



SEPTEMBER 1981

NO 144

### THE M.C.G. ROYAL WEDDING TRIBUTE

On 29th July 1981, Charles, Prince of Wales, Heir to the Throne of England was to be wed to his beloved, Lady Diana. Throughout the country, loyal subjects planned their tributes to the Royal Couple

Down at the Fox and Hounds and Mawson Arms on M.C.G. night, excitement was running high as discussion of the wedding began. What could the M.C.G. do in celebration? To what lengths could they go to display their undying devotion to the future King and his charming bride?

Or to what depths? .....

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N.G.R. ST/5147.5605

GUEST BOOKINGS:-

To be made with the Cottage Warden

THURSDAY MEETINGS

THE FOX & HOUNDS & MAWSON ARMS  
CHILSWICK LANE SOUTH, LONDON W.4.  
8.30. P.M.

with G.C. (July 1960)  
London  
The G.C. Club

"A trip to Yorkshire for the Royal Wedding?  
We'll book Green Close - I'll contact N.P.C."  
The plans are made; four cavers round a table,  
Geoff, Ian, Bob; and Chris from C.C.C.

"Oh by the way" says Bob, "I've just been buying  
Some rope; one - fifty metres of 11 mil".  
At that, four faces light, four voices whispered.  
"That's just enough to go down Gaping Ghyll!"

And so it was <sup>that</sup> on Tuesday morning,  
After an evening supping Theakston's ale,  
Four hale and hearty cavers left the cottage  
For Clapham, and the Ingleborough Trail.

Of tackle that was needed for this venture,  
The abseil rope is listed first of all.  
Four hundred feet of S.R.T. kernmantel  
Was wanted to control the speed of fall.

"For coming out again, we'll make it easy  
(Three - sixty feet of prussiking's no fun)  
We'll rig Bar Pot; the first pitch is a forty,  
About a hundred feet the second one".

"We'll need one - fifty feet of ladder; lifeline  
(Two hundred feet of that should be enough.  
First up can use his Clog for self protection);  
Descenders; krabs; belays; the usual stuff".

The gear is sorted out, and stacked, and counted,  
Divided into four and packed in sacks,  
The lads put on their wetsuits, lamps, and helmets,  
And bundle the equipment on their backs.

The track to G.C. entrance is a long one,  
Two miles, or three, or more, from road to pot,  
It's uphill all the way; so heavy laden,  
The cavers in their wetsuits soon are hot.

At Ingleborough Cave they find refreshment;  
A tourist booth purveying fizzy pop.  
And while they guzzle, over hobbles Chester,  
To see what's in that dam' great bag they've got.

"Four hundred feet of rope? - ee that's not heavy,  
I'd lift it with one hand. You see - no sweat".  
(Aside, "These lads are daft. You couldn't pay me  
To carry it ten yards - before it's wet").

At last by force of will and fear of failure,  
The four arrive at Bar with all their gear.  
A minute's rest; a pee; sort out equipment,  
Then plan just where they have to go from here.

They split up into two - man rigging parties,  
The one to rig G.G., the other Bar.  
So Bob and Geoff set off with rope and belays,  
"It's this way, up the path. It isn't far".

And Chris and Ian ladder up the forty:  
An awkward chimney, then an open climb.  
Chris goes down first, and finds the ladder lacking.  
"Tobshort; send down another on a line".

This means axshortage for the second big pitch.  
The plan is modified to take account.  
They have a length of S.R.T. rope with them,  
One - fifty feet; enough to get them out.

The pitches duly rigged, the two ascend now,  
'Til Chris discovers that the upper pot  
Is not his size. But with much thruching, cursing,  
At last he crawls out gasping, from the top.

And so to Gaping Ghyll, where Bob and Geoffrey  
Are in a little passage down the side,  
Which keeps the rope away from half the water,  
And gives a slightly dryer ride.

The rope is rigged around a massive boulder  
And down the passage to a wooden pier.  
From here it disappears in spray and darkness;  
A sight to fill the stoutest heart with fear.

But Bob clips on his rack. "Well, here goes nothing".  
And in the waterfall he's last from sight.  
The others at the top must wait, and wonder  
If they have worked the length of rope out right!

Is it too short, not reaching to the bottom?  
Or tangled up, and hanging in the air?  
Or will the water, falling from the streamway,  
Be beating down on Bob too much to bear?

The time is going by, "What is he doing?  
Ten minutes now, and still the rope is tight".  
But out of sight and sound there is no option,  
If ther's a snag, but let him put it right.

Meanwhile, three - forty feet below the entrance,  
Hangs Bob, annoyed and aching more and more,  
A tangle in the rope is all that stops him,  
From finishing his journey to the floor.

He prussiks up a bit, then starts untying  
The knot that bars his progress from below.  
Not easy with one hand; and wet; and spinning.  
But finally he does it "Down I go".

Up top the rope goes slack; next man is ready.  
On with his figure - 8; check all the clips.  
Slowly at first he feeds the rope. And slowly  
Down through the tumbling waterfall he slips.

At first the rockface makes the going easy,  
A wall to take the feet and stop the spin.  
Then suddenly, the crash of water's greater.  
It beats his helmet, briefly shaking him.

He's past the worst cascade, and now he's able,  
At last to settle back and look around.  
He sees a great cathedral, overflowing,  
With splashing, spraying, gushing, roaring sound.

The waters from above float out in streamers,  
And carry softly down the light of day.  
It seems as if a hole has formed in heaven,  
And out of it has poured the Milky Way

Brought rudely back to life -- the caver's spinning;  
The wall is gone, and now he's hanging free.  
The spinning stops. Lean back and just enjoy it.  
This sight's not one that everyone can see.

This slowly falls the caver through the darkness,  
No worries here with women, work, or wealth.  
His life depends on half an inch of nylon, fibre (~~rope~~)  
A metal loop; and most of all, himself.

The rope feels lighter now. A lamp is shining.  
His speed seems greater with the floor in sight.  
Pull on the rope a little 'Stop the falling'  
A waist-deep pool then ends the downward flight.

Unhitch the rope! Get <sup>out</sup> clear of the water!  
A moment taking in the sights and sound,  
And savouring a little more, the pleasures  
Of being here, and of the journey down.

The third man, high above, comes into sight now,  
Like shining spider, sliding on his thread.  
He's down. And soon the fourth. The abseil's over.  
Five minutes rest, then find the way ahead.

The passage on to Bar is in the corner,  
A muddy chamber up a stony slope.  
They start off walking upright; crawl a little;  
Then upright once again, but with a stoop.

The tunnels are quite dry and neatly rounded,  
All uniformly shaped, like disused drains.  
But then - what's this - they're high up in ~~the~~ chamber,  
That's wrong. Back to the turn and try again.

The chamber bypass means a lot of crawling,  
On hands and knees, for fifty feet or more,  
Then out beyond the chamber, up a scramble,  
And there's Bar Pot; a rope hangs down the wall.

The rift in which they stand is straight and lofty;  
A floor of hard - packed earth; and rocky walls;  
Their ladder hanging freely by the rockface,  
Ends roughly thirty feet above the floor!

Their rope is here, and S.R.T. 's essential,  
The rock is sheer, no handholds on the face,  
Unpack the Gibbs, the Clog, the leg loops, harness,  
And prussik up the rope with easy grace!

The walk up to the hole has tired the cavers.  
A hundred feet of ladder is a lot.  
It's slow; but with a rest and then an effort,  
At last the four of them sit at the top.

While two go out to G.G. for the tackle,  
The others coil the ladders up with care,  
Then climb the top pitch - once again much thrutching -  
Into the balmy scent of open air.

The walk back home, dry clothes, and then refreshment,  
Need not be described, for all should know,  
The joys of ale, good company, and stories  
Of journeys in our wondrous world below.

Ian McKechnie.

# MENDIP CAVING SHOP

## WETSUITS

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 double skinned neoprene.

## CAVING SUITS

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.

## SLEEPING BAGS

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)

## EQUIPMENT

Ladders and Belays  
Viking 10mm or 11mm Nylon Lifeline  
Abseiling/Prussiking Ropes and Equipment

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## COTTAGE BOOKINGS

### SEPTEMBER

4 MEMBERS WEEKEND+ PETE LINGWOODS PARTY  
11 DROITWICH SCOUTS.  
18 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
25 DAVE GIBSON + 11

### OCTOBER

2 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
9 WESTMINSTER SCHOOL  
16 HALF YEAR GENERAL MEETING  
23 IMPERIAL COLLEGE  
30 DAVE GIBSON + 11

### NOVEMBER

6 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
13 WESTMINSTER CAVING GROUP  
20 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
27

### DECEMBER

4 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
11 DAVE GIBSON + 11  
18 MEMBERS WEEKEND  
25 CHRISTMAS

## MEET PROGRAMME

ST CUTHBERTS 2 PARTIES

## LINK POT

As a ploy to avoid a certain event, on Friday 24th July Geoff, Ian and myself went up to Yorkshire in Geoff's car. After some amusing travelling to reach Geoff's house wrapped in 200 metres of S.R.T. rope, and a pleasant nights drinking in Leeds, we met one of Geoff's mates who had somewhere for us to crash.

So, on Saturday, in the Marten Arms we sat discussing the afternoon's caving over a three course meal of Theakstons, and Link Pot was suggested. So, in a magnificent attempt to avoid becoming sober, off we went to Bull Pot Farm, changed and walked over to Link. As the only person to have been down there before, I lead the way, having mentioned the long crawl to Pippikin that was ahead, for reasons best known to themselves, Ian and Geoff still carried ammo boxes. Ian's may have been surgically attached - he never put it down. As any aficionados of Link will know, the crawl is not designed for this, and the passage may be slightly larger as a result.

Slow progress was made to Dusty Junction, whence we proceeded to the Hall of the Ten. Unfortunately, a time check revealed the we should leave immediately (if not sooner). And so we plunged back down into the rabbit hole. Anyway after directing Chris down the right passage near the entrance, I climbed out and spent a happy time watching the others coming up through the constriction - a number of interesting techniques were displayed, possibly for the last time, as none of the others seemed to enjoy the trip much.

Bob Varley.

## LANCASTER EASE GILL

Sunday morning dawned at Green Close, and the four of us, Geoff, Ian, Bob, and Chris, were glad to think we had a whole day potholing ahead and did not have to head for London.

Despite Bob having tried to put us off Ease Gill on Saturday we were still keen to try another day exploring the longest system in the country, and tried to raise some support from among the N.P.C. members present. Unfortunately the lateness of their retiring for the evening had dampened their enthusiasm, and we set off for Bull Pot Farm to see what we could arrange. Our luck then seemed to change, for on asking whether anyone would like to take us from Lancaster to County, we soon had a volunteer. Jim Newton seemed a good choice as his age (60?) and lack of one eye should have ensured that we would have an easy trip. Our suspicions should have been aroused however when he indicated that it would not be necessary to pre ladder County, as he knew how to do it uphill. After the 110 foot drop into Lancaster Hole we spent six hours at a fast pace, although stopping for many photographs, and managed a detour up and around the well decorated Easter Grotto. The climb out through County was exciting, but the first entrance pitch needed real skill to climb from below. (Fortunately Jim had a ladder for the rest of us to use.) As usual we retired to a pub afterwards, and Jim was soon telling us of all the other delights of the system which were left for us on another occasion - which we are all looking forward to sometime.

Geoff Barton

## IREBY FELL

None of us had done this cave before, but I had heard that it was a good trip without being too wearing. (Which was what we wanted as we were going to do G.G. the next day.)

Unfortunately Green Close had no charger available and although three of us had NiCads Ian had an Oldham that was just about flat. So we left the lead

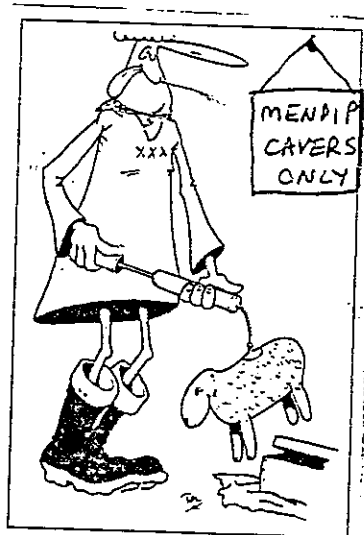


acid in Ingleton to be charged and resorted to using carbide. This later proved to be the downfall of the trip. Ian and Geoff had been lugging ammo cans full of spare carbide around for the last few days and as is quite common in these cases, when required for use, the spare proves even duffer than the original.

Unfortunately Bob and I had gone off down the cave before this was discovered, and had rigged three pitches, two of which were shower bath wet. After waiting about twenty minutes for the others to catch up, we both started getting cold and disillusioned, and as we didn't have the gear to do the rest of the descent, we decided to abort, only to meet Ian descending the second pitch with no light at all.

The rest of the day was spent dangling from trees at Wherneside Manor.

Chris Crowley.



Brian Terry with his latest plaything