

NORTHERN CAVERN & MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 1962

All Members should be aware from their Meets Cards, Calenders or the weather that we have nearly reached the end of another season and that we are about to engage upon the festive round. Already we have had an invitation to a Club dinner. Last year we were invited to the N.S.G. dinner but the dates clashed. We are glad that the N.S.G. were not offended by our non-appearance since we have been invited again. We are especially pleased since we are able to reciprocate this year and invite a guest from the N.S.G. to our Dinner. Alas, we understand that the northern Sub-Aqua Group are having a dinner the same evening and therefore many of our friends from the N.E.G. will not be with us.

The Annual General Meeting will take place at 2.00pm at the Temperance Hall, Sackville Street, Skipton. on Saturday the 10th of November. The Dinner will follow at 7.00 pm at The Devonshire Hotel, Newmarket Street, Skipton.

Members wishing or willing to show slides are invited to bring enough to last about twenty minutes.

Meets

After a successful visit to Beldi Hill, Swaledale, at Whitsuntide (mentioned in the last newsletter) it was decided to have another trip and to make it a meet. Since permission did not seem to be forthcoming for the Cononley and Raygill meet we transferred the meet to Beldi hill. Over twenty persons assembled at Keld on the morning in glorious weather and although it was hot work walking in potting gear up Swinnergill underground became delightfully cool. The mine was explored as far as reason permitted whilst others in the party explored the caves in the gill, or lounged about according to taste.

Providence Pot was the scene of another large turn out on an equally fine day. Only five persons completed the through trip, passing another party from a caving club which had to be rescued later that night. Support groups entered both Dow Cave and Providence whilst a Member did surface watch as we were determined not to lose anybody this meet as there has been a rash of Call-outs in this system.

Previous to the Ribbleshead meet the weather had been atrocious and all the cavers in the district were apparently exiled to Alum Pot. So were we, until we saw the crowds. Since we were the fifth or sixth CLUB in the queue we diverted to Calf Holes and Birkwith area. This also became something of an overflow district but we were at the head of the queue.

The Kingsdale meet was diverted to Dentedale when we received permission to visit an N.S.G. discovery. The meet was not well attended because it was in the holiday period, but must have been enjoyed because many Members have since re-visited this cave.

Hebden Sports had been well attended last year by a scratch team of Tug-o-war exponents so this year the Society erected a large tent on the show field and put on show some of our records of the Hebden district, together with some of our mining souvenirs and potting equipment. Two villagers lent specimens of mining tools and the White Rose Pothole Club lent us a large selection of mounted photographs. A friend 'got at' the loudspeaker van which repeatedly advertised for us and therefore our effort was well attended.

The Thorpe area meet was rained off. We went to Hubberholme only to sit in our transport and watch the river rise almost two feet in little over an hour.

The weather was cold and wet for the Foss Gill meet and after visiting Starbottan End mine to warm up, only four were left to attempt the piece-de-resistance. The entrance is low and wide which forces one to crawl in 18 inches of water. The floor descends to make the cave a channel about six feet wide with five or six feet of clear water and a bedding roof. The roof rises to form a large stream passage. Two boulder falls have to be negotiated to reach the end which is a very high rift over a small but deep and definite sump. The cave was first explored by the Cave Diving Group with diving equipment and later the C.P.C. lowered the entrance and did the hard way. Our leader for the meet had been on the C.P.C. expeditions and equipped with an inflated inner tube unwillingly 'plunged' into the water and when the roof lifted was able to float about quite elegantly enjoying a sadistic revenge on those who had forced him to lead. Needless to say it was a quick trip, with two submersions. Once when somebody found himself out of his depth and once when a confident Member blithely stepped off a ledge into at least six feet of water.

A very large party assembled outside the Cafe Royal at Grassington for the Grassington Moor meet which was lead by P. Austin of the C.P.C. supported by four members of his club. We told Fred that he didn't need a bodyguard but we were pleased to see David Judson who had just returned from the Gouffre Berger expedition. The meet became scattered over Grassington moor but many Members were introduced to the delights of Fred's pet pothole, Swarth Gill. The evening became eventful as there was two call-outs in the Wharfedale area. Two eminent Officers of the Society spent some time exposed to a roaring rainstorm carrying a blanket for a stretcher over the moor to Dowkabottom when the victim had walked off unaided in another direction.

Cave Rescue

There has been a spate of cave rescues recently, many of them of a trivial nature. The rescue organisations have to treat each call-out as serious but one can only feel that much of their time and splendid efforts are being wasted because of an inadequate approach to caving by some people. There have been far too many call-outs because of light failure. It is a simple matter to take a spare light. Rubber torches will take two or three U2 cells and will stand up to a lot of bumping and banging. Candles and matches kept dry are a good stand by. Since many Members carry a cave bag with them they would be wise to carry a candle, this may be oldfashioned but you can use candles for light and heat and use them as chewing gum to pass away the time, if one likes the taste. Call-out cowboys seem to be most ungrateful when fished out of a hole, of course anyone can have an accident but it is more prudent to attempt to keep out of the limelight and newspaper articles are not always flattering.

A timely reminder that mines are unsafe and should be treated with respect is given by the fall Glory Level (Appletreewick) which was explored by the Society in 1961. The level was a water supply which is now blocked and we understand that efforts are being made to remove the fall.

The Durham Cave Club will shortly be organising a North-East section of the Cave Rescue Organisation to give cover to the Weardale/ Teesdale area. Any Members resident in this area who wish to join this team should contact our Hon. Secretary.

The Cave Diving Group will be active in the Midd heads and New Goyden area on November 16th to 19th. It is their intention to dive both the upper and lower sumps in New Goyden at the week-end, the Society is invited to supply some manpower and make it a joint meet.

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20 / 5 / 62 Sunset Hole (Chapel-le-Dale) Leader C.Wade.

This meet became unwieldy as twenty persons were present and eighteen wished to descend. Due to the large party and the fact that there was much more water running than normal made the affair definitely 'sporty'. A lady Member emerged from underneath a waterfall indistinct of speech but positive in mind, "I'm wet". Later half the party retired and were forced to do nothing as we had not taken enough tackle to the entrance to have a diversion. It is regrettable that when we returned to our transport we found we could produce 275 feet of ladder for what was basically a 50 feet pitch.

2 / 6 / 62 & 3 / 6 / 62 Carrock mine (Carrock Fell, Keswick)

Leader J.D.J.Wildridge.

From a splendid camp site between road and river a party had a preliminary trip on Saturday, descending a shaft in the higher workings and exploring the Canadian level. In this level a party succeeded in scaling an eighty feet ore chute, named 'Porcupine' because of the number of metal bars and old drills projecting from the walls, into a higher level with rails in. On Sunday an enlarged party climbed porcupine and explored the higher level, the main point of interest being a series of hoppers under a stope. This part was stemped and propped with timbers about a foot in diameter and at one end of the section a climbing way containing four ladders and partitioned from the stope with similar stemples rose from a platform at the side of the level. The climbing way was scaled by using the vertical succession of stemples as belays as the ladders appeared unsafe. When a lifeline had been fixed at the top two lighter Members were able to use the ladders, but three rungs broke in consecutive order under the weight of a larger Member. Both ends of the level finished after a short distance and the only possibility of progress meant climbing the ladders and traversing a platform of deads. The party descended porcupine and split up into small groups in search of quartz crystals in other parts of the mine.

9 / 6 / 62 Capping Gill (Ingleborough) Bralford Pot-hole Club Open Meet.

Nine Members were present to descend on the B.P.C. winch. When it became apparent that there would be a long delay Three Members left for Swaledale. Three went down Bar Pot and three went down on the winch and spent their time in Mud Hall.

10 / 6 / 62 Beldi Hill (Keld, Swaledale) Leader A.E.Cannell.

Landy level was explored by a party of eight. A short length of 'Zinc' pipe was recovered. This pipe, assumed to be air pipe, would appear to be almost identical in size and construction to a specimen recovered from Glory Level, Wharfedale, on a previous meet. The specimens have not yet been compared.

What is believed to be Parkes top level was found to have run at about 70 yards. Swinnergill cave was explored by some but was abandoned in favour of Swinnergill level, which was explored to a junction and the party halted at a place with extremely bad arching.

11 / 6 / 62 Arkengarth Level Leader A.E.Cannell.

Danby Level was explored for 240 yards to a very short but complete roof fall. The fall could be rapidly removed but would have to be approached very skilfully. There was no water behind the fall.

Stones Level (Little Punchard Gill) proved to be a very extensive system, estimated at a little over a mile. Several passages ended at falls and was fall was passed, only to lead to very bad ground. Three rises and one stope were passed on the way to the furthest point reached, which was a watery passage which had been artificially dammed at the mouth. This could be the boat level

mentioned in Raistrick's "Mines and Miners of Swaledale".

Clog marks, sharply pointed, and animal tracks, presumably dog, were seen at the extremities of several passages. The level appeared to be generally sound but had several short sections which looked extremely insecure.

I / 4 / 62 Grange Rigg (Ingleborough) Leader W.Emmott.

In reply to an extremely popular demand permission was secured and three Members, with two friends and uncertain weather set off for this private meet. Two of the party found the crawl, immediately after the 30 feet pitch, a little on the tight side, so they returned to the top of the pitch where they found that an excellent way to keep warm was to do the 'twist'. The rest of the party went on to the head of the last pitch, turning back here, due to lack of time. Despite the fact that the pot was not bottomed, a most enjoyable day was had by all. It is rumoured that the B.P.C. have found a connection from this pothole to nearby P5 pothole. Eli Simpson was adamant that this would one day be possible, he alas passed away a little too soon.

Bitten by the digging bug a party have been pressing the sump rising in Sleets Gill cave (Wharfedale). After three week-ends clearing channels, building dams and hard bailing the sump was lowered enough to enable entry into a sandy crawl which led to a stream passage. Unfortunately upstream and downstream were blocked by further sumps. A narrow passage led off from the opposite side of the stream to the point of entry and went to a small chamber containing many fossils. The force of the stream, which must flood strongly, had dissolved away the surrounding limestone, leaving the fossils projecting from the walls and making them clearly visible. It was decided not to further the dig at that time as any work done would be quickly undone if the stream floods, which it does rather often, it can seal off the entrance to the main cave in about fifteen minutes and sometimes floods the whole system. However it is hoped to make a passage to give easier access to the extension, when we can survey the passage and collect, or identify, the numerous fossils. If the necessary materials can be obtained in time, a Rhodamine B colour test may be tried in the stream. (See C.R.G. Newsletter, available at the Field Centre)

The first two occasions showed the desperate shortage of diggers who now echo the age old cry of "Come for'ard, pick up thi shuvel, an' DIG".

Other members of the tribe will offer an effusive welcome to any prospective diggers any week-end at the field centre. Further information can be obtained from the Cottage Warden.

Incidentally, we believe this to be the only successful attempt to pass this sump since discovered by someone connected with the U.W.F.R.A.

Field Study Centre, Pickering End, Hebden.

The Centre is just paying its way, mainly supported by a hard core of regulars. Odd walkers, or anybody else who is interested, have been dragged in to look at our mineral collection or anything we have and they will look at. Improvements are gradually taking place, unfortunately rather slowly due to financial reasons, also in recent months Members have been active but away from 'home'. Among our guests have been groups from Leicester University Speleological Society, Leeds University Union Speleological Society and the Durham Caving Club. Now we have established a pattern of administration visitors are welcome, not more than twenty at a time please. Further details can be obtained from the Cottage Warden.

Examination of Water flowing through Mine spoil heaps, to establish presence of lead salts.

We wish to establish a small, relatively simple kit to test water flowing from mines, particularly from below spoil heaps. We hope to test water on site and Members are asked to observe sites and report to the Cottage Warden. If this is not reasonably possible Members will be supplied with a bottle so that a sample can be taken and collected when convenient. We hope to keep the kit at the field centre to be used after instruction from the Cottage Warden as some of the chemicals used are dangerous.

The Dithizone (Diphenylthiocarbazone) Reagent is a brick red complex salt in neutral, ammoniacal or alkali-cyanide.

Place 1 ml of the neutral or faintly alkaline solution in a test tube, introduce a few small crystals of potassium cyanide, and then two drops of the reagent. Shake for half a minute. The green colour of the reagent changes to red. Minimum concentration limit (in good conditions) 1 in 25,000,000.

Heavy metals (Ag. Cu. Hg. Cd. Ni. Zn. etc) interfere but this effect may be eliminated by conducting the reaction in the presence of rich alkali-cyanide. Excess of KOH solution is also required for zinc. We think that we will require indications in the order of one in a million to ten in a million, so small errors can be allowed. A good reaction in an interesting site can be repeated or sent away for a more stringent test.

The reagent does not keep well, so the test will have to be carried about by a Member.

Modifications to Meets List

To meet various requirements the meets list has been slightly altered and Leaders appointed for some of the meets, A full list of the remaining meets is given for Members to check against their Meets Lists.

July 1 st. Beldi Hill. Keld. Swaledale. Leader A.E.Cannell.
Skipton 'bus station 10.00am. Keld 12.00am.

July 8 th. Providence Pot. Kettlewell. Wharfedale. Leader R.S.Harker.
Skipton 'bus station 10.00am. Kings Head Hotel. Kettlewell 11.15am.

July 22nd. Ribbleshead area. Ingleton. No leader appointed.
Skipton 'bus station 10.00am. Ribbleshead Inn 11.30am.

Aug. 19 th. Kingsdale area. Ingleton. Leader appointed on the meet.
Morton Arms Hotel. Thornton-in-Lensdale. 11.30am.

Aug. 26 th. Thorpe area. Cracoe. Wharfedale. Leader J.M.Dickinson.
Skipton 'bus station 10.00am. Devonshire Hotel. Cracoe 11.00am.

Sept. 9 th. Foss Gill Cave and Pot. Starbotten. Wharfedale. Leader C.Wade.
Skipton 'bus station 10.00am. Starbotten 11.00am.

Sept. 16 th. Grassington Moor. Wharfedale. Leader F.Austin. (Craven Pothole Club)
Skipton 'bus station 10.00am. Cafe Royal. Grassington. 11.00am.

Oct. 14 th. Lolly Scar mine. Lofthouse. Nidderdale. Leader A.R.Nichols.
Pateley Bridge 'bus station 11.30 am.

Report of General Committee Meeting held at the Crown Hotel. Horton-in-Ribblesdale. June May 6th. 1962.

Present R.T.Clough; J.M.Dickinson; J.E.Holding; K.Foster; C.Wade; W.Emmott; J.Sletcher; M.Roxburgh; A.R.Nichols; M.Wilson; D.Platt:

Three Non-Members who were present were allowed to stay.

The minutes of the Working Committee were read out and the following resolutions are modifications or reversals of the Working Committee's actions.

"That all last years unpaid Members should be struck off, and that unpaid 1962 Members be notified again."

"That £3-0-0d per year be spent as required by the Recorder. Amounts in excess of this sum to go before the General Committee."

"That the Cottage Warden shall have full powers to say who shall be allowed to stay at the Field Centre."

"That as the trial period as now passed, the Working Committee ruling on heating the Field Centre be squashed and the Cottage Warden be allowed to purchase coal, if required."

The Hon.Treasurer stated that the Society had £57-0-0d in tal cash.

A sub-committee was elected to publish the next 'Transactions'.

The following were elected. R.T.Clough; C.Wade; J.M.Dickinson; J.E.Holding; and D.H.Platt.

R.T.Clough and C.Wade gave their estimates of costs based on the last issue and on forthcoming liabilities and the following resolution was passed.

"That the publishing sub-committee produce the next issue of the 'Transactions' for a sum up to £75-0-0d."

After much discussion a resolution was passed,

"That C.Wade spend up to £6-0-0d to purchase a full weight Nylon life-line."

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Special Request Meeting to discuss tackle at the Field Centre June 16th. 1962.

Present R.G.Guthrie; W.Emmott; Mrs M. Wood; G.Metcalf; J.Sletcher; C.Wade; K.Foster; A.R.Nichols; R.Leach; D.Platt:

R.G.Guthrie was chairman.

The meeting had been requested by C.Wade because of the resolution at the last General Committee meeting "That £6-0-0d be spent to purchase a Nylon life-line". It was decided to delete the £6-0-0d and spend £25-0-0d to produce metal ladders of the Electron type and Nylon life-lines, the tackle would have to be made and used on a basis of two years life, and the £25-0-0d would be spent as follows. A tackle sub-committee was formed, A.R.Nichols; W.Emmott; K.Foster; J.Sletcher. W.Emmott to be Treasurer for tackle purchases. To control the tackle purchases finances the following resolutions were passed.

"That the sum of £10-0-0d be paid to W.Emmott to purchase materials immediately required".

"That the sum of up to £15-0-0d total that Members had previously agreed to lend be paid as required to W.Emmott. W.Emmott to keep a record and this money to be paid back to Members when funds were available after sale of sufficient 'Transactions'".

In view of the crowdedness of some of the recent meets it was decided to have meets organised on the basis of the main centre, the 'A' meet, and a diversion; if required, the 'B' meet. Modifications to the meets list is given on another sheet.

New Members The Officers wish to welcome the following newly elected Members. G.M.Davies. Pateley Bridge; B.A.Hopkin. Nottingham; H.Whittaker. Keighley; Miss H.Liversidge. Leeds; Nellie Kirkham. Newcastle. Staffs; R.Leach. Darwen. R.M.Thornton. Leeds; J.Sletcher. Bradford.

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C.Wade. 28 / 6 / 62.