



Mendip Caving Group Newsletter

March 1983

No. 162



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DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS (SEE PAGE 3)

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CAVING ACCOMMODATION is available at the MCG Cottage on Mendip. The address is:
Nordrach 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 evening at 8.30 onwards, at:
The Fox and Hounds and Mawson Arms, Chiswick Lane South, London W4

NEW! NEWSLETTER is due on 21st April. Copy should reach the Editor before 15th
April to ensure inclusion.

MCG MEET PROGRAMME.

Meet	Leader	Base
Mar 19 AGM and Dinner		
Apr 9 Portland - Blacknor Hole	Ian McKechnie	MCG
May 77 Swildons - Deep Link	Steve Lane	MCG
Jun 18 Stoke Lane Stocker	Jon Roberts	MCG
May 23 Gaping Gull	Neil Hutchinson	NPC?
Jul 22 OFD / Den yr Ogof	Denise Samuel	SWCC
JUL 16 Mendip Geology	Malcolm Cotter	MCG
Aug 13 Birks Fell, Yorks	John Miriam	NPC
*/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**		/**
Aug 18 - Sept 6 Pyrenees - Reseau Trombe	Ian McKechnie	*/**
*/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**/**		/**
Oct 8 Teryghent Pot, Yorks	Roger Wallington	NPC?
Nov 12 Derbyshire	Roy Kempston	?
Dec 3 St. Cuthberts Swallet	Tony Knibbs	MCG

The next ARMCHAIR MEET is due for 14th April. We don't actually have anything planned
at the moment - but rest assured there will be something, even if it's only an encore of
the annual dinner entertainment. (Don't worry, it won't be that.)

THE PORTLAND MEET on 9th April will be to Blacknor Hole on the sle of Portland, near
Weymouth, Dorset. Blacknor Hole is a fairly extensive (for Portland) system of pass
ages in the West of the island. Access is through a 3ft square hole, 35ft down a 105ft
sea-cliff. This involves some novel techniques, hanging over the cliff and swinging

COVER PICTURE: "But can you tie it with one hand?" Near Tunnel Road, Rotherhithe.

into the hole. It is planned to drive down to Portland from the MCG cottage, and return after the trip, (about 50 miles each way). Those interested, contact Ian McKechnie.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS.

Applications were accepted for Probationary Membership from:

Christine Martin, 88A Church Road, Hanwell, London, W7.

Peter Dymant, Room 9, 79 Eaton Rise, Ealing, London, W5.

DON'T FORGET CHARTERHOUSE MANOR if you are looking for somewhere for you and your Good Lady to lay your heads after the Annual Dinner. Phone Blagdon (0761) 62262.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS have still not been paid by some members. It has been agreed by the committee that from 15th March, anyone who has not paid will (1) have no right of advance booking for cottage bunks (ie your name will be removed from the booking sheet if the cottage is full, such as at the AGM) (2) not be entitled to a copy of the club Journal; (3) Cease to receive the newsletter. No-one wants to have to apply these sanctions, so please pay up now - there's no excuse.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS.

March	May
12 Ealing College (12)	7 Members w/e (Damp Link)
19 AGM (fully booked)	14
26	21
	28
April	June
2	4
9 Members w/e (Portland Meet)	11 Notts Speleo (12)
16	18 Members w/e (Stoke Lane)
23	25
30 Pat Walsh + 12	

TACKLE NOTES.

We have some new tackle; ladders, rope, and 3 tackle bags.

To assist in identifying the new ladder (eg at the top of Swildons 20, where there may be many other ladders) and hopefully encouraging other people not to take them, one end of each rung has coloured resin. All the club ladders have 10" spaced rungs, so count the rungs to find the length.

The additional 600' of 11mm nylon lifeline will be divided up into suitable lengths. Each rope has its length marked with a black sleeve signifying each 50' of length. For example, 50' - 1 ring; 150' - 3 rings; etc. Note that the binding ring at the marked end is counted as a marking ring. There will also be a binding ring at the other end, which should be ignored.

AMMO BOXES are available cheaply from Mick Dean. Let him know if you want any.

BCRA SPRING MEETING.

This will be held at the Railway Hotel, Buxton, on 12th March. It's a bit late, but if you're desperate to go, contact Dr R G Picknett, 28 Potters Way, Laverstock, Salisbury, or (might be better) contact the hotel.

DAFFODILS should be sent this year to the Hotel Meridian, Tokyo, where Greg will be on Annual Dinner night. Sounds as if it may be a dull dinner this year.... unless you know better ?????

REVIEW: "THE MANUAL OF CAVING TECHNIQUES" by Chris Bradshaw.

Publisher: The resurgence Press, 31 Waterford Park, Radstock, Bath, Avon,
BA3 3TS. 1982.

A4 format, 98pp including 9pp photos and 56 line drawings.

Price £1.95. Available from Rocksport, Wells.

At first glance, this publication seems assured of a ready market amongst newcomers to caving. The work is aimed directly at the novice and strives, to quote the introduction, "...to reduce the accidents that happen underground...". In that, it should succeed as well as the written word ever can.

Apart from an attractive cover with a full-colour reproduction of a photograph of St Cuthberts Entrance Rift, the printed quality only achieves a standard rivalled by the better class of club publication. Black and white photos are poorly reproduced, but the typewritten copy remains legible throughout and its message is well amplified by line drawings, especially those by 'Reg' (Robin Gray). The book is wire-bound between thin card covers.

It has all the ingredients of an excellent beginners book, yet it contains enough detailed information to appeal to the experienced caver. And therein lies a criticism; there are points at which the work exceeds its 'basic' level of message.

Most annoying to me was the written quality of the copy. It badly needs the attentions of a competent proof reader. Spelling errors abound, punctuation is slipshod, and the style is rather offhand in places. There are also several instances of imprecision and questionable accuracy.

Equipment received good coverage, especially the subject of lighting which began with a rather pointless (even for beginners) description of modifying a cycle lamp for caving use. I would disagree that the life of a dry (zinc/carbon) cells is unpredictable, especially so if rechargeable nickel/cadmium cells are to be classed as "dry cells", which they are not.

Advice on how to unsolder the water valve assembly of a carbide caplamp seemed rather extreme -- few lamps, I feel, would recover from the shock. And it is no use taking a spare jet underground without a tool for removal and replacement.

Mining electric caplamps are dealt with in some detail, but I failed to comprehend the illustration relating to a contact clip for charging through a type G headpiece.

Reference to nickel/cadmium cell conversions did not include the correct charging instructions for the '20 Ah' cells which needs 1.6A for 14 hours. I have no experience of the 10 Ah cells, but 20 Ah cells (usually SAFT VO 16 KH) deliver about 200A on short circuit and a fuse should be strongly advised. Electrolyte level for the VO 16 KH should be 20mm below the valve seat.

Personal equipment and clothing also received good coverage. Karabiners and Maillons Rapides were discussed at some length, giving a whole page of MR data. I was puzzled by the statement that MR manufacture is not "...to the same quality control standards as karabiners and (they) may fail under a lower load." Does this mean that published data is unreliable? Surely, an MR with a rated breaking load of 3000lb will not fail at a lower figure unless grossly misused.

SRT advice is rightly omitted, but harnesses are dealt with and abseiling is mentioned but not described. Abseiling has its emergency uses and it would have been useful to include methods using a karabiner or figure of 8; the latter is shown later in its less common role in lifelining. Thinks... do novices buy Figures of 8?

"Techniques for moving in a cave" might have included a note on the dangers of boulder slopes and the the safeguard of cavers not following each other in line ahead up or down them. Loose rocks on ladder pitches are also a noteworthy hazard.

Sump diving gained a new danger -- "inverted comas..." -- no, don't panic, it was just a misspelling! To overcome excessive buoyancy by "...turning upside down and 'crawling'

along the ceiling" would probably give some novices (and others) a nosefull of water when they least needed it.

"Lifelining" quoted a typical 'cosy chat' between lifeliner and a climber setting off up a pitch. Ok, but it also gave a translation for whistle duet. Assuming whistles are used where vocal exchanges are open to confusion, only essential communication is adviseable. A 100 ft wet pitch is no place for superfluous signals, and surely lifeliner and climber can anticipate what each other are doing.

The introduction of Sticht (not stitch) plates and Figures of 8 as friction belays seemed out of place here, useful as they are in more experienced circles. To have the rope from the lifeliner running through a belayed karabiner (at or about his head level) to a climber below is the simplest mechanical friction additive.

The glossary of terms also had its doubtful moments: calcite deserved better than "crystallised limestone" and a stemple is not a "wood or metal shoring device" - it's for stepping on.

For all my criticisms, "The Manual of Basic Caving " is good value for money. More expensive works of this genre may often be preaching to the converted - a novice is more likely to part with the cost of this book and derive almost as much benefit. Hopefully, he will not be unduly critical of its little shortcomings.

Tony Knibbs.

FLOODING IN GB CAVE.

On Sunday, 21st November 1982, eleven cavers were rescued from the GB Ladder Dig series. (See Newsletter 159.) According to one party, the water in GB had risen by 12ft in one hour, raising the level of the terminal lake in the Main Chamber from the base to the top of the pitch into Ladder Dig. The lake was already high, following heavy rain during the preceeding week and during the weekend. The ground was saturated, and a torrential downpour during Sunday was the final straw.

Trevor Hughes and Rob Harper from BEC dived the tight entrance passage in zero visibility to establish contact with the cavers trapped beyond - the crawl was sumped in three places. It was only when water entering GB was diverted down Charterhouse Cave (thereby confirming the absence of significant drainage from Charterhouse to GB!) that it proved possible to bail the first 'sump' in Ladder Dig, which was the major obstacle.

As luck would have it, the MCG was caving in Agen Allwedd that weekend - we observed the same atrocious weather. We were unaware of the rescue until learning about it in the press on Sunday night. Although the comments below are written entirely with the benefit of hindsight, it becomes clear that access to Ladder Dig has been a potential problem for some time.

GB Cave, which drains some of the water flowing off the sandstone ridge of Blackdown, is one of the nearest major caves to the MCG cottage at Charterhouse. So it continues to be a popular caving venue for members and guests, as the visits noted in the cottage log book bear witness. The following recorded visits to the cave have been extracted from the latest MCG log book, and cover the past sixteen months, from October 1981 to January 1983. A total of 35 separate trips are noted, made on 32 different days (29 in different weeks). This period covered amounts to 476 days, or 68 weeks. Depending on the comparison chosen, this is a sampling rate of between 7% and 43%. (Statistics!) Remarks on flooding and access problems are reproduced if these were written at the time.

- 14.11.81 4 persons. "Pleasant trip to Bat Chamber. Very little water about (except where we had to crawl!)"
- 29.11.81 4 persons. "...The squeeze after helictite chamber needs clearing out before we could get through."
- 05.12.81 4 persons. "...Cave unexpectedly wet. Visited extension through wet crawl."

- 23.01.82 5 persons.
- 07.02.82 3 persons. "...plenty of water..."
- 00.02.82 6 persons. "...More water than usual running into GB yet no floods at base of cliff..."
- 04.04.82 5 persons: "...An interesting exercise in lateral thinking and a ladder was rigged to reach Ladder Dig, the crawl was wetter than usual and cold..."
- 17.04.82 3 persons.
- 08.05.82 6 persons. "...not very much water in cave, but we had to bail 7 gallons + from squeeze into Great Chamber. This is silting up and could do with being dug out..."
- 29.05.82 4 persons. "...Bristol Waterworks tipped a vast amount of soil into it (the depression) last week to stop access via this "entrance". However, they have almost succeeded in blocking the Devil's Elbow connection to the Gorge, too. nb This material is very loose, and should not be approached from below. The whole idea seems silly anyway - it'll all wash down towards the Main Chamber when it rains..."
- 05.06.82 22 persons. (MCG rescue practice.)
- 06.06.82 7 persons.
- 19.06.82 2 persons. "...down to the end of Bat Passage, in and out the easy way. Very little water flowing down the Gorge but large lake at bottom of stream-way. Squeeze was wet and refreshing in grotts."
- 03.07.82 8 persons.
- 04.07.82 7 persons.
- 04.07.82 3 persons.
- 10.07.82 3 persons. "...very dry, only a small stream passing through th sump down b by Ladder Dig. The cave has become very muddy since the council (Bristol Waterworks) tries to fill in the large swallet hole..."
- 17.07.82 5 persons.
- 24.07.82 6 persons. "Signs of flooding in Ladder Dig, which was also very wet..."
- 07.08.82 2 persons.
- 29.08.82 4 persons. "...the water in the tube to Helictite Grotto, was foul and stank to high heaven..."
- 29.09.82 2 persons.
- 09.10.82 5 persons. "...GB contained a sizeable lake... sufficiently for Jonathan to believe he was walking on the Ladder Dig..."
- 31.10.82 3 persons.
- 06.11.82 4 persons. "...the water level was higher than normal, reaching about 10m further up the passage than the foot of Ladder Dig..."
- 21.11.82 MRO call-out to Ladder Dig.
- 27.11.82 5 persons. "Met members of UBSS on their way down to ... Ladder Dig. On arrival there they explained that they were going to remove the rawlbolt from the face. This was because the practice of hooking the ladder over the bolt was not

recommended! ...We proceeded to Ladder Dig as far in as the squeeze at Helictite Grotto which had a good few inches of water in it..."

- 27.11.82 4 persons "...stream very active but no stream below Ladder Dig..."
- 04.12.82 3 persons "...there was quite a bit of water flowing through the cave..."
- 11.12.82 3 persons. "...a very wet 40', and a veritable swim into Ladder Dig, in which we did not indulge! ...We encountered a lot of water..."
- 11.12.82 10 persons. "...good swim up to Ladder Dig as the water level had risen a lot."
- 29.12.82 4 persons
- 01.01.83 8 persons. "...the water had backed up to the Ladder Dig extension..."
- 15.01.83 12 persons. (Author observed that the terminal lake began shortly after the Ladder Dig pitch.)
- 22.01.83 3 persons.
- 29.01.83 5 persons.

These comments are summarised in the attached chart. Water levels are shown as high or low for each report, and the evidence of previous flooding (eg water reported in crawl) are indicated as strong or weak depending on the clarity of the report. Finally, it has been assumed that if strong evidence of flooding does not coincide with a recent report of flooding, then this in itself is evidence that flooding has occurred.

The following known or surmised dates are therefore interpolated from the evidence as dates when Ladder Dig entrance passage has flooded:

late November 1981
late March / early April 1982
early May 1982
mid July 1982
9th October 1982
6th November 1982 (possible)
21st November 1982 (rescue)
11th December 1982
1st January 1983 (possible)

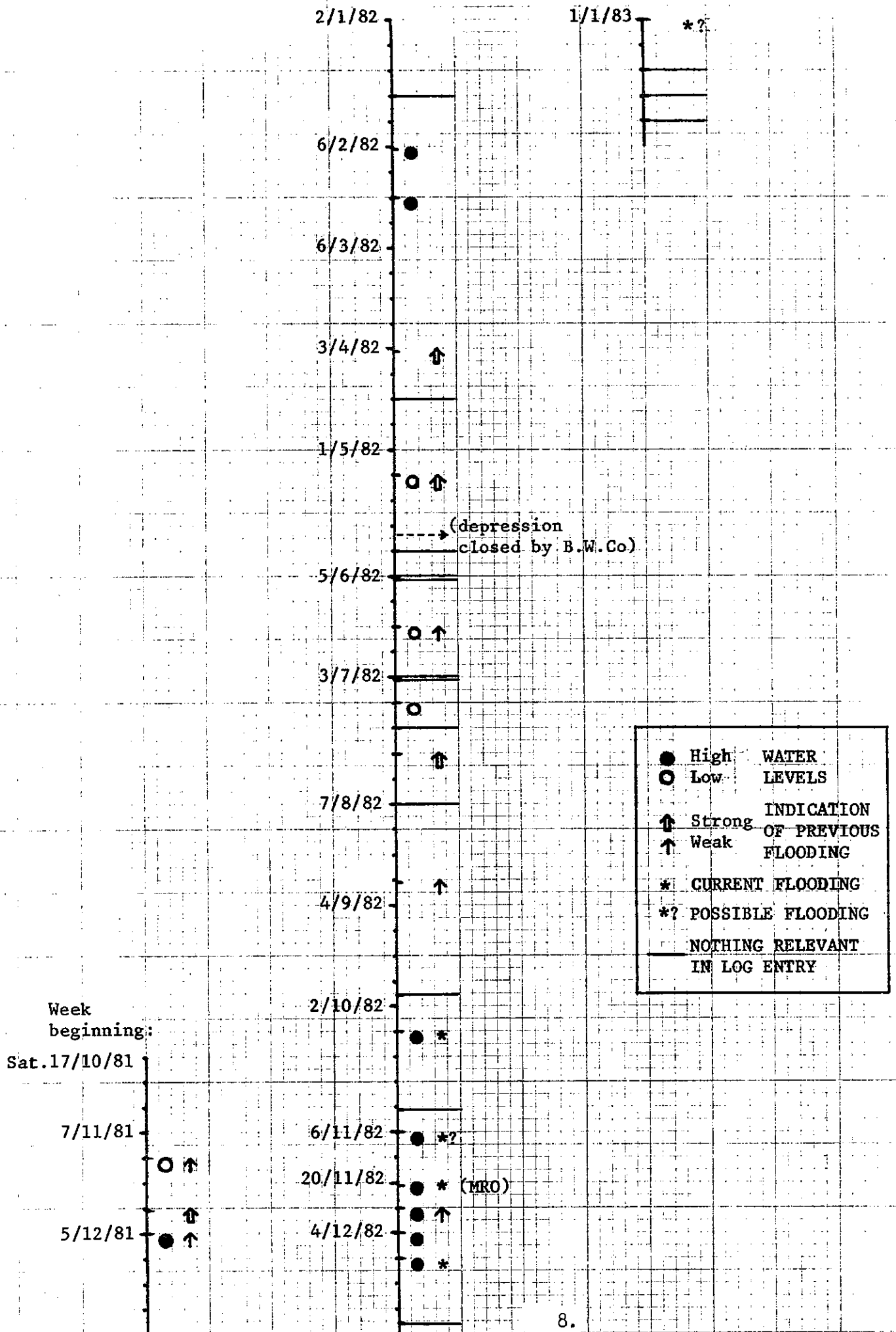
This represents 7-9 floods in 16 months, or an average of 5-7 per year. Direct observations by MCC parties, plus the MRO call-out, have shown 3-5 floods between October 1982 and January 1983.

The above figures provide no evidence of an increase in flooding since the filling of the depression by Bristol Waterworks. Nevertheless a greater volume of silt is now encountered in the terminal choke, and this cannot improve matters.

Until recently, GB Cave has been regarded as a system offering safe caving at any time. This remains so in parts of the cave, but there must now be a big question mark over Ladder Dig in prolonged wet weather. Since many trips to GB Cave are made by parties visiting Mendip, it may be appropriate for the Charterhouse Caving Committee to publicise the potential problems in the caving press. A cautionary note may also be worthwhile when the Mendip caving guide books are next reprinted. As always, though, the final responsibility rests with the caver. Think more carefully about the weather before you go underground!

- Sources:
1. MCC cottage logbook, October 1981 to date.
 2. Cave Diving Group newsletter 66, January 1983.
 3. Cerberus Speleological Society journal vol 13, no 1, Jan/Feb 1983
 4. The Standard (London newspaper), 22nd November 1982.

WATER LEVELS IN GB CAVE, BASED ON MCG COTTAGE LOG BOOK OCT. 1981 - JAN. 1983



With snow falling in the Home Counties, it seemed lunacy to head forth to where even worse conditions may have lurked. However, the southern snowfall petered out somewhere around Bedfordshire, and little more was seen until leaving the M6 near Lancaster; and what there was provided no more than a welcome decoration on the Fells.

On Saturday morning the large MCG contingent split into two groups:

Laddering Party:

Tony Knibbs, John Miriam, Denise Samuel,
Phil Eliot, John Felton, Jon Roberts, Ian
Parry, and Paddy Newman.

De-laddering Party:

Roger Wallington, Mike Lovell, Don Vosper,
Adrian Duckett, Louise Curley, and Alan
Mellon.

The laddering party entered the cave at 11.45am, with PE still trying to get his other boot on. TK and JM indulged in the sort of travelling conversation from which an eavesdropper could have concluded that certainty about the route was in limited supply. But we found New Roof Traverse and looked for No.1 Hole to put a line down.

Passing over No.1 Hole ("Not down it?", you ask?) soon brought us to Hammer Pot (?) down which the line seemed insufficient, so a 20ft ladder placed. Keen observers will realise that some innocent confusion reigned. And the next pitch was not Pulpit, although we treated it as such and were 10ft of ladder short. Puzzled, we added another ladder and descended Mud Pot (no, we still hadn't guessed).

Next came Cathedral Pitch of 45ft. Or did it? No, the next was 75ft and must be Dome Pitch - we must have lost Cathedral somewhere. My God, the mind plays strange tricks down these Yorkshire holes. Then I found that the end of the ladder did not correspond with the bottom of the pitch. Hm! But it was only about 20ft short, and this was climbable with a handline.

Yes, you've got it - we were descending Centipede pitch, following an alternative route to the one we were intending to use. And we still did not realise it; there's leadership for you!

Never mind, we were getting deeper and the next two pitches, Candle Pot and Shistol Pot were recognised as such. The sound of a stream heralded the approach of Battle Axe Pitch whose 45ft ladder is only damp for the last 15ft to the big ledge of Thunderstorm Depot. A short traverse up and out over the 65ft Wet Pitch gained a rawlbolt belay from which the ladder hung out of the worst of the deluge.

Opinions varied as to how to get onto this ladder: I chose to traverse to the rawlbolt and descend but, looking up through the spray, I noticed the next person doing a Tarzan (sorry, Jane) act and swinging out from the ledge. Chacun a son accident, I thought, moving smartly out of the flight-path.

Last pitch of 25ft was laddered through the usual hole above and to the right of the wet version. The vanguard of the last three pitches - TK, DS, and IP - again found themselves waiting for their pursuers. An exchange of limericks had filled in some waiting time above Battle Axe, but pressing on to groundsheet Junction with the Master Cave seemed a better idea now; and there was time to push on downstream to Long Pool before returning to meet the remaining arrivals at 4pm.

It was Mars Bar time, DV appearing as if by magic to announce the approach of the second party who had managed a quick pint before setting off down.

Leaving the others to go downstream, the first party went upstream in the master Cave to reach the impressive rift chamber of Lyle Cavern above the boulder-choked streamway.

Both parties met again as we headed downstream to the junction. Some would quibble with my saying that the return trip went without incident. Individual rates of ascent varied from reasonable to very slow - gravity bothering some more than others, and lifelines occasionally becoming hauling ropes.

The parties united once again on Centipede Pitch where some mutual assistance with tackle and bodies was called for. No, we still had not twigged it - this was still

TK and JM brought up the rear of the first party, carrying odd items of tackle and two ammo boxes belonging to other members. And our labours were duly rewarded by a barrage of well-aimed snowballs as we reached the entrance. There's gratitude. But who cared? It had been a great trip and it was only 8.30pm - time for a shower, a meal, and then off to the New Inn, Clapham, for a couple of jars.

SEQUEL

The scene is the bar of the New Inn where, having cussed (in the nicest possible way) Greg Smith for not booking us in at NPC's Greenclouse HQ, the conversation got around to "How was the trip?" Our description caused GS to indulge in much gesturing and a strong disbelief in OUR VERSION. Actually, GS explained where we had been, and we all said "Oh, of course, how silly not to have realised it." Much laughter. Well, you can't win them all, can you?

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - COMMITTEE REPORTS.

To save time at the AGM, officers' reports are printed below. If you have any queries arising from these reports, please make a note of it for the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

As can be seen from the balance sheet (attached), the club is still solvent despite the high cottage running costs and the editorial drain! Concerning the cottage, the electricity consumption has jumped to practically double this last quarter due to the installation of the storage heaters. This will be offset, if not financially, at least in the reduced deterioration of the structure due to damp. Sewage disposal costs should be lower this year after the modification to the cess pit; council rates, however, may rise. Gas costs are gratifyingly low, but observant types will notice that fuel (coal) does not appear in the expenditure column, this is because we do not purchase any, so this year that cost will be additional. Another aspect is the lower insurance figure - £371.30 was paid early this year, the insurance company overlooked us. Glad we did not have to claim.

As we gradually improve fixtures and fittings, so the improvement expenses will be reduced, the exception being the extension and extra land purchase, so a slight saving in that direction is forecast this year.

The committee expenses are moderate, mainly postage and stationery. The unfortunate Editor has the highest bill, this because of the high cost involved with printing and postage to those unable to attend a Thursday meet.

The library, as many of you will have seen, now resembles a library, with books, surveys, newsletters etc. At quite a high cost, though - plus we now have a good stock of large-scale maps for accurate survey work on Mendip.

Finally on the expense side - the cottage is now ours, lock, stock, and shower room, the final outstanding invoice now having been settled.

On the credit side, the greater our membership the greater the income (providing you all remember to pay). We should be about one third better off this year.

The cottage fees provided a good source of income, especially the guest bookings, so keep them rolling in. And as can be seen, the cottage income equalled £1921.50 against cottage-only expenditure (not including improvements, but including insurance) of £1058.17, so it is holding its own and should continue to do so this year.

One disappointment last year was the income from covenants. This year I intend to start afresh with a new covenant from everyone who is willing to do so, and scrap the old ones, so tidying up the administration. Please, if you haven't done so, fill out a fresh form, dated from 1.1.83 and return to me as soon as possible.

Arthur Spain.

MENDIP CAVING GROUP

YEAR ENDING 31-12-82

<u>1981</u>	<u>INCOME</u>		<u>1981</u>
16058.72	CASH AT BANK 31-12-81	3624.59	117.93
1.76	CASH IN HAND	1.76	210.23
703.23	BANK INTEREST 1981	26.45	89.01
	1982	264.04	59.07
319.00	SUBS 1982	800.00	
	SUBS 1983	110.00	15.86
1071.71	COTTAGE FEES - MEMBERS 1982	841.00	34.00
	- GUESTS	1080.50	195.26
	COTTAGE FEES 1981	73.00	.
368.28	DINNER TICKETS	462.00	288.50
116.51	DIN. COACH COLLECTION	33.00	1187.63
19.00	COVENANTS	55.89	
3.50	GIFTS/DONATIONS	7.97	
	CCC PERMITS	17.50	
	SALE OF BOOKS	30.60	13.14
	BARBEQUE SURPLUS	1.20	302.21
138.58	BREWERY A/C	64.53	75.61
	TRANSFER FROM SPEC A/C	50.00	70.17
		<u>7544.03</u>	44.00

AUDITED BY : -

DATE
DATE

9413.69
263.94

4391.66
1.76

EXPENDITURE

COTT. RUNNING EXPENSES -

ELECTRICITY	275.71
GENERAL RATES	227.40
SEWAGE DISPOSAL	145.00
WATER RATES (BRISTOL W.W.)	57.58
WESSEX WATER RATES (DRAINAGE)	2.29
REFUSE CHARGE	26.15
GAS	50.45
INSURANCE	60.50
COTT. HOUSEHOLD ITEMS	43.75

COTT. IMPROVEMENTS EXPENSES

IMPROVEMENT MATERIALS	440.21
IMPLEMENTS	124.02
HEATING INSTALLATION	169.11

COMMITTEE EXPENSES

TREASURER	30.45
EDITOR INCLUDING N/L PHOTOCOPYING	387.82
EDITOR FLOAT C/F 1983	14.48
COTT. WARDEN FLOAT C/F 1983	14.00
SECRETARY	20.00
RECORDER	52.00
MEET SECRETARY	7.50

MISC.

LIBRARY REQUISITES BOOKS/SURVEY	408.06
SUNDRY CAVE EXPENDITURE	73.89
SUBS TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS	79.00
DINNER - HOTEL	445.50
COACH	37.00
FINAL BUILDING INVOICES	641.35
SUNDRY GIFTS	25.00
MISC. EXPENSES (PHOTO, CARDS ETC.)	17.31
TRANSFER FROM DEP. TO SPEC.	250.00
CASH AT BANK	3319.59
PETTY CASH	4.44
MAPS	96.60

7544.05

MENDIP CAVING GROUP

BANK ACCOUNTS

BALANCE AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1982

GENERAL PURPOSE FUND	-	CURRENT ACCOUNT	232.09
		DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	3087.50
SPECIAL FUND	-	DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	1049.35
		FUND IN HAND 1-1-83	<u>4368.94</u>

BALANCE AS PER

SPECIAL FUND	967.07
INTEREST SPEC. FUND 1981	5.78
1982	76.50
GENERAL FUND	3319.59
CASH HELD BY TREASURER	4.44
	<u>4373.38</u>

AUDITED BY :-

DATE

DATE

EDITOR'S REPORT.

Since the last AGM the club will have been subjected to 12 editions of the newsletter, one each month. Average content has been about a dozen sides of A4. Distribution started out a year ago at about 100, and has gradually crept up to the present figure of 150 - this including exchanges with other clubs (about 35 now) and a few complementary copies for prospective members. Despite extensive use of donated materials and services (for which thanks to those who have helped), this has cost the club almost £400 - about 25p per copy, including postage on about 80 copies a month.

As most of the material for the newsletter comes from you the members, please keep the news coming in. This doesn't necessarily mean sitting down to write an article - it's a Newsletter, so what we really want is snippets of news, opinions, complaints; in fact anything which may be of interest to other members.

Ian McKechnie.

RECORDER / LIBRARIAN'S REPORT.

Ten committee meetings were held in 1982. Average attendance was 5.7 members - the best excuse for absence was 'working in China', the worst 'I forgot'. The meetings have definitely speeded up now we meet at the Mawson Arms, though we have yet to take less than 1hr 40min.

My priorities as librarian remain (1) to acquire relevant cave surveys and maps if these are lacking; (2) keep up to date with new publications and ensure the newsletter exchange with other clubs continues satisfactorily; (3) try to catch up on old publications.

All caving librarians I have met agree a national caving bibliography is desperately needed to cope with the multitude of publications. However, nobody has produced one. In its absence, I have made a point of completing our set of "Current Titles in Speleology" which provides yearly listings of major articles and books from 1962, and "Internationale Bibliographie Für Speleologie" covering 1950 to 1960. These at least reduce the reference problem to checking annual entries on topics and regions.

Nearly 700 items were obtained for the library in 1982. This included extensive catching up on publications missed in previous years when building the cottage. Our first library list was published in November 1982. At last I know what items the library is supposed to have, if the cottage contained everything in the library list and former card index. Unfortunately it doesn't. It's former chaotic state in the old hut meant at least forty items went missing then - these are listed in the Jan 1983 newsletter, page 6 $\frac{1}{2}$. Please do check if you have anything listed there, and return them. Only one item could not be traced in 1982: "The complete Caves of Mendip" (1970 edition). I should like to know who has Norbert Casteret's "Darkness Under the Earth" - currently missing.

Following the decision of the 1982 HYGM, we have obtained twelve 6" geological maps of western and central Mendip, and the remainder are on order. Judging by the number of swallets shown on them, we shall have no problem finding new cave passage this year!

I should like to express the MCG's thanks to the following for generously donating publications: Gloucester Speleological Society, Hades Caing Club, Shepton Mallet Caving Club, Somerset Mines research Group, Craven Pothole Club, David St Pierre, and a number of MCG members.

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The past year has been one of progress and consolidation for the Group. With the imposition of seemingly endless work on Nordrach Cottage now but a memory, the transformation back to a fully active caving organisation is complete. Activities are taking place against a background of reasonably efficient administration, financial confidence and, most important, an enthusiastic membership.

Meets planned for 1983 are as varied and interesting as those of last year. The first two meets this year have attracted gratifyingly large attendances. Away meets

are obviously very popular - particularly those in South Wales and Yorkshire. For the first time in many years an overseas expedition is being run; certain areas of the Pyrenees will be crowded with MCG members this summer.

The demand for tackle on Yorkshire meets has shown up a need for more ladders and ropes. These have now been purchased, together with other sundries, and it is hoped that the next journey North will not take with it all the group's tackle.

Membership is still increasing steadily. A year ago the total number of members stood at 79. Today it is 110 including all classes. Of that figure, I would estimate that 50% are regular cavers, which is a healthy proportion.

I am beginning to sense that there is some concern about setting a numerical limit to membership. Obviously, to set a limit requires a calculated reason for so doing. We are an open organisation and should remain so until the amenities we offer show signs of being overstretched, especially the accommodation. General meetings excepted, there is still no difficulty for members to find a bunk at weekends. However, the effects of increasing membership will be closely monitored, hopefully to identify problems before they become serious.

There has been no settlement yet of the probate on the late Jim Fry's estate. Hence we are no further forward in our efforts to buy an extra piece of land. However, a written offer is being made to underline our interest in the purchase.

No action has taken place on the revision of the Bone Hole licence agreement. The ball is in the National Trust court.

The Group's position vis-a-vis national and regional caving organisations remains unchanged. We retain our supportive membership of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs, Cambrian Caving Council, and Council of Northern Caving Clubs. This ensures that we receive reports from areas in which we have particular interest. We are usually represented at meetings of the Cambrian Caving Council, but conflicting dates seem to hamper attending Southern Council meetings; however there is always the opportunity to catch up on events on any night at the Hunters.

A watchful eye is kept on the National Caving association, but little of any real interest to cavers at large seems to come from this slough of bureaucracy, except for occasional equipment reports which are useful.

Returning to reality, an alternative venue for the AGM is being sought at Charterhouse country Club this year. Attendance at general meetings is now too high to comfortably accommodate everyone in the cottage lounge. Guest numbers for this year's dinner are forecast to reach 100, so the coach is going to be a crowded place on Saturday night, not to mention the crush at the bar at the Star.

Tony Knibbs.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR TICKET FOR THE ANNUAL DINNER, ASK TONY KNIBBS NOW-- IT PROMISES TO BE ANOTHER MEMORABLE EVENT, AND SOME FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT HAS BEEN ARRANGED FOR YOU POST-PRANDIAL DELIGHT.

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RECORDER's REVIEWS

"And every one said, 'If we only live,
We too will go to sea in a Sieve, -
To the hills of the Chantry Bore!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live..."

(slight apologies to Edward Lear)

Fairy Cave Quarry is just ten miles by crow from Nordrach Cottage, fewer still from the Hunters. But there must surely be an upland Sea dividing eastern and western Mendip, judged by the awareness among Nordrach cavers of happenings east of the Fosse Way. Strange tribes such as the Border Caving Group are rumoured to scrape a weekend's living under the earth. Primacy within this eastern land is claimed by the Cerberus, led by the "mighty...feared...omniscient...beneficent...HonSec" (sounds familiar, doesn't it). Every two moons, messengers are despatched at his bidding to all peoples of his dominion, and missives even stray as far as Charterhouse, bearing curious tidings in Mendipese. These weighty parchments are none other than the Journals of the Cerberus Speleological Society, which amassed 234 pages in 1982.

The burning issue on eastern Mendip would appear to be a topic of great familiarity to MCG members a few years previously: the desire for a new club cottage. Local details are different though - the Cerberus' current premises at Fairy Cave Quarry are rented from Hobbs Ltd. (a part of ARC) who own the quarry and who have successively discovered and destroyed some of the most beautiful caves on Mendip. The consequences of this counter-intuitive relationship between cavers and quarry owners are described in detail in the Journal - suffice it to say that the CSS would like: A) a new freehold cottage; B) preservation of the remaining caves in Fairy Cave Quarry (they accept this would entail additional responsibilities and substantial costs); and C) A and B preferably not to be mutually exclusive. The saga continues, and they deserve the best of fortune - few caving clubs are really prepared to spend much time and effort conserving caves.

Items on caves of eastern Mendip are spread thinly, though the Journal may be considered the fullest and freshest source of information (excepting a certain bar in Oakhill). Again both eastern and western Mendip have some similarity, the local caving content in respective publications being a function of the scale and number of cave systems and digging hang-ups. Relevant articles in the past year have been:

Vol.6 No.1, January/February 1982	p27	Hilliers Cave digging and radiolocation
	p33	Caving regulations for Fairy Cave Quarry
No.2, March/April 1982	p59	Wishing Well Cave, Ashwick Grove
No.3, May/June 1982	p91	St Vincent's Swallet and thoughts on drainage of Stoke St Michael area
Vol.7 No.1, January/February 1983	p13	A Review of CSS digs on Mendip:-
		St Vincent's Swallet
		Hopeful Hole
		Wishing Well Cave
		Timber Hole (an old MCG dig)
		Hunting Lodge Slocker
		Maesbury Swallet
		Shatter Cave
		Withyhill Cave
		Springfield Slocker.

Club news, club trips and the social scene take the usual share of space. The 1981 Cerberus expedition to Morocco occupies over 50 pages of issues 5 and 6 in 1982 (now there's a useful idea for Ian after the MCG Pyrenees meet), and gives

a good feeling for what a club expedition can be like. Cerberus had an advantage, the 1981 expedition being their third visit to Morocco, being a return trip to the Chara Region first visited in 1979.

Technical articles include one on the well-worn theme of caver's lighting (Vol.6 No.3, p85), and an intriguing dissertation on the design of a combat descendeur (ie: military, not CNCC v CCCC) where descent rates of 4-5 metres per second are sought (Vol.6 No.1, p28). A 'Mark 2' version of this descendeur has been issued to various UK special forces, and even in warm conditions, 20°C plus, and repeated descents, its temperature did not reach 65°C. The article doesn't say what happened to the rope! Off-beat techniques lavishly illustrated include the Cerberus Frog Rescue Service (a little known branch of MRO), and the Toad Recovery Division which made opportunistic use of a M.A.S.K. (Mobile Amphibian Survival Kit). Clearly eastern Mendip wildlife is cared for underground, but the articles gloss over whether either the toad or the frog had over-run their ETR before rescue was initiated (Vol.6 No.2, p55 and No.6, p207).

Aficionados of Private Eye will detect a certain resemblance between the PE 'Great Bores of Today' and the CSS 'Speleo' feature. The 'Back Page' is written by Speleo, so is everything you could expect to hear if you gained all your Mendip gossip while lying in a tired and emotional state under the shove ha'penny table in the Hunters. And so to the big Question. Can Cerberus Shady Deals Inc. afford to donate a new jumbo stapler to the CSS Editor? Recent Journals have been so large the staples just won't cope, risking disintegration of the Journal and causing bloody thumbs among MCG bibliophiles. Or perhaps we could have a free elastoplast with every issue.

ERRATUM in the last edition: In Greg Smith's account of Large Pot it is stated that the entrance is West of Marble Steps. It is of course East.

Bob Speleo β



MENDIP CAVING GROUP

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NORDRACH, 19 MARCH 1983

3.00 pm sharp

Chairman - Pat Walsh.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last General Meeting, the Half-yearly General Meeting held on 16th October 1982.
3. Matters arising from the minutes.

4. Committee reports:

Hon. Secretary	Tony Knibbs
Hon. Treasurer	Arthur Spain
Hon. Editor	Ian McKechnie
Hon. Cottage Warden	John Miriam
Hon. Recorder	Jon Roberts
Hon. Tacklemaster	Phil Ingold
Hon. Meet Secretary	Greg Smith

5. Matters arising from the Committee Reports.

6. Election of committee Reports.

With the exception of the Hon. Tacklemaster and Hon. Meet Secretary, the committee remains as listed above.

Hon. Tacklemaster: Two nominations have been received for this post and a vote will decide between Roy Kempston and Bryan Terry.

Hon. Meet Secretary: Only one nomination has been received for this post, and Geoff Barton is elected unopposed.

7. Any other business.
8. Date and venue of the 1983 Informal Half-yearly Meeting and 30th Anniversary Party.

NB The coach to the Star Hotel, Wells, will leave Nordrach Cottage at 7.00 pm.

It is hoped that the meeting will be held in Charterhouse Manor rather than in the cottage, where space is limited. However this is not yet confirmed - a notice will be posted in the cottage on AGM morning stating the venue.

If we meet in Charterhouse Manor, the bar there will be available to all those attending the meeting, and you are encouraged to go over there at lunch time.