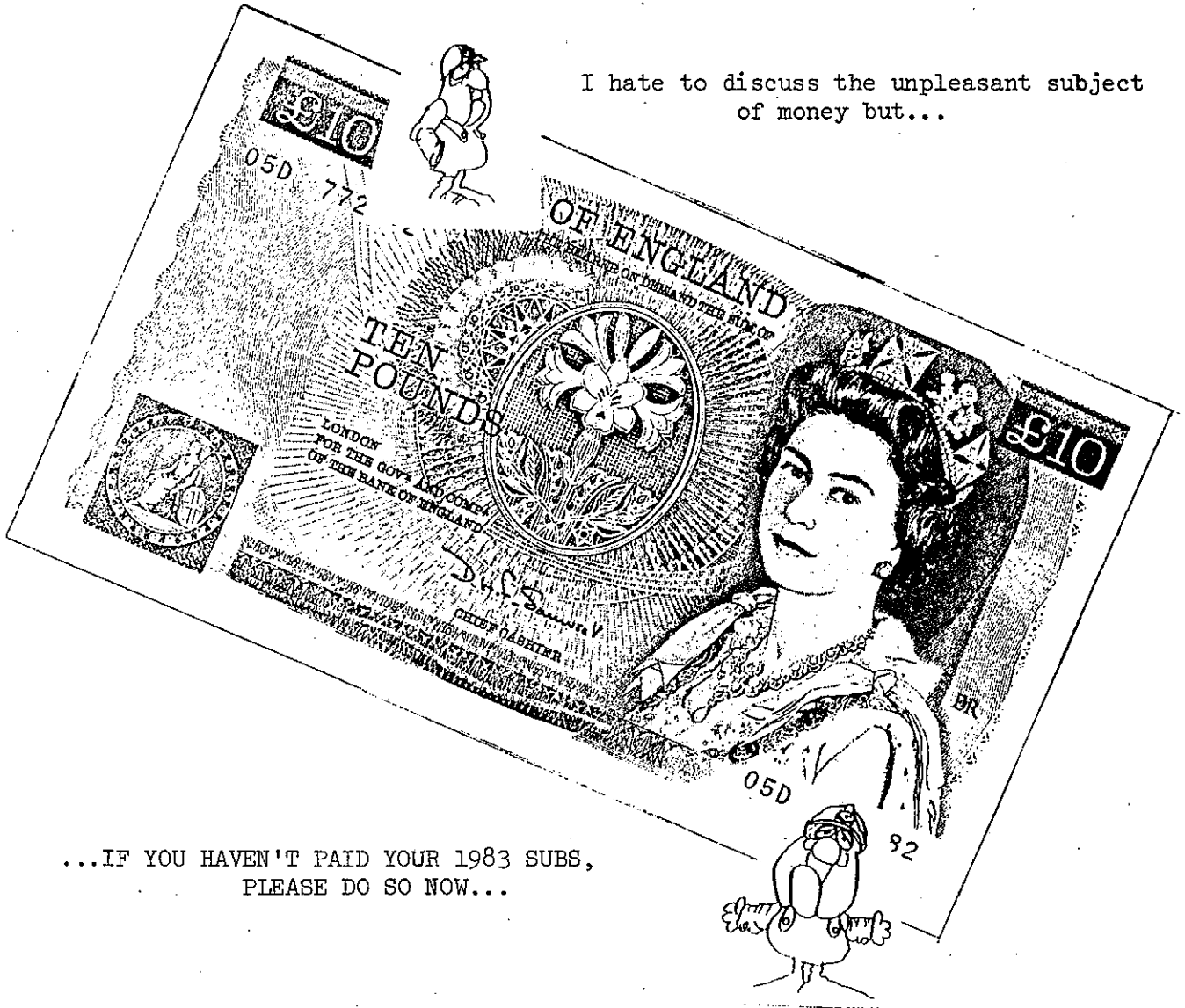




# Mendip Caving Group Newsletter

February 1983

No. 161



I hate to discuss the unpleasant subject of money but...

...IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR 1983 SUBS,  
PLEASE DO SO NOW...

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Caving Accommodation is available at the MCG Cottage on Mendip;  
Nordmach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XW  
Map reference 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 8.30 pm at:  
The Fox and Hounds and Mawson Arms, Chiswick Lane South, London, W4.

NEXT NEWSLETTER is due on 10th March. Copy should reach the Editor before 4th.  
March to ensure inclusion. Late news can normally be accepted up to the public-  
ation date.

MCG MEET PROGRAMME.

Meet	Leader	base
Feb 12 Lost Johns System	Tony Knibbs	NPC
Mar 19 AGM and dinner		
Apr 9 Portland - Blacknor Hole	Ian McKechnie	MCG
May 7 Swildons - Damp Link	Steve Lane	MCG
May 28 Gaping Gill	Neil Hutchinson	
Jun 18 Stoke Lane Slocker	Jon Roberts	MCG
Jul 2 OFD / Dan-yr-Ogof	Denise Samuel	SWCC
Jul 16 Mendip Geology	Malcolm Cotter	MCG
Aug 13 Birks Fell Cave, Yorks	John Miriam	NPC
Aug 18 - Sept 6 Pyrenees	Ian McKechnie	
Oct 8 Penyghent Pot, Yorks	Roger Wallington	NPC
Nov 11 Giants 3 Oxlow System, Derby	Roy Kempston	
Dec 3 St. Cuthberts Swallet	Tony Knibbs	MCG

An ARMCHAIR MEET is planned for Thursday evening, March 10th in the back room of  
the Mawson Arms at 8.30pm. Malcolm Cotter will be giving an illustrated talk on  
the previous MCG French expedition. Anyone with additional slides or other material,  
please contact Malcolm or bring it along on the night.

More PYRENEES TRIP information... One sub-group has already booked a farmhouse  
(gite) for the non-caving members of their party. This is in the village of Urau,  
quite close to our intended camp site, so may also provide an emergency refuge for  
others in the event of illness etc... A brief survey of ferry brochures shows a  
cost of £60-£80 each way Folkestone/Dover - Calais/Boulogne (for car + 3 occupants,  
average size car, depending on time of day and date) or £80-£110 Southampton - Le  
Havre. The latter saves about 150km driving in France... If you want to reduce the

900km drive to about 150km, one way is to let the train take the strain! A one-way trip by French Motorail for car + 3 occupants, from Dover/Folkestone to Narbonne, including ferry and overnight Couchette, costs £285... Brochures on the above are available from travel agents. If you can't get a brochure or want to discuss plans before making a booking, contact Ian McKechnie.

#### MEMBERSHIP NEWS.

Applications for probationary membership were accepted from:

Peter Whittle, 139 Fletcher way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Introduced by Chris Whittle, Phil Ingold.

Peter Harvey, 3 Oakfield Cottages, Caerherbert Lane, Rhayader, Powis. LD6 5EB

Introduced by Denise Samuel, and Tony Knibbs.

Congratulation to both Ian Parry and Lesley Robbins, who have been accepted as Full Members.

The ANNUAL DINNER will be held at the Star Hotel, Wells again this year, on Saturday, 19th March at 7.30pm. A coach will be arranged from the Cottage to Wells, and return afterwards. Tickets for the dinner are available from Tony Knibbs, at a cost of £7 per person. A large demand is expected, so book early if you want to come along.

ANY PROPOSALS for changes to the constitution and rules must be publicised in advance of the AGM. If you have a proposal, please hand it to a committee member immediately.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS - in case the cover picture is not sufficient reminder - should be sent or given to the treasurer (or another committee member if you prefer) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. We don't want a recurrence of last year, where subs were still being collected in June... it's not fair on the club or the treasurer.

On AGM & DINNER WEEKEND the cottage is fully booked. Charterhouse Manor over the road has vacancies at the moment and have very reasonable B&B rates - book now if you want to be sure. Phone Blagdon (0761) 62262.

+++OLDHAM CAPLAMPS+++ Brand new 12hrs on main beam £32.13. (Compare Gaving Supplies £44.50 + postage £2.19.) If interested, contact Adrian Duckett, 01-572-2374.

#### MORE FROM MARTIN...

Dear Geoff, Spent Xmas camping here (Costa Rica) - a cool 100°F in the shade - and New Year on an active volcano (letting the year in with a bang, etc.) Give my regards to MCG. Martin.

#### COTTAGE BOOKINGS.

February	April
12 Ealing College (12) + WMCEC (6)	16
19	23
26 Kingston Poly (12)	30
March	May
5	7 Members w/e (Damp Link)
12 Ealing College (12)	14
19 AGM (fully booked - see above)	21
26	28
April	June
2	4
9 Members w/e (Portland meet).	11
	18 Members w/e (Stoke Lane)

OVERHEARD, our own JR talking of a prospective member, "...he's renowned for scrounging food from other people...". In the rush for a suitable reply, Greg was first with "...You've got some competition, then...".

## COTTAGE NOTES.

GUIDELINES FOR COTTAGE USE have been published by the Cottage Warden, mainly for the guidance of visiting clubs. A copy is usually kept in the lecturn at the cottage if anyone wants to see it. Here are a few relevant extracts:

NO SMOKING in the dormitories please.

DO NOT COVER the storage heaters, or attempt to dry clothing, towels etc on them.

ELECTRICITY. There are two consumer units located near the front door above head height. These will be found, and are normally left, in the 'ON' position.

GAS. The gas tap is located in the kitchen directly below the hob cooking surface. Two externally housed propane cylinders have an automatic changeover valve, so access to the gas store is normally unnecessary. A gas store key can be found hanging on the gas tap.

ON LEAVING the cottage - even for a short period - always lock all outside doors, close all windows, and turn off the gas.

.....wait for the next exciting instalment!

## CAVING NEWS.

BLACKMOOR / UPPER FLOOD. The end of the cave has again become interesting. While clearing the face following a bang, Geoff Barton noticed that the crack on the left between bedrock and calcite was opening up. Using a beam it was possible to probe forward about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres. This process pushed mud forwards, and it was heard splashing into water. The sump-like space under the left wall allows some spoil storage. If this is used, large chunks of material should be put in so that water may filter through. Clean water was also observed to be coming towards the workers through the narrow crack. This presents a problem of where the water is coming from. Have we struck an inlet - or is the main flow following a devious route? If members staying on Mendip make it a policy to remove at least one load from the face per person, the problem of spoil removal would probably be eliminated. (Correspondent - M. Cotter.)

BLACKMOOR - EAST BANK. Work has begun on investigating the route of water sinking into the East bank, above the causeway, just below the Upper Flood entrance. A temporary dam of sods was made to reduce water flow. The level of the small pool dropped, but the strong inlet from below the bank kept it about  $\frac{3}{4}$  metre deep. The material removed from around consisted of Calcium Carbonate sand from lead washings. The water appeared to be going in a Northerly direction in a covered leat. The presence of a leat in this position does not mean that there is not a swallet nearby, as there is evidence in other parts of the valley of water being diverted below ground in such places. At this time of year, one can wash and cool off here after working in Upper Flood. (Correspondent - Malcolm Cotter)

## SENGING RIVER MINE 2.1.83

by Adrin Duckett.

Party: Kate Taylor (surface leader), Steve Taylor, Ian Parry, Lesley Robbins, Andy Boare, Clive Towner, Bill Ducklin, Jon Roberts, Phil Eliot, John Felton, Chris Scrance, Caren Southern, Adrian Duckett.

Having been put down as leader for a cave she didn't know on a weekend she didn't intend to go underground, KT was casting around for someone to take over the responsibility from her. She knew that I was familiar with the cave, and asked if I would lead. What can one say when a lady has just bought you a pint of Butcombe? - I was a bought man; a mercenary of subterranean exploration. (You try saying that after you've been bribed a few times.)

A national hangover day was declared for New Years Day, and the trip planned for the 2nd January. Even then, a late start was called for, as Phil Eliot and his party

wanted to go down GB early that morning and join us later. On hearing this, Steve, Clive, and Bill took off for Blackmoor Shaft, so 12.30pm was set for a rendezvous. However, Phil's party didn't show (they had just popped in to the Hunters), so after a festive mince pie from Bryan Terry (wot, no curry?), we moved off.

At the 35' entrance shaft my thoughts of the party being too large proved to be right, but it was too late by then. As the last member was about to descend, Phil's party arrived but had not yet changed, so we moved on down the mine, leaving route instructions with JR so that he could wait for Phil.

We found Gulf Bypass, which eliminates a dangerous 20' muddy climb down into Stinking Gulf (thankfully no longer smelly) and rejoins the route at the far end, where one can look back at its beautiful green pool and precarious high level galleries.

Then on to Great Hall, which took everyone's breath - not because of its size or beauty, but because the water was bloody cold. We waded to the far end in chest-deep water, then the MCG water-polo team went into their warm-up routine, and tried out all those wet-suit hoods they'd bought for Swildons 9. LR was taking photos of the polo, but couldn't be convinced that the water was warmer when swimming about.

PE's party then arrived making a high and low level entrance with quite a splash, followed by a high diving act. Poor light forced the water polo to a draw, and we left the cold waters of Great Hall for the West Series - To find JR diving the sump in Stinking Gulf.

On arriving at the end of the West Series, where the Singing River sinks out of sight, ST and AD squeezed down as far as possible and agreed that it might be possible to push further with the aid of a chemical hammer. (Another addition to Cotter's Mendip Dig Guide?)

Making our way back to the entrance, we had a look at some of the flooded galleries off the main stream. While the main party was ascending the shaft, IP and AB explored the entrance series, which is quite a maze of tunnels.

Then back to the cottage only to find no hot water left. So like all good MCG members we sat in the lounge waiting for the water to heat up, drinking tea, and trying to look as if we hadn't been caving. Difficult in a steaming wetsuit with your face covered in mud.

In conclusion, I think the party was a little too large, which prevented exploration of all the smaller galleries. An ideal party may be 4, splitting into 2 pairs in some places. However, I believe this trip showed the main points of interest in the mine.

GB TRIP 15.1.83

by Joan Goddard

Having gained the impression from sundry conversations and newsletter reports that in order to join a club meet one must be ready at crack of dawn, I fully expected to have missed the GB trip when we arrived at the Cottage at 11am on Saturday. However, Mendip seemed almost like old times - at least two vehicles were in pieces, with their anxious owners half hidden under bonnet and chassis, and begging lifts to the nearest spare parts depot. Such familiar delaying tactics lulled me into a false sense of security as opening time drew near, and I assumed that caving would be postponed until the morrow. So I was quite surprised to find myself at the GB blockhouse a short while later.

Two MCG parties had already descended when Arthur and Julie Spain, Simon, Jon Roberts and I skirted the mud hole at the entrance, (Why, I wonder?) - and set off down the cave. We travelled via Mud Passage, negotiating the two little climbs without difficulty, until we reached the Gorge. Upslope could be seen the mud and debris from the large surface shakehole which formed when a surface depression collapsed during the 1968 floods. We progressed down the bouldery stream and under the Bridge. On climbing down the little waterfall it became obvious which members of the party were not wearing wetsuits.

Soon we reached the terminal sump, which had more water than on my previous visits (or is my memory just a bit hazy?), and after a quick swim by Arthur and Jon and a brief word with one of the many other MCG parties, we set off via the Oxbows and White Passage. The latter was well decorated, and the slow pace of the old-time cavers proved to be a distinct advantage when looking at formations. I was particularly pleased to see a rather fine group of helictites. A leisurely investigation of Rhumba Alley and various other small passages was followed by our return to Main Chamber and exit via Mud Passage.

### A LITTLE ON LARGE

by Greg Smith.

While cavers on Mendip often toil for months on end with little reward, their counterparts in the Dales still contrive to yield major systems each year with comparative ease. One of the more important finds last summer happened in an area West of Marble Steps, adding yet another piece of zigsaw to the postulated "Three Counties System". Known as Large Pot, the system has nearly 4000' of passage and a respectable 400' depth. There is a choice of two routes leading to separate places; one route drops via 11 pitches to a silted sump, while the other leads from the bottom of the 3rd pitch to a remarkably large piece of cave passage, called Necropolis, at a depth of 280'.

The easiest way to reach the entrance is to park on the Turbary Road, as for Marble Steps and Ireby, and continue up by foot until the road bends sharply to the right. By carrying straight on across the moor in a Northerly direction, a line of depressions can be followed to Little Pot; Large Pot lies in the depression adjoining Little Pot shakehole.

The entrance pitch can be free climbed, but it is easier to rig a 25' ladder for the first part. A short wriggle at the pitch bottom slopes down to an 'S' bend, preceding the second pitch of 40'. Since there is precious little room at the pitch head, one of the narrowest parts of the cave, it is best to enter the 'S' bend feet-first.

The passage suddenly opens out in size from the bottom of the second pitch and a crumbly 8' climb down infill leads to the third pitch of 25'. This drops into "Thornton Hall" where an active inlet enters, to carry a small stream which is just a trickle during normal weather.

Following the passage downstream, past a right-hand bend, quickly leads to "Red Herring Series"; a 90' pitch followed by a succession of smaller pitches of 15', 40', 25', 25', 20', 20', and 12' to the sump.

Back at the right-hand bend, an obvious draughting hands and knees crawl heralds the start of a journey into the most interesting part of the system. "The Pit" is soon reached and this involves free-climbing down 20' and then back up to regain the passage level; as for the entrance pitch, a ladder or rope makes life easier here. Soon "Tinkle Passage" is reached, being a nice clean streamway with a fine gravel bed and many roof straws. Unfortunately this does not last for long, and the way on continues as a mixture of stooping, crabwalking, roof tube traversing, and crawling, the passages becoming continuously more muddy. After about 500' of this type of caving, interspersed with a couple of awkward squeezes, the route, now heavily calcified, enters the much larger "Pumpkin Passage". This contains deep pools of porridge-like consistency, which are best traversed over the head of an airy 150' pitch. The take-off situation is similar to Lamb Lair large pitch, and the ladder hangs free for most of its length. There is a bolt available for SRT.

The sheer size of the newly entered passage at the bottom of the pitch is not realised until a debris slope is descended underneath a low roof. This breaks out into a place perhaps comparable in size to George Corne's Monster Cavern in Lancaster Hole. The Cavern is over 600' in length and blocked off at both ends. No way on has yet been found, but the potential exists for those prepared to hump digging gear this far underground.

Full details of Large Pot, together with a survey, can be found in the latest NPC Journal. To sum up: the trip is a collector's piece and well worth a visit.

HELMETS AND LAMPS AVAILABLE ON LOAN.

by Tony Knibbs

In response to a request which I made several months ago, numerous members have very kindly donated their spare helmets and lamps to the Group. These have been overhauled, painted red for easy identification, and now reside in the tackle store. They are primarily intended for use by novice guests accompanied by members.

Six helmets are available. They are of various styles, and not all of them are adjustable for size.

Six caplamps are available. These, too, vary in style but, with one exception, each is fitted with two 3.5 volt 0.3 amp bulbs; the exception has only one bulb and has no switch. Cables terminate in solder tags for connection to a 4.5 volt Bell Battery with screwed terminal studs. This combination gives about 5 hours of useful light. Batteries cost now about £1.50.

There are no battery cases, but a short length of terylene cord is tied at the end of each cable for the purpose of anchoring the cable to the battery. Users should be encouraged to take great care to obtain the best possible cable-to-battery connection / anchorage, perhaps using a polythene bag for added protection. Bell batteries are not very strong, but are adequate for use by novices in easy caves. Always ensure that a spare lamp is carried.

Borrowers are asked to ensure that items are returned after use, and that any defect is rectified.

THE LEAD / ACID ALTERNATIVE

by Tony Knibbs

The price of a new lead/acid battery for an Oldham caplamp is about £26; a replacement 4 volt 1 amp bulb costs £1.27. This battery / bulb combination gives at least 12 hours burning at 4 watts output. The battery weighs 2.7 kg, has a volume of 820 cc and needs occasional maintenance.

An RS Dryfit 6 volt 5.7 ampere-hour sealed lead / acid battery costs around £14; a 6 volt 0.5 amp bulb costs about 30 pence. This battery / bulb combination gives 10 hours burning at 3 watts output. The battery weighs 1.1 kg, has a volume of 500 cc and needs no maintenance. This is the type of battery used in the 'Searcher' caplamp.

The differences are obvious. Oldhams are reportedly developing a low maintenance version of their battery, which will almost certainly cost more than the present type. The Dryfit represents a real step forward in lead / acid battery design.

To get the greatest advantage out of the Dryfit battery, it should be installed into a box tailored to its smaller size. However, it fits very easily into an old NiFe or Edison battery case, the excess space making it possible to add foam plastic for extra protection and insulating the battery connecting lugs from contacting the case. There is also room to instal a 3 amp fuse; the battery delivers 80 amps maximum current, making the inclusion of a fuse advisable.

The Dryfit battery is very robust and may be operated and stored in any position. Each of the three cells is sealed with a one-way valve incorporating a safety trap to prevent any escape of the jellified electrolyte or the ingress of water.

Optimum bulb rating would be 6 volts 0.3 amps to obtain 100% of battery capacity, but a 0.5 amp bulb gives a more useful level of light output and will derive 95% of capacity and last for 10 hours. A 0.3 amp bulb would give about 18 hours light.

All rechargeable batteries have a tendency to self-discharge if stored, especially lead / acid types. However, the Dryfit is quite good in this respect, losing only 10% of rated capacity stored at +20°C over 3 months. Lower temperatures reduce this loss.

Recharging is ideally carried out using a constant voltage charger giving 6.90 volts

at up to 2.5 amps initial current. A suitable commercial charger would cost about £37. Most cavers have access to constant current chargers. A suitable output rating would be a voltage above but close to 7 volts and an accurately controllable current of 0.3 amps applied for 20 hours. Quicker charging is best done on constant-voltage equipment. Avoid charging in a completely gas-tight container.

Life expectancy of the battery is anything up to 1000 recharges assuming the avoidance of over-discharging or over-charging. The author is currently using a similar size and type of sealed lead / acid battery, the Oldham Carefree 6 volt 4.5 amp-hour battery which is now discontinued from the carefree range. It bears a 10/79 date indication and still gives full rated capacity. Its previous utilisation is unknown.

BASIC DATA - RS DRYFIT 6 volt 5.7 Ah SEALED LEAD / ACID BATTERY.

Height (over connectors):	98mm	Supplier:
Width:	151mm	RS Components Ltd.,
Depth:	34mm	PO Box 427
Weight:	1110grm	13-17 Epworth Street
		London EC2P 2HA
		tel. 01-253-1222

Capacity at 20hr, discharge rate of 0.286 amps: 5.7Ah

#### MCG BREWERY ACCOUNT.

Please note that the number given last month for Derek Walsh was incorrect. Derek's phone number is now Staines 63341. Apologies to Derek, and to the new occupier of his old address - who has apparently been surprised to receive so many orders for beer.

+++

AN ACCIDENT in or around the Cottage is not something we would wish for. But if the worst should happen, we are now well equipped. Thanks to Bryan Terry, our first-aid box has been filled at no cost to the Group. Perhaps we should now have some first-aid instruction so that members can make best use of it. An idea for a Thursday Armchair Meet?

+++

OUR TREASURER would like to point out that all old covenants are cancelled from the end of last year. If you haven't filled one in recently, he would like a new one from you. The advantages of the covenant were fully described in the December newsletter, and a form was also included. However, if you want any more information, or another form, just contact Arthur Spain.

+++

THE MCG SHOP is always there when you need some new equipment or clothing. Why go to rock-pot or C-ing -u-plies when you can usually get a better price at the MCG Caving Shop - and the profits are returned to the Group for your own benefit. So next time you want something - contact Phil Ingold, and at least see what he has to offer.

#### CAVERS TOP 40

Is caving getting into the pop charts? Our musick correspondent reports that no. 1 this week is Down Under, by Men at Work. At 22 is Going Underground by Jam. And at 25 is Tunnel of Love by Fun Boy Three.

Then for the climber we have Up Where We Belong by Joe Cocker & Jennifer Warner at 7; Rockers Revenge with The Harder They Come at no. 30; and Get The Balance Right by Depeche Mode at 32.

Come on, Velvet Bottom Band; where are you?



RECORDER'S REVIEWS

*DISCOVER THE PARTS OTHER CAVERS CANNOT REACH*

Q What caver, making a trip of less than 24 hours, would carry a paperback to read underground ?

A A cave diver.

You will all have read 'The Darkness Beckons' by Martyn Farr, a copy of which is in the cottage library. It is the history and development of cave diving, notably in Britain and Ireland. I was even persuaded by its excellence to purchase a copy for myself.

Well, we now receive the Cave Diving Group newsletters regularly. They too are totally impressive. They are neither prolix nor do they use in-jokes and persiflage, unlike last month's Recorder's Review. The factual records of underwater exploration are good reading material in their own right, and reveal clearly the do's and don'ts of diving underground which must be mastered.

It would be wrong to state that cave divers are professionals (not least because the Inland Revenue and the rules of the Health and Safety at Work Act create special problems for remunerative cave diving, thanks to repercussions from the North Sea oil bonanza ! ). But they are expected to cultivate a professional attitude. Read the January 1983 CDG newsletter on current proposals for training of cave divers. Competence in caves, competence in and under water, competence with diving equipment, and then competence with specialised cave diving techniques such as line laying, are all demanded before a cave diver is regarded as qualified.

Underwater gear built for diving at sea may present dangerous problems in caves, such as mud getting in air valves. The cave diver must take special care in purchasing the right equipment and in maintaining it.

The newsletters reflect this also in discussions on particular problems - for example the effects of low temperature on reliability of depth gauges (vital for measuring decompression and air consumption times), or the half technical, half moral dilemma on when to permit novices to begin their diving within caves. (A consensus on this point is, as soon as the person shows competence in the water - as with 'conventional' caving, the best training for cave diving is cave diving.)

Unlike many club newsletters full of social chit-chat (and Recorder's Reviews), three-quarters of the content of CDG newsletters (which surface quarterly) are logs of cave exploration. More than 60 underwater trips are often recorded in each newsletter, a great many being dives into new territory. The yearly index of dives achieved is especially valuable when wishing to stay au fait with the perils to guard for, and the progress at each site.

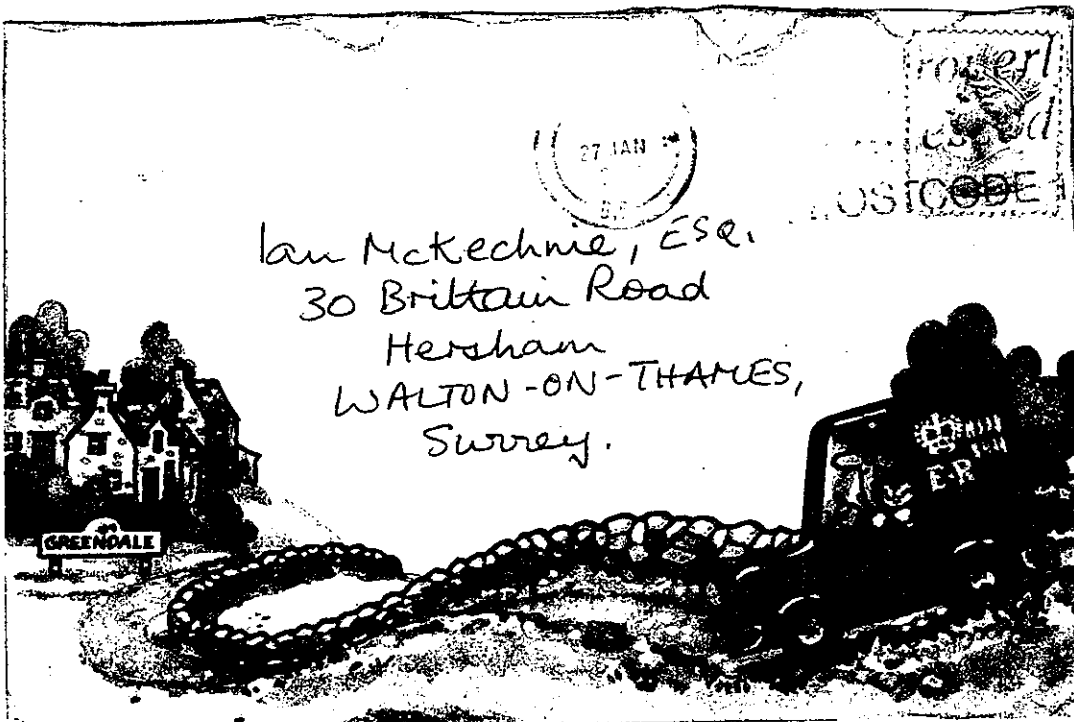
Anyone reading through several newsletters will be struck by the incessant references to visibility problems and line laying. With disturbed silt often causing near-blackout conditions, the key aid to survival is the guide line through the sump. These risk breakage and getting tangled, due to factors such as flood pulses, debris, rocks and humans. The status of the lines at each exploration site is accordingly of considerable importance.

The newsletters supply a range of not-so-funny stories about overcoming the difficulties of cold, penetrating with diving gear through tight slots, decompression, and digging underwater boulder chokes. In one recent case at Holmbush Adit (N/L 64, p23), the diver pushed a tight slot between deads, subsequently discovering on his return that the deads had moved and blocked the slot. He had to remove the boulders choking the passage, to make his escape. Martyn Farr describes his recent push in Wookey Hole in N/L 66 (pages 28 to 33) - this included a period of zero visibility, being unable even to see his watch, during the critical period of decompression underwater following his deep dive. The pages on Wookey Hole also show the extensive preparation and sherpaing required for major cave diving pushes.

The more joyous moments are there too - even if they are only so in retrospect. Such as the 'bottomless pit' which proved with a plumb line to be only 2 metres deep - the bottles were left in the car. And the case of the cave diver who couldn't achieve his planned through trip due to route-finding and visibility problems, and spent the next few hours wandering around some Yorkshire moor in full diving kit - looking unsuccessfully for other potholes in the teeth of a severe storm (he was viewed suspiciously by another moor-bound caver).

Finally there are the, fortunately few, rescues. Not just of other cave divers, which can be a tragic affair, but of the likes of us ordinary cavers. If 'conventional' cavers get stuck due to flood water, such as the 1982 Kingsdale call-out and the more recent event at GB Cavern, then often it is the cave divers who volunteer to risk their lives to save others. (GB is covered in N/L 66, p26.) It is therefore nice to record that following one hair-raising rescue in Dido's Cave in Derbyshire in 1982, two cave divers were awarded Royal Humane Society medals and certificates.

Two last items. What, I should like to know, is the 'crocodile' frequently mentioned in the Wookey Hole reports? And in case you were still wondering why a cave diver should bother with a paperback underground, if the reading material is up to it, it can enliven an otherwise tedious wait underwater while decompressing (presumably cave divers are fast readers or the pages would get too soggy)!



WHY NOT WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR???

"Caver, O caver, pray where have you been ?  
I've been down to Mendip because I am keen.  
Caver, O caver, what did you do there ?  
I slept in a bed and I sat in a chair."

This ditty was found by the BEC on the wall of the MCG Netherwood Cottage in 1961. It was then published in the Belfry Bulletin. Those cavers among you who are 'resting' may recall it in a slightly different form:-

"Caver, O caver, pray where have you been ?  
I've been in my bed and I've sat in my chair.  
Caver, O caver, what do you do there ?  
I dream I'm on Mendip because I am keen."

This is, as you will hear on several occasions between now and the end of 1983, the thirtieth anniversary of the Mendip Caving Group. As such, it is most appropriately celebrated by an outbreak of caving.

Last year's meets were frequented by a select band of members - fewer than 50% of probationary and full members took part in one or more official club meets. It is always anathema to talk of cliques within caving clubs but on this showing, if there is any clique in imminent danger of forming it is a caving clique !

The 1983 meets list has a higher Mendip content than last year, to parts of Mendip netherworld which it is confidently believed have seen few MCG members in recent years, So we all have little excuse.

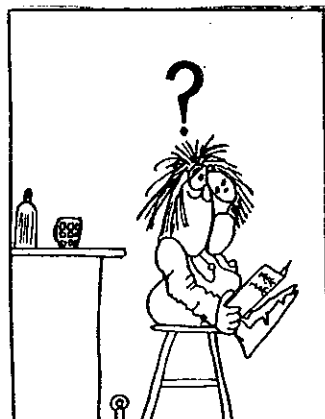
The second way of seeing this thirtieth birthday to a joyous conclusion is to find some new cave passage. It is a matter of record, unless the records have been transmogrified by human agency, that the longest single length of passage the MCG has discovered is in Switzerland - Mendiphöhle - and that was in 1963. Which is not to belittle the strenuous efforts made on Blackmoor, in Velvet Bottom, Cheddar Gorge and Longwood Valley, but always the magic target of a thousand feet of virgin Mendip passage has eluded us. We can change that, this year, if we are minded to, and if we help create that modicum of luck which is indispensable to a successful digging programme.

The two prime rules for digging are 1) have more than one dig, and 2) dig regularly. The more *active* digs the greater the chances of success (provided we don't deplete established digging sites).

We have the membership: 100 + . Enough for many digging teams.

We have the sites: Blackmoor Shaft, Bone Hole, Charnel Shaft, August Oxbows, Malcolm's new Blackmoor Valley Swallet, and Arthur Spain's site (to say nothing of Upper Flood).

So - we can now extract digits, and put them in dark, damp and unexplored places, - can't we ?



Bob Speleo

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11.

NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE OFFICERS 1983/84

Please ensure that nominees are willing to stand for election.

HON. SECRETARY .....

HON. TREASURER .....

HON. MEET SECRETARY .....

HON. TACKLE MASTER .....

HON. COTTAGE WARDEN .....

HON. EDITOR .....

HON. RECORDER/LIBRARIAN.....

NOTE: The above nominations and ANY PROPOSALS TO CHANGE the Group's CONSTITUTION AND RULES must reach the Hon. Secretary by Friday 26 February 1983. Also, prior notice of any important item for AGM agenda discussion would be appreciated.

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TO: Hon. Secretary, A.J. Knibbs, 23 Winern Glebe, Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7LT

TICKET APPLICATION - MCG ANNUAL DINNER 1983

The Star, Wells, 19 March 1983. 7.30 for 8.00 p.m.

Please supply ..... tickets at £7.00 each, for which I enclose £.....

NAME :

ADDRESS :