



Mendip Caving Group Newsletter

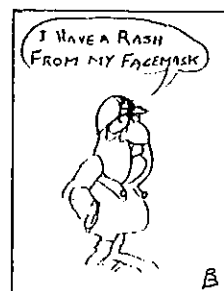
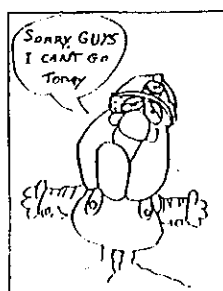
September 1982

No. 156



IN THIS ISSUE...

Meet Programme	2	Caving News	4
Membership News	3	Committee Reports	5-9
Cottage Notes	3	HYGM Agenda	9
Cottage Bookings	4	Mendip Dialect	9



MENDIP CAVING GROUP

Secretary:

Tony Knibbs, 23 Winern Glebe, Byfleet, Surrey.
tel (home) Byfleet 43875 (work) 01-546-7741 ext 2199

Treasurer:

Arthur Spain, 57 Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, Sussex.
tel (home) Horsham 64068 (work) Crawley 542251 ext 63

Meet Secretary:

Greg Smith, 16 Nield Road, Hayes, Middlesex.
tel (home) 01-848-3340

Cottage Warden:

John Miriam, 18 Lorraine Court, Cambourne Road, Sutton, Surrey.
tel (home) 01-643-7872 (work) 01-736-1212 ext 3045

Tacklemaster:

Phil Ingold, 31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
tel (home) 0442-42029

Recorder:

Jonathan Roberts, 17 Kent Avenue, West Ealing, London W13 8BE
tel (home) 01-997-2916 (work) 01-278-3825

Editor:

Ian McKechnie, 30 Brittain Road, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.
tel (home) Walton 28292 (work) Walton 28851 ext 212

CAVING ACCOMMODATION is available at the MCG cottage on Mendip:
Northwch Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XW.
The map reference is NGR 5147 5606 (OS 50,000 first series sheet 182).
Guest bookings should be made with the Cottage Warden.

WEEKLY MEETINGS are held every Thursday from 8.30pm at:
The Fox and Hounds and Mawson Arms, Chiswick Lane South, London W4.

NEXT NEWSLETTER is due on 28th October. Copy should reach the editor
before 14th October to ensure inclusion.

MCG MEET PROGRAMME

Meet	Leader	Base
Oct 16 Rhino Rift	J. Miriam	MCG
Nov 20 Agen Allwedd	P. Ingold	Chelsea (Whitewalls)
Dec 18 Mastwater (Primrose Pot)	I. McKechnie	MCG

RHINO RIFT 16th October: Rhino Rift has five main pitches in rapid succession, 100 ft, 50 ft, 70 ft, 15 ft and 20 ft deep respectively. It's one of Mendip's few "vertical" caves and for this alone is worth a visit. The larger pitches will be rigged for SRT, so bring along any gear you have. If you haven't, don't be put off, it's still possible with sufficient ladder and stamina to match.
(note - this is also HYGW weekend, so book your cottage space early)

BONFIRE AND RUN 5th November: Bonfire, barrel and barbecue. Half-marathon for those who can (or are prepared to try). Contact Derek Walsh (Staines 63341) or Roy Kempston (Camberley 34338) if you want further details of the run.

AGEN ALLWEDD 20th November: We are staying at Whitewalls (the Chelsea Cottage) just down the tramway from Aggie. Accommodation is limited to about 12, so give your name to Phil Ingold or Jon Roberts if you want to go.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH by Neil Hutchinson. Spot the deliberate mistake?

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The HALF-YEAR GENERAL MEETING will be held at Nordrach Cottage on 16th October at 2.30pm. Committee reports are printed elsewhere in this issue, and will be taken as read at the meeting.

MIKE MINTRAM's address is now 75 George Street, Bedford.

A CHRISTMAS PARTY is arranged for Saturday, 18th December in Chewton Mendip village hall. Val Knight is the organiser, and you should contact her if you would like to go along.

EMPTY BARRELS, if you have any, should be returned to Bruce, or even better to the brewery between 8am and 4.30pm.

FULLERS SWEATSHIRTS (new design) are available now from Bruce Dean. In grey or blue, they cost £5.75 to members, £6.25 to non-members.

CHARTERHOUSE MANOR tell us they have a number of parties planned over the Christmas and New Year period, and an "18th Century Dinner" in conjunction with the American Eagle Society for the end of October. Anyone from the MCG wanting to arrange a group meal should contact them, the meals are good and they will offer special rates. They are also looking for instructors for next years caving courses - anyone interested?

MCG GROUP MEMBERSHIP at Charterhouse Manor is now such that it is not necessary to apply in a group. If you want to join, simply fill in the application form, mark it "Mendip Caving Group", and take it over the road with the group membership fee of £10.

COTTAGE NEWS

MISSING FROM THE COTTAGE sometime during August are the lounge copy of "Mendip Underground" and the library copy of "The Complete Caves Of Mendip". Neither was signed out and the librarian was not informed. Jon Roberts would appreciate them being returned not later than the HYGW weekend, and points out that most other clubs have a policy of restricting access to their libraries to a few "senior" keyholders - he does not want to have to propose such a scheme for the MCG library.

COTTAGE UTILISATION has been rather low of late, reports Jon Roberts. On 11th-12th Sept., only two members were there. Tony Ingold, who had booked the cottage for 15 guests, failed to materialise, as did the guests. The previous weekend only three people were there. A few more weekends like this and we may propose that the MCG be renamed the "Society for Lazing On Thursdays with FULLers".

A SABRE FIGHT to the death with Martin Bishop's house spiders, and heavy breathing in the belfry on Saturday night as a video'ed "Jungle Burger" was viewed by the assembled masses, were just two of the extravagances virtually every MCG member failed to share on the weekend of the National Caving Conference in Bristol. (Sept 11th-12th). Only Jon Roberts and Denise Samuel were present to represent the MCG. Sadly this also meant little progress on the Bleak House survey.

The GAS BLOVE is now in commission, thanks to John Miriam. We hear that when John tried it out for the first time, he managed to burn the toast. Is that a good omen?

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

October

- 2
- 9 Jon Roberts + 8
- 16 HYGM and Rhino Rift meet
- 23 Jonathan Austin + 11
- 30 Steve Conquest + 12

November

- 6 Bryan Terry's barrel, bonfire, run
- 13 Pat Walsh + 10, WMC&G (4)
- 20
- 27 Dave Higginson - Ealing College

December

- 4 7th Bushey & Oxhey Venture Scouts (12)
- 11 Ian Parry + 6
- 18 Eastwater meet
- 25

January

- 1
- 8 Barnet Caving Group (8)
- 15
- 22
- 29

note: the dates shown above are the Saturday of the weekend. Previous lists have shown the Friday.

Ealing CHE Feb 12/13
and March 12/13

CAVING NOTES

CUCKOO CREEVES has been closed by the farmer due to persons unknown tampering with the lock and leaving the gate unbolted/ajar. The owner had threatened to close the cave on previous occasions unless the entrance was properly shut. While the action was probably caused by "pirating" cavers, they have now provoked the closure of the cave, to the detriment of all. The owner has placed his own lock on the gate, and may in a year or so's time, allow access again. Any further tampering with the lock is likely to result in the entrance being filled in permanently. For the sake of future relations with the owner, do NOT go near the cave until a new access agreement is thrashed out.

CHARTERHOUSE CAVE has a write-up in the latest issue of Caves and Caving (no 17, Aug 1982), which is available for reading at your leisure in the cottage lounge. We should soon have our own key to this cave, which will have a leader scheme to minimise damage to the cave and its formations. Tim Large of CCC has asked for volunteers to help with work on the cave during the weekend 9th-10th October.

A connection is reported in SWILDONS HOLE between the Fault Chamber and Swildons 4. Apparently a visual connection has been made, though it is not known if anyone has been through. If you are thinking of trying it, you would be well advised to first contact Pete and Alison Moody of Wessex CC.

LATE NEWS on the Swildons Watergate link from Jon Roberts. It seems that after concerted digging last weekend, the link has been proved. Watergate is in the roof of Swildons 4 just downstream of Blue Pencil. The link starts as a highly tortuous rift, opening out as it gets nearer to Fault Chamber. So we now have an alternative Long Round Trip for those bored with Blue Pencil - but still check with someone who knows before you try it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

To save time at the HYGM, reports from the committee are reproduced below. These reports will not be read at the meeting, so if you have any questions, make sure you have them ready for the committee on HYGM day.

HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT

It is again pleasing to report continuing improvement in the Group's general situation and its caving activities. Financially, we remain in a healthy position and the standard of Nordrach Cottage is increasing. The Meet Programme has ~~attracted~~ the support of many members and activity on Mendip - both caving and digging has increased. Perhaps the only point of regret is that we have been unable to arrange an overseas trip during this year. However, the summer of 1983 is not so far away, and should offer the opportunity to visit the French Pyrenees or County Clare in Eire.

Nordrach Cottage has seen a number of improvements since the AGM: the car park is finished, the stone walling has been completed, the dormitories are fully tiled, a gas stove has been fitted in the kitchen, and three storage heaters are installed. The frequency of cesspit emptying still indicates the need to give some urgent attention to creating a new soakaway or performing some other miracle of modern sanitation.

Consideration in committee has been given to the views of several members regarding the proposed lean-to extension to the cottage. But the plans are not quite finished and it may not be possible to start the actual construction work until next spring.

The purchase of additional land still awaits the outcome of what seems to be a marathon probate problem. Discrete enquiries are regularly made, but no early result is anticipated. Perhaps it is comforting to think that the longer we wait, the more we shall be able to afford this desirable amenity.

Meanwhile, the cottage is not losing money or visitors. Indeed, the income this year is running at a level well above expenditure. The booking policy is working smoothly with the notable exception of occasional party bookings - by guests and members - which fail to take effect. To discourage this, the Hon. Cottage Warden has been empowered to request advance fees, at his discretion, from those who have failed to take up a booking previously.

Since the AGM we have accepted 14 probationary and 2 associate members, bringing the total membership to an amazing 97. The committee is aware that some numerical limit on members may eventually need to be recognized, but there is no sign yet that the group's facilities are becoming overstretched.

The Annual Dinner at the Star Hotel, Wells, was a great success again - more for some members than others! Unless there is any viable alternative suggested, it is proposed that we dine at the Star in 1983, on Saturday, March 19th, to be exact. This date has been already tentatively booked and will be confirmed if members are in agreement.

For some reason not unconnected with cottage building, the group omitted to celebrate its 25th Anniversary in 1978. A chance to set the record straight will occur next year when we clock up 30 years of existence. Perhaps we can think of some way in which to mark this event.

The National Trust has not yet produced a draft of a revised licence agreement, so work is still not being carried out in Bone Hole, including shoring where it is needed. Ubley Hill Pot entrance is now lined with concrete pipes, and a steel lid should soon be fitted.

The recent closure of Cuckoo Cleaves Cave is a sad reminder that the often delicate balance between the common sense of cavers and the tolerance of land-owners is easily upset. It is the concern of all cavers that access constraints have to be complied with, however gradually.

Charterhouse Cave access has been agreed (5th June), but the mechanics of sorting out the gating have not been completed. Appointed MCG leaders are myself and Ian McKechnie.

During July a training weekend was held on Mendip. This seems to have been very successful and may point to a need to make this a regular feature. Questions have been raised concerning the possible flippant use of the training trip form which full members fill in and sign on behalf of candidates for full membership.

As a group, we have a responsibility to ensure that all members possess the basic caving skills. Although we do not provide comprehensive training, we must regard the training trip as a serious attempt to maintain a high standard of caving amongst group members.

The committee will be discussing the possible need to revise the training requirements, perhaps to bring it more into line with current caving practice and/or to improve the standard which the form seeks to indicate as having been achieved.

Tony Knibbs, Hon. Sec.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Statement of Accounts up to 17th Aug 1982

Deposit Account	£ 3172.96
Current Account	£ 146.57
Special Account	£ 1012.11
<u>Total</u>	<u>£ 4331.64</u>

This includes interest for $\frac{1}{2}$ year:

Deposit Account	£ 157.92
Special Account	£ 65.71

Expenditure - Fixed ($\frac{1}{2}$ year)

Electricity	£ 188.51
Gas	£ 41.50
Cess-pit empty	£ 80.00
Rates	£ 113.73
Refuse Collection	£ 26.15
Water/Sewerage Charge (Flood water drainage)	£ 31.08
Insurance	£ 60.50

Income from the cottage continues to be good - keep it up. All subscriptions have now been collected.

The club has received £ 55.89 tax relief from subs covenanted (not included in total). Please covenant your subs - details on request from the treasurer at the AGM, or by post.

Details of cottage expenditure/income were included in the July newsletter.

Arthur Spain, Hon. Treasurer.

HON RECORDER/LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Committee meetings have been held every month since last May, and a full attendance was achieved once, for the first time this recorder can remember. Meetings are now averaging two hours, an improvement possibly stimulated by the change in meeting place, to the back room of the Mawson Arms.

I wrote in my AGM report that my main headache was the library. It still is. At present we have neither the best collection on Mendip nor is it catalogued. This year has been spent acquiring publications we ought to have had anyway. This process hasn't finished, though we have at least made progress with nearly 500 items donated, bought or obtained by exchanging with other clubs, since February. Particular thanks go to members who have donated items - Joan Goddard, Tony Knibbs, Simon Knight, Martin Rowe, Bryan Terry and Don Vosper.

The exchange arrangements are improving, with double the number of effective newsletter exchanges (23 clubs) compared to 1981 (11). I hope to increase this further, and must thank the editor for the quality and regularity of this newsletter - which other clubs have commented favourably upon, and which helps to establish exchanges. The library benefits greatly from an effective exchange scheme. Some clubs we exchange with have been kind enough to find spare copies of some earlier publications, for our library - I should like to express here the Group's appreciation for their assistance. In return we are providing some back numbers of our newsletter for them.

Newsletters in particular will need binding at some stage, this being the most effective way of preserving the copies from loss or damage. The proposal to reproduce earlier copies of the newsletter has been delayed because the printers who were to have done it (cheaply) have gone into liquidation! I still hope to get the scheme underway, in the New Year.

Cataloguing is increasingly urgent as the library improves. I have begun by setting our own 'publication house' in order, by sorting through the Group's records to produce an index to MCG literature. This task is nearing completion, and will include a full list of contents of the MCG Cave Surveys, Journals, Newsletters, and other publications, and an author index. It will be published after MCG Journal No. 7, and anyone wanting a copy should let me know soon - it will be about 130 pages including the author index, with the price about £5 - £7.

Finally, apart from the usual inflow of books, journals, and newsletters, we need to give some thought to what specialist items to purchase for the club. I shall be happy to have your views at the HYGM, and see three areas myself:-

CAVE SURVEYS - We should have a complete set of surveys of the principal caves in Britain and a few overseas ones. Many surveys are published in newsletters and journals, so at least part of the need can be resolved by effective cataloguing. Some surveys will be obtained as and when required, with priority for Mendip where a separate set is being gathered for keeping in the map cabinet (because of their more intensive use). Others will however be available if the library does not stock the relevant newsletter or journal.

MAPS - The Ordnance Survey publishes three detailed map scales - 1:25000 (2½ inches to 1 mile); 1:10000 (about 6 inches to 1 mile); and 1:2500 (25 inches to 1 mile). Thanks to Pam and Robbie Charnock we have a 1:25000 display for Mendip. The OS sometimes publish 1:25000 special editions for other, well-visited regions such as the Brecon Beacons. These will be worth acquiring as part of the Recorder's yearly budget.

With the group's specialist interest in Mendip, there should be merit, while we can afford it, in obtaining a set of 6 inch to 1 mile maps (there are 21 covering Mendip). These provide a high grade of information extending to notable depressions and shakeholes, and former mine shafts and surface plant. Ordinarily the 6" maps would cost £7.50 each, which would be an outlay of £157.50. But we could obtain them for a third off (£105). The Institute of Geological Sciences, However, publish most 6" maps for Mendip with valuable overprinted geological information such as surface rock strata and fault lines. And they're cheaper than the OS, at £5.50 each (VAT extra) ! We wouldn't be able to get a third off these, but for the outlay of (a maximum) £133 - only £28 more than the basic OS maps - we would have a 6" set, plus the geological information for most of Mendip. If the HYGMA agrees, I should like to purchase these maps for the club.

In the case of Charterhouse, Velvet Bottom, Longwood Valley and the upper end of Cheddar Gorge, it may be useful also to acquire the 25" maps. Although the IGS do not publish geological maps at this scale, it is possible to see the master copies of the geological survey, which are at 25" scale, and transfer the notes to an ordinary 25" OS map. What are your views on this ?

MENDIP CAVING PUBLICATIONS - With our involvement in Mendip, we ought to have a complete set of caving publications for the region, including both books and caving club newsletters and journals. The limitation of course is money ! Within the ordinary yearly budget I can buy a few relevant publications, new and old, and obviously rely a great deal on the effective exchange of literature between the various clubs on Mendip. It is not going to be possible, however, to obtain a set of the early issues of other Mendip clubs without effort and money, photocopying the originals if these can be loaned by the other clubs (unless, that is, the great caving librarian in the sky looks kindly on us). There is currently the offer from Tony Oldham of a complete set of Wessex Cave Club Journals and supplements, from No.1 to 1978, most hardbound, at £150, and a complete set, most hardbound, at £120, of BEC Belfry Bulletins until about 1978. Are they worth it ? Probably not at that price, though they could be regarded as a blue chip investment. We lack about 60 issues of the Wessex Journal and supplements, and about 120 of the Belfry Bulletin. Allowing for some early issues not having many pages, the photocopying costs at 5p a page would amount to (say) £100, with extra for binding. The results of photocopying would be variable, with some being difficult to copy. The Oldham 'sets' would undoubtedly be worth spending some extra money, but how much extra ? Do we want both sets ? Should we enter into negotiations with Tony Oldham ? Can you think of any other questions ? For discussion at the Half-Yearly...

Jonathan Roberts, Hon Recorder.

HON EDITOR'S REPORT

Since the AGM when the present editor took control of the MCG press, there have been six editions of the Newsletter (including this one), one each month. On average, you have been presented with 10 A4 pages - most of the contributions coming from you the MCG member. However, it would be good to see some new contributors. Just send me your opinions, trip reports, cartoons, photographs, complaints - it's all welcome.

Among minor changes to the newsletter have been the regular inclusion of a cover photograph, and an attempt to provide such information as meet programme, membership news, cottage news, and tackle notes in a standard format for easy reference. We have had one crossword puzzle from Bryan Terry, and more are promised. Val Knight keeps me well posted with items from the Mendip local press. We have even had a report from China. The editor will welcome any comments you have in the newsletter, or suggestions for improvements.

The membership list is now held in a friendly computer, which also provides the editor with address labels each month. Cost of the newsletter for the first five months has been about £120 (including the cost of postage, about £8 per edition), but this is not a true cost as some materials and services are donated.

It is the editor's intention to continue with a regular monthly newsletter. Publication date and copy date for the next edition is now being published each month, so there is no excuse for being late with your submissions.

Work is in hand on Journal No.7, under the control of Bryan Pittman. At the time of writing, much of the promised material has not yet been received, but as the last date for submission is HYGEM day (16th October), no doubt more will be said at the meeting. If you have promised anything for the Journal, please give it to Bryan or me as soon as possible - it is important to meet the publication date if we are to have a 1982 Journal.

Ian McKechnie, Hon. Editor.

HYGM AGENDA

A written agenda will be available before the start of the meeting. If any member has an item he would like to discuss at the meeting, please let Tony Knibbs know, in advance if possible.

MENDIP DIALECT

The following conjugation of the verb "to be" was found recently by an MCG bibliophile. It was originally published in a grammar of Mendip speech, by "Agrikler", in the latter part of the last century.

<u>Present tense</u>	<u>Past tense</u>	<u>Present Neg Interrogative</u>
Oi 'be	Oi were	Bain't oi?
Thee beest	Thee wert	Bisn't thee?
He, she, it be	He, she, it were	Bann'er?
We 'm	We was	Bain't us?
You 'm	You was	Bain't 'ee?
They 'm	They was	Bain't 'em?

Things don't change, do 'em?

**