



NOVEMBER 1981

NO 146

CAUTIONARY TALE OF O.F.D.

On Saturday 24th October two parties comprising of M.C.G., N.P.C., and S.W.C.C. members went down O.F.D. at midday.

The first party included John Miriam five N.P.C. and one S.W.C.C. hoping to make the through trip to the top entrance if conditions permitted. The second party including Greg Smith, Denise Samuel and others went on a tourist trip round O.F.D.I and surfaced about 3.30p.m.

John Miriam's party found the stream in O.F.D.II o.k. so they continued up stream. However, when approaching the Great Oxbow the stream started rapidly rising. They subsequently had great difficulty negotiating the last Pothole, and due to the force of the water were unable to make the Great Oxbow. They saw another smaller oxbow, lept up into it and stayed there till the flood subsided. All though it took only half an hour for the flood to rise, it took eight hours to subside three feet when the party considered it safe to leave the oxbow and return to the surface.

During their wait they spent the time comfortably perched close together for warmth, and built a wall for further protection, climbing up and down and eating emergency rations to stretch their legs and keep warm.

Soon after they started their exit they were met by two members of the Rescue Party, and they subsequently left via ladder to Midnight Passage and reached the entrance about 2.30.a.m. B.S.T.

In recent years flash flooding has increased in O.F.D. which may be due to afforestation in the area. Everyone entering O.F.D. should be prepared for a long stay with adequate clothing, spares and emergency rations.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

It is likely that Eric Dowley will have to resign as Treasurer in December, as he may be taking over a village store in a village near Lime Regis. He will be more taxed with business and domestic financial problems associated with his new venture, and therefore will have insufficient time left to continue the post of Treasurer effectively.

The post of Treasurer carries a great financial responsibility, requires a clear mind and a head for figures. Unfortunately when the job is done well the effort is almost unnoticed save by those with whom he has direct dealings on the Committee. For, as club financial matters seem such a headache to most ardent cavers, they would rather leave those problems for someone else to sweat over. Thanks Eric and good luck with the store.

Wayne Hiscox announced his intention to resign as Cottage Warden at the 1982 A.G.M. He will have done ten years in that post come February and the Club is greatly indebted to him, for without his leadership it is doubtful if we would have the wonderful cottage we have today.

MENDIP CAVING GROUP COMMITTEE

SECRETARY	TONY KNIBBS	23 Winern Glebe, Byfleet, Surrey, Byfleet 43875 01.546.7741. Ex377
	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 72081 Ex 273
	TEL (WORK)	
TACKLEMASTER	PHIL INGOLD	31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. 0442 42929 01 902 6011 Ex 100
	TEL (HOME) (WORK)	
RECORDER	JONATHAN ROBERTS	17 Kent Avenue, West Ealing, London, W13 8BE 01 997 2916 01 278 3825
	TEL (HOME) (WORK)	
EDITOR	BRYAN PITTMAN	36 Manor Way Egham, Surrey Egham 37540
	TEL (HOME)	
CAVING ACCOMODATION		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

THURSDAY MEETINGS-

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

Bryan Pittman will also be resigning as Editor at the 1982 A.G.M.

INCREASED SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1982

At the Half - Yearly General Meeting, it was decided by a majority vote to increase subscription rates to £10 for Probationary and Full Members, and to £5 for Associate and under 18 year old Members. (This category includes Member's Spouse.). These increases take effect from 1st January 1982 and in conjunction with increased Cottage Fees, should ensure that Group funds at least break even next year.

During the course of the discussions which led to this decision, it was pointed out that the previous rates of £5 and £1 were featured in the Constitution & Rules and that the increases being debated represented a change to C. & R. This being so, the proposals should have been publicised as implying such a change and a postal vote would have been available to Full Members unable to attend.

The pressing need to effect the increases was described on the reverse side of the HYGMA Agenda circulated with the October Newsletter.

In recognition of the slightly unusual procedure adopted to agree increases in Subscription Rates in time for such increases to take effect before 1st January 1982, Full Members who were unable to be at the HYGMA are hereby invited to inform the Hon Secretary if they object to the decision reached by 30th November 1981.

N.B. A proposal that the actual rates of subscription should be removed from C. & R. will be formally put to the 1982 A.G.M.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

NOVEMBER

6 MEMBERS WEEKEND
13 West Midlands Caving Group
20 MEMBERS WEEKEND
27 Geof Davies

DECEMBER

4 MEMBERS WEEKEND
11 Dave Gibson
18 MEMBERS WEEKEND
25 CHRISTMAS

JANUARY

1 MEMBERS WEEKEND
8 MEMBERS WEEKEND
15 MEMBERS WEEKEND
23 Imperial College C.C.
29 Dave Gibson

FEBRUARY

5 MEMBERS WEEKEND
12 Dave Hiyson
19 MEMBERS WEEKEND

COTTAGE CLEANLINESS

There have been complaints made about guests not adhering to Cottage Rules, making it filthy and going in the lounge in wet caving gear. All Members and Guests are to remove caving gear in the changing room provided. It is the responsibility of Members to set the right example and to enforce this sensible rule on any erring guest.



CAVING SHOP

For all your Caving, Mountaineering, and Boardsailing needs.

SPECIAL OFFER WETSUITS AND WARM WEAR

Double lined Jackets and Trousers from	33.00
Single lined Jackets and Trousers "	26.00
One Piece (S, SM, & M only) "	33.00
Double lined Long John and Bolero with Zips	49.00
Double lined Long John and Bolero no Zips	39.00
Single lined Long John and Bolero with Zips	39.00
Single lined Long John and Bolero no Zip	33.00
P.V. Shortie	10.00
Thermal Pile Jackets	8.50
Thermal Pile Trousers	4.50
Thermal Pile One Piece	13.50

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

MEET PROGRAMME

Next years Meet programme will be printed on the new 1982 Membership Card. Greg will be asking for Meet Leaders for the Programme very shortly.

C.S.C.C. CAVING PERMITS

Greg will be issuing all Full and Probationary Members with new Permits as the old ones are now invalid. Temporary Permits for Guests in Lecturn. Mandatory for Longwood, Reads Grotto, Timber Hole, G.B. & Rhin.

1982 EXPEDITION

Greg and Tony are at present discussing the possibility of an M.C.G. Caving Expedition next summer. Possibly to France.

UBLEY HILL POT

A volunteer is required to take responsibility for organizing the capping of Ubley Hill Pot. It must be done as soon as possible as we promised to do it six months ago.

BONE HOLE

A walkway and reshoring has to be done in Bone Hole. Would someone able to take responsibility for this work contact the Committee.

LIBRARY

Mike Mintram has now supplied all the shelving supports for the library which are much appreciated, thanks Mike. Fitting out is now well in hand.

FIRST AID BOX

Thanks are due to Brian Terry for supplying a First Aid Box, which is now fixed on the rear wall of the lounge.

FULL MEMBERS

Charlie Ruddick, Pete Spain, and Chris Whittle have been accepted as Full Members of the M.C.G.

NEW ADDITION

Congratulations Pete and Trish Mathews on the birth of your son Paul Samuel. He was born on 2nd November at 4.30 a.m. and weighed 9lb 2oz.

BACKGROUND HEATING

It has been agreed in principle to install storage heaters as background heating in the new cottage. Anyone who knows of good condition second hand storage heaters available to the M.C.G. should contact Tony. Due to their weight arrangements will have to be made to transport them to Mendip by van.

VARTA BATTERIES

These automotive batteries are still available to M.C.G. Members at 50% of list price. Contact Bruce on 01 848 3340. Also Please order now for your Christmas drink requirements.

NORDRACH COTTAGE NOVEMBER 1981

The following is a list of most of the outstanding work to be done by Members

- LOUNGE Supply and fit closing controller to hall door
Finish fire surround with quarry tiles
- STAIR CUPBOARD Finish lagging pipes
Paint walls when dried out (emulsion)
- CHANGING ROOM Supply and fit closing controller to hall door
Add final coat of paint (eggshell) to walls and
all pipework and basin brackets.
- SHOWER ROOM Add final coat of paint (gloss) to ceiling.
- LOBBY Paint walls (eggshell)
- BEDROOMS Fit anti-roll boards.
Lay lino tiles
Fix bunks to walls
- ROOFSPACE Paint loft trap (gloss)
Fit access ladder
Fit fibreglass insulation over water tank
- LIBRARY Finish fitting shelves
- EXTERNAL Form chute below rainwater pipe at rear.
Finish levelling and surfacing car park
Erect fencing and repair drystone wall.
Construct soakaway.
- GENERAL Add sealer coat to lounge floor, when car park at
front is surfaced, and burn old carpets.
Construct rescue gear cupboard in lobby.
Change stair carpet when car park is surfaced.
Finish gas installation.
Finish battery charger installation.

RESCUE WARDEN

Brian Terry has volunteered to be Rescue Warden.

SINGING RIVER MINE

Our key does not fit. Arrangements will be made to rectify this.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE H.Y.G.M.

Greg Meets are being applied for in all the familiar places!

Wayne I hope to improve a little bit in the near future!

Pat There's no room for Providence in an inflationary society!

B.E.G.

That ubiquitous crew even get pissed on while adhering to urinal walls!

MENDIP CAVING GROUP



PATRON: THE MARQUESS OF BATH

MINUTES OF THE HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING 1981
HELD AT NORDRACH COTTAGE, CHARTERHOUSE-ON-MENDIP,
ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 17TH.

The meeting opened at 3.30 pm. and finished at 6.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN: Robbie Charnock.

ATTENDANCE: 31 full members, 8 probationary, prospective and associate members,
and 5 guests.

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Greg Smith. Apologies for late arrival were received from Phil Ingold.
- 2 MINUTES OF THE 1981 A.G.M. were agreed, and signed by Robbie Charnock.
- 3 REPORTS FROM HON. OFFICERS:-

Hon. Secretary, Tony Knibbs

All things considered, the Group is a thriving organisation - we have assets exceeding £50,000, a bank balance after budgeted expenditure of well over £1000, and our caving activities are increasing with each passing month. Membership is increasing at an encouraging rate. Since April, seven probationary members have been accepted, five existing probationary members have become full members, and Richard Woollacott, who first joined us in 1956, has rejoined as a full member.

Caving activities have almost returned to the level reached before the long interruption of cottage building. Work has been restarted on the excavations in August Hole, Bone Hole and Blackmoor Flood Swallet. The number of cave keys held by the Group seems to be sharply increasing and members are asked to take care of these and to be vigilant in operating access arrangements. Recently, the renewal of a locking installation on Cuckoo Cleaves cost CSCC member clubs £10 each.

While on the subject of cave access, it is worth mentioning that we opened a cave called Ubley Hill Pot in 1960, and put a very rudimentary fence around the shake-hole entrance. That was 21 years ago, and we still haven't fitted an efficient lid! Some volunteers are needed to initiate some action on this.

The new cottage is proving to be a great success with members and guests alike. Allocated guest weekends are booked for the remainder of this year and into early 1982. In common with other clubs offering similar accommodation, we are finding that running costs are very high - approximately £2000 per year on current experience. An appropriately high level of income must be achieved to meet such expenditure. Although some members may feel that guest bookings are excessive, we need the income that they provide and we will continue to do so into the future.

Monthly committee meetings are steadily becoming less tiresome as the residual business of fitting out the cottage decreases. The provision of accurate and detailed minutes, by the Hon. Recorder, has brought a welcome breath of efficiency into the proceedings. The improvement which we all look forward to, is that of completing the list of minor details - sundry purchases and tasks - which remain to be done to finally finish Nordrach Cottage.

/...There has

There has been no progress in our negotiations to purchase an extra piece of land behind the cottage. The long delay is due to the problems which have attended the sorting out of Jim Fry's estate. However, the matter will be pursued as soon as the opportunity arises.

The National Trust has requested that our licensed access to Bone Hole be modified to exclude 'sole archaeological rights'. Bernard Reeves and I met National Trust representatives at the cave on 27th June to discuss this. It was agreed that the Group was not technically competent to carry out the thorough archaeological examination which the Trust feels to be required. But it was agreed that we should retain 'sole caving rights' at Bone Hole. We spent some time discussing the necessary changes to the wording of the licence, and we are still awaiting a formal response from the Trust.

In practice, the revised situation bars us from digging in the old cave and from causing any further disturbance to Skull Slope. We agreed to instal some form of walkway to bypass the slope, and to improve the shoring in the excavated entrance shaft; National Trust said they would pay for the materials. These jobs must be regarded as a condition of continued access and should be given high priority on the Group's list of things to do.

There is little to report on the subject of national caving politics. We have decided not to seek an active role in this complex arena unless a subject of specific interest arises. As a general policy, we will only seek to be represented at meetings of the Charterhouse Caving Committee and the Council of Southern Caving Clubs (and of CSCC Ltd. in which we hold shares). However, we will keep an eye on national activities - chiefly by reading the incoming paperwork from regional councils, especially that from the Cambrian Council which has considerable coverage of other UK areas.

Hon. Treasurer, Eric Dowley

Current cash in hand is £4,112.15. *Budgeted* expenditure is £2,391.35, made up of payment to the builder £641.35; land purchase £500, library and book buying £300, mats for changing room £100, gas installation £100, sparkguard £100, car park chippings £200, bunkroom lino £300, and storage heaters £150. *Cash available* is accordingly £1,720.80; however occasional costs will eat into that. The budget excludes the cost of fencing, possible land purchase costs higher than £500 and any provision for maintenance and repairs for the cottage.

Recent noteworthy income was £155.68 from the brewery account, £116.51 from covenants and £225 from the sale of pantiles, while expenditure had included £100 donation much appreciated by the MRO (who have purchased a Reviva), £100 donation gratefully received by the National Playing Fields Association, and £148 for the new cottage opening event. A loss had been made on the A.G.M. Dinner.

Members are reminded of the importance of forwarding hut fees and subscriptions as soon as possible to the Treasurer, so they can be banked and start earning interest. It is also up to members to ensure that guests paid when they should - there had been one recent guest debt which had been written off.

Hon. Cottage Warden, Wayne Hiscox

Following the three month 'running in' period, the cottage is now being used by both members and guests, though not up to available capacity. The principal tasks still needed on the cottage are being publicised to members, and tools are readily available from the Cottage Warden to get things done.

Hon. Recorder/Librarian, Jonathan Roberts

Wearing the Recorder's hat, 31 pages of committee minutes and annexes have been written since the April A.G.M. The size of committee minutes has dropped from a maximum of 11 pages to 3. Since the minutes always repeat outstanding items until they're done, this suggests the committee has been fairly active in the past six months. Repeating outstanding items also means no committee member can conveniently forget about his overdue items of business.

On the library, as promised in April, keys which fit both the tackle store and library doors are being handed out to members. Basic fitting out of the library is proceeding, with a map cabinet installed. Shelving is now under way. Other items needed for the library are: a desk and working top, a lockable display cabinet, and possibly a light box for drawing purposes.

Once the shelving is ready, the books and newsletters will be transferred from the bunk rooms and our collection reviewed. Although we currently exchange newsletters with 17 clubs, we should exchange with more, nor is our book collection fully up to date. These matters need putting right over the coming months, and a library register made, for members' information and to help organise a satisfactory method of book borrowing. We have made a start on buying books, with an 1890 book on caves and three by Norbert Casteret.

A book and magazine stand is wanted in the lounge, where some duplicate exchange newsletters, and Descent, Caves & Caving, and Caving International will be on hand for general reading - and for firelighting if desperate.

Hon. Editor, Bryan Pittman

There has been an encouraging provision of articles and news snippets by members, which has helped the Editor in producing a regular newsletter. With caving activities to the fore again, a Journal should be produced next year, and members are asked to put pen to paper.

Hon. Tacklemaster, Phil Ingold

A new ladder has been purchased to try out. Members' comments are wanted - if favourable then more will be brought. There is now plenty of rope and ladder on Mendip. Members are reminded of the special offer by the MCG Caving Shop for new wetsuits.

Hon. Meet Secretary, Greg Smith

Successful meets since the A.G.M. have included Simpsons/Swinsto exchange and Malcolm's geology weekend on Mendip. Various members have also visited Yorkshire on private meets; one trip during the Royal Wedding week did Lancaster/County Pot and abseiled Gaping Gill main shaft. There has been a lull since then, as there often is during the summer holiday months. This weekend, trips have been arranged for St Cuthberts.

The main task at the moment is to produce a meets programme for 1982. Meets are being applied for in all the familiar places: Yorkshire, Derbyshire and South Wales. The aim is for one away trip per month, with a meet leader appointed for each trip. Trips on Mendip are not to be neglected and suitable arrangements will be made on 'Members' weekends. There are also plans to hold SRT sessions on one weekday evening during the winter months. The sessions will be held in a local London gym and will provide a chance for beginners to learn the basics or for the more experienced to improve their technique.

A meets card will be available to *fully paid-up* members in December (1981 ?). Finally, I would welcome the offer from someone to suggest or organise a summer expedition for 1982. It is up to members to get things moving on this.

Principal points arising from the Hon. Officers' reports are noted below (the committee would follow them up as appropriate):-

- Following questions about having a separate capital account, the Hon. Treasurer explained that the present practice was to have just one fund using a deposit and current account, most of the funds being in the former while the current account held only cash required for immediate use. It had been hoped to put the residual capital funds on long term deposit as suggested at the A.G.M., but with large bills still coming in this had not been possible. Now the cash flow was clearer and money had been earmarked for land purchase, it would be

/...sensible

sensible to set aside a capitalised sum in a different account. It would be separate from any funds needed for building repairs and maintenance or for an extension lean-to suggested by the Cottage Warden. Wayne Hiscox also suggested a soakaway for next year, to reduce sewage costs, which could be decided at the next A.G.M.

- Members expressed great appreciation to the Editor for the regular flow of newsletters.

4 REVIEW OF GROUP EXPENDITURE. This topic was introduced by Tony Knibbs. The last A.G.M. had decided not to use existing capital funds generally to subsidise Group and cottage running costs. The committee had now estimated the running costs for the club and the new cottage: income would fall short of the required amount with the present membership subs. and cottage fees, as current costs were roundly £2000 p.a. allowing for inflation, and income roundly £1100. There was an element of uncertainty in the figures as both costs and income had been based on the first few months with the new cottage. Doubling ordinary membership subs. to £10, husband and wife membership to £12, and increasing cottage fees by 50% to 75p for members and £1.50 for guests (children to be charged at the guest rate), would still leave a shortfall, of under £100 on current estimates.

As there was £1700 in the Group's funds, it was suggested that for the current year these funds should be used to buffer any remaining shortfall after subs. and cottage fees were increased. If on the other hand the increases generated a surplus of income, then there would not be subsequent reductions as inflation would soon eat into the extra income. Although the committee were responsible for deciding on the level of cottage fees, clearly on this occasion the Group's income had to be taken as a whole, as a low increase in subs. would have to be reflected in rather higher cottage fees, and vice versa. Members were asked to bear this in mind in commenting on the estimates and when deciding on what the subscription increase was to be.

The Cottage Warden felt the cottage costs were underestimated - he thought the water rates should be put at £60 and the sewage collection costs at £100 - and that estimated income was on the high side. If anything, the increases in subs. and fees needed to be higher than those already mentioned. Guests' fees were a vital part of our income and he cautioned against a policy of unduly loading the scales against them.

Simon Knight objected to the idea of raising cottage fees for children to the guest rate - they should be charged at the members' rate if members' children, while guests' children were not wanted at all.

Responding to queries, the Cottage Warden said the new cottage was not being used fully by members on reserved weekends, nor were guest parties using it fully on weekends when they were permitted.

Following suggestions that the Group should at once reconsider its policies on guest bookings, the Secretary emphasised that the current estimated running costs - much attributable to club administration and the newsletter, caving gear and cottage fixed costs - had to be covered this coming year regardless of any guest policy. At the last A.G.M. it had been agreed to maintain the now current guest booking arrangements for 12 months before reviewing the position. He saw no reason to vary from this as it was still early days, with the winter caving season to come and practical experience to be gained from the new cottage.

The Treasurer commented that charity covenants needed new applications in 1982 - this was another reason for deciding now on the new subs. in time for January 1982. Pat Walsh thought that on this occasion it would be reasonable to finance any shortfall after subs. and fees increases from the Group's funds.

/...Further

Further discussion resulted in three proposals on the use of the cottage:-

- A Wayne Hiscox, seconded by Jon Roberts, proposed the status quo, to continue the arrangements agreed at the A.G.M. for guest weekends and guest numbers until the next A.G.M. Members should be encouraged to bring more new faces along. Subject to decisions taken later on subs. and cottage fees, any income shortfall should on this occasion be met from our general funds.
- B Malcolm Cotter, seconded by Arthur Spain, proposed one members-only weekend per month (i.e. each member could bring one guest), with the other 3 or 4 weekends open to guest party bookings.
- C Joan Goddard, seconded by Pete Goddard, proposed one members-only weekend per month (when each member could bring one guest), a second weekend when members could bring up to 6 guests each, and the other 2 or 3 weekends open to guest party bookings.

The status quo was agreed, with 15 votes against, and 15 for plus Robbie Charnock's casting vote.

Having decided guest policy, there were then four proposals for subs. and cottage fees (new subs. to be effective from 1st January 1982, new cottage fees effective immediately):-

- D Wayne Hiscox, seconded by Eric Dowley, proposed an annual subscription of £15, with cottage fees £1 for members, £1.50 for guests.
- E Brian Terry, seconded by Ian McKechnie, proposed an annual subscription of £15, with cottage fees 75p for members, £1.50 for guests.
- F Don Vosper (not seconded) proposed an annual subscription of £15, with cottage fees 50p for members, £2.00 for guests.
- G Tony Knibbs, seconded by Martin Rowe, proposed an annual subscription of £10, with cottage fees £1 for members, £1.50 for guests.

During discussions on these proposals, Malcolm Cotter pointed out that the prevailing subscription rates of £5 and £1 were published in the Constitution and Rules and that the increases being debated represented a change to C&R. This being so, the proposal should have been publicised as implying such a change - a postal vote would then have been available to Full Members unable to attend. The members present agreed there was a pressing need to implement the increases, and that they had no objections to this variance from C&R. A proposal that the actual rates of subscription should be removed from C&R would be put formally to the 1982 A.G.M. and, in recognition of the slightly out of course procedure adopted to change subscription rates in time for 1st January 1982, Full Members who were unable to attend the Half Yearly Meeting would be invited to inform the Hon. Secretary if they objected to the decision reached at the meeting.

Tony Knibbs' proposal was agreed (22 votes for, Malcolm Cotter and John Puddock abstaining) subject to no overall adverse vote once responses were received from Full Members not present at the meeting. It was also agreed that the members' spouse subscription, and the subs. for Associate and under 18 years old Members, would be 50% of the members' rate, i.e. £5 from 1st January 1982, and that members' cottage fees would apply for members' children aged from 3 up to 18, no guest's children being permitted to stay at the cottage.

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:-

- There were complaints about cottage cleanliness and muddy gear being brought too far into the cottage. A lean-to for storing such gear would be considered.
- Brian Terry asked whether the post of Rescue Warden would be recreated. Brian was unanimously adopted for the post.
- Jon Roberts queried the position on issue of valid CCC permits for members. Greg Smith would be asked to ensure all members had up to date permits.
- 'Anti-roll' boards were needed for the upper bunks: another item of cottage work.