

# **ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN CAVING CLUB**

## **NEWSLETTER No 6**

**DECEMBER 1966**

### **THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The annual general meeting of the Club was held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November and was very well attended. Remarking on the Club's progress during the year, the chairman stressed the need for more specialists within the membership, and also congratulated members on their efforts towards fresh discoveries. Thanks were expressed to Mr G Classed for acting as Chairman for the meeting.

Officers and Committee members for 1967 were elected as follows :-

Chairman - John E Lewis.

Secretary - James Hay.

Treasurer - Ray Wright.

Equipment Officer - Laurence Bailey.

Records Officer - Roger E Bailey.

Committee Members - Rex Keane and Anthony Day.

Club Members are reminded that subs are due as from 1<sup>st</sup> November 1966, and remain at 5/- for junior members ( 16 - 18 years ), 10/- for senior members ( over 18 years ) payable to the treasurer before 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1967 or membership will be assumed to have lapsed.

### **DISCOVERIES**

Hoar thorn Wood Swallet National Grid Ref :- 591137.

Hoarhorn Wood Swallet has been known for many years and members started blasting there early this year, after finding an encouraging draught. A short passage led to the deepest pot so far discovered in the Forest of Dean - 102 ft, with 85 ft, vertical but easily negotiated due to the uneven sides. The stream was encountered at the bottom, heavily silted, and at the moment too much water is present to allow further blasting.

### **SLADE WOOD RISING.**

Obviously not a discovery but members have been extending this by blasting. A typical Sunday mornings activity until recently has been :- fire a charge at the bottom of Hoarhorn Wood Swallet, a quick dash to Slade Wood near St. Briavels fix a charge and fire it, and then finally over to Howle Hill.

### **DUNDER HOLE FARM SWALLET - National Grid Ref- 601195.**

Possibly a corruption of "Thunder" Dunder Hole Farm Swallet is situated about 300 ft above, and one mile from the River Wye, in a dark grey limestone. ( did someone say this is a pleasant change from the red, yellow and green ) . A small stream sinks here, and considerable careful blasting will be needed to push this.

### **BISHOPSWOOD HOUSE SWALLET - National Grid Ref :- 600188.**

A natural rift taking three separate streams, again about 300 ft above, and half a mile from the River Wye. Careful inquiry has failed to reveal any previous reference to this swallet, so it has been named as above.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES.**

#### **SLING IRON MINE.**

Progress has been halted by the fall we mentioned previously, and temporarily abandoned in favour of the more interesting possibilities on Howel Hill.

#### **OLD HAM IRON MINE**

Further to our report on the main route collapse in Ham we are pleased to say that this has now been re-opened. Rod and Colin slapped twenty five pounds of plaster on the roof near the collapse and blew it open again, ( must have been quite some bang ) leaving it much safer than it was before. The escape route has been surveyed by Tony and is , of course still open, should we ever get trouble in the future.

Several familiarisation trips have been held this summer, both in Old Ham and Old Bow, and some excellent samples obtained, contributing greatly, we feel, towards our membership.

### **OAKWOOD MILL DEEP LEVEL**

Some interest is being shown in this are, and some excellent slides were secured recently by Roger and Laurence, in the partially flooded adit using the multi-flash technique. Brian Nelmes, Mike Salmon, Graham Lockwood and Mike Howell are re-opening a very sticky outcrop back entrance and would appreciate help should anyone wish to tie up with them.

The whole area from Sling to Bream appears quite a little hazy to most of us, and coupled with the 6 inch surface map, would provide an excellent evenings discussion. A map on the lines of the tracing done by Tony of the Easter, to Sling area would be invaluable, however I dare not suggest this to Tony.

### **EASTER IRON MINE**

A further trip towards Easter was led by Rex recently, but heavy falls prevented the party from reaching as far as the previous trip. In view of the very dangerous nature of the country, ( boulders in loose sand ) all attempts to reach Easter via the Red Pit are abandoned. The only way at present open would be down one of the shafts.

### **SOUTH WALES.**

Trips to South Wales have been well supported and David Bailey has been fortunate enough to assist a party in the Dan-yr-Ogof extensions. David's brief comment was "It has not been overestimated" . A party of members also acted as sherpas to a diving party as far as Dip-sump ( 185 ft long ) which leads to O.F.D.2, and were there to meet them on their way back. The South Wales Club is hoping to find a dry route to this new extension and we can expect to hear a lot more about this major discovery in the future.

### **AGEN ALLWEDD**

Eighteen members met in Brynmawr on the morning of Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> and entered Agen Allwedd about twelve o'clock. A quite trip to the Cliffs of Dover etc, Coming out about six o'clock to be greeted by pouring rain, and then fog to drive home in. Typical comments - "A very enjoyable trip" .

## GEOLOGY.

The geological field trips were very well attended and some excellent fossils obtained. Most tantalising were the “Conchidium Knights” out of reach in the Anystry Limestone, so to every ones amusement, Andy perched Elaine on his shoulders to reach them. Due to the hardness of the limestone it proved almost impossible to work out one of these specimens without damage.

At Garden Cliff, Westbury-on-Severn, P Lewis was very lucky to find the bone which joins the paddle of an Ichthyosaur to its body. This has since disintegrated into six or seven pieces, probably due to drying out and I I very much regret not seeking expert advice on its preservation when it was discovered. A coat of clear varnish or cellulose would probably have been sufficient to exclude the air.

Mr Burrows enjoyed a visit to Ham during the summer but refused to comment on the “football roof” .

Mr Dreghorn of St Pauls College Cheltenham was also introduced to Barbecue Churn and Ham on 4<sup>th</sup> December and was completely fascinated at every turn. He pointed out the “sugar” sparkling, which indicates dolomite, and the varying degrees of Haematiesation, indicated by the amount of red penetration. Mr Dreghorn appeared to understand this type of country extremely well, and I would very much like to persuade him to give members the benefit of his learning on another trip in trip. He has for the moment promised to give members a lecture on the geology of the Forest of Dean, a theory ( that he is not entirely satisfied with ) of electrostatic attraction at the time of sedimentations.

Whilst in the Lake District on holiday this year, I was very fortunate to meet the well known mineralogist and colour photographer Mr Davidson of Penrith. He was forced to sell an excellent collection of minerals when so many people calling and spending several hours at a time, interfered with his business. We were treated to a show of his slides, all 2.25 inches square, mostly on Agfa, and this was something we shall never forget.

We were sorry to hear of the accident that occurred to Mr Burros and his family earlier this year and we all hope that he is now fully recovered. Should the “Introduction to Mineralogy” materialize at Cinderford Tech’ everyone will be informed in plenty of time.

## **CAVE RESCUE GROUP ACTIVITIES**

Two rescue practices have been and much useful knowledge gained, particularly from the Wigpool practice.

Congratulations to the C.R.G. members who rescued a dog from a 180ft natural rift resulting in a welcome addition to the funds.

The barbecue held in the British mine on 29<sup>th</sup> October proved very successful, some one hundred and forty people attended. ( See David's excellent shot taken with two P.F. 100's ).

May we again thank everyone who helped in any way to make the event such a success. Various suggestions for improvements have been made, and should we hold another barbecue, these will be put into effect.

The annual buffet dance at the White Hart Cinderford was even more enjoyable than last year, probably due to Tony's organisation of the games.

## **HON. ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

The committee has agreed to appoint Roger Solari as assistant secretary and he will be primarily responsible for organising al guest trips as well as helping in other directions.

The committee has also agreed to request the briefest possible details for the trips record :-Date - No of people - Leader, anything of unusual interest and of course the venue.

Any outside club requiring assistance, information, or guides in the Forest, please contact Roger, either by phone Dybrook 326 or at his address as on page 1.

### **S.W.C.C. BELINKA PIT EXPEDITION.**

Space will not permit coverage of this very successful expedition, how can one sum to years of planning and hard work plus the expedition itself in a few paragraphs. The absence of accidents, the entire planning and operation, and the ultimate achievement, places this among the great exploits of caving history. Our very sincere congratulations to all who took part in it.

### **EQUIPMENT - LADDERS AND NIFE CELLS**

Jim has ordered sufficient material to produce 1200ft of ladder, the main of which has been ordered by individual members and members of G.S.S. We hope begin producing shortly after Christmas, or as soon as we produce the drilling rig and we also hope to borrow a toggle press for swaging the ferrules. Our thanks to Rod for the loan of his swaging tool.

The Club has purchased eight Edison NIFE Cells, and these together with belts and helmets will be reserved specially for visitors. Anyone requiring NIFE Cells, spares or any equipment, contact Jim.

### **R.F.D.C.C. HEADQUARTERS.**

A jocular remark in committee and a very tentative suggestion to Graham Yates, resulted in yours truly being shown over Clearwell Castle on the evening of Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> December. One has to see the Castle to believe it, and in a very subdued mood I was shown a basement that might be suitable for the Headquarters, fifty feet by twenty, with a room on the end, twenty feet by twenty eight, quite dry and several tons of mixed rubbish scattered throughout. The committee held an emergency meeting the following Monday to view and discuss the place and after talking over various problems with Mr Yates the committee agreed to rent it on a provisional basis. A grand tour of the Castle rounded off the evening.

We are pleased to report that working parties have now been in several times, and even with more enthusiasm than was shown in moving the forty or fifty tons of stone and small stuff in the Barbecue Churn, they have cleared the main room almost completely. Eighteen turned up on the evening of Wed 13<sup>th</sup>, and in two hours bagged and dumped some three tons of rubbish. Thanks to Ray and Graham for using their vans.

We are proposing to provide accommodation for visitors which must include eventually dormitories, ( both male and female ) , Kitchen and dining room, shower, toilet facilities, lock up offices and changing room. Everyone so far agrees we need a fairly large room possibly up to thirty feet long for meetings and other activities, so this would obviously be at the fireplace end. Included in this newsletter will be found a scale plan of the total area and you are invited to fill this in to what you would consider the most convenient layout. Do not be afraid to include any ideas of your own. The committee members are giving this a great deal of thought and sensible planning at this stage may save alterations later.

We are also begging timber and anything suitable for cladding, ( for partitions ) also old chair, tables and floor coverings, in fact anything that might be suitable for a caving club headquarters.

### **FOREST OF DEAN MUSEUM.**

At a recent meeting with representatives of the various important bodies throughout the Dean, Jim and Ray found great difficulty in convincing those present of the need for a museum.

The outcome of the meeting was - another meeting to be held in February 1967, when alternative sites would be suggested and a list presented by Jim of the possible exhibits for the museum.

### **CONTACTS - OTHER CLUBS.**

We have contacted members from various clubs visiting the Forest recently, and the following have agreed to exchange newsletters with us :-

Kent and Surrey and the West Midlands. Kings School Gloucester and the West Midlands Club, expressed their gratitude to our guides for showing them round Wigpool.

### **BREAM YOUTH CLUB.**

Following a talk with slides, given by yours truly one evening, some fourteen members and the leader of the Bream Youth Club, welcomed the chance of a trip, probably in Ham. This will be arranged with Roger for the New Year.

### **CONGRATULATIONS.**

To Colin on his engagement to Miss Marion Butler.

### **A PROPOSED EDUCATION EVENING.**

Early in January it is proposed to hold a special evening for newer members when various speaker will take the floor and as briefly as possible bring up to date on the various aspects of caving and its associated interests in the Forest of Dean and other areas. Subjects to be covered may include :- Geology, History, Minerals and Crystals, Publications and Maps available, Iron Mines in particular, the caves of South Wales and a talk on Ogof-Ffynon-Ddu. This will be a reasonably high pressure evening, ( there will be time to fill up ) and although aimed at the new members, should prove very enjoyable to everyone. Dates will be announced later. There may be time to include our best slides.

### **MAPS - EASTER AREA - OLD HAM AND NEW DUN.**

Tony is still extending his survey in New Dun and has interesting maps for sale at purely nominal prices, Easter area - a tracing from originals in the Crown Office Coleford, of surveyed workings of Easter, Old Bow, Lambsquay, Old Ham, New Dun, Sling and various small workings, together with recorded tonnages, shaft depths and other useful data. Scale 66yards to 1 inch, a bargain at 5/- per copy. Single sheets, covering the main route through Old Ham and New Dun, surveyed and drawn by Tony at a scale of 20ft to one inch, 2/6 per copy. Possibly four sheets for the complete set. Sheets one and two now ready, remainder ready as soon as possible.

### **NEW MEMBERS**

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members, who have joined since the publication of our last newsletter :- Malcolm Austin, Bernard Dunn, John Elliot, Terence Hems, Michael Howell, Brian Nelmes, Michael Simons, Robert Simpson, Stanley C Wheeler, Martin Wheeler, Simon Wheeler.

This will probably be the last bumper newsletter. Events are occurring so fast, and the expansion of the club, demands a smaller newsletter at more frequent intervals.

To all our members and their families we extend the compliments of Christmas, and wish you happy caving in the New Year.

John E Lewis.  
Hon, Chairman and Editor.

### **P.S. LATE NEWS.**

Skittle match with G,S.S. Bird in hand, Minsterworth, 7.30 pm. Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December.

ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN LAYING CLUB

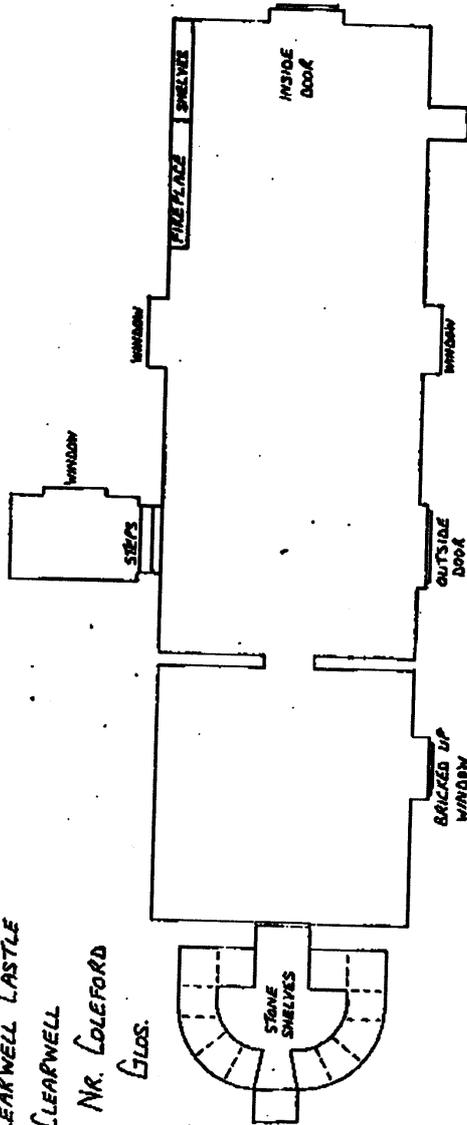
HEADQUARTERS

CLEARWELL CASTLE

CLEARWELL

NR. LOLEFORD

GLOS.



SCALE: 1 INCH TO 10 FEET

FLAGSTONE FLOORS

MAINS ELECTRICITY

MAINS WATER

MAIN SEWER.