



JULY 1981

NO 142

#### THE THURSDAY VENUE HAS NOW CHANGED

The M.C.G. has now changed Thursday evening meeting place to the Fox and Hounds and Mawson Arms as reported in the last Newsletter. It is hoped that the new venue lives up to expectations. The Committee would like to hear Members opinions on the new venue.

#### OFFICIAL COTTAGE OPENING

The Opening of the Nordrach Cottage on the 6th June was a huge success enjoyed by all who attended. All beds were taken for the first time that Saturday night! Among the guests were old faces such as Richard Woolacott one of the early Chairmen of the M.C.G. and Paul Green, not forgetting all the Mendip guests who came. Roger Wallington was presented with a Pewter Mug by Tony Knibbs on behalf of The M.C.G. for all the effort he put in over the last seven years or so designing and coordinating the planning and development of the original new cottage and its ultimate replacement. An effort we are all very impressed with and very thankful for. Val Knight laid on a fantastic buffet which was washed down with two barrels of Fullers. Every thing considered a very memorable evening.

#### COTTAGE PROGRESS

Much work was done on the car park, front drystone wall and entrance gate over the Cottage opening weekend. The wall is now complete, the car park usable, and the gate posts cemented in and gate hung. Since then the entrance between the road and the gate has been tarmaced. It was quite amazing how lively and enthusiastic everyone was on Sunday after the Official Opening doing all that cottage work then retiring to the Hunters for liquid lunch! Save for Bernard who arose from his bunk just in time to go to the Hunters only to fall asleep in the Hunters Back room over a scotch and soda muttering something about not feeling well.

Sue 'The Flute' and John Dukes have given us a lovely mantle piece which has already been erected and now just needs tiling. Formica surfacing of the charger shelf has been done. The Builder has now supplied a fire blanket, fire extinguisher bracket a front door mat and a hook for opening the library windows. All the Dunlopillo mattresses have now been delivered. Don says they are very comfortable.

Brian Terry is going to supply a new first aid cabinet for the cottage. We still need cleaning utensils such as brooms, squeegees, mops, etc. Please contact any Committee Member if you have cleaning utensils that you wish to offer the club.

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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

# WCS

## CAVING SHOP

### SPECIAL OFFER WETSUITS

5mm Single Lined Two-Piece Suits. £37.00  
Glued, Stitched & Taped Seams.

4mm Standard Single Lined Suits £40.00

Long-Johns, Jackets, Shorties, Trousers etc. in  
3,4,& 6mm Single or Double Lined Neoprene

Zips, Tubes of Glue (50p each), Tenax Fasteners  
and sheets of unlined Neoprene.

### WE CAN NOW ALSO OFFER

One-Piece Petzl 'Speleo' Suits (Nylon/PVC)  
One-Piece Tailored 'Styx' Caving Suits (7oz P/V Proofed Nylon)  
One Piece Thermal 'Furry' Suits.  
Plus a full range of 'Thermal' Jackets, Trousers, Socks, Etc.

A range of Down or Synthetic Filled Sleeping Bags and Duvets  
And for the very 'Cold' Thermal Sleeping Bag Liners.

Satin Shorts (Very well tailored)

Ladders and Belays  
Viking 10mm or 11mm Nylon Lifeline.  
Abseiling/Prassiking Ropes & Equipment

Contact Malcolm Cotter, 249 Feltham Hill Road, Ashford, Middx  
Phil Ingold 31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.  
Phone (Day) 01 902 6011

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

MEET PROGRAMME

JULY NO GUEST BOOKINGS

JULY

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

GEOLOGY OF MENDIP

FRIDAY 10  
FRIDAY 18  
FRIDAY 24  
FRIDAY 31

SWINSTOW. SIMPSON EXCHANGE AWAY MEET SEE GREG

AUGUST

FRIDAY 7 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
FRIDAY 14  
FRIDAY 21 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
FRIDAY 28

SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY 4 MEMBERS WEEKEND + PETE LINGWOOD'S  
FRIDAY 11 PARTY  
FRIDAY 18 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
FRIDAY 25 D. GIBSON + 11

OCTOBER

FRIDAY 2 WESTMINSTER SCHOOL 4 STAFF + 12 BOYS  
FRIDAY 9  
FRIDAY 16 HALF YEAR GENERAL MEETING  
FRIDAY 23  
FRIDAY 30 D. GIBSON + 11

AWAY MEET GREG WILL ANNOUNCE DETAILS LATER

NOVEMBER

FRIDAY 6 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
FRIDAY 13  
FRIDAY 20 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
FRIDAY 27

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## CESS PIT

The Cess Pit was found to be full on the Cottage Opening Weekend. Arrangements were put in hand to have it emptied as soon as possible, however it costs around £60 per tanker load extracted from the Cess Pit and requires four loads to empty it! As all our water waste drains into the Cess Pit we will have to use water sparingly if we are to keep waste removal costs down. As the toilets use the most water, the cisterns have had their water capacity reduced by half to one gallon each flush. All members should ensure there are no dripping taps and any faults in the plumbing attended to as soon as possible.

## COTTAGE FEES

Collection of Cottage Fees has been lax. Stamped addressed envelopes are now being left in the Bed Booking Book and Members are now to send Cottage fees collected at the end of each cottage stay, preferably as a cheque, in the envelopes to the Treasurer by post.

## WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

The application by the school for four masters and twelve boys to use the cottage on the first weekend in October has now been considered and accepted by the Committee. The school has used our facilities for their Annual Expedition for several years now, and it is felt that it would be difficult to refuse them on this occasion. It is being explained however that it may not be possible to repeat the arrangement next year.

Although the Committee only received two verbal objections to the application, Members can rest assured that the Committee does wish to continue Members Only Weekends as agreed at last September's General Meeting.

On the first weekend in October there will be an Away Meet the details of which Greg will finalising soon.

## MEET PROGRAMME

Greg is now organising the Meet Programme. Initially it will be mainly local trips with a full programme of away meets starting in the New Year. However don't forget to keep an eye on the Meet List which is to be published in the Newsletter from this one on.

## GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP 4TH/5TH JULY

Malcolms leading this, oneday on the surface round Blackmoor, Saturday weather permitting. O.S. map 182 of Western Mendip and a packed lunch required a hammer and a 10 times magnification hand magnifying glass would also be useful. The alternative day will be spent underground.

## SWNSTO/SIMPSONS EXCHANGE 18TH JULY

Greg has arranged this Swinsto/Simpsons exchange trip for 18th July Accomodation may be available at Green Close the N.P.C. Headquarters or if not then at the camp site 100 yds from the New Inn at Clapham.

## HALF YEAR GENERAL MEETING

This is to be held at Nordrach Cottage on Saturday afternoon 17th October. Several Members will also be celebrating their Birthdays that weekend with the customary barrels as well.

## QUOTES OF THE MONTH

'I Haven't been caving for ages' Phil Ingold

'I can account for two corks' Brian Terry

## MEMBERSHIP

Geoff Barton and Mike Mintram have now been accepted as Full Members of the Mendip Caving Group.

## WARNING...CARS ARE STILL BEING BROKEN INTO...

Thefts from parked cavers cars are still continuing. You should therefore take the following precautions when visiting any cave, especially Longwood or GB;

Change at the cottage leaving all clothing and gear there.  
Park your car in a prominent position, lock it securely and  
take the keys with you down the cave  
If you see anything suspicious report it to the Police

## GB CAVERN

Martin Rowe reports that the bridge was cracked when he went down in early June and it may be unsafe to cross.

## .....FAILURE REPORT.....

### WARNING DANGEROUS KARABINERS

FROM THE N.C.A. EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE

Recently there have been at least 6 failures of SIMOND 10mm oval ALLOY karabiners. These are marked SPELEO 1500 kg on the spine and have a cross type latch. Most failures have been the result of some element of sideways (minor axis) loading, but the most disturbing thing is that a failure has been reported with the correct loading (i.e. along the major axis end to end). The mode of failure is fracture of the keeper latch allowing the keeper to be pulled through the gate opening. In view of these reports, these karabiners have already been withdrawn from the shops, and it is suggested that they are no longer used.

Any queries regarding these karabiners should contact the distributor:  
Lyon Ladders, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria.

TROLL SAFETY EQUIPMENT LTD, SPRING MILL, UPPERMILL NEAR OLDHAM. OL3 6AA  
4.6.81.

### GMI HANDLED ASCENDERS : RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS

Following minor complaints about GMI 5000 Ascender design, and at the request of their U.K. distributors, Troll Safety Equipment, GMI have made several important modifications to this handled ascender. The wrapover section of the ascender body where the cam jams the rope has been lengthened and strengthened so that now on tests so far carried out the rope always breaks before the wrapover failure (at between 700 and 800 kgf depending on the type of rope): the cam has been redesigned to give better grip and made lighter: the spring has been strengthened and modified so that all the problems outlined in issue 11 of 'Caves and Caving' have been overcome. The extruded alloy body which has the great advantage of reliability over a cast body (cast bodies can crack with impact) remains the same.

This modified ascender will be available from September onwards only from Troll Safety Equipment who are the Official Distributors, through their appointed retailers, and will be marked as such. The reason for this is that there have been in the past, and may well be again, 'grey' imports, that is not imported through Troll, which which may not have the modifications pioneered by Troll and for which they cannot of course be held responsible.

Because Troll are very keen on customer satisfaction, replacement modified spring and cam assemblies (which overcome the previous problems) are now being made available free of charge for CMI 5000 (first generation) ascenders, where users have been experiencing problems.

This offer only applies to those CMI 5000 ascenders imported by Troll which can be recognised by the following points:-

- 1 Body is grey/black in colour
- 2 Cam hinge pin rotates when cam is depressed or released.
- 3 Wrapover section of body (at cam) measures approx. 38mm in length (not 48 mm)

Any other CMI ascenders which do not fit this description can be regarded as 'grey imports'.

Ascenders qualifying for replacement spring and cam assemblies may either be returned direct to Troll Safety Equipment, Spring Mill, Uppermill, Nr. Oldham OL3 6AA or through the shop where the ascender was purchased.

#### A TRIP TO UBLEY HILL POT

Better late than never said the editor. So, some six weeks later I find myself writing a description of what happened on the morning of the A.G.M. Malcolm Cotter and myself had decided to take Ian McKeohnie and Mick Lowe, both Probationary Members on a Training Trip. After much thought we settled for Ubley Hill Pot, since it had a long ladder pitch (well twenty feet is long if your a Probationary Member). By the time we had changed and driven to Ubley Hill Farm, it was about lunch time, and at the back of our minds was the barrel back at the cottage... and the sun was shining... and my wetsuit was new ... and we didn't want to go down Ubley did we?

'You can't go down Ubley Hill Pot' said the farmer when Malcolm asked permission. 'Its lambing season, and the hole has to be kept covered'

What a tragedy we thought. Four desperately keen cavers with no cave to explore. Reluctantly we turned around, and dejected, started our long journey back to the cottage and the beer.

'You could go down Cow Hole instead though - theres no lambs in that field.'  
'Bollocks'

'No, theres no bullocks either'

'But Cow Hole is closed, Mendip Underground says so'

'Its open now. Someone came along and did a bit off digging'.

'Sods'

'No, boulders mostly'.

Fifteen minutes later I was 20 feet underground in Cow Hole face to face with a 2foot high boulder held up by air and a bit of mud. Malcolm decided to move it aside. After a bit more gardening Ian and Mick rigged the pitch and descended, clearing a few more stones on the way. As the boulder chamber at the top of the pitch was a bit loose, and lack of space on the first 10 feet of the pitch made a double line difficult. I stayed behind to lifeline (well, someone had to do it, and 20 feet of caving on the day of the A.G.M. sounded quite reasonable to me).

Then Ian came up and offered to lifeline me down. Despite my protests (A.G.M. started, beer to drink etc.) he insisted I should go.

'This is a Training Trip. I have to demonstrate I'm capable of lifelining' he said.

So I joined Malcolm at the bottom of the cave, having a bit of fear on two awkward climbs on the way (a short line would have been useful).

By the time we got out, got back and changed, I was tired and the A.G.M. had started. And this is where we come to the real purpose of this article; Some of you may remember a body in red jeans at the Dinner, It was me! You see, I wasn't drunk, just tired. I was asleep, after a hard day's caving.

P.S. On a more serious note, I have since been back to Cow Hole to tidy up a few more boulders at the top of the pitch. The ruckle is still unstable but can be passed with care. Belay points are hard to find, perhaps someone could put in a bolt? Anyway, its a good little cave and all M.C.G. Members should visit it while open. Call at Ubley Hill Farm for permission.

Martin Rowe

#### FOUND

Has anyone left a caplamp in the old cottage? Tony Knibbs found one when clearing the old cottage, if its yours contact Tony.