



Mendip Caving Group Newsletter

October 1982

No. 157



IN THIS ISSUE...

Meet Programme	2	Upper Flood News	4
Membership News	3	Yorkshire Meet Report	5-8
Cottage Bookings	3	Recorder's Reviews	8
Camping Barns	3	MCG Song	8-10
Fibrescope	4	Bob Speleo	10

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, Camborne 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, Hershaw, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.
tel (home) Walton 28292 (work) Walton 28851 ext 212

CAVING ACCOMODATION is available at the MCG cottage on Mendip:
Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XW
The map reference is NGR 5147 5606 (OS 1:50,000 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 18th November. Copy should reach the editor before
11th November to ensure inclusion.

MCG MEET PROGRAMME

Meet	Leader	Base
Nov 20 Agen Allwedd	P. Ingold	Chelsea (Whitewalls)
Dec 18 Eastwater (Primrose Pot)	I. McKechnie	MCG
Jan ?	Watch this space for further news.....	

AGEN ALLWEDD 20th November: Accommodation at the Chelsea Cottage, numbers limited
to about 12. Contact Phil Ingold or Jon Roberts if you want to go.

The EASTWATER trip on 18th December, and we will visit Primrose Pot, the deepest
point of the cave. This will involve a lot of tight passage, followed by an even
tighter 35ft pitch. A 65ft and a roomier 90ft pitch then lead to the final rift
passage. It is not a trip for the bulkier caver, and if there is sufficient demand
a second trip will be arranged to other parts of the system.

HEARD IN THE MCG COTTAGE from a recently married associate member (using a sort of
poor-little-girl voice): "John. Cut me some bread. I'm not very good at it."

MARTYN FARR et al are planning to attempt the British cave-diving depth record this
weekend; they have previously dived a vertical passage in Wookey Hole, and now in-
tend to push further.

CREDITS were missed from "Upper Flood News" (p4) and "Yorkshire Meet Report" (p5);
They were written by Malcolm Cotter and Tony Knibbs respectively.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Geoff Barton splashing up Easegill streamway. (Ian McKechnie)

mat and stove are also needed. Accommodation is unisex - whatever that means!

The barn is part of an experiment by the Peak Parks and the Countryside Commission to find new uses for derelict barns as well as to offer basic accommodation to visitors. The Losehill barn is situated in the grounds of Losehill Hall and bookings should be made by writing to or phoning:
Peak Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire. S30 2WB
tel Hope Valley 20373 / 20693.

A copy of a brochure giving more details is pinned on the cottage noticeboard.

NEW DIGGING AID?

A flexible fibrescope, designed for the building industry, is described in a magazine cutting handed to the editor. Available from American Optical of Slough, the Stratoscope fibrescope allows visual examination of restricted holes and fissures. The instrument's inspection head is at the end of a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter, 101 inch long flexible tube, and illumination is provided by coupling to a standard MSHA or Wheat miners lamp.

(For further details phone Slough 76464 - maybe they'll let us borrow one on trial??)

UPPER FLOOD ENTRANCE SWALLET

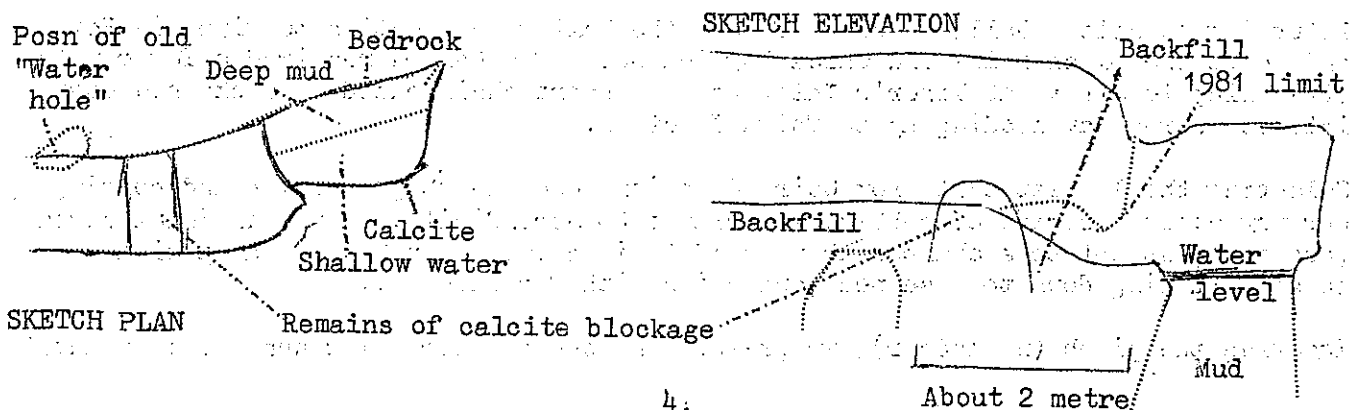
This year the face has been advanced about 2 metres by blasting through massive calcite. This calcite, unlike the earlier mass, dips below stream level and holds back an appreciable amount of yellow clay (as opposed to the black tailings encountered earlier). Hopefully this will be the end of the present obstruction.

The work has produced a pool partly floored with unfathomed soft mud. The passage also takes a slight turn to the left (looking downstream).

With the wet weather this year we have on several occasions encountered a lively stream in the cave which does not back up at the end.

The problem of spoil removal has been the main factor in slowing down forward progress. The present policy of preservation by avoiding excessive dumping in the chambers means that matter removed at the face must be taken right out to the surface - a distance of nearly 200 metres. To assist handling, spoil is currently put into poly-bags in quantities of about one gallon. The whole is then put into a skip and hauled out of the cave. Unfortunately, there are about 12 staging posts where obstructions occur and where bags must be taken from one skip and transferred to another - a tiring and time-consuming process. The small quantity of material in each bag means that a lot of bags need to be handled.

Following discussion of the problem, some of the workers think that it may prove better to completely fill a batch of skips, then pull them all the way without unloading. This will require more ramping and obstruction removal.



YORKSHIRE WEEK 18th-25th SEPTEMBER

Attendance: Tony Knibbs, John and Helen Miriam, Roger Wallington, Mick Lovell, Don Vosper, Greg Smith, Neil Hutchinson, Pete Bulling.

An alternative title for this account could be "Not Dowbergill Passage": this was the only scheduled trip and was abandoned for several reasons including: no knowledgeable leader available, it's too much of a sweat sorting out our own route, crowds of other cavers were expected to be there. Those excuses sufficed for the first weekend, after that things got progressively wetter. Luckily we found plenty of other caves to do.

Saturday, 18th September, GRANGE RIGG POT. Party comprised TK, JM, RW, ML, and NH, with HM and PB giving moral support on the two-mile slog up via Clapdale Farm.

The moors had been dry for about two weeks and the day was very hot and settled. Grange Rigg was a good choice because it is ordinarily a very wet trip in average weather, not least due to extensive moorland "gripping" around the entrance. The numerous shallow trenches leading into the sink provided useful identification.

Having cached the numerous rucsacs inside the entrance, we set off following the small trickle which passes for a stream. The first 50ft pitch provided a superb free-hanging descent in a cleanwashed shaft. A good passage with occasional crawls in water led on via 10ft and 15ft pitches to another good descent at a 40ft pitch.

An uncomfortable wet crawl over cobbles ensued, followed by the sometimes awkward going through Anemolote Crawl out into the more spacious Battleship Passage. We continued, stopping occasionally to puzzle over the route, which was confused by odd boulders which someone had left lying about, and to gaze at the many attractive formations. A 15ft pitch, followed almost immediately by another of 25ft at the Dome, brought us to Sledge Hammer Pot from which an uninviting drainpipe was pursued by JM and RW to the final chamber.

After four sporting hours underground, we emerged to find the weather changed to a grey mist and cold wind. No time was lost changing to dry clothes and setting off back to Clapham, this time down Trow Gill and along the path beside Clapham Beck.

Sunday, 19th September, LINK POT. Party comprised TK, JM, RW, ML, NH and PB.

Changing at Bull Pot Farm, we set off over the moor, passing Lancaster Hole to reach Ease Gill after a mile or so. Link Pot entrance is an initially narrow rift providing a dry 50ft pitch. Mistakenly thinking this cave to be of ample proportions, TK carried a 12 volt 55 watt quartz halogen lamp in an ammo box. Both of these (and nearly ML, lifelining below) he tried to demolish by accidentally dropping over the last 35ft. It was surprising to find the lamp undamaged; the ammo box was slightly dented; ML was stirred but not shaken.

The cave opened out below the pitch and we passed through Hilton Hall and descended the small streamway to Echo Aven, an 80ft pitch into the Earby Series of Lancaster Hole. Having no ladder, we contented ourselves with examining the pitch with the spotlight, which easily illuminated the rocky floor below us.

Returning to Hilton Hall, we set off past the Wallows connection to Pippikin Pot and on to the Black Holes and China Dog Chamber. The Canyon required a few minutes straddling to arrive at Tiger's Inlet where a short chain eased a tricky manoeuvre into the streamway leading up to Cairn Junction.

Selecting the largest exit from Cairn Junction soon had us grovelling and cussing our way along a series of pebbly, wet crawls to Serendipity. Here, an inlet stream passage opens out to a chamber above a 50ft pitch into Easy Street, a spacious passage running down to a sumped connection with Pippikin Pot.

Ignoring the pitch (no ladder), we pressed on upstream for a few hundred feet until

more grovelling threatened. On the return we noted a rope hanging out of Matchbox Aven, key to the Lone Ranger Series.

From Serendipity, an easier crawl past some good formations in Death Row brought us back to Cairn Junction. The return to the surface was uneventful and we emerged after an intriguing three-hour trip.

Monday, 20th September; LANCASTER HOLE / EASE GILL CAVERNS. Party comprised TK, JM, RW, GS, ML, NH, and PB.

The party split into two groups: TK, JM and NH descending Lancaster Hole, the rest entering Ease Gill system at County Pot.

The weather had become decidedly damp and it was raining as we descended Lancaster Hole, leaving a return lifeline in case the exit through Ease Gill was impossible. The 110ft entrance shaft was wet; this suggested that streams elsewhere would be high.

Route finding proved relatively easy and we were soon at Fall Pot, using the spotlamp to illuminate the 150ft waterfall coming in from Cow Pot. The Master Cave, only 60ft below us, looked inviting but we set off along Montagu East Passage to Stake Pot. Here, and in some large chambers to follow, the spotlamp proved of practical use in clearly picking out continuations of the route, which were invisible to us by normal caplamp lighting.

With the sound of the Master Cave stream often audible below us, we continued at high level where thick deposits of mud covered everything and made the going rather tricky at times. The route became steadily more uncertain as we entered a region of hands-and-knees crawls which we thought wrongly to be the Minarets. But we moved steadily towards Ease Gill system by much trial and error, eventually meeting GS and RW somewhere near Snail Cavern.

GS and RW had come from County Pot via Manchester Bypass, avoiding water problems indicated by the heavy stream they had encountered at Spout Hall. It was thought best to follow this route out, TK making heavy weather of the more awkward crawls and blaming his ammo box. The going improved once we had descended a 20ft ladder hanging on a maypole, and we were soon washing off the accumulated mud in the County Pot streamway. Emerging from the entrance after a four-hour trip we found Ease Gill in spate and heavy rain falling.

Tuesday, 21st September, DENTDALE. GS, RW and ML had returned home, and we were joined by DV.

A leisurely day was begun with a scenic drive in good weather up Kingsdale and down to Dent village where we called in at Lyon Ladders to examine their products with a view to ordering some additional ladders.

Window shopping completed, we snatched a pastie and a pint at the Sun before setting off for a walk as a passing shower petered out.

From Dent, we set off up the path beside Flinted Gill to gain a walled track contouring the fell to the Southeast, overlooking first Dentdale and then Deepdale. The track reached an altitude of about 1600ft before we left it in favour of following Blea Moors, with some picturesque waterfalls, down into Deepdale and the road back to Dent. The walk provided a circuit of almost eight miles which took us three hours to complete. The views were magnificent.

Wednesday, 22nd September, SUNSET HOLE and HARDRAWKIN POT. Party comprised TK, JM, DV, NH and PB.

Casting a cautious glance at the weather, we set off from the Hill Inn carpark to reach Sunset Hole after a mile or so. With its expanse of bare limestone pavement,

this part of Chapel-le-Dale is a superb example of karst landscape.

The trip was straightforward. About 1000ft of easy stream passage leads via a simple six-foot climb to a pitch of 15ft. A further 300ft of easy going then opens out into a sizeable chamber with a good 50ft pitch offering a convenient hang out of the stream. High up at the far end of the chamber a knotted rope hung from a bar across a wide chimney leading up into Upper Series and 1968 Extension.

The ascent was easier than it looked, allowing TK, JM, and NH to push on for a couple of hundred feet through low crawls and a short drop through boulders to a 30ft pitch. We had no ladder, so we turned back to join the others for an easy amble upstream to emerge after two hours of good, honest, fun.

Since the rain was still holding off, we walked back to Hardrawkin Pot and cached the rucksacs in the entrance rift. Following the easy streamway for about 700ft brought us to the head of a 90ft wet pitch. The descent was exhilarating, to say the least, and TK, JM and NH pressed on down to a sump pool in a blind rift.

Returning up the big pitch was occasionally difficult where the full force of the downpour was inescapable. The return to the surface was otherwise easy and we regained the entrance after one and a half hours.

Together, Sunset Hole and Hardrawkin Pot provide a pleasant half day's caving. But in high water it is probably something else entirely.

Thursday, 23rd September. LOST JOHN'S SYSTEM was the plan for the day, but heavy overnight rain had fallen and was still pouring down when we got onto Leck Fell. One look at the entrance was enough; a very heavy stream was bucketing down it, and appeared to be still rising. So it was off to Austwick for a pint in the Gamecock.

In the afternoon TK and NH went to Malham for a couple of hours walking up Gordale towards Malham Tarn, reaching the Cove via Comb Scar to make a five-mile circuit.

Friday, 24th September, ALUM POT via LOWER LONG CHURN CAVE and UPPER LONG CHURN CAVE. Party comprised TK, JM, NH and PB.

Having spent the morning playing at SRT on the beech tree outside Greenclose, it was decided to go underground for the afternoon. Alum Pot seemed a reasonable choice because it was thought not so susceptible to the effects of bad weather; it was raining when we arrived at Selside.

The visit got off to a silly start when we mistook Diccan Pot stream entrance for Lower Long Churn. Arriving at the 120ft first pitch of Diccan, (very wet, despite moderate stream) we realised the error and set about finding the hands-and-knees crawl linking with Upper Long Churn. This done, there was no problem getting down Dolly Tubs pitch of 45ft and out into Alum Pot shaft via the 15ft pitch at Greasy Slab.

Crossing the bridge, we laddered the 45ft pitch and realised that we had no remaining ladder for the final pitch. This was no problem, however, as TK lowered a 30ft ladder off the pitch to enable JM and NH to reach the sump. The main Alum Pot shaft was wet, windy and cold. Rain was falling into the open shaft from a very grey sky above.

The return trip went smoothly, and we met a party from a school in Bingley entering Lower Long Churn as we left. They stated their destination as the Dolly Tubs.

We next turned our attention to Upper Long Churn from which a very lively stream was flowing. About 900ft of easy walking stream passage brought us to Dr. Bannister's Handbasin where the water chute was going great guns.

Three of us climbed the chute, but PB had some trouble (like the ladder put down to

help broke the tiny rock spike belay as PB's weight combined with water pressure). JM returned downstream with PB; TK and NH used the upstream exit.

Outside on the moor it was raining very heavily indeed and, returning to await JM and PB at Lower Long Churn entrance, the stream was seen to be rising rapidly. Concern was felt for the Bingley party, and the return of JM and PB confirmed that they were now going upstream in Upper Long Churn. A quick run up the streamway found them retracing their steps in a now angry stream.

Had any of us extended our time underground by 30 minutes, the story could have been gravely different. In the short space of about 45 minutes the streams above Alum Pot had become raging torrents; descending Diccan streamway would have been suicidal. The incident provided an object lesson on cave flooding.

We changed hurriedly at the car as the lane became more and more like a river, leaving just in time to ford a flooded dip in the track before it became too deep.

Although not taking part in the caving activities, Bryan Terry, Carol Nunn and Dave Shephard stayed at Greenclose during the first weekend. They achieved their aim of doing the Three Peaks walk, expending so much energy that BF's traditional curry defeated them afterwards.

Despite the inclement weather during the last few days, the Yorkshire week was very successful. Three meets are planned for this area in 1983 and TK will be leading unscheduled caves suitable for beginners - so don't be put off by fears of being thrown in at the deep end.

RECORDERS REVIEWS

Jon Roberts hopes to provide brief notes on principal topics covered in publications newly acquired for the library, in future issues. The following notes concern recent Chelsea Speleological Society newsletters.

Ch SS Vol.24 No.9, June 1982. Part 1 of Chelsea's recent discovery and exploration of Pwll Gwynt; and a visit and survey of Carno Adit (near Beaufort).

ChSS Vol.24 No.10, July 1982. Chelsea have carried out stream flow measurements in Agen Allwedd, based on speculation that the size of the main stream seemed larger on the downstream side if the 5th boulder choke than upstream of the 4th. A flow rate of 0.07 m³/sec was obtained upstream of the 4th, and 0.21 m³/sec downstream of the 5th. With stream volume three times greater, Chelsea are now convinced that a major streamway exists behind the 5th boulder choke, and are planning a major dig.

ChSS Vol.24 No.11, August 1982. World war 2 deep tunnel shelters at Ramsgate; and part 2 on Pwll Gwynt (including plan).

ChSS Vol.24 No.12, September 1982. Expedition to the Ardeche, describing trips to the Grotte de la Diau, Goule de Foussoubie, Grotte de Midroi, Grotte de la Cocaliere, Grotte de Reveillon, Aven de Richard, Aven de la Varade.

The Journal of the Craven Pothole Club includes articles on Cliff Force Cave, Tiddeman's Pot, Poseidon's Halls, Great Northern Passage (Caping Gill), Falkensteinerhohle, Kephallinia 1980, Sardinia 1980, Alum Pot, Ray Cat (Andros Island). I think that speaks for itself.

THE MCG SONG

By popular request, the words of the MCG song are reproduced below. The song was composed "many years ago" by Pete Goddard. It is sung regularly but unintelligibly in the back room of the Hunters - hence the requests for a copy of the words.

THE MCG SONG

We're three members of the M.C.G.,
In the Hunters you will often find us lurking.
So if you're interested
We will tell you why we're vested
With authority to lecture you on shirking.

CHORUS: The B.E.C., the Wessex, and the Shepton
Can crawl up their amalgamated rectum.

From Londinium to the Mendip Hills we speed,
In vehicles that are sometimes far from pretty.
We have boots upon our feet
And wear badges, oh so neat,
But the rest of us is really rather nasty.

CHORUS: The B.E.C., etc

Now Alfie plays the banjo very nicely,
But I can hardly play the thing at all.
And as he sits there strumming,
His compositions humming,
I wonder if he's got two banjo balls.

CHORUS: The B.E.C., etc

We swig our ale with pleasure and with ease,
And the kind of songs we sing are sure to please.
We're the only buggers here
Who can take their drop of beer.
It's the tea that really brings us to our knees.

CHORUS: The B.E.C., etc

We've got ourselves a name for brewing tea,
And we must admit we do it liberally.
But while we're tippling tannin,
The scheme that we are planning
Is to creep down to the B.E.C. for coffee. (with emphasis)

CHORUS: The B.E.C., etc

You may wonder what we're up to all the week.
Well, our life up town is really rather shady.
We're often seen around
Piccadilly Underground,
Providing all the earnings of a high born lady. (appropriate tune change)

CHORUS: The B.E.C., etc

and a new verse for 1982.....

If you'd like a cottage built, you ought to see us.
We've built our own; we'll build you one as well.
We'll make it strong and high,
And homely, warm, and dry.
And then we'll light the gas and run like hell.

Sorry, BEC, Wessex, and Shepton. You know we don't mean it.

And for those who can understand all those funny black dots: here's the melody, as whistled by Tony Knibbs.

We're three members of the M. C. G., In the
 Hunter's you will often find us lurking, So
 if you're inter-ested we will tell you why we're vested with author-
 or-ity to lecture you on shirking. CHORUS: The
 B. E. C., the Wessex and the Shepton can
 crawl up their am-algam-ated r---m.

Bob Speleo β

SUNDAY, 8am.
 MEN'S Lounge

CUP OF
 Tea For
 You J.D.

ER, TA
 VEEY MUCH

CUP OF
 Tea, GEORGE

OH.... THANKS,
 JUST WHAT I
 NEED

CUP OF Tea
 MICK, Its THE
 LAST ONE

NO THANKS,
 LET BOB
 HAVE IT

BOB,-
 CUP OF
 TEA

I'D RATHER
 HAVE COFFEE-
 WHITE-ONE
 SUGAR.

FROM THE LOBB BY MARTIN 1982