

# MCG

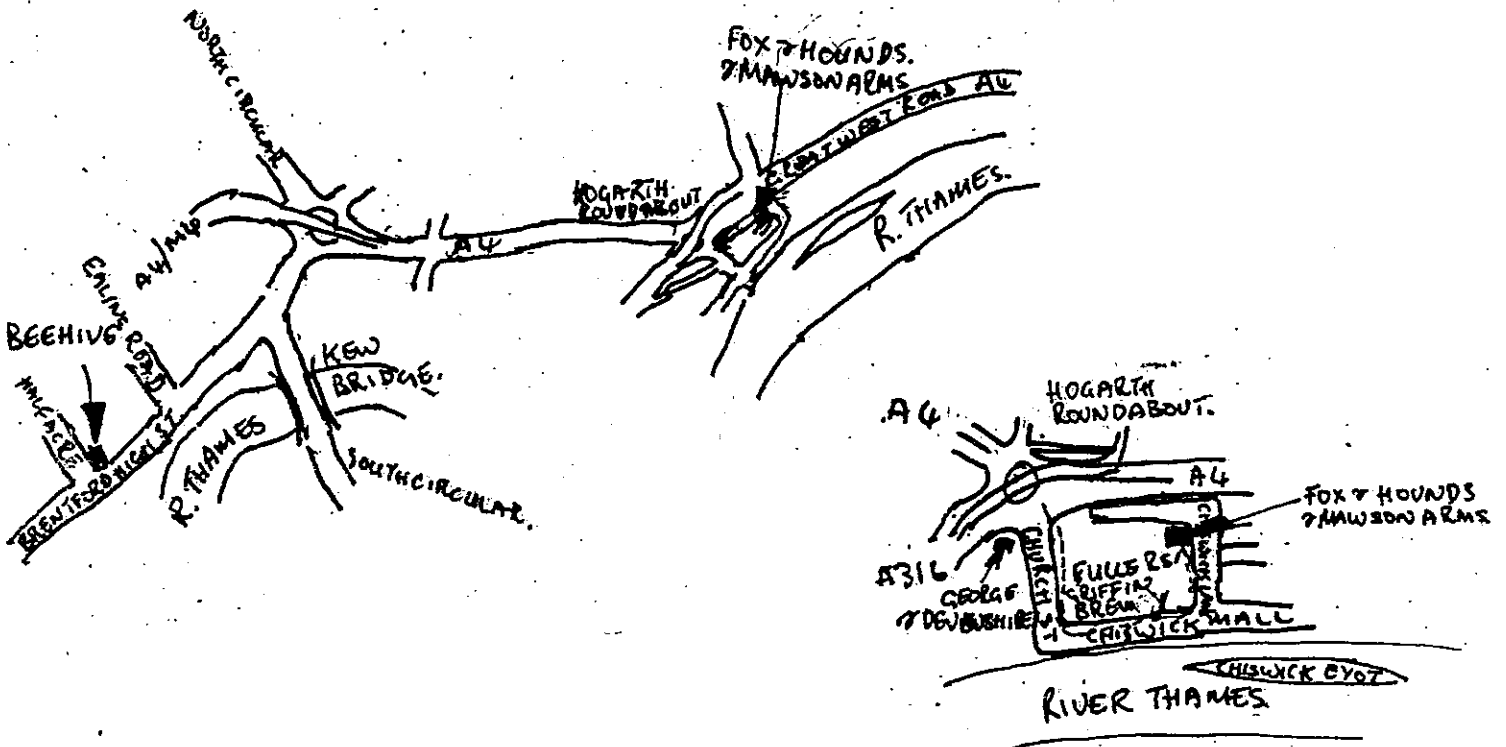
**Mendip Caving Group Newsletter**

OFFICIAL COTTAGE OPENING

NEW THURSDAY VENUE

JUNE 1981

NO 148



## THE CLUB'S CHANGING PUB ON THURSDAY 18TH JUNE

It has been decided that the Group will meet at the Fox and Hounds and Mawsen Arms (two pubs knocked into one) from the 18th June. As you can see on the map it is next to the A4 at Hogarth Roundabout by Fuller's Griffin Brewery. The nearest Tube station is Turnham Green. The Juke Box in the Beehive was louder than ever last week! Infact it was so loud some members left at nine thirty!

## OFFICIAL COTTAGE OPENING

This is to be held at the new cottage on 6th June at 8pm. Many friends and associates of the club have been invited as well as members past and present, so it will no doubt be a very memorable occasion. Val Knight has arranged the buffet and Bruce has organised two barrels of beer.

MENDIP CAVING GROUP COMMITTEE

SECRETARY	TONY KNIBBS	23 Winsom Glebe, Byfleet, Surrey. Byfleet 43875 Weybridge 45522 Ex 6125
	TEL (HOME) (WORK)	
TREASURER	ERIC DOWLEY	32 Chequers Orchard, Iver, Bucks.
MEET SECRETARY	GREG SMITH	16 Nield Road, Hayes, Middlesex. 01 848 3340
	TEL (HOME)	
COTTAGE WARDEN	WAYNE HISCOX	3 Keward, Glastonbury Road, Wells, Somerset. Wells 72084 Ex 237
	TEL (WORK)	
TACKLEMASTER	PHIL INGOLD	31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. 0442 42029 01 902 6011 Ex 100
	TEL (HOME) (WORK)	
RECORDER	JONATHAN ROBERTS	17 Kent Avenue, West Ealing, London. W13 8BE 01 997 2916 01 486 8523
	TEL (HOME) (WORK)	
EDITOR	BRYAN PITTMAN	36 Manor Way, Egham, Surrey. Egham 37540
	TEL (HOME)	
CAVING ACCOMMODATION		MENDIP CAVING GROUP, NORDRACH COTTAGE, CHARTERHOUSE-ON-MENDIP, BLAGDON, BRISTOL, BS18 6XW

N.G.R. ST/5147.5605

GUEST BOOKINGS :-

To be made with the Cottage Warden

## COTTAGE PROGRESS

Despite various attractions in other areas some Members have found time in the last month to continue with the New Cottage preparations.

Tony Knibbs and Pete Goddard plus their families were down at the cottage last week spending quite a lot of their time on the cottage. Tony completed fitting the plywood in all the bunks, and Pete and Joan have now fitted all the windows with curtain rails and curtains. Tony has put up a key board, and an extinguisher has been fitted in the lounge. A trash sack holder has also been fitted in the kitchen.

A lot of effort will be required this weekend preparing the carpark, the 10' entrance gate has to be fitted and the drystone wall in front of the cottage rebuilt. The side and rear fences will ~~wait agreement~~ on the site boundary.

The Old Cottage has now been almost completely cleared, there are a few items left but they will be removed this weekend.

Unfortunately we will not now be taking delivery of new mattresses this weekend as promised, so you are advised to bring your own airbeds. It will be necessary to obtain suitable floor covering for the dormitories as soon as possible to protect the chipboard. Old carpets that members are discarding would be most suitable for the present.

Pam Charnock is mounting a new map of Mendip for the New Cottage.

Lastly we now have an Official Address registered with the Post Office. All Club correspondence should now be addressed to the cottage in the manner set out below:-

MENDIP CAVING GROUP,  
NORDRACH COTTAGE,  
CHARTERHOUSE-ON-MENDIP,  
BLAGDON,  
BRISTOL, BS18 6XW

Why Nordrach Cottage? Well you can blame that on the Post Office. Or, you can thank them if you like.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME

Or, why did our builder decide to call his house 'Kismet'? Well, he was visiting the local blacksmith and there was a sale on.....

Pete Mathews

### THANKS FOR THE TANKARD

Pete Mathews has written the following note to me:-

Please, convey my thanks to the club for presenting me with such a handsome tankard. Anyone would think I was retiring! It was a very kind thought and one which I will always remember. Certainly, one way and another it was my most enjoyable Dinner Weekend too.

Pete.

### PICTURES FOR THE COTTAGE

I would be quite happy to 'blow up' and frame any black and white photographs for adorning the cottage. I guess the more historic scenes would be appropriate.

Pete Mathews.

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Mendip Caving Group has now been notified. The date Membership List will be distributed with this Newsletter. If your name not appear on the list then you had not paid your Membership Fee by the end of April.

## Duplicator

The Editor has just taken delivery of the new Roneo 270 Duplicator and is hoping to use it for printing this Newsletter if the engineer sets it up in time.

## LIBRARY

Jon made an initial sort of our library collection over Whitsun and three facts stand clear.

- a) It is very dusty
- b) We have some remarkable foreign publications and earlish U.K. items
- c) We have virtually nothing - newsletters or books - after 1977. I can list immediately about 40 caving clubs' newsletters/magazines we should be exchanging/acquiring, and indeed we have a good collection up to 1977. To put matters right is going to be a major task in time and effort, and probably not very cheap either. If we don't do it, then really there is little point in having a library. To help me in the task I entreat members who have library books and newsletters to return them to the cottage for the time being, so we at least know the full scale of the problem.

Recent acquisitions are:-

BCRA Transactions March 1981 Vol 8 No.1  
Caves & Caving (former BCRA Bulletin) May 1981 No.12  
Caves & Potholing, By David Judson & Arther Champion, 1981 192pp, Granada  
Caves of Mulu (1979 reprint) autographed by Tony Waltham!  
National Speleological Society News (USA) February 1981, Vol 39 No.2  
and March 1981 Vol 39 No.3  
The Western Caver (W Australian Speleo Group) November 1980 Vol. 20, No.2  
Westminster Speleological Group Newsletter No. 23, March 1981  
Plymouth Caving Group Newsletter & Journal February 1981, No 82

Caves and Caving No. 12 includes some interesting items on extentions in Swildons and in Peak and Speedwell Caverns, the Agen Allwedd 51 hour rescue, and SRT bolt belays. it also mentions something our more exploratory - minded members ought to be interested in - survey pads for use in wet, rainy and muddy conditions. Made of water - resistant paper and inside tough card covers, tried underground they have survived intact total immersion for 1 hour. All the notes were, apparently legible after a soaking, and the mud could be washed off the paper with a little water without detriment to paper or notes. Measuring 11 by 17 cm, and with 200 pages, they are available from H.W. Peel & Co. Ltd, Jeymer Drive, Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 8UX, tel 01. 578 6861, price £1.80 each.

The next in the 'Limestones 7 Caves' series should be published this year, about South Wales.

Jonathan Roberts.

## TACKLE

Our stock of caving tackle is very sadly depleted as is well known.

We have an imediate requirement for 500' of ladder and enough belays and spreaders to complement the ladder. Consequently we are making a trial purchase of one 10" rung spacing ladder from Lyon Ladders plus the full complement of belays and tethers. We are also purchasing 200m of 11mm lifeline for immediate use, and will ensure sufficient tackle is on Mendip for the Official Cottage Opening Weekend.

## RESCUE EQUIPMENT

We need to re - equip our Cave Rescue Kit and appoint a Rescue Warden. A list of kit requirements is now being drawn up and it is hoped to discuss appointment of a Rescue Warden at the Half Year General Meeting. In the meantime 150m of haulage rope is being purchased immediately for the Rescue Kit.

## MEET PROGRAMME

As yet no Meet Programme has been drawn up, however Members should now be making their Meet, Trip, and Cave Access requirements known to the Meet Secretary so that a worthwhile Meet Programme can be arranged most suited to Members needs.

## INTERNATIONAL SPELEO FILM FESTIVAL

The International Speleo Film Festival is to be held once again at La Chapelle en Vecors, France. from 2nd - 6th September. I hope nobody gets a chance to run off with the takings this year.

## PAY TO GO CAVING?

There seems to be an increasing impression that farmers in the North will shortly be charging for access to caves, and for parking on their land. Farmers are aware of a steady increase in the numbers of cavers accompanied by damage to walls, gates and the like. There isn't a locked cave up there yet!

## G B CAVE

There has been a movement of boulders in the vicinity of the Bridge, and all cavers visiting G B are warned to take care.

## LAMB LEER

The survey of the fixtures has been carried out by two mining engineers in conjunction with Oliver Lloyd. They found that all fixtures are in reasonable order and have recommended certain maintenance works which are in hand. With regard to the platform at the head of the pitch, they recommend that no more than FOUR CAVERS use the platform at any one time. A notice to this effect is to be erected. Cavers should also ensure that the gate is secured properly on leaving and that if for any reason this cannot be achieved the person from whom they borrowed the key should be informed.

## BROWNS FOLLY MINES

The entrance to these mines have now been locked. Keys are available from shareholding clubs. The M.C.G. is a share holder and has a key.

## DERBYSHIRE 22/25 MAY

Over the Bank Holiday weekend 22nd - 25 May a group of M.C.G. and Decca Cavers and climbers visited Derbyshire. After putting up the tents in the rain, Dave Howe and Steve Taylor (Probationary Members) led us down P8, which was good and wet. One member of the party had not caved before, and was a confirmed convert.

After a day climbing on Stanage Edge in the rain, and a morning on horseback in the rain, we decided we might as well be back in P8 getting wet. For the benefit of those who weren't there on Friday we went down to the sump and back again, and spent some time taking photographs in the waterfall. On Monday it rained so we didn't get past the pub.

Ian McKechnie Geoff Barton Mick Lowe Dick Housago

COTTAGE BOOKINGS JUNE → DECEMBER

JUNE & JULY NO GUEST BOOKINGS

JUNE

FRIDAY 5 NEW COTTAGE OFFICIAL OPENING - BUFFET + BARREL SATURDAY EVENING 8PM

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 LINGWOON'S PARTY

FRIDAY 11

FRIDAY 18 MEMBERS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 25 D. GIBSON + 11

OCTOBER

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

FRIDAY 9 COMMITTEE COMMENTS TO COMMITTEE PLEASE)

FRIDAY 16 MEMBERS WEEKEND W.H., J.P., J.M., & 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

DECEMBER

FRIDAY 4 MEMBERS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 11 DAVE GIBSON + 11

FRIDAY 18 MEMBERS WEEKEND

FRIDAY 25 CHRISTMAS

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## AGEN ALLWEDD CAVE RESCUE REPORT

This item has been delayed till now due to lack of space in the last Newsletter. It is the report of the rescue of Tim Flannagen from Southern Stream passage, Agen Allwedd on January 17, 18, & 19, of this year.

### The Accident.

Tim Flannagen 28 of Croydon Caving Club was one of a party of six returning up Southern Stream passage during a caving trip which had been cut short by high water, in the lower main stream. Tim was in the company of two other cavers approaching the Waterfall Chamber in lower Southern Stream Passage. He climbed over some boulders which were partly blocking the passage when he was hit on the right leg by a large boulder which fell from somewhere high in the roof of the passage when he was on top of the pile. He crawled to his companions ahead of him to avoid further falls, and they carried him a few yards to a high level dry chamber where his leg was inspected; it was bleeding badly and grated when moved.

Three members of the party left the scene to raise the alarm, after taking food from the nearby rescue dump at Waterfall Chamber, leaving two with Tim, one of whom was familiar with First Aid techniques.

The party were well equipped with space blankets, food, and emergency lighting, and Tim was left in good spirits asking only that his wife be informed of the accident.

The accident happened at about 5 pm on Saturday 17th January

### The Rescue

The Party Leader Gary Jones contacted Arthur Millett and John Cooper at Whitewalls, the CSS Cottage, and the Police were informed that a rescue Call Out was to be initiated. The Call Out started at about 8pm, local Gwent CRT members and West Brecon members from SWCC in the first rescue party, in an operation which was to take 44 hours to complete!

### The Figures

Total time from accident to evacuation	44 hours
Total time for rescue	41 "
Time taken to traverse S. Stream	22 "
Time taken for Main Chamber & Entrance Series	7 "
Total carrying time	29 "
Number of cavers logged on rescue	257
Number of Doctors	4
Number of Surface Co-Ordinators	6
Assuming an average of 8 hours underground for each caver,	
Total Manhours	2056 hours
Number of Caving Organisations involved	35

### Conclusions S.W.C.R.O.

Revivas of Brecon Mountain Rescue and M.R.O. used and a fund started to replace them. Difficulty with telephones

If the Solari incident saw the birth of S.W.C.R.O. then the Flanagan incident must be it's coming of age. What impressed the most was the way in which the teams from Gloucestershire, Mendip and Midland Rescue Organisations worked together and the low fall out rate. The S.W.C.R.O. thanked them all for their assistance. Derbyshire C.R.O. was also on standby.

Tim Flanagan is now on the mend and is very appreciative of the efforts of the rescuers and for the hospitality he and his wife received in Wales.

## SHIPSHAPE AND BRISTOL FASHION

On seeing, some months ago, the annual report and accounts for the Bristol Waterworks Company advertised in the Financial Times, I wrote off for it. My filing system has just rediscovered it, so here are a few paragraphs.

The Company serves all of Avon, parts of the Cotswolds and Wiltshire, and in Somerset, Mendip and part of Sedgemoor, a total of 923 sq. miles. The number of supplies has increased from 332,000 in 1970 to 385,000 in 1979/80.

Most interesting is to compare, from the available statistics, the relationship between population, water supply and local rainfall. The total population served has grown by 5% in the last 10 years to 1979/80, and to keep pace with this and give better quality of service, the length of mains has increased by 11%, suggesting also a more dispersed settlement pattern. To cater for the larger population, water supplies too have grown by 5% from 1970 - keeping overall the same consumption per head of population, but requiring greater intake of water catchments such as Mendip.

This has been achieved with considerable difficulty, for there have been wide fluctuations in rainfall (based on measurements at Litton). Generally Bristol Waterworks have been able to cope taking one year's dry weather with the next year's wet weather, as shown by the graph for the years 1970 to 1975. But two year's drought just can't be coped with, causing broadly a 10% cut in water supplies during the second year (and obviously considerably greater hardship during certain seasons of that year). It also appears to take up to two more years for supplies to recover with a lagged (sorry about the pun) effect reflecting the preceding year's rainfall.

It would be interesting to know if there is any research evidence to demonstrate what effect if any the generally depleted water table during 1976 - 1978 had on 'wet' Mendip cave passages.

Jonathan Roberts.

## IN PRAISE OF MR DAVID JUDSON AND MR ARTHUR CHAMPION

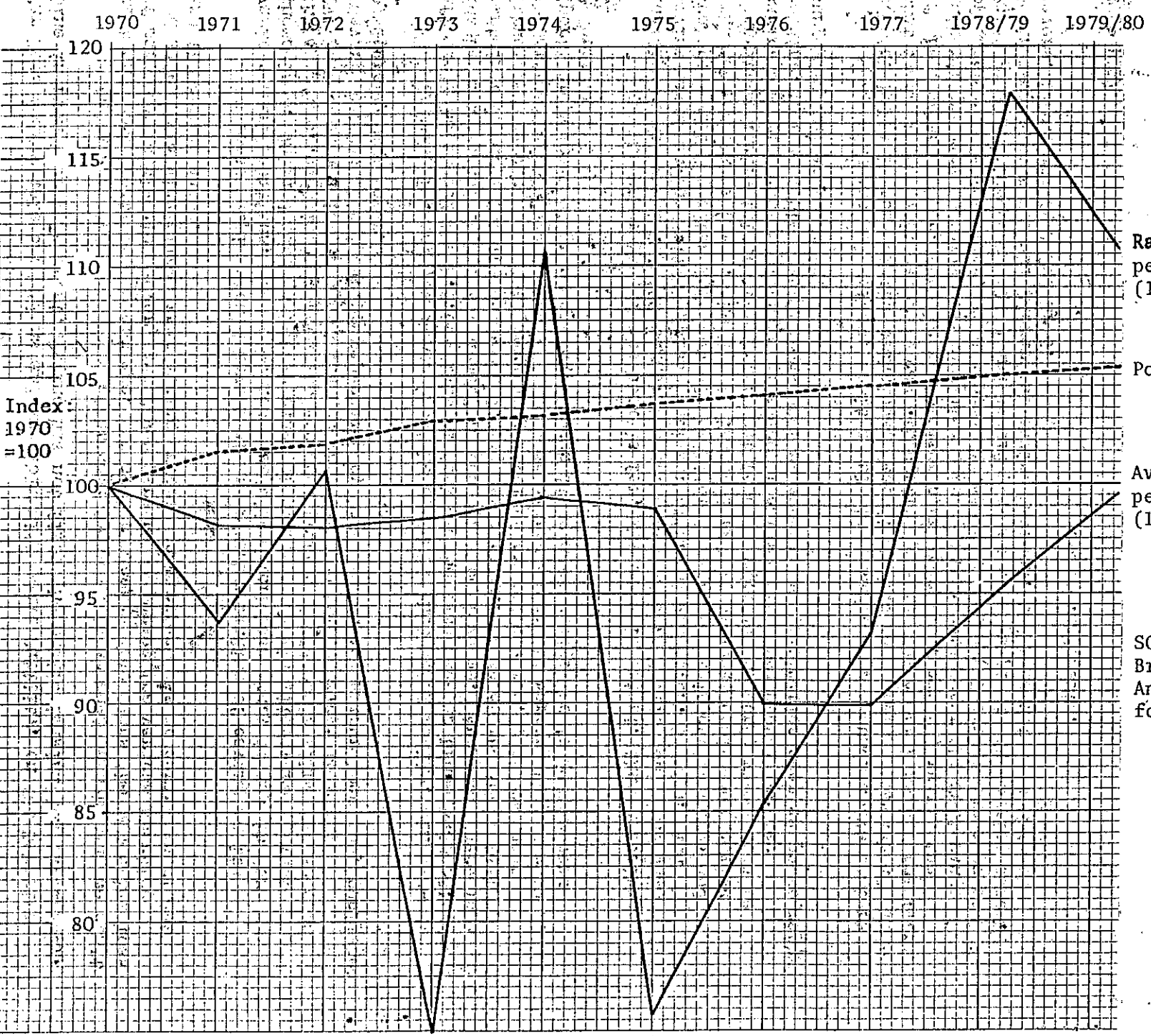
Once upon a time a year ago, there was no such thing as a good caving book. There were hydrological and geological books, books on cave systems, rarefied books about caving techniques, introductory books clearly written by the Ladybird or Young Observer mobs, and books about great men behaving greatly underground preferably with an expedition or spicy rescue or two thrown in for good measure. Caving books told you about caving in much the same way that tablets of limestone didn't.

Such specialised literature was not so very remarkable: after all, it had been written by cavers - who already knew about caving didn't they, and had already decided which aspect of the sport/science they were going to pursue furthest and pronounce on. Which begs the question, how did these cavers get to enjoy caving? Yes, we all know the answer - by doing it, by trial and error.

And how did they get to know where to do it what to wear doing it, and with whom to do it safely (obviously with one of the reputable caving clubs as commonly recommended!) and what encouraged them to do it at all in the first place? Ummm...

In contrast to many other pastimes there has been a dearth of adequate informative, introductory literature on caving; Ladybird books are simply not good enough. Nor - given the individual attitudes of most cavers - has there been a strong motive to produce appropriate literature. Cavers emerge in the public eye largely through rescues (hitting the headlines this way is easy - news copy is usually short for Monday morning papers), while there is a public mythology about the futility and nastiness of caving which quite ignores the fact that many ordinary souls go underground wearing inappropriate clothes in





Rainfall at Litton  
per head of population  
(1970=1072mm of rain,  
935,000 population  
in BCo catchment)

Population in BCo  
catchment

Average daily water supply  
per head of population  
(1970=308,000 cu.m./day,  
935,000 population)

SOURCE:  
Bristol Waterworks Company  
Annual Report & Accounts  
for 1979/80

far less comfortable conditions and arguably with equal futility, on the Bakerloo Line in rush hours. In short, caving has not fired the public imagination favourably.

And a good thing too, you might say: Swildons is crowded enough, and we don't want any more guests in our cottage. But such reticence also means the potential loss of many a valuable club caver, and fewer persons to pursue the various sporting and scientific disciplines that caving offers - a further loss to caving knowledge and the caving scene.

At least people should have a clearer understanding of caving in its various manifestations, and so be less prejudiced and less chary to try it for themselves. Which demands a better range of available basic literature to whet the appetite, especially a good all - round primer. Sid Perou's films 'as seen on TV' have opened a lot of eyes, and now there is a suitable primer to read; 'Caving and Potholing', £1.95 paperback, by Dave Judson and Arthur Champion, published by Granada/ Mayflower.

AAargh, Judson, you foam. ( But he can't be that awful really, can he - after all he signed the M.C.G. Visitors Book on the same page as Bruce Bedford! Yes he did. Go and look for yourself if you don't believe me.) And yes, there is a certain content about the National Caving Association, of which the 'Political Structure' on page 74 where everything revolves around the N.C.A. is the most objectionable. On page 73 the N.C.A. is described as the 'Governing Body for the Sport' in respect of grant aiding, though it is acknowledged as 'a rather weak federation'.

But the other 99% of the book is far, far more important. That describes lucidly in the remaining 190 pages: the processes of cave development; the main caving areas in the British Isles ( not forgetting South Devon, Scotland and Ireland - all too often left out of the literature ); the main caving clubs and other associations ( yes, the M.C.G. is mentioned ); personal equipment; caving techniques horizontal and vertical; what food to take underground; views on safe caving and cave conservation; a glossary of caving terms and useful further reading; and readable descriptions of more specialised activities such as photography surveying and expeditions.

No book can be perfect, so it should be possible for argumentative members to pick holes in some of the techniques described, but the general approach adopted - that it is up to every caver to cave thoughtfully - and the comprehensible treatment of the subject matter, showing the pleasures and perils of caving, fulfil the author's primary objective of providing a good, basic read about the full range of underground activities. It deserves its wider audience ( I bought our copy at Paddington Station bookstall ) and should attract more people to the caving scene. Definitely a must for all libraries, caving novices, and some not - so - fresh cavers. Thank you Mr J and Mr C.

Jonathan Roberts.

STOP PRESS

Wayne is now Champion of the Chew Valley Shove Ha'penny Singles League after a hard fought contest which went to five games.

#### WETSUITS

Phil has still got some wetsuits at the bargain price of £37.50

Malcolm has 4mm double skinned neoprene sheets at £7.50 each