

**THE ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN
CAVING CLUB**



DECEMBER 1970

NEWSLETTER No 27

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POEM

The people of the Vorest O Dean
Thay be a race apart
Rather rough and ready
But thay b' yunt sobad at 'eart
Thay'll slap tha on the Shoulder
Ar clip tha on tha jaw
However thou bist exin' vor't
T'wunt worry them t'all
Thay'll watch till thay be zertain
Which woy thou'lt 'ave it be
Then same as thou bist tratin them
That's 'ow thay'll trate thee.

**From Forest of Dean Humour
By Harry Beddington.**

EDITORIAL

November saw a well attended AGM admirably chaired by Ian Standing, this year there were fire-works, but only of the pretty kind. A large smelly bonfire was lit at the rear of the Butchers Arms and an interesting display of rockets, sparklers, aeroplanes and some very impressive penny bangers (or were they tup-penny ones) .

The new committee was installed with no pomp little ceremony and no barracking from the rear. Cave rescue had its annual airing, it's a great pity that cavers in general take such poor interest in this vital subject.

GCRG has asked the member clubs to appoint their own safety officer, this might help arouse more interest, but the real answer is for people to become more cave rescue conscious, There is of course those brave lads one hears in the public bar who don't need a rescue service, if ever I have an accident don't get me out, just let me die it will be my own fault, but you can bet your bottom dollar that if one of these proud heroes down a dark muddy hole nursing a broken leg they would be crying for their mums and cave rescue (here endeth the lesson) .

Conservation is heard a lot of these days, our particular field is not exempt after the loss of the 'All men and boys ' sign from Wig pool , recently the committee is asking the members and anybody else who enters the Forest mines to recover all the relics they can. Please label your finds with the relevant information and bring them to the club room at the Butchers. For the moment we shall just store the items, later when the top room is in better condition we shall lay out a more permanent display.

This is my first attempt at a newsletter, done with one finger on a typewriter which cost me 30/- however with twelve months of news to type there should be a gradual improvement in the spelling and grammar. Any article will be welcome (no porno please) on any subject in the caving sphere of activity.

Roger Bailey.
Hon Editor

NB. In this edition there are several deliberate spelling mistakes, there will be a prize for the paid-up member who can tell me the correct number, but I must point out that any accidental errors will not count.

OFFICERS FOR 1970 - 1971

Chairman
Jim Hay
10 Chase Park
Chase Park
Ross-on-Wye
Hfds

Secretary
John Court
26 Park Walk
Chase Park
Ross-on-Wye
Hfds

Editor
Roger Bailey
Rose Cottage
Aston Crews
Lea
Nr Ross-on-Wye
Hfds

Equipment Officer
Malcolm Sterry
18 Glynfield Rise
Foxmoor Lane
Ebley
Glos

H Q Warden
Pete Brown
ValeView
Upper Church Village
Tonteg
Nr Pontypridd
Glam

Treasurer
Andy Solari
Fir Tree Bungalow
Wigpool
Nr Mitcheldean
Glos

Librarian
Diana Court
26 Park Walk
Chase Park
Nr Ross-on-Wye
Hfds

Meets Secretary
New Address to be supplied

FOREST NEWS

After a November which has had an unusual heavy rainfall the water levels in the area are rising rapidly. Mike Howells reports that in Oakwood Mill Deep Mine the water rose fifty feet in just over a week. This rise in levels will probably be repeated in Oakwood Mill Land level, considerable work has been done there over the last few months nearly all of the mine that is above water has been accounted for. One recent trip John Court recovered a fine example of late 19th century billy can and a tinplated water bottle.

The dig at St. Anne's Well, Clanna is progressing, the latest news is that a small natural series has been reached. The cave is about 70 ft long, 30 ft being mined, the natural part being formed by flood water washing a way through a boulder collapse, a good draught is coming from the rear of the choke, blasting is necessary to carry on. A sink half a mile up the valley has been found, this sink takes a small stream but the volume of water is only a small proportion of that coming out at the resurgence.

John Elliott and Ken Faull have revisited Yew Tree Pit, as there is still work to be done in this area, a fresh approach to its mysteries will be welcome. The dig through from Old Ham is still intact but it must be treated with extreme caution !

The Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group - dance and buffet had a rather poor attendance this year but in spite of this members appeared to be enjoying themselves and for a change there was no misbehaviour to report in 'WHO's - WHO.

At Novembers committee meeting it was decided to cancel the order for NIFE spares that the club had placed through Bardic Systems Ltd because of the huge increase in Bardic's prices (steel vents have gone up from 1/- to 10/- each !) Hon Sec duly wrote to NIFE's direct asking for quotes and complaining about dealers profiteering, by return of post came a courteous reply and surprise - surprise NIFE's are Bardic Systems. Needless to say we are shopping else where.

WANTED COLUMN

By the librarian :- folders, box files etc to hold a rapidly growing library.

By John Berry :- car reflectors, sealed beam units and a small portable generator to help with his underground cine project.

TRIPS

December 6th - Eastwater swallet, Mendips, the meets Sec' is drawing up a comprehensive list of venues for the coming year.

And now a message from our treasurer - subs are due. There is a strong rumour has it that Andy will give a pint for those who pay their subs before the New Year.

Those people who wish to purchase a cast iron copy of the Newland brass should take note that there will soon be a price increase to £4 each.

Also going up in price is the newsletter, this applies only to new subscribers.

OUT OF THE WOOD

Keld Head. According to the latest 'Descent' the body of Alan Erith has not been recovered, he disappeared on his first dive on October 3rd.

Himalayas. I bet that shook you, the British Speleological Expedition to the Himalayas is now in business, one cave they thought they heard running water but it turned out to be a pitch choked solid with bats, the noise was the beating of bat wings.

South Wales Tunnel Cave is to be commercialised, apparently a contract has been signed to drive a 40 or 50 yard long tunnel to open the bottom entrance. Goodbye Davey Prices Hall ? Paddy o'Reilly is hoping to take about 600 photos of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, A grant of £445 has been made to SWCC for this purpose. (I wonder if we could get 30/- for doing Old Ham ?)

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Orpheus Caving Club - newsletter Vol 6 No 10
Descent Nov 1970 No 15.

This addition contains a dreadful error, Mitcheldean and St. Briavels (I'm not to sure about Severn Bridge and Welsh Bicknor) are listed under a heading "£6000 boost for S.Wales Hostels ". This is part of England " Old Butt ", the Welsh have just been given Monmouthshire on a plate, any more of this and we shall have to reopen Offas Dike.

DISAPPOINTMENT POT OCT 17TH

By Roger Solari

On reading Novembers newsletter I noticed that there was no mention of the second party - in fact we laddered the pot in 1 ½ hours reaching the last pitch with surprisingly little difficulty. We slowed appreciably at the top of the fixed ladder in the high road where three ways on appeared. Eventually the Bung was found and passed. The pitch presented its problems - a muddy take-off to a free hanging section to an awkwardly inclined ledge. After high pitched squawks from Diana we unhappily negotiated a flat out crawl but Diana soon found it didn't go. There were definite signs of dissent as I passed the duck and only Diana showed any enthusiasm. The crawls became tedious, and as we were on the brink of turning back the roof lifted and a rift was reached. A stream was reached and followed a beautiful tunnel to a large boulder chamber, which was descended to high rift (the bottom of the pitch) and ascended to Mountain Hall.

There discretion got the better part of valour and we beat John Elliotts party back to the last pitch in Dis' by about 1 ½ minutes and raced out with a minimal amount of tackle to reach the surface after 6 ½ hours of caving, a hard introduction to northern caving for Jim, Roger Gardner, John and Diana Court.

LONGWOOD AND AUGUST 8TH NOVEMBER

Party - John Berry, Chris Bowen, Pam Brown, Diana and John Court, John Elliott and Jim Hay.

As usual it was a sunny day when we left home, but by the time that we were in the Mendips it was overcast with an off putting cold wind blowing.

Much to our surprise everyone turned up at the right time. There was much moaning and groaning when we eventually got around to changing as it was cold and miserable.

With the usual keen spirit we ploughed through mud and water to the entrance gate to find that some kind soul had dammed the stream and a large quantity of water was cascading down the entrance pitch.

However we soon removed the dam and started down, hoping that the stream wouldn't rise at all, as it was very full and had obviously flooded very recently.

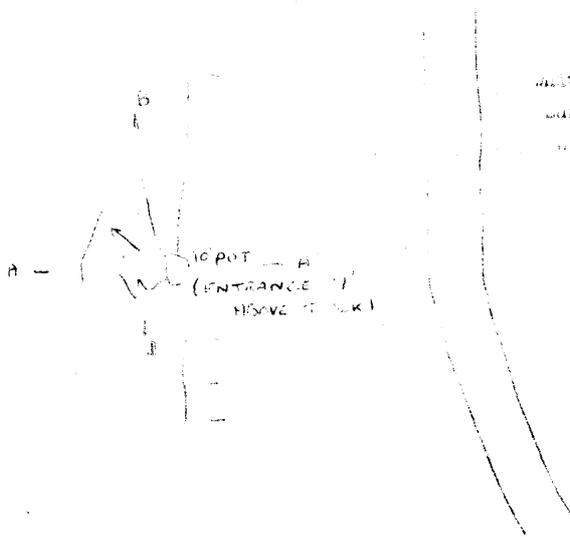
The entrance series is very grotty, tight, awkward and rather wet but once in the cave system itself, we were all very much impressed. After negotiating the climbs and the water chute (which I think impressed us most of all) and the ladder pitch (very sporting) . John Elliott, John Berry and myself ventured down the end section, which eventually becomes too small to follow, or so we decided. We had great fun on the way out of this system as it involved a tight awkward climb with virtually no holds.

We rejoined the others and John Berry gave us a conducted tour around 'his ' cave it was Johns twelfth trip in Longwood.

Chris, John and myself were rash enough to follow John B, on a different route out whilst the others returned the same way that we had gone in. We left them at the top of the ' waterfall' pitch to detackle and followed John along a rift. We soon took a left hand passage and wished that we had followed the others. The passage was very small and VERY full of water. Chris nearly drowned from tidal waves pushed back from John E as he ploughed ahead of him. We then all crouched in a small chamber looking at the climb up, or rather at the water coming down, we couldn't see the climb. Being that bit madder than the rest of us Jim disappeared up into the water followed by John B. As neither of them were washed back down we presumed it was OK and I reluctantly followed. Once in the water there was no turning back, it really exhilarating and we all bombed through. When we reached the 10 ft climb we realised that the others weren't out so we returned to meet them. They were only a few feet from where we had left them. While we had been gone, John, Pete and Pam had met two members of UBSS who were going to collect some water samplers and they were told that the entrance had been completely flooded the previous day and that the UBSS men had not been able to get in.

We then all trogged off out, and after some questionable language from John C we emerged to find the wind still blowing and the rain pouring down. We got decidedly wetter changing than we had in the cave. All in all it was a good trip in a typical Mendip cave in typical Mendip weather and I think that most of us would like to re-visit the cave for a better look round.

Diana Court.



Mitchell Quarry pit
 survey grade
 100.00
 depth 15 ft.

