Alison Moody, the Oxbows area is the most promising part of the system for further exploration. Although there are no exciting draughts or major streams to follow, the Oxbows gives access to a large, choked dry passage running parallel to the main streamway and about 100 ft to the east of it.

The result of sporadic work between 1962 and 1971 produced some 90ft of southerly passage via a small duck and about 40ft of dry crawling eastwards from the low chamber in the Oxbows.

There is still a good possibility of some hard work producing more progress beyond the 90ft extent, but the dry crawl of Sand Passage seems merely to run into the boulder choked lower section of the fragment of choked dry passage at the eastern end of the Oxbows.

This boulder - choked dry passage is only accessible over a length of 20ft, but the cross - sectional dimensions are quite impressive - 10ft wide and at least 20ft high into boulders overhead, plus possibly 10ft depth of boulder floor. This gives it an area in cross - section roughly equal to the large rift section of August Streamway. It is therefore reasonable to predict a sizable continuation above the boulders overhead.

John Miriam, Don Vesper and I made a start upwards through the choke on Saturday 4th April. We chose to push on up against a solid wall in order to retain some vestage of stability in the task. The job will not be easy and a lot of care is going to be needed to avoid a headache! Cavers are warned that this work will, from time to time produce a temporary presence of loose boulders in this area.

Tony Knibbs

LONGWOOD/AUGUST SURVEY

Due to numerous discoveries, the cave has outgrown the size of its survey sheets. Over the next few months I am intending to add on to the various extensions to the existing plan and elevations of Longwood/August System. On the sheet which shows the plan and projected elevation, the north indicator is known to be 37 degrees in error to the west. A few minutes work with a protractor will put that right, but the inset diagram showing the cave in relation to the surface features needs to be redrawn.

To avoid increasing the already large sheet size, the survey will be reduced in scale. This may result in a slight loss of detail, particularly on the plan, but a special effort will be made during the preparation of the final drawing to retain maximum clarity. Mike Rennie has kindly loaned me his survey notes and the original drawings to work from.

Tony Knibbs

COTTAGE BOOKINGS MAY - NOVEMBER 1981

MAY JUNE & JULY NO GUEST BOOKINGS

MAY

FRIDAY 8 NEW COTTAGE WORK IN PLUS OLD HUT CLEAR OUT TO BE FINNISHED
PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND

FRIDAY 15 NEW COTTAGE WORK IN

FRIDAY 22 " " "

FRIDAY 29 " " "

JUNE

FRIDAY 6 NEW COTTAGE OFFICIAL OPENING - BUFFET

JULY

FRIDAY 3 GEOLOGY OF MENDIP ONE DAY ABOVE GROUND ONE DAY BELOW BY MALCOLM COTTER

AUGUST

FRIDAY 7: MEMBERS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 14

FRIDAY 21 MEMBERS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 28

SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY 4 MEMBERS WEEKEND + PETE LINGWOOD'S PARTY (DISREGARD DATE IN LAST NEWSLETTER)

FRIDAY 11

FRIDAY 18 MEMBERS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 25 D. GIBSON + 11

OCTOBER

FRIDAY 2 MEMBERS WEEKEND (APPLICATION BY WESTMINSTER SCHOOL TO USE COTTAGE ON THIS

FRIDAY 9 DATE BEFORE COMMITTEE COMMENTS TO COMMITTEE PLEASE)

FRIDAY 16 MEMBERS WEEKEND W.H., J.P., J.M., & J.G.S. COMBINED BIRTHDAY PARTY

FRIDAY 23

FRIDAY 30 DAVE GIBSON + 11

NOVEMBER

FRIDAY 6 MEMBERS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 13

FRIDAY 20 MEMBERS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 27

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1981
HELD AT THE NEW MENDIP CAVING GROUP COTTAGE
NORDRACH ON MENDIP ON SATURDAY APRIL 4TH

CHAIRMAN : Robbie Charnock

1. Apologies for absence were received from Rob Penn and Arthur Cox.
Apologies for late arrival were received from Jonathan Roberts.
2. Minutes of the 1980 A.G.M. were not available.
3. Hon Officers reports:-

Hon Secretary, Pete Mathews.

The long, long awaited completion of the New Cottage is without doubt the most important event in the history of the club. And, it is one of which Members can be unashamedly proud. The whole future of the club at once looks brighter and more optimistic than for many years. Once again, the Group owes its gratitude to the enormous effort put in by Roger Wallington, along with Ron and Wayne.

The year was greatly saddened by the sudden death of Jim Fry at the New Year. I feel it would be appropriate to ask all members to show every understanding and practical help to his widow.

On a more mundane level something like 300 letters were written on behalf of the Group. These covered a wide variety of topics from membership enquiries to requests for keys and information on caves. No regional meetings were attended though agenda and minutes were regularly abstracted for the Newsletter. With a total of ca. 200 hrs. meetings a year, and little end result, this attitude seems reasonable. As a point of interest, the N.C.A. committee resigned after it became clear that their proposed merger with B.C.R.A. was impossible.

The Trustees have purchased shares in C.S.C.C. Company Ltd. on behalf of the Group. This is obviously a poor investment as the asking price was the same as that at issue five years ago. The Company is being used by C.S.C.C. as a medium for funding access protection and control. This presently includes Lamb Leer, Brown's Folly and Swan Mine.

Committee meetings were generally poorly attended, especially those held on Mendip. John MacMillan tendered his resignation at the New Year making way for Jonathan Roberts, who was coopted in his place.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to get a programme of Thursday evening talks together this year. However, we have seen a regular monthly Newsletter. Thanks due to Bryan for producing a most enjoyable publication. It is a poor reflection on our members that it is not better supported.

Some seven formal complaints were received from Members regarding overcrowding at the cottage. This is quite unprecedented.

Membership is only slightly up on last year. Suffice to say that subs are still coming in! With a considerable number of prospective members around the prospects of even more overcrowding at the cottage look good.

Much thought was given to the dinner this year. The Star comes top of the list with no real alternatives. A booking was arranged with caterers to present a dinner at the village hall in Chewton Mendip at similar cost, but was rejected by the Committee.

After 13 most enjoyable years as Secretary to the club, I can think of no better moment to retire, to make way for one of our promising younger members. May I wish him every success in the job.

Hon. Treasurer, Eric Dowley

Audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 1980 had already been distributed. After some discussion in which the high cost of postage was noted and a suggestion made by Arthur Spain that the major capital investment should have been shown (rather than given verbally), the accounts were accepted as correct.

Hon Meet Secretary, Jonathan Roberts.

No comprehensive programme of meets had so far been arranged for 1981. Members were advised to watch for details of meets which will appear in forthcoming Newsletters.

Hon. Cottage Warden, Wayne Hiscox.

Acknowledgement was made of the criticisms received over the matter of overbooking accommodation. With these criticisms in mind, the first and third weekends in each month would henceforth be reserved for members only. Guests would only be accepted on the second and fourth weekends of each month, to a maximum of 12 guests per visiting club, i.e. no more than 12 on any bookable weekend.

Income from Cottage Fees in 1980 was - Members £157 Guests £328.
Examination of a 47 week period during the year showed that guests had used the cottage at the average rate of eight guests on each of 33 weekends. The 1980 Rating Assessment for the New Cottage had indicated an amount payable of £405 the Groups Charity Status would have reduced the figure by 50 per cent . The amount payable for 1981 would approach £225 less a sum allowable for the unoccupied period.

Hon Tacklemaster, John Miriam,

It was noted that the Group possessed 330ft of ladder, less than 200ft of lifeline and some 20 assorted tethers. The quantity of lifeline was clearly insufficient and purchase of the correct quality would need urgent attention. Any additional ladders would be bought ready made rather than manufactured by members.

Hon. Recorder, Greg Smith.

Plans for relocating the library were discussed and it was announced that library keys (also fitting the tackle store) would soon be available to Full Members. The work of planning and making suitable bookshelves, and maybe cupboards, remained to be done.

Hon.Editor, Bryan Pittman.

Newsletters were now being successfully produced on a monthly basis. It was hoped to improve the copy quality perhaps by purchasing a new duplicator or other copier.

4. Election of Officers

The following changes and reappointments to the Committee took effect automatically as the nominations were unopposed:-

Hon. Secretary,	Tony Knibbs
Hon. Treasurer ,	Eric Dowley
Hon. Cottage Warden,	Wayne Hiscok
Hon. Meet Secretary,	Greg Smith
Hon. Recorder,	John Miriam
Hon. Editor,	Bryan Pittman

The

The result of a ballot for the Office of Hon. Tacklemaster was that the post became the responsibility of Phil Ingold.

5. Election of Auditors.

Val Knight expressed her wish to resign and a vote of thanks acknowledged her much appreciated work over past years. Arthur Spain agreed to continue as an Auditor and Joan Goddard was elected to serve in place of Val.

6. As a result of his survey of Members views, Pete Mathews stated that the most popular choice of name was Nerdrach Cottage. However, a ballot showed a preference for Mendip Caving Group Cottage.

7. The proposal that 'Annual Subscriptions for 1982 should remain the same as for 1981' i.e. £5 for Full Members, was withdrawn after much discussion. The main purpose of the proposal was to contest the irregularity of an entry in the Newsletter No. 138. to the effect that 'The Agenda includes a proposed increase of Annual Subscriptions to £10 (and £2). The entry proved to be a factual error, but most concern was expressed at the 'apparent policy' suggestion of such an entry.

The actual need for increases in both subscriptions and cottage fees was questioned, some speakers submitting that capital could be used to make good any short fall in income. The idea of draining the Capital Fund was rejected. It was eventually agreed that Eric Dowley would consider the need for raising the levels of Annual Subscriptions and report to the Half Yearly General Meeting.

Discussion on raising Cottage Fees resulted in the Committee being asked to consider the matter; the most popular increase seemed to be from 30p to 50p for members and from 60p to £1.00 for guests.

8. The proposal that 'The residue from the Cottage Rebuilding Fund be held invested solely for capital expenditure on the cottage and adjoining land' was discussed and accepted as proposed. It was agreed to transfer £1000 to the General Purpose Fund, the residual capital remaining invested until required to meet expenditure in major items.

9. Architect's Report. (Roger Wallington)

No formal report was given because the important aspects had been covered in the Treasurer's and Cottage Warden's comments.

10 Discussion of an informal proposal by Pete Mathews that the Group might consider setting up a Grant Aiding Trust for caving on Mendip was inconclusive. The potential benefits of such a scheme were loosely supported in principle, but the need to interest other clubs was noted. The amount of residual funding available for such a scheme was still subject to speculation.

A suggestion that the Group might make a substantial donation to the A.R.O. was supported and it was felt that consideration should be given to this when funds permitted.

11. Tony Knibbs proposed a vote of thanks to Pete Mathews in appreciation of his 15 years of Committee service. Pete was presented with a pewter tankard which will be suitably engraved.

N.B. The A.G.M. was attended by 38 Members and 9 Non Members.