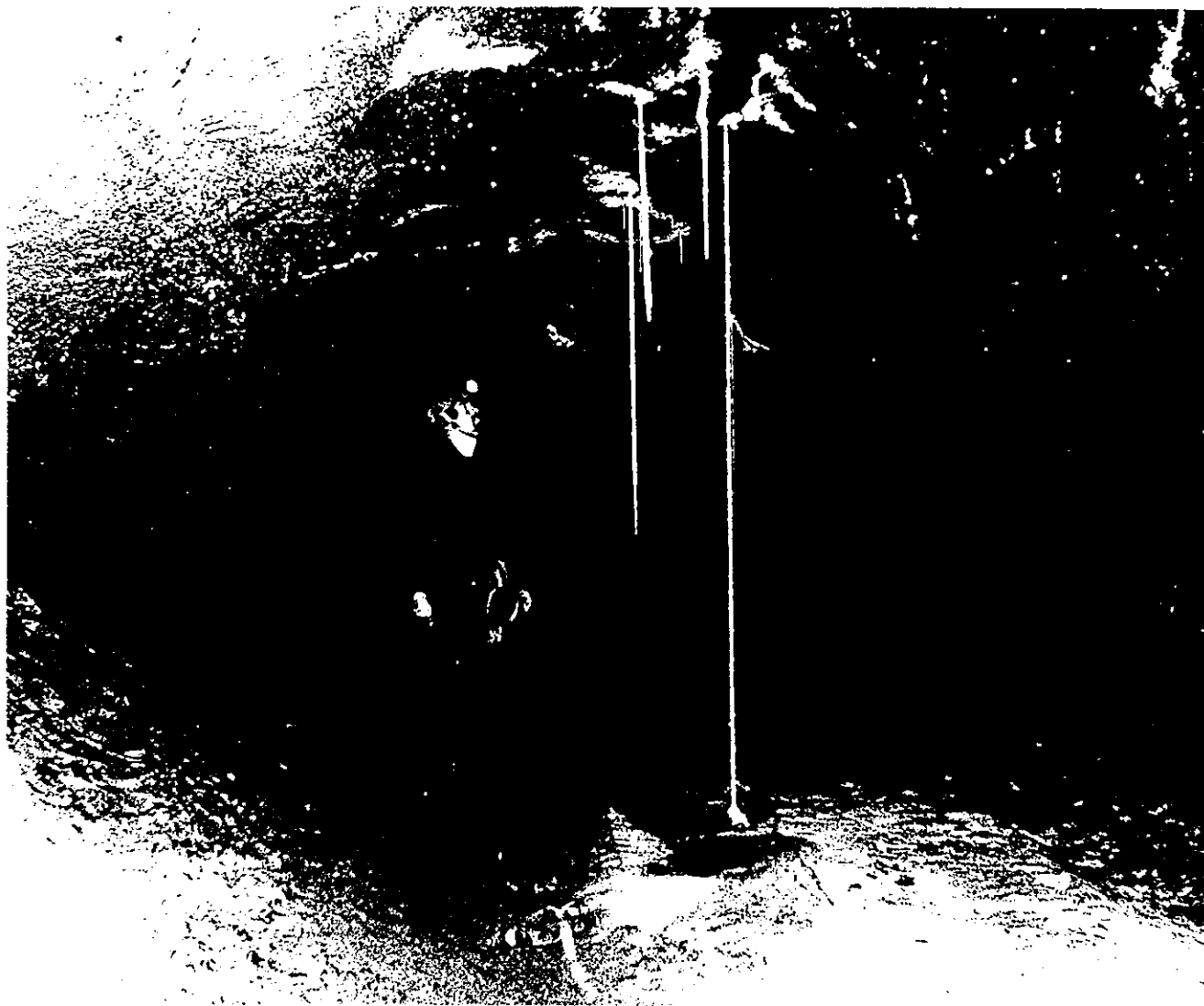




Mendip Caving Group Newsletter

November 1982

No. 158



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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 1:50000 first series sheet 182).
Guest bookings should be made with the Cottage Warden.

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

NEXT NEWSLETTER is due on 16th December. Copy should reach the Editor before 10th
December to ensure inclusion. Late news can normally be accepted up to the public-
ation date.

MCG MEET PROGRAMME

Meet	Leader	Base
Nov 20 Agen Allwedd	Jon Roberts	Chelsea (Whitewalls)
Dec 18 Eastwater (Primrose Pot)	Ian McKechnie	MCG
Jan		
Feb		
Mar 19		

AGEN ALLWEDD 20th Nov.: A few places still available. Contact Jon Roberts.

EASTWATER (PRIMROSE POT) is not as bad, I am told, as was described last month. All
the 'Old Members' of the club say they've been down there - don't let them say that
you're soft! Seriously, though, it sounds like a corner of Mendip which shouldn't
be missed - I'll see you there.

THE PYRENEES for 1983 appears to be a viable proposition as an MCG overseas meet. A
'working party' has been set up to make provisional plans, find out the best time to
go, and co-ordinate the Club's knowledge and experience of the area. Anyone inter-
ested - speak to Geoff Barton or Tony Knibbs.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: In Flabbergasm Oxbow, Dan-yr-Ogof. (Ian McKechnie)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS have been accepted from:

Richard Dominey, 44 Charnell Close, Heston, Middx.

Probationary - introduced by Malcolm Cotter and Adrian Duckett.

Paddy Newman, 148b Westmount Road, Eltham, London, SE9 1XY.

Probationary - introduced by John Pullock and Jon Roberts.

Peter Turcan, Flat 18, Kensington Mansions, Trebovir Road, Earls Court, SW5.

Probationary - introduced by Malcolm Cotter and Adrian Duckett.

CONGRATULATIONS to Anne and Wayne Hiscox, on the birth of their second daughter, May, on 9th November.

CONGRATULATIONS also to Linda Yeats, (an MCG member until last year) who is to marry cave-diver Dave Morris. They are at present living in Skipton.

THE LIBRARY LIST is now almost complete. This indexes all publications held in the MCG library at present, and will be updated from time to time through the Newsletter. Several copies of the list will be kept in the library for reference. Anyone who would like a personal copy should contact Jon Roberts - there will be a nominal charge to defray costs. Please ask as soon as possible if you want one, so that they can all be copied together.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

November

20
27 Ealing College (12)

December

4 Bushey Ventures (12)

11 Ian Parry +6

18 Eastwater + Val's Barn Dance

25

January

1

8 Barnet C.G. (8)

15

22 Kingston Poly (12)

29

February

5

12 Ealing College (12)

19

26 Kingston Poly (12)

March

5

12 Ealing College (12)

19 AGM (members only)

26

April

2

9

16

COTTAGE NEWS

The NEW SOAKAWAY began to take shape last weekend (6.11.82) with the appearance of a JCB on Saturday morning. This machine proceeded to dig a hole about 15ft deep in the car-park in front of the cottage. After passing through a layer of rubble from the Mk. 1 cottage, and a layer of clay, it reached solid rock, apparently dipping in a direction between the cottage and the field.

All the rocks removed by the JCB were thrown back in over the weekend, approximately 1/3 filling the hole. When more rocks are in there, the plan is to cover this permeable layer with a membrane such as heavy duty polythene before filling with earth and resurfacing the car-park. In parallel, a pipe will be needed to carry the water to the soakaway.

In the meantime, we have a large hole in front of the cottage - take care not to park your car in it. We also have a very muddy car-park, so more care than usual is needed to avoid transferring this mud to the cottage floor, and in cleaning up after the weekend.

CAVING NOTES

CHARTERHOUSE CAVE (see article on page 11) should be getting a gate on Saturday, 27th November, in preparation for opening the cave to general access. The work will involve a lot of concrete mixing and pouring, which must all be done in one session, so as many people as possible are needed. If you can be there that weekend to assist, contact Tim Large or Glyn Bolt in the Hunters on the Friday evening.

MCG SONG - ADDENDUM

It didn't take long for Simon Knight to point out that a verse was missing from the version of the MCG Song printed in the last issue of the Newsletter. So to put the record straight, our roving reporter primed one of the "Older Members" with the customary pint, and this is what came out:

Now someone said that once he saw us caving.

But who it was, we really can't agree.

And when we catch that lout,

We'll sort the bugger out,

For our drinking reputation is worth saving.

CHORUS: The BEC, the Wessex, and the Shepton
Can crawl up their amalgamated rectum.

RECORDER'S REVIEWS

Bristol Exploration Club Caving reports

No.13 St Cuthberts Reports: Part G - Cerberus and Maypole Series, Oct 1982
Part I - September Series, Oct 1982.

After getting everywhere, you have to describe everything. This at any rate is an absolute for St Cuthbert's Swallet, the BEC's underground feifdom. They have even had to resort to London Undrrground - style diagrams, to render the complex of passages intelligible to the uninitiated. So the absence of a 'Minoteur Maze' is the more surprising - is this an as yet undiscovered series under the Shepton hut, one wonders? The inevitable 'Rabbit Warren' makes a showing, though. The passageways are being dissected series by series, and parts G and I have now broken cover. Standard format is a description, followed by notes on the survey, references, acknowledgements, photographs, and finally the surveys themselves. A further eight parts have yet to materialise. And in due course, no doubt we can expect Belfry Publishing to produce the book, the film, the serialised television rights, St. Cuthbert's memorabilia.... This one will run and run.

Cambrian Caving Council 'Red Dragon' Annual Journal No 9 1982-83, Sept 1982.

Another entertaining and instructive pot-pourri from Frank Baguley, Cambrian CC secretary. Tracts include funding and planning for expeditions, cave access and conservation, South Pembrokeshire Coast caves (I thought it was Dyfed now), bats and the law and the implications of the wildlife and countryside act 1981, water tracing results in the Upper Rhymney Valley, Doctor in a cave (an historical perspective of the Mendip Rescue Organisation by a participating doctor), and - for the incurably curious - a verbatim account of the Coroner's inquest and aftermath, following a recent death at Porth-yr-Ogof. Well worth reading, all 106 pages.

Grosvenor Caving Club newsletter No 1 Summer 1982

This up and coming (or do I mean down and going places) offshoot from the North Wales Caving Club visited Mendip in April, and then and there exchanged their first Occasional Publication. The first formal newsletter has now arrived, and displays a wealth of underground activity, with wide-ranging explorations of caves and mines in North Wales and the North of England, and no fewer than 16 digs in various stages of devel-

opment. And the NWCC have written an inevitably libellous club song about them, to the tune of Aurelia. The dimensions of one of their cave digs can be judged from its name: Ogof Noeth - Naked Cave.

Westminster Speleo Group newsletter.

WSG N/L 27, 3.82: The usual club news, the Westminster cartoon character SPL0D (personally I think our Bob Speleo is a much more likely individual), and a review of CRO callouts in the North of England during 1980 including no fewer than 11 animal callouts. They evince great concern for the four-legged rescuees, and re-publish an earlier and clearly unsuccessful appeal to sheep to join a recognised caving club rather than undertake such perilous pastimes on their own.

WSG N/L 28, ???: NEVER RECEIVED - any chance, WSG?

WSG N/L 29, May 82: SPL0D again, and an extensive commentary on their rescue practice at Ogof Foel Fawr in March this year. (No sheep took part.)

WSG N/L 30, July 82: S--0D. Mendip News. And a visit to Langcliffe via Oddmire Pot.

WSG N/L 31, Sept 82: One memorable item - Ogof Hesp Alyn is "a shit hole; and the only place to wash off afterwards is a nearby sewage-processing plant".

HALF MARATHON (MORE MCG MASOCHISM)

by Roy Kempston

On 6th November, Derek Walsh, Bryan Pittman, Mick Lovell, Paddy Newman, Roy Kempston and Chris Kelsey found a new way to get out of caving. They set off just after noon, heading down to Charterhouse, Velvet Bottom, Priddy Hill, Priddy, the Hunters Lodge, and back to the cottage - an uphill course with wind against the whole way.

The three keen ones (CK, RK, PN) made an early break, but could not get away from the "oldies"; however a few hills soon gave them a 50m lead. This gradually increased until in the end the three "young ones" finished together in 84 minutes, closely followed the other "young one" DW. Youngster Mick made an early diversion with shoe problems, and young Bryan was still at the hunters 1½ hours after everyone else had finished.

EQUIPMENT REVIEW: A DYNAMO TORCH AS EMERGENCY LIGHTING Ian McKechnie

Browsing one lunch-time in a Milletts store, an item described as a "Dynamo Flashlight" caught my eye. A label on the box proclaimed the following features:

"Neither dry batteries nor storage cells required as electricity is generated by squeezing the grip lever.

"A lock on the top makes it more easy to carry in the pocket, and it is handy to use in an emergency.

"Shockproof and water-repellent case.

"(Never throw against the ground or intentionally soak in water.)"

With such a testimonial, what could I do but buy one?

As soon as I got home, I shut myself in the wardrobe to try out the new purchase. It sat comfortably in the hand, and was fitted with a wrist lanyard to reduce the danger of dropping it. When the handle was squeezed, the light output was good and the fly-wheel kept the light there for 1-2 seconds. Repeated squeezing gave continuous light; but how long would it last before the hand was too tired? And what could I use it for anyway? There was one way to find an answer to both these questions - try it out underground.

(continued bottom of page 9.)

Most of you reading this will have some idea of what is involved in SRT. However, I'm sure many members have dismissed it as an area which is definitely not for them. This is fair enough. SRT is not everyone's cup of tea, but all too often this decision is made on the basis of some common misconceptions.

It is my intention in this article to run through some of these misconceptions, trying to give a better all-round view of SRT and its pro's and con's, as they apply to the average caver. In so doing, I hope to possibly convert a few of you to taking an active interest in this area of the sport.

Firstly, let me make it clear that I am not advocating the complete abolition of ladders underground. There are many situations where a ladder provides the quickest and easiest method of descent, particularly on short, awkward pitches. Indeed, there are few, if any, pitches in this country which can't be climbed using conventional ladder techniques, and SRT should never, in my opinion, be used simply as a substitute for poor ladder technique. On the other hand, SRT does provide a most attractive alternative to using a ladder, and can make a 150' plus pitch a joy to climb rather than purely a means of getting from A to B. SRT of course comes into its own on the Continent, where 300' plus pitches are commonplace; to anyone considering caving abroad, the necessity of a good SRT technique should be obvious.

So, what puts cavers off SRT? Let me now run through a few of the common arguments put forward by the anti-SRT camp, and try and dispel a few myths.

A frequently heard argument is that 'ladder is safer' - this is in fact not true; given that both ladder and rope are rigged by competent cavers, a rope will almost always be safer. The key to this statement lies in what we understand by safety; most people will just take into account the slightly higher breaking strain of a wire ladder and conclude that it must be safer. However, with the very high breaking strain of modern SRT rope, there are other factors which become far more important. For instance - a ladder will be belayed at one point only, whereas a rope will be belayed at at least 3 points at the head of a pitch, and often will be rebelayed at intervals down the shaft.

The addition of a lifeline means that we may often be tempted to use substandard belay points for a ladder because of an implied increase in safety factor from the extra rope. Again, the actual safety of a life-line can itself be questioned, as this depends on the state of the chosen belay, and the strength and alertness of the person in charge of the lifeline. How many of us have actually held a fall off a ladder? It is my suggestion therefore that ladders, and in particular lifelines, present a climber with a very false sense of security, and are only psychologically safer than a single rope.

Another frequently heard argument is that 'ladders are quicker to rig and climb'. While this may be true on short pitches with an optimum number in the party, on a long pitch with a larger party, the extra time taken coupling together ladders and rigging lifelines will often greatly exceed the time taken to search for useful rope belays. As for climbing, on a big pitch a single rope will win 'hands down', especially where the rope is belayed at intervals down the pitch - it then becomes possible to have two or three on the rope at once. Also, because climbing and descending are individual procedures with a single rope, there are no great communication problems - how many times have you stood at the bottom of a large, wet, pitch, freezing to death, and trying to sort out a tangled lifeline stuck halfway up.

The above two points are probably the most important and widely voiced in dismissing SRT, however there are other factors to be taken into consideration, not the least of which is the cost.

There is no arguing this point - SRT equipment is not cheap. However I don't think it is quite as expensive as many cavers believe. The main expense in a system is the cost of ascenders and descenders (about £10 - £15 each). Together with harnesses,

slings, and krabs, this puts the cost of a complete 'sit-stand' system at around £50, and of a rope-walking system at around £60. These prices are for a complete system, most cavers will already have a certain number of krabs and tapes, many will possess a sit-harness and descender. This will of course reduce the cost quite considerably, often leaving just ascenders and a few bits and pieces to be purchased - an outlay of £25 to £30.

Although a certain amount of ingenuity can be used in putting together a cheap SRT rig, there is a very thin line between saving money and using dangerous and inadequate equipment. Suspended 100' up a pitch is no time to wish you had spent those extra few pounds on the correct gear.

Another point in favour of SRT is the reduced amount of tackle needed to rig a cave. One person can comfortably carry enough rope to rig a 300' pitch; to do that with ladder would require a large wheelbarrow and an inexhaustible supply of mars-bars. This means that smaller parties can easily tackle large systems with much vertical work, thus making the whole process of moving through the cave quicker, steadier, and more enjoyable.

Perhaps the most attractive feature of SRT is that given good technique, it can make the climbing of very long pitches not only possible, but rather pleasant. When using a rope-walking system, the caver is kept upright all the time, and all the power comes from the legs, the arms not being used at all. In using the sit-stand method, the caver is alternately sitting and standing; this means for one half of each cycle the caver is sitting suspended from his sit-harness, and so resting. So it can be seen that the very nature of SRT makes climbing a far less exhausting process. However just as in ladder climbing technique is all-important, so it is in SRT; otherwise you will arrive at the top of a 100' pitch feeling as though you have just run a marathon.

One last point that is important to remember; SRT is a very personal technique; when you are on a pitch, it is your skill in using the equipment that counts, as there is no-one to give you a helping 'tug' if you start floundering. For this reason, if for no other, SRT can not and should not be used as a club technique; here I think ladders will always reign supreme. SRT is very much up to the individual or group of individuals within the club.

Unfortunately, Mendip is not exactly abounding with caves where SRT can be used. But Mendip can provide a good training ground for more ambitious trips to Yorkshire. It would be nice to think that as a club we could organise well-attended SRT weekends at regular intervals. Of course, the logical extension of this would be an annual trip abroad, and maybe even a regular expedition to more far-flung and less frequented areas. As a club of significant (and still growing) numbers I think we should be seriously considering such things, and as caving abroad requires a use of SRT, it is up to us, the members, to start generating interest and building up the required skills.

If there is enough interest, I propose to try and organise an SRT trial weekend on Mendip where members already using SRT can give anyone interested the chance to try out different systems on the surface. You can then see for yourself what SRT involves. If anyone interested would approach me (Neil Hutchinson), I will try and sort out a weekend convenient to all.

THE DERBYSHIRE MEET - POSTSCRIPT.

by Geoff Barton

I am reminded by the editor that the Sunday visit to Knotlow Mines has not yet achieved the distinction of being recorded in the newsletter, and idle promises to do this some time in the future, and some threats, have resulted in the story finally being told.

The August issue tells of the many hours spent discussing the finer points of caving in the pub, and the long hours of physical exertion at the Orpheus cottage with a barrel. The party was thus reduced to 7 MCG when a late start was made on the Sunday,

the other three having decided to continue as they had started and to spend the afternoon in a pub at Hartington. (It's all lies, says the editor.) After obtaining a large (8 inch) key to the mine we set off and soon had a ladder down the 10ft entrance via the climbing pitch into the main system. As we were a largeish (10) group, we split into two, and the first group set off to ladder the next two pitches. Unfortunately, JP discovered that the ladder on the final waterfall pitch was too short, and a change of plan was called for. They decided to explore the Bung series, and started crawling into various corners of the intermediate chambers in what turned out to be an unsuccessful attempt at locating the entrance. The second party decided to sacrifice a lifeline and remove a ladder from the second pitch; and they were soon down the waterfall pitch to the bottom of a 170ft mine-shaft where light was just visible through the cover above. The way on led down a long 'coffin' level which is shaped to permit passage only when the upper body is bent to the horizontal. When the second party, led by Gordon Lister, reached the end of this, by then a crawl in water, the way on was mysteriously blocked by what appeared to be a roof-fall, and some plaintive cries were soon followed by hearty cursing.

The end of the system was reached by going down to Crimbo Swallow, where great care was needed not to disturb the 'deads' which had been stacked by the miners and looked as though a loud noise might dislodge them. The return journey was enlivened by a swim in a large pool which had contained a pumping engine; and the presence of a large quantity of yellow flowers which the errant pub party had thoughtfully thrown down the main shaft.

The mines were a fine conclusion to an exciting weekend, and we look forward to organising another trip to Derbyshire in 1983.

ASSAULT ON RHINO RIFT - A Horror Story

by Mike Bygrave

The lure of a couple of barrels was enough to ensure good attendance at the HYGM, and the following evening's hearty drinking session lulled many members into a false sense of security - little did they know what was to befall them on the following day. And next morning, still in an alcoholic haze, a trip to Rhino Rift sounded like a pleasant enough excursion and an excellent excuse to avoid another day's digging in Upper Flood. Even "a-hundred-feet-of-ladder" (said quickly) didn't sound too daunting - little more distance than from the gents to the bar at the Hunters.

So in due course, a party of ten set off merrily down the Longwood Valley to the Rift entrance. (Party comprised John Miriam, Tony Knibbs, Neil Hutchinson, Ian McKechnie, Roy Kempston, Mike Bygrave, +4 who left early.) The short passage to the first pitch was easy enough, and it was not long before the first pitch was being rigged.

In the meantime, some of the party perused the pretties in a small adjacent chamber while others wrestled with each other in the adjoining cramped passage. After about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour all (well, most) of the possibilities of self-entertainment had been exhausted, and these intrepid cavers sat down to wait for the rigging of the pitch to be finalised. With the prospect of more long waits while the rest of the party climbed the pitches, it was not long before 4 of the party disappeared to find a better way to spend the afternoon.

The more steadfast members lingered on, fighting the tertiary stages of exposure, until at last the ladder disappeared over the edge, and the gaping, bottomless pit was ready to accept its first meal of the day. TK was first to venture down, and the rhythmic chink-chink of the ladder against the rock could be heard slowly dying away as he made his lonely descent. After about 5 minutes, there was a pregnant silence, followed by a muffled cry of "Oh, bugger!". "What's the matter, Tony?", shouted JM. "The bloody ladder's 5ft too short!", came the reply. Fortunately this minor hitch was easily overcome by swinging across on the ladder to an adjacent outcrop, and soon Tony was joined by 2 other speleomaniacs.

Which brings me to my turn. As I slithered down the passageway to take my place on the ladder, I began to appreciate the geometry of exercise and the panic-inducing

dimensions. As I peered over the edge of the pitch, I could see the lamps of those who had already made the descent, moving around like minute glow-worms at the end of an extremely long test-tube. The ladder seemed to taper away into infinity - never have I seen such a long-locking hundred feet.

Just so as not to make things too easy, the ladder was positioned so that one had to, spider-man style, traverse about 60° of the mouth of the pit before arriving at its uppermost rungs. But once on the way down there was no technical difficulty - the ladder hung freely in places, and in others draped over ledges and outcrops. The major difficulty - in my case - was physical exhaustion, and this became more and more pronounced over the last 50ft. Pain in the various arm muscles ranged from discomfort at 45ft to the threshold of unconsciousness at 99ft. After this they completely seized up, and IM had to rush over and prize me off the ladder. It was not until about 10 minutes later that I was able to get my arms out of their ladder-clutching position.

In the meantime, the rest of the party had been preparing the next pitch of about 50 feet. Enthusiasm, among some members, had been slightly dampened by the first pitch, but everyone except me (blush) went down. While they grunted and groaned their way to the next ledge, I busied myself trying to coax the blood back into my arms and generally preparing myself for the trip back to the surface. It was also my task to life-line the last caver down to the unstable, sloping ledge at the foot of the next pitch. This was in fact as far as the party went; it appeared that there had been a fall since the last visit, and it was decided not to risk the third pitch without more thought, and possibly a new rawlbolt.

TK was the first to come back up the second pitch, and in so doing put himself at the mercy of my spasmodic lifelining. My arms were still working slowly, and he appeared over the edge pulling a loop of loose rope behind him.

The climb back up the long pitch was considerably easier than the descent, as most of the strain was now on the legs. However, the arm muscles once again began to give trouble just as the top of the ladder appeared through the swirling mist. I would probably have remained in a position 20ft from the top of the pitch for several hours were it not for the assistance of the life-liner, who almost yanked me off the rungs every time I tried to slow the pace. Several grunts, arghh's, & groans later I was one rung from the top and almost delirious with schemes for lift systems and other labour-saving devices flashing through my head. The effort required to scale the last rung seemed greater than all the other rungs put together; but with a little concentration I was soon picking my way across the mouth of the pitch to the safety and relaxation of the ledge. Here I was able to lie back and allow the arms to unwind while listening to the soothing sounds of the cave, like the trickling of water over calcite, and the pain-related noises of RK as he took his turn on the ladder.

As in the aftermath of most caving trips, it was a joy to be back in the open air afterwards. In this case, I'm in no hurry to try another 100ft ladder; at least, not without a little more ladder practice,

(Equipment Review - continued from page 5)

Then first demonstrated to the assembled masses in the "CG cottage, the new toy excited an attempt to blow the bulb by pumping as hard as possible, and several comments of "it'll make you blind, you know". Not discouraged, the next day found me in the Gorge of GB with three unsuspecting assistants, having convinced them that an experiment on the way to the surface would be a good idea, we all turned our lights off, and I started squeezing the torch.

The first obstacle was the 15ft chimney at the foot of Mud Passage. I stood at the bottom to light the way for each of the others in turn, then climbed myself, just providing an occasional burst of light to find the next handhold. The wrist lanyard on the torch made climbing relatively easy, as I could use both hands, and retrieve the torch when I wanted light.

On the straight sections of passage, I walked in third position, which gave enough light for the two in front and one behind. By these means, we reached the surface in a little more time than it normally takes. We did get some strange looks from a party we met on their way in, but they made no comment! (There will probably be a letter in the next issue of "Descent" about novice cavers going underground without proper lights.)

The lamp seemed to perform well, and the expected sore hand did not happen. Although it only leaves one free hand when it's in use, it's lighter and smaller than a carbide lamp and is certainly worth considering as a spare lamp for emergency use.

It was made by YICKO and is available at Greenfields or Milletts for about £2.25.

BRITISH CAVE-DIVING DEPTH RECORD

Martyn Farr swam to a depth of 200 ft in Wookey Hole at the end of October. He was stopped by silted-up passage.

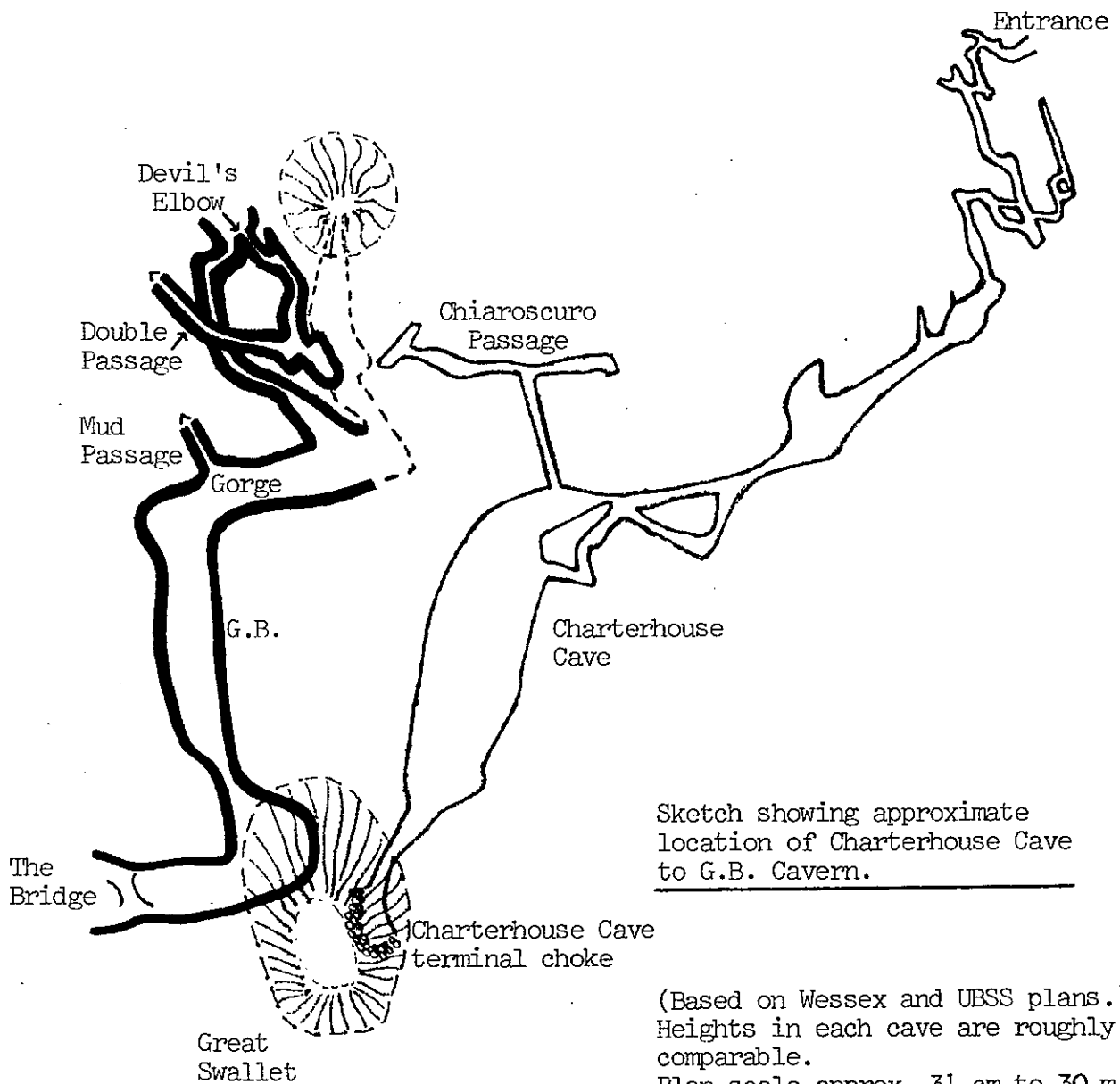
FREE GIFT WITH THIS ISSUE

The rest of this page is entirely free for you to do whatever you want with. For example, you could use it to write an article or letter on, and hand it to the Editor for inclusion in the next newsletter....

CHARTERHOUSE CAVE

Jon Roberts has added the provisional plan of Charterhouse Cave to the GB survey in the map cabinet, following publication of Alison and Pete Moody's plan in Caves & Caving No.17. The Caves & Caving article refers to the proximity of the cave to GB:- Chiaroscuro Passage in Charterhouse is 5m from Double Passage on the GB Devil's Elbow route, and the Charterhouse stream vanishes only 10m from an inlet in GB. Water tracing has not yet shown whether this is the same stream, and previous tests have indicated no stream connection between Charterhouse and GB.

Superimposition of one plan upon the other (see enclosed sketch) shows that Charterhouse Cave's terminal choke, where the stream vanishes, is under Great Swallet (a major surface depression on the GB map). The main GB passageway follows the northern side of the Swallet and turns sharp right here, on the final corner heading downstream before The Bridge, while Charterhouse Cave currently finishes on the eastern side of the Swallet. So the GB inlet stream could be surface water entering at this point, and, subject to further water tracing, there remains the exciting possibility of a major extension to Charterhouse Cave beyond the Swallet, parallel to GB, providing the Wessex (not least Alison and Pete) can safely negotiate the choke caused by the surface collapse. At least the eastern wall of the Swallet should offer some stability !



Sketch showing approximate location of Charterhouse Cave to G.B. Cavern.

(Based on Wessex and UBSS plans.)
Heights in each cave are roughly comparable.
Plan scale approx. 3½ cm to 30 m.

MENDIP CAVING GROUP



PATRON: THE MARQUESS OF BATH

MINUTES OF THE HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING, 1982
HELD AT NORDRACH COTTAGE, CHARTERHOUSE-ON-MENDIP
ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 16TH

The meeting opened at 3.30 pm and finished at 5.05 pm.

CHAIRMAN: Bryan Terry.

ATTENDANCE: 25 full members, 7 probationary and associate members, and 3 guests.

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were received from Pete Mathews, Bernard Reeves, and Pete Spain. Apologies for late arrival were received from Greg Smith.
- 2 MINUTES OF THE 1982 A.G.M: were agreed and signed. (Proposed by Tony Knibbs, seconded by Ian McKechnie.)
- 3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: None.
- 4a COMMITTEE OFFICERS' REPORTS: The reports from the Hon. Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, and Recorder had been circulated in advance, with newsletter no.156.

Hon. Cottage Warden - John Miriam

With the gradual increase in the Group's membership has come a greater and more realistic use of the cottage. Cottage income has been derived fairly equally from members and guests alike and is currently providing a moderate surplus for maintenance, improvements, winter heating bills, etc.

The system of accepting two large group bookings per month is working well. In fact, on this basis, I have had to refuse some requests for accommodation. We are now fully booked to mid-January and have bookings extending into March 1983.

Since the AGM various improvements to the cottage have been completed including the tiling of the first floor and the installation of a gas cooker. An improved charging facility is now almost complete. Three electric storage heaters are in position, wired up and awaiting connection to an off-peak supply. Two heaters are positioned in the lounge and one on the first floor landing. It is proposed to get these functioning first and then add off-peak water heating and bar heaters in the changing room. The bar heaters will automatically operate at off-peak times, but will also be available for day time use. In conjunction with this heating, it is also proposed to improve the permanent ventilation in the shower area.

The major problem arising out of cottage use has been the amount of effluent produced. This has reached peak levels of about 1000 gallons per week during the summer. The cesspit thus requires emptying on a four-to-five week basis costing £20 a time. Various intermediate solutions to this problem have been proposed, but I believe that the only real solution is to dig a large overflow soakaway. This soakaway would be on our land and just opposite the changing room. It would be dug with mechanical aid, but the connecting trench would have to be dug by hand to avoid damage to the electricity cable and existing pipe-work. This would be at a total cost of perhaps £200.

Work on the proposed cottage extension has been shelved until the cesspit work is complete.

/...Hon. Tacklemaster

Hon. Tacklemaster - Phil Ingold

"Not much seems to have happened."

Hon. Meet Secretary - Greg Smith

no report received

4b MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE OFFICERS' REPORTS:

Hon. Treasurer

Arthur Spain reported the latest financial position: current account £297.97, deposit account £2962.71, special account £1012. The funds had not changed significantly since last year.

Hon. Cottage Warden

Steve Taylor suggested two additional shower heads should be fitted.

Bryan Pittman asked the committee to give consideration to improving the back porch, to provide greater weather protection.

Due to the meet programme and bank holidays, members only weekends had been poorly attended. The custom of reserving the first and third weekends in the month had therefore been stopped. At least two weekends every month were however always kept free of guest party bookings - with cottage bookings for the next four months published in the newsletter - while weekend events organised by individual members were proving successful. Members agreed that the cottage booking scheme was working well.

Hon. Tacklemaster

Several members observed that the recent Yorkshire week had denuded the cottage of tackle for local Mendip caving during that period. Phil Ingold said he would supplement the tackle before the 1983 AGM, buying 300 feet of rope and up to 200 feet of ladder. If anyone else wanted to purchase rope, at a discount, they should let him know soon before he put his order in. He would investigate ways of identifying MCG ladders clearly.

Hon. Meet Secretary

It was agreed, in Greg Smith's absence, that most meets had worked reasonably well this year, though the non-organisation of the St. Cuthberts trip was criticised.

Replying to Bryan Pittman, Tony Knibbs said that a 1983 membership card/meet programme would be printed, and that it was hoped to run at least one foreign visit in 1983. On a show of hands, the Pyrenees via County Clare seemed the most promising!

Members objected to the way people had been arbitrarily selected to be in charge of 1982 meets, and hoped Greg Smith would consult in advance of 1983's programme.

Hon. Recorder

Members were asked to advise the Recorder which cave surveys they needed were lacking from the library - he would then endeavour to acquire them.

The meeting agreed to allocate up to £150 for a set of 6" maps of Mendip - geological maps where available. (Proposed by Simon Knight, seconded by Joan Goddard)

Jonathan Roberts reported that the offer of a set of Wessex Journals had fallen through; members felt that further exchanges and photocopying was a better way of obtaining a set of Belfry Bulletins than the cash offer made by Tony Oldham. Several members offered to help with photocopying.

- 5 MCG JOURNAL No.7 PROGRESS REPORT: Bryan Pittman reported that some articles had come forward in recent weeks, and a 1982 Journal was still possible. All material was required by the end of November, at the latest.

6 MCG 30th ANNIVERSARY: Members were asked for ideas to celebrate the Group's thirtieth anniversary, which was towards the end of 1983. The meeting agreed to Malcolm Cotter's suggestions for a '1953' caving trip down Swildons; and a party. (Proposed by Tony Knibbs, seconded by Arthur Spain.) "I reckon we ought to put some flags across Cheddar Gorge", commented Joan Goddard. Jonathan Roberts said a 30th anniversary publication was under way - celebratory and historical items will be very welcome.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Half yearly meetings

Simon Knight proposed the HYGM be abolished - he would much rather spend the time caving. Jonathan Roberts replied that last year members had been concerned about Group and cottage funds and had felt that at least one further HYGM was necessary, in case there was a financial problem. Tony Knibbs suggested that a less formal meeting would be useful - a mid-year forum - so that members could discuss whatever topics were thought relevant. Members agreed to Tony Knibbs' proposal that "the HYGM be organised on an informal basis to enable members and committee members to comment on current activity only".

'Dry meetings'

There was general approval for having a 'dry' general meeting, to help the transaction of club business.

Covenants

Arthur Spain urged members to fill in covenant forms if they had not done so already - this cost nothing but gained income for the Group.

November party

A bonfire party would be held on Saturday November 6th at the cottage. Members present that weekend would be charged a levy (perhaps £2) to cover the cost of fireworks and food.

8 DATE AND VENUE OF 1983 A.G.M. AND DINNER: The AGM will be held on Saturday March 19th 1983 at Nordrach Cottage, followed by the Annual Dinner at The Star Hotel, Wells.

Bob Speleo β

