



ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN  
CAVING CLUB

MARCH 1963

NEWS LETTER

NO. 11

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| Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> March             | Coldwell Swallet                  |
| Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> March             | Ilford Scout Group                |
| Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March             | Ladder practice in the Wye Valley |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> April | Easter                            |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> April | South Wales Weekend               |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> May   | South Wales Weekend               |

### WHO's WHO.

## **GENERAL NEWS SECTION**

The Forest of Dean has now been completely de-restricted as far as Foot and Mouth is concerned and so theoretically there is now no reason why caving should not be resumed. However it is strongly recommended that where a member wants access to a cave on farming land, he or she should make absolutely sure that the farmer has given his permission for caving to be resumed. The re-infection at Worcester is too near for comfort so keep your fingers crossed.

If you are underground this weekend , stop and give a few minutes thought to the fact that it is one year since Rex was killed in Easter Mine Shaft.

Due to a number of reasons, but mainly due to work, Rod Stewart has found it difficult to get to club committee meetings this year. He feels that this is unfair on the club and so the committee have reluctantly accepted his resignation. By agreement within the committee, Ken Faull has been co-opted to fill the gap and his address is :-

Mr K Faull  
22 Victoria Road  
Lydney  
Glos                      Tel - Lydney , 2565

Very little improvement has been made to the Castle H Q over the last few weeks. We are already getting requests from outside clubs for the use of the H Q and although some have used it, we feel that we cannot charge them for the use of it until we offer more facilities. The three most urgent jobs at present are :-

Whitewashing the second room - painting the overhead pipes - installing a lavatory.

We should take a hint from what has been done at the Butchers Arms where the upstairs back room has been completely redecorated. With white walls and all black beams and woodwork, the room is very clean and neat and only needs some caving photo's around the walls to finish it off. Mrs Dovey is quite happy for us to put up anything we like on the walls so it is planned to frame some of the better photo's in the club and to put them up.

## **HELMETS**

A number of members require helmets and an order will have to be sent off soon. The light Polypropylene helmets purchased previously have not proved popular because of their rapid wear rate so quotations were obtained for Texolex helmets which seem to be of a superior type. These are the dark brown helmets with a type of wood grain pattern on them and they can be had for about £1 each. Think about it if you need a new one as we need a big order to save the postage.

## **CLUB RECORDS**

There are three methods of recording the club's activities :- by trip reports - by newspaper cuttings - by photo's.

Trip reports are held by Phil Schwarz and he now has the club scrapbook ( which makes interesting reading - such as the cutting headed - All cavers should be examined before going underground ) Phil will also soon have the photo album so make sure you pass any newspaper cuttings about caving to him and also any photo's of general interest - especially any showing club members.

## **MINE CLEANLINESS**

Some of the commonly used mines are getting into a disgusting state with litter and paper arrows and chalk marks. An alarming tendency is growing for chalk arrows to appear with heads at both ends or for the heads to be on the wrong end. Where you see examples of this - don't walk past but stop and rub them out. The litter and paper arrows should also be brought out or we shall have to organise special cleaning trips.

## **WELDLESS STEEL TUBES C C**

The above club visit's the Forest at fairly regular intervals and recently they brought a newspaper photographer with them to record some of the clubs activities in Wigpool Iron Mine for their local paper. We hope to see copies of these photos and to see what sort of a job a professional makes of photographing the formations.

## **COLDWELL SWALLET**

### **National Grid Reference - 569155 - N Sterry**

At present this cave is about 60ft long and approximately 20ft deep and lies about 250ft above the River Wye in a valley running towards the river. The horizontal distance from sink to rising is about 200 yards.

By Forest standards, the cave is quite large, being big enough to walk in except for the two foot high entrance. The water flows into the low entrance over boulders and descends quite steeply in steps over slabs and small slopes until it eventually sinks on the right hand side of a horizontal passage through silt, pebbles and small boulders. Digging has started in this blockage with the interest being mainly shown by Jim Hay, John Elliott, Laurence and Roger Bailey and myself. More diggers are welcome in this interesting and very promising dig. To date, there have been two digging assaults :- On the first trip, Laurence, Roger Ken Faull and myself went in to bang a flake off on the right hand wall to make the digging easier. This was done successfully.

On the second occasion, Jim, John, Dick Holland and myself went in to dig out the floor. Several large slabs of rock were removed with aid from Jim's bang and digging in the floor commenced. It was decided that small buckets would be a considerable advantage in digging out the silt and small stones. This cave is promising - it is big - but would be much bigger if large slabs and boulders were removed. The blockage gives one the impression that the passage may tighten slightly and hence a few blocks are holding up the floor above the vertical or semi-vertical passage beyond. Perhaps it is a trick of acoustics but the stress on the other side of the blockage appears to be audible. There are good prospects that the stream passage will be relatively large, have one or more deep pitches and be at least 300ft in length. This is one of the most promising digs at the present time but prolonged digging may necessitate a wet suit.

Previously, much work has been done in this cave by Peter and Ian Standing and Ian has produced a survey.

## **GREEN MOSS POT**

### **National Grid Reference -**

### **Roger Bailey.**

Over the last few months, a friend of ours, who is an amateur dowser has been experimenting with map dowsing for caves in the Forest using a method which has had some success in America. On the results he obtained, we had a recce down towards the Biblins one Saturday and while our dowser checked his map results in the field, I took a stroll over the nearest bend and a few yards up came across a large collapse. Laurence came up for a look and then walked further up the track where he came across a forest track at the side of which he found a small running into a dark hole with moss covered walls - Green Moss Pot.

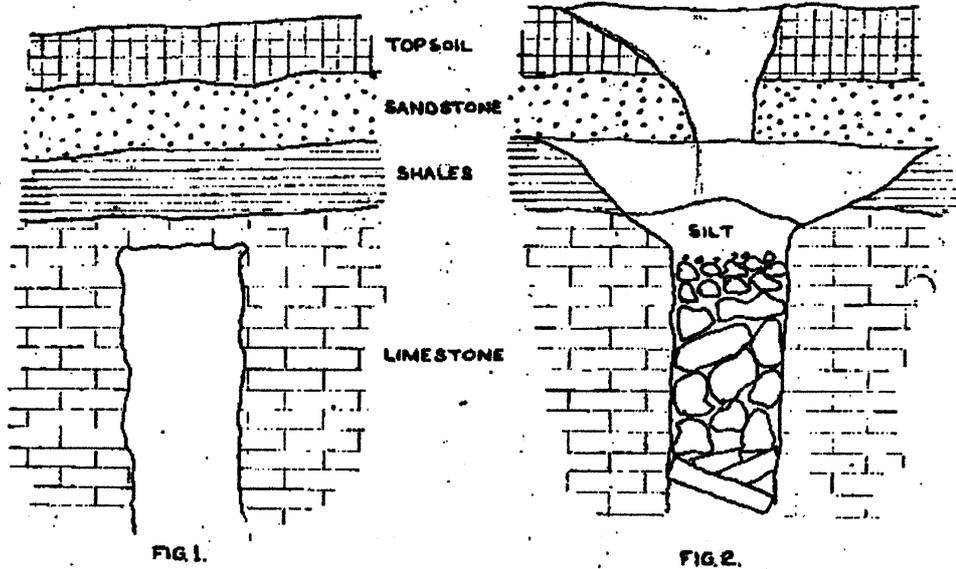
We returned next day for a further investigation, dropped down through the entrance and found ourselves in a low circular chamber of 20 - 30 ft in diameter with a silt covered floor about 15 ft deep from the surface at its lowest point. The Pot had obviously been investigated before as there was an old dig in one corner and a few old detonator wires about. We shifted a few small boulders and did a draught test and found a good air movement so the following week we returned with more kit and dug down several feet until we had a strong draught coming out of the boulders under our feet. After several digging sessions we had penetrated the boulders down about seven feet where we came to a rift formed by a large flute in the side of the pot. We could see down this rift for about six feet, after which it appeared to lip under. By now things were rather pressing and a rock which had been placed in the boulders a week before could not now be removed and the whole dig was becoming unstable. So we reluctantly boarded over the rift and popped all the offending boulders but at the same time this caused a collapse of silt from above. We have now dug out the silt back down to the boulders and put in timber and our next step will be to extend our shaft down to the rift we were forced to abandon.

We think Green Moss Pot was formed in the following way :- As in figure 1- a solutional pot or aven was formed with only a relatively thin limestone roof between it and a shale band, the shale band consisting mainly of very friable rock which is probably a calcareous sandstone ( ie, a mixture of limestone and sandstone ) . Next as shown in figure 2, the roof had collapsed bringing in the shale above and a small section of sandstone and at the same time capturing a small streamlet.

We think - and - hope that so far down there is a log jam of boulders across the pot for the following reasons - the boulders are out of the roof and not brought in from outside - the existing pot is shallow but must be much deeper as open collapses nearby are at lower levels and are about 30 ft deep - below the silt layer, the boulders are free and have air spaces between them - the sides of the pot are deeply fluted and would tend to hold the boulders. An example of what we expect to find is Hoarthorn Wood Swallet where the top of that is a large limestone block that had fallen in.

There is a small wager in beer between the Green Moss Pot diggers and the Coldwell Swallet tunnelers as to who breaks through first and as most of the work in Coldwell has been done in the Rock Inn so far, I know which side I am backing.

Diagrams over the page.



**NOTE**

The Editor does not necessarily agree with the views of contributors to this newsletter. In the case of the above article, he definitely does not agree. The Bailey brothers are getting a nasty reputation in the Forest as 'fillers-in' of holes and it sounds as if Green Moss Pot is going the same way.

## **RECENT ACTIVITIES SECTION**

The swallet near Biblins bridge mentioned in the last newsletter turned out to be Green Moss Pot, a swallet well known to some cavers and listed in Caves of Wales and the Marches. However, there is a strong draft in the bottom and the Bailey brothers are pushing ahead. The unstable boulders make digging difficult and they have had to resort to extensive timbering to keep the shaft in a sanitary condition.

A further well known swallet - Coldwell Swallet - is being actively dug and looks very promising. The distance between the sink and the rising is relatively short but it would also have some sporting pitches on the way out.

Both the above digs are being dug on Sundays and extra help at either would be very welcome. Although they are both wet, a wet suit is not necessary.

Mike Howell and Phil Schwarz have had a look down a section of the Cannop Fault - one of a series of large faults across the Forest but one of the few that appear at the surface as actual gaps wide enough to get down. They were able to get down to a depth of about 30 ft but were limited to distances of about 50 ft along the rift by infilling.

### **Saturday - Sunday 2 / 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

Some of the club went on a weekend to the Mendips on a G S S trip and stayed at the U B S S. But near Burrington. The trips weren't very successful as a Stoke Lane trip on the Saturday had to be abandoned at the sump when one member of the party had a slight accident and a way through the boulder choke in G 3 couldn't be found on the Sunday. Still, a tree was very expertly cut down for firewood and its direction of fall very accurately estimated. That Malcolm happened to be standing under that very spot was sheer coincidence.

### **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

A party of a dozen from Hatherley Boys School were taken down through Old Ham and on down to New Dun bottom. With a very enthusiastic party of youngsters, Ted reports some difficulty in keeping track of them all when the group stopped for a look around.

## **FUTURE ACTIVITIES SECTION**

### **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March**

Coldwell Swallet dig in morning and possibly all day.

### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March**

A visit by an Ilford Scout Group for a trip down Old Ham and some caving instruction. This group had a trip arranged with through P G N before Xmas but Foot and Mouth forced us to cancel it. The party consists of a total of 30 and it is planned to split them into two groups of 13 - one group to go underground in the morning while the other does some laddering and rope practice, the two groups changing over in the afternoon. Helpers and leaders are needed so here is a chance for the clubs experts ( ? ) to put over their pet theories without fear of contradiction.

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March**

Now that there is a reasonable amount of ladder about in the club, it is proposed to hold a laddering and roping practice for club members. A fine new pitch has been discovered just below Coldwell Swallet where verticals of between 10 and 60 feet are easily hung and there is a fine clear view for taking photo's of somebody being rescued.

### **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> to Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April - Easter**

No plans have been made for any particular trips over Easter but a group in the club is thinking of camping away from the Forest and getting a full four days caving in. The bigger the party the better, so think about it

### **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April**

A booking for Penwyllt for the weekend so book early as it seems that we may be able to get into Dan-yr-Ogof with our own leaders. Pfynton Ddu 1, 2, 3, are also open to use so there is plenty of choice.

### **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May**

Advance warning of a repeat booking for Penwyllt.

During the month of March a beginners trip will be run down Old Bow, depending on the party size and formation, may visit the new extensions which have very fine formations.

Don't forget that the Castle is always there and a lot of work still remains to be done.

### **WHO'S - WHO**

Who buys his carbide in bulk - all 2 cwt of it.

Who said "It doesn't go" and someone else found it.

Who was the caver that bought a new Jag and then caught the bus home.

Who found the hole full of ex-WD American Equipment but discovered un-canned meat instead.

Who thinks his carbide lamp runs on carbide fumes.

Who moved Stoke Lane sump by 6 inches to right.

Who got an unexpected force when operating the swaging press.

Who is the pebble collector that met the Awre bull.

Who got locked out of the U B S S. But without a key.

Who is the club's television star beach-comber.