

MCG NEWS

MAY 1984 No. 174

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

AGM & DINNER

by Jonathan Roberts

COTTAGE REPAIRS, committee changes and members' subs. were the main topics at this year's MCG AGM held on 7th April at Nordrach Cottage. Two barrels were rapidly consumed during the weekend, and the Annual Dinner was another great success, starring Ron Saunders' judgements on heroic characters from the 1983/4 MCG calendar, and the now-familiar limerick competition. Winner of the Sunday morning casualty stakes was Geoff Barton!

'We must get our act together, soon' was the general conclusion to be drawn from John Miriam's report on the cottage and the discussion which followed. Fencing was the only one of nearly fifty items of cottage repair and improvement that had made any progress in the past few months, and that had only been started that morning. Some items of work had to be completed this summer, especially the window-frame repainting. A new list of cottage tasks is published in this newsletter, and a cottage working weekend is planned for 2nd/3rd June.

Members approved a subs. increase effective from January 1985, to £15 for full and probationary members and £7.50 for associate members, but asked the committee to take account of possible difficulties a £15 sub. might create for unemployed or low-waged members.

The AGM agreed to increase the numbers of MCG officers to eight, adding an Ordinary Committee Member to the ranks of the committee to ease the workload of owning a major cottage and running an expanding group. The Editor and Recorder swapped jobs, while Cottage Warden John Miriam achieved well-earned semi-retirement after 2 years' labours (and 10.5 years in total on the committee). John Pudduck and Paul Merron were nominated for the vacant posts, and were co-opted at a committee meeting on 12th April.

Paul Merron has asked John Miriam to remain in charge of cottage bookings. The new committee line-up is:

Secretary	Tony Knibbs
Treasurer	Arthur Spain
Meet Secretary	Geoff Barton
Cottage Warden	Paul Merron
Tacklemaster	Roy Kempston
Recorder	Ian McKechnie
Editor	Jonathan Roberts
Committee Member	John Pudduck.

Full details of the AGM are published in the Minutes, in this newsletter.

A WELL-ATTENDED ANNUAL DINNER at The Star saw off a thoroughly enjoyable meal including the sirloin steak (but where was the profiteroles' sauce?). The subject of the limerick competition this year was 'hangovers', to which an immediate response was - what does this rhyme with, except legovers? Welcome guests were Bob & Mary Drake (Wessex), Robin & Sue Gray (BEC), and Alan & Aileen Butcher (Shepton). Guests of honour were 'Alfie' & Sally Collins, who presented some crafted speleonotes ... in the words of Alfie, "everyone knows how long it takes a stalactite to grow an inch, but who knows how long it takes to go down a semi-tone?"

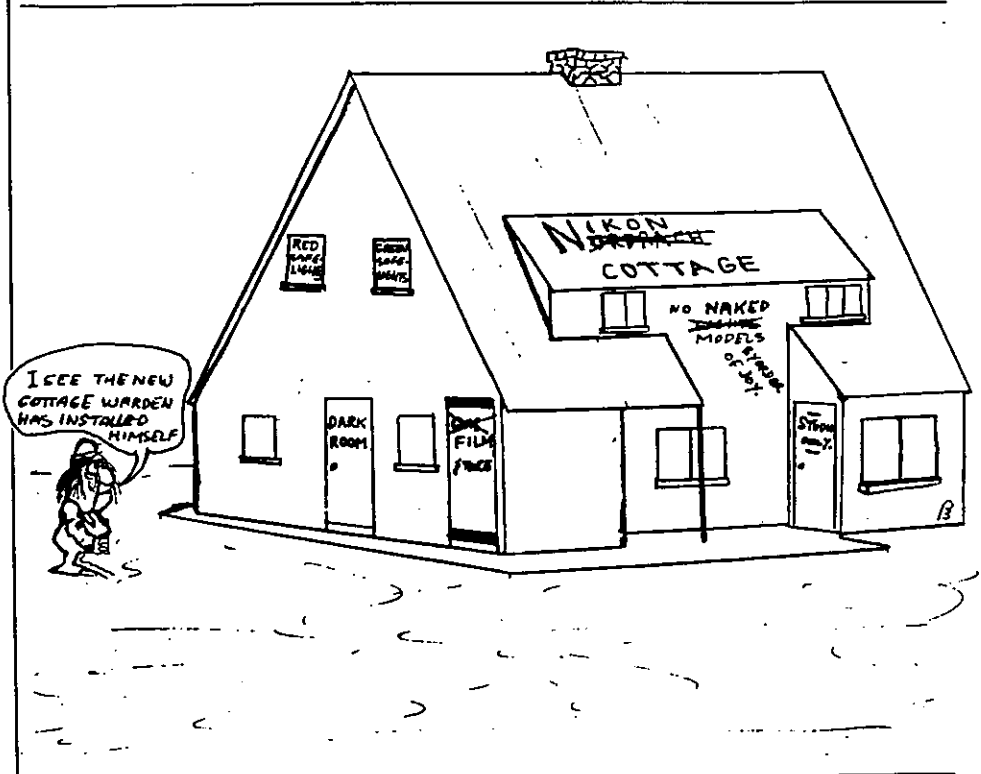
And so to the apres-cave. Ron 'Hanging Judge' Saunders administered himself, amid considerable pleasure, to charitably condemning various errant members to heavy awards for actions during 1983/4.

Steve Taylor acquired a heavy-duty SRT knot, and pole-position for a prospective posthumous award in 1985. To Andy

Beare went a source of spontaneous combustion, to evoke memories of downtown Madras. Le Swear Box was handed to an unblaspheing, retiring Cottage Warden, "toutes proceeds pour le <Sod Gouffre Raymonde> fund, fondé Août 1983 durant une fiasco trip de J.Miriam et ses amis".

A Junior Diver's Kit was passed to senior member Pete Harvey - "age is no bar to foolhardiness" - in recognition of events in the Grotte de Pene Blanche. Sartorial elegance in Goatchurch had greatly impressed four young ladies and the usual assorted weegees, and won Dix Houseago a neoprene bow-tie, styled 'Le Wimp'. Roy Kempston achieved distinction by winning an award two years' running. He was presented with an everlasting breakfast, to safeguard the appetite after a night's hard drinking.

'Gloom Dispersant' in the form of an acetylene lamp was jointly awarded to Pat Newman, and second-timer Martin continued on page 2



INSIDE	* Down A Mine - p.8	* Spain 1984 - p.4	* Cottage Jobs - p.3
THIS	* News from CCC - p.4	* Members' News - p.3	* Poets Corner - p.7
ISSUE:	* AGM Minutes - p.5/6	* Photos please - p.4	* Bob Speleo writes - p.7



SECRETARY

Tony Knibbs,
85 Cavendish Avenue, West Ealing,
London W13 0JY.
01.997.2032.h
01.546.7741.x2199.w

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Paul Merron,
21 Howberry Road, Thornton Heath,
Surrey, CR4 8HZ.
01.771.0666.h

TACKLEMASTER

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EDITOR

Jonathan Roberts,
17 Kent Avenue, West Ealing,
London W13 8BE.
01.997.2916.h
01.278.3825/3888.w

COMMITTEE MEMBER

John Pudduck,
9 Windermere Road, Norbury,
London SW16.
01.764.0539.h

CAVING ACCOMMODATION

is available at the MCG, Nordrach
Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip,
Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XW.
Map ref. NGR 5147.5606,
O.S. 1:50000 sheet 182.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

Apply to John Miriam,
44 Chesterfield Road, West Ewell,
Surrey, KT19 9QP.
01.393.3955.h
01.736.1212.x3027.w

WEEKLY MEETINGS

Are held every Thursday,
from 8.30 pm onwards, at:
The Fox & Hounds and Mawson Arms,
Chiswick Lane South, London W4.
(Near to the A4 Hogarth Roundabout;
nearest tube stn: Turnham Green;
local buses: E3,27,91,237,267,290.)

MENDIP + MCG COTTAGE BOOKINGS

DATE (Saturday)	MENDIP + MCG COTTAGE BOOKINGS	MCG AWAY MEETS + OTHER
May	5 MEMBERS' BANK HOLIDAY (Clive Towner)	.. ..
	12 Dave Baxter + guests (12) ..	CDG AGM + Dinner, Abercraf
	19 CSCC AGM, Hunters Lodge, Sat.pm.	.. ..
	26	DEVON BANK HOLIDAY (Bob Varley)
June	2 MENDIP GEOLOGY (Malcolm Cotter) + COTTAGE WORKING WEEKEND	.. ..
	9 Barnet Caving Group (12) ..	.. ..
	16 Chelsea Speleological Society (12)	GOWER WEEKEND (Ian McKechnie)
	23	BCRA AGM+Summer mtg, Univ.Bristol
	30 .. ..	.. ..
July	7 MEMBERS' WEEKEND (Mike Mintram) + Wessex Summer Barbecue, Chariot Race	.. ..
	14 .. ..	.. ..
	21 .. ..	.. ..
	28 .. ..	.. ..
August	4 MEMBERS' WEEKEND (Pete Dymant)	) SPANISH EXPEDITION TO MATIENZO) (Ade Duckett, Neil Hutchinson)
	11 .. ..	.. ..
	18 .. ..	.. ..
	25	YORKS. BANK HOLIDAY (Martin Rowe)
September	1 MEMBERS' WEEKEND (Chris Whittle)	PENYGHENT, G.G.WINCH MEET (at NPC)
	8 .. ..	.. ..
	15	S.WALES WEEKEND (Denise Samuel)
		OFD/DYO (at SWCC)
		also WHERNSIDE MANOR SRT COURSE
	22 .. ..	.. ..
	29	BCRA Conference, Univ. Lancaster
October	6 MEMBERS' HALF YEARLY FORUM ..	.. ..
	+ BEC Annual Dinner	

Forthcoming local events to watch out for are the Cottage Geology weekend on 2nd/3rd June (find out how to renovate your bedding planes, repair faults, repaint your slickensides, creosote a pitch, and instal a showerbath), and the Wessex Summer Barbecue & Chariot Race on 7th July. We are told there will be even fewer rules for the Chariot Race than there were for the Mendip Challenge Cup - if last time's experience was anything to go by, we had better supply our own judges! The MCG will need to build a chariot if we wish to enter for the race - or could the Editor be persuaded to donate his car?

Please contact Ian McKechnie (0932.228292, 30 Brittain Road, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 4LR) and Bob Varley (086735.760, Flat 2, Nokewood House, Church Lane, Beckley, Oxford, OX3 9UT), if you are interested in their respective trips to the lesser known caving areas of Britain. Camping is planned for the visit to the pleasant Gower area; camping, or commuting from the MCG Cottage, will be the order of the day for Devon.

A special mention for the Spanish expedition in August. Four members are definitely going: Adrian Duckett (01.572.2374), Neil Hutchinson (01.267.1005), Ian McKechnie (0932.228292) and Mike Mintram (01.949.7954). They need to hear from you soon if you are thinking of joining the throng - see the article on page 4 of this newsletter.

Alan Mellon, Steve Bedford and Louise Curley are going on an SRT training course at Whernside Manor (alias the National Cave Training Centre) on 14th-16th September. They would be interested to hear if anyone else wished to come along to make up a larger MCG contingent - training for Arbas 1985 perhaps - the cost is £40-ish for the three days. Contact Alan Mellon at the Mawson Arms on Thursdays, or at 01.560.0205 (133 Ellerdine Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 2PU).

AGM & DINNER

continued from page one...

Rowe, for their many blacked-out caving trips. The booby awards went to the MCG ladies' team, Jo Davies, Linda Gates, Helen Jenkins, Carol Nunn, Denise Samuel and Yvonne Ward, who had competed at the Mendip Challenge Cup olympiad. And winners of the coveted novice prize whose instructions this year were "Don't screw. Turn skirt up and pull. Press plug well home with thumb. Stopper can't get loose or come out. Seamless and impermeable", were newly-weds Bill & Diana Jones. Or, as Ron Saunders said in presenting the hot-water bottle, "an event of the greatest possible asset to this club, bringing together a caver and a diver..."

Later on, Ian McKechnie compèred a magic-lantern display of photographic mementoes of 1983, revealing all those poses and events that memories are made of but you rather wish they weren't.

All in all, a truly memorable evening, crowned by Val Knight's winning limerick:

An angry young man is our Martin,
With no mattress to lie on and fart in!
He vented his ire
On the MCG fire -
At a watered-down twat we are laughin'.

PAUL'S EASTER MESSAGE

Dear All,

I am re-publishing the list of outstanding cottage work. I will make an effort to have the materials for most jobs down at the cottage by May 5th. I have added some extra jobs, and have attempted to list them in order of priority. I will also put a copy of the list in the cottage: that list will be ever so slightly different as it will have a space beside each job for you to put your name.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO DO ANY JOBS ! Please do adopt your own corner of the cottage and keep it up to scratch. I am adopting the living room window to the rear of the cottage, for a start, and will also undertake the planting of trees and landscaping of the plot. Steve Taylor is fitting a third shower head, while we have a volunteer to sand and re-varnish the lounge floor.

Some of the most urgent work to be done is on the exterior of the building. The window frames need stripping and re-painting and the walls need a coat of paint. The fence is well underway but still needs every other support cementing in and the rest of the posts to the rear of the cottage; there are instructions with the fencing in the gas store.

The toilet opposite the door to the changing room needs attention: the toilet bowl needs removing to repair the seal at its base.

The cottage now needs a **SPRING CLEAN**. The walls need washing; carpets, rugs and mats need beating out, and so do the seat covers. (And the exercise will get you fit for caving!) I believe our cottage is the best on Mendip -- so let's keep it that way.

(Editor's note: As well as the cottage working weekend on 2nd/3rd June, Paul will be present at the cottage on 5th/6th May.)

COTTAGE WORK REQUIRED:

Exterior

Put up fence to side & rear of building
Strip and re-paint window frames
Check, clean and repair guttering
Repair door to gas store
Landscape plot eg plant cherry trees
Improve drainage near front door
Build changing room extension
Build translucent roof over area
from back door to gas store

Kitchen

Fill holes in ceiling
Support centre of wall cupboard shelf
Make stand for urn
Paint panel at end of bar
Label shower booster switch

MEMBERS' NEWS

A **HEARTY WELCOME** to the following probationary members:

Dave Edwards,

11 Milland House, Bessborough Road,
Roehampton, London SW15 4BL.
Tel. 01.789.8088.

(Introduced by John Pudduck and Tony Knibbs)

James Chubb,

57 St Quintin Avenue, London W10.
Tel. 01.960.1262,
or Staines 50173.

(Malcolm Cotter, Tony Knibbs)

Chris Scrase,

19 St Johns Road, Westcott,
nr Dorking, Surrey.
Tel. Dorking (0306).887330.

(Phil Eliot, Roger Wallington)

CONGRATULATIONS to Peter Collings-Wells and to Mike Haselden and Dik Houseago, who were accepted as full members at the April committee meeting.

ON THE HOME FRONT, Martin Rowe's new address is The Youth Hostel, Station Road, Keswick, Cumbria, where he now works as Assistant Warden. Best wishes for your new job, Martin, and don't forget to count the mattresses every night. If the YHA keeps log books, the one at Keswick will now rapidly fill up...

ARE YOU LONG IN THE TOOTH ? How many years is it since you joined the MCG as a probationary member, but never bothered to become a full member by the simple expedient of bribing the committee with beer, and passing your training trip? Think of all those times you haven't been allowed to vote at general meetings! Access to the tackle store and library becomes so

much simpler with your own key. So don't delay, do your training trip today.

The following probationary members are now eligible for full membership:

Gill Attwood	Dave Higginson
Dave Baxter	Steve Lane
Andy Beare	Carol Nunn
Steve Bedford	Fiona Picton
Pete Bulling	Jerry Roberts
Dave Corr	Graham Sutcliffe
Louise Curley	Andy Tizzard
James Davies	Peter Turcan
Mick Dean	Peter Whittle
Richard Dominey	Andy Wynn.

Eligible in June will be David Forrow, and Darren and Jarrod Bartlett.

LAST CHANCE MEMBERS' SALOON... Our Treasurer advises me that, at the latest count, 18 members had not paid their 1984 subscriptions. The committee meets next on Thursday, May 10th - any persons who have still not paid their subs. by then, will regrettably lose their membership. Please let Arthur Spain have your cheque, urgently, or tell him when you did pay. This message is directed especially at:

Doug Anderson	Judy MacMillan
Dave Corr	Fiona Picton
Bruce Dean	Dave Punter
Richard Dominey	Jerry Roberts
John Felton	Charlie Ruddick
Dave Higginson	Roger Saunders
Dave Hobby	Graham Sutcliffe
Mick Lowe	Pete Turcan
John MacMillan	Richard Woollacott

STOP PRESS .. STOP PRESS .. STOP PRESS
Arthur Spain reminds members **NOT** to send cash through the post when paying cottage fees - please make out a cheque to him and keep the cash.

Lounge

Refit back door braces
Fill holes in walls and ceiling
Grout tiles around fireplace
Clean and varnish door
Fix door handles
Move thermostat to left of window
Move small storage heater to Library
Fit better lamp shades

Library

Fit more shelves
Replace light fitting

Changing Room

Repair cold tap
Fit hooks near sinks
Supply waste bin
Fit bar heaters

Showers

Fit third shower head
Improve ventilation in shower room

Toilets

Repair toilet opp. changing room door

Tackle Store + Charging Area

Refit the Rescue cupboard doors
Refit side door braces
Fit tool shelves
Fit high pegs for long ropes

Entrance Hall

Fill holes in wall
Replace shoot bolt on WC door
Clear out cupboard under the stairs

Foreman's Lounge

Fill holes in ceiling
Secure centre bunks
Fit foam rubber to ceiling nr. bunk 3

Guest Room

Repair curtain rail
Secure bunks to wall
Fit better light fitting

Small Room

Change taps over
Secure bunks to wall
Replace hook on door

CHARTERHOUSE BLUES ?

THE CHARTERHOUSE CAVING COMMITTEE, which exists to maintain liaison with Bristol Waterworks and obtain access to caves on their land, held its 1984 AGM on Saturday 14th April. Tim Large retired as Secretary/Treasurer, and his place was taken by Dave Cave-Ayland, Secretary of the Shepton Mallet Caving Club. (Your Editor was nominated, as was Graham Price of the Cerberus, but neither of us could easily take the job, because of existing commitments.)

Queries and problems about CCC caves (Charterhouse, GB, Longwood August, Longwood Valley Sink, Rhino Rift, Timber Hole) should now be addressed to Dave Cave-Ayland at 33 Jeffreys Hill Bottom, Hanham, Bristol BS15 3BG; 0272.675585.

GB Cavern, as usual, featured on the inevitable list of administrative matters. Sightings of novice parties, over-large parties, and rogue keys, remain the main causes for complaint.

The Committee wishes to remind cavers of the rules regarding GB: no novices, party size limited to six, no carbide, and no under-18s (excepting 16-18 with

parents' permission). Parties must have CCC permits, and are asked to lock the door behind them when entering and leaving the cave. Regarding novices, whatever definition one judges this to mean, it certainly does not intend that a party including cavers with minimal experience should be allowed in the cave.

The CCC has asked the University of Bristol Speleological Society, who 'manage' the GB cave tackle, to fit a security padlock to the entrance door.

Following the publicity about the GB rescue of November 1982, Bristol Waterworks feel unhappy with the way their agreement with CCC is worded to cover cavers under 18 years old. Whether this presages some further limitation on young cavers (in addition to parental consent and the 16-18 age band), will presumably emerge during negotiations.

CCC members expressed the view that these restrictions, together with the novice rule, meant there was a substantial safeguard limiting Bristol Waterworks' risks and liabilities.

Bristol Waterworks were still not happy with draft insurance arrangements for the use of explosives at digs on their land. This matter remains unresolved.

The other 'hardy perennial' is the removal of CCC locks and, sometimes, damage to entrance gates, apparently caused by cavers who believe land owners have no rights to control access to their property. The closure of Charterhouse Cave for an extremely lengthy period in 1983/4 was initiated by severe damage to the entrance gate. Repair work has commonly fallen to Tim Large of the BEC, and Glyn Bolt of the Wessex. They would appreciate Mendip caving clubs considering 'adopting' the entrances to individual CCC caves.

The MCG now has two digs on Bristol Waterworks territory: August Oxbows, and Longwood September Rift. September Rift is a new dig near the Great Chamber, while the best we could report this year on the Oxbows dig was 'slow progress'. It would be nice to have something more positive to report in 1985 - each year the Wessex offer a barrel to the Mendip club which has found the most new cave passage.

WANTED (1)

IN THE DEPTHS of the MCG Library is an old and yellowing volume which is the MCG Scrap Book. The last entry is a set of photographs in Bone Hole, circa 1974, but even before that the entries are rather sparse. It is the new Recorder's intention to try and rectify this situation, by asking for photographs, newspaper cuttings, or memorabilia, concerning or loosely connected with club activities.

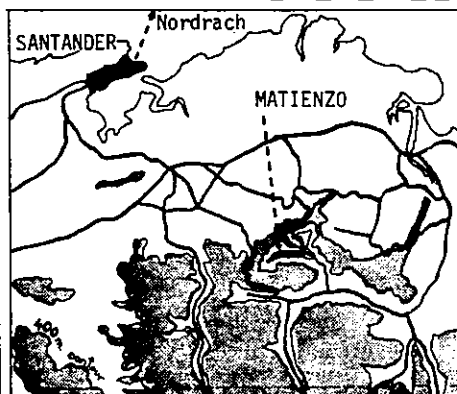
If you have any said items you are prepared to part with, please send them to the Recorder. If you have any you are not prepared to part with, then I would be pleased to arrange copies if you will loan them to me. I can photocopy any written material, and I can take copies from photographs: preferably slides or negatives, but prints can also be copied if necessary.

So dig out your photo-box and scrap book, and see what you have. I'm sure that we have the capability among us all to produce a superb record of the club's activities - it's just up to you to provide the material!

.... WANTED (2)

"NO MCG NEWS ? ... NO COMMENT", Adrian Duckett has already quipped about the new-style MCG Newsletter. But no stories submitted, no newsletter, quips your Editor. We're not offering NUJ rates, but this is your chance at last to write for a newspaper! Articles, researches, snippets, press cuttings, letters to the Editor, stray conversations, hot gossip, digging progress and discoveries, caving trip reports, I'll take the lot. Most papers have plenty of illustrations and ads, too. Short of tearing up my favourite caving books, the editorial library sorely lacks any decent - or indecent - photographs and drawings. Please give generously, you know it makes news.

SPAIN 84



PLANS ARE IN HIGH GEAR for the 1984 Spanish meet to Matienzo. The aim is to team with Manchester University, whose final go-ahead is awaited. Matienzo, in the Cantabrian Mountains, is 35 miles by road from Santander, served by car ferry from Plymouth. The area offers caving trips suitable for all likes and dislikes, and still yields new finds. The local 'apres-cave' is rated highly by those who can recall anything about it! So brush up your rusty Spanish, and join 'Ade' Duckett, Mike Mintram, Neil Hutchinson and Ian McKechnie during the first two full weeks of August... Do let them know, very soon, of your plans - they have to liaise with Manchester.

.. MCG CAVING SHOP ... MCG CAVING SHOP ... MCG CAVING SHOP ... MCG CAVING SHOP ..

M
C
G
The MCG Caving Shop can get you anything you need, and better any
prices. Before you go elsewhere for your caving, walking, boardsailing
or mountaineering needs, why not contact Phil Ingold, on 0442.42029.
S
Malcolm Cotter has a range of books, and furry suits, overalls, etc.
H
O
P
Contact him at 07842.52643.

.. MCG CAVING SHOP ... MCG CAVING SHOP ... MCG CAVING SHOP ... MCG CAVING SHOP ..

. GEAR FOR SALE . GEAR FOR SALE . GEAR FOR SALE . GEAR FOR SALE . GEAR FOR SALE .

G
E
A
R
One right hand jumarc ascender £6.00
One Petzl Croll caver's nylon sit-harness (hardly used) £8.00
F
O
R
One Petzl Bobbin descendeur. Single Rope caver's model £5.00
Two chockstones on wire £1.00
Contact: Alan Dougherty, 3 The Cottages, Station Road, Wrington
nr. Bristol, Avon.

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MINUTES OF THE 1984 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP,
held at Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, at 3pm on Saturday 7th April 1984.

CHAIRMAN Malcolm Cotter.

Bob Speleo β



ATTENDANCE 32 Full Members
8 Probationary & Associate Members
2 Guests.

Full Members

Geoff Barton
Jean-Paul Burch
Mike Bygrave
Robbie Charnock
Malcolm Cotter
Adrian Duckett
Peter Harvey
Bill Jones
Roy Kempston
Tony Knibbs
Simon Knight
Gordon Lister
Mike Lovell
Ian McKechnie
Paul Merron
John Miriam
Bryan Pittman
John Pudduck
Bernard Reeves
Lesley Robbins
Jonathan Roberts
Martin Rowe
Denise Samuel
Arthur Spain.

Peter Spain
Steve Taylor
Clive Towner
Don Vosper
Roger Wallington
Derek Walsh
Pat Walsh

Probationary & Associate Members

Gill Attwood
Andy Beare
Mick Dean
Barbara Dewdney
Dik Houseago
Joy Merron
Kate Taylor
June Walsh

Guests

Barbara Bygrave
Diana Jones



- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:
Neil Hutchinson, Mick Lowe, Pat Newman, Ian Parry, Bob Varley.
- 2 MINUTES OF THE 1983 AGM:
Were agreed.
- 3 MATTERS ARISING:
None.
- 4 HON. OFFICERS' REPORTS:

Were mostly published in MCG Newsletter No.169. Verbal reports were made by John Miriam and Geoff Barton:

HON. COTTAGE WARDEN (John Miriam)

Last year I said it was good to see the cottage was still here - the comment still applies despite a recent attempt with the cooker! There was no obvious cause for that event, so following a careful check of the cooker I have declared it safe for further use. The cottage is serving us quite well, with guest bookings averaging about 1.5 groups a month. Since we allocate space for 2 groups a month, we could be doing better but are not doing badly. A list of cottage maintenance work outstanding was published in the last-but-one newsletter - but no-one has proved willing to do any of the jobs. The most urgent tasks are the fencing, and the repainting of outside window frames which is essential before next winter. Owing to pressure of work and commitments at home, I cannot carry on as Cottage Warden, so I am resigning.

HON. MEET SECRETARY (Geoff Barton)

Last year's meet programme was arranged by Greg Smith. This year's is my work, and includes both home and away meets each month. I haven't yet failed to organise a trip that people have requested - so let me know if you want a trip to somewhere in particular. This year's meet abroad, to Ireland, has been called off due to lack of interest, but there is a visit to Northern Spain instead, at about the same dates. It is now time to think of the 1985 meet abroad; Martin Rowe has suggested we revisit Arbas after the groundwork we did during 1983.

COMMENTS ARISING FROM THE HON. OFFICERS' REPORTS WERE:-

HON. SECRETARY (Tony Knibbs)
None.

HON. TREASURER (Arthur Spain)
Martin Rowe queried the new tax-at-source arrangements introduced for bank accounts and other deposit schemes in this year's Budget. It appeared to operate only for individuals, so should not affect the MCG, but Arthur Spain would check the position.

HON. RECORDER/LIBRARIAN (Jonathan Roberts)
None.

HON. COTTAGE WARDEN (John Miriam)
Martin Rowe felt it reflected poorly on the membership that none of the urgent items of work mentioned in last year's Cottage Warden's report had been done, except fencing which had begun today. John Miriam said that Martin's comments were true in general, though some items were improvements rather than repairs. He agreed with Tony Knibbs that the new work list was mostly maintenance and did not need urgent action. Members did not have to hold an official title to do work or organise work - it was up to everyone to do their bit.

Members felt that if the outstanding work was left to general exhortations, nothing would get done, so perhaps it should be regarded as part of the regular weekend cottage jobs? A proposal for a Duty Warden scheme was refined into a suggestion for a Duty Warden during members' home meets, as an extension of the meet organiser scheme.

Pat Walsh suggested that the Group could be better off paying a contractor to do some important jobs, especially on the fabric of the building, to ensure the cottage was kept up to scratch and did not deteriorate; some of the suggested subs. increase might be useful for that. Mike Bygrave suggested a list of jobs should be publicised in the cottage, and others thought the Cottage Warden needed to give the lead and define the types of jobs that needed attention.

Summing up, it was agreed that the committee would monitor what happened during the next six months, including the cottage working weekend in June, and that the fencing and exterior woodwork would be dealt with by August by whatever means were necessary. The committee would seek quotes for jobs that might be carried out by contractors.

HON. EDITOR (Ian McKechnie)
Was thanked for his fine achievement with the newsletter.

HON. TACKLEMASTER (Roy Kempston)
Replied to Robbie Charnock and Malcolm Cotter, that it was impossible to tell if the tackle losses were real, or whether people still held the items. The booking scheme was not working reliably - tackle wasn't always booked out, nor always booked back in. He was considering a different procedure, and would make a start by changing the door locks so that it was a slam-lock. People shouldn't be afraid to tell him of any damaged or lost tackle - it was much better that the Group knew when to replace items.

HON. MEET SECRETARY (Geoff Barton)
Arthur Spain advised members that Bob Varley would be leading the Devon meet, instead of himself. Geoff Barton said he would like to know if members wanted another Otter Hole meet organised as the first had been rapidly oversubscribed.

5 ELECTION OF HON. OFFICERS FOR 1984/85:

The following committee posts were agreed (there were no hustings):-

- HON. SECRETARY Tony Knibbs
- HON. TREASURER Arthur Spain
- HON. RECORDER Ian McKechnie
- HON. EDITOR Jonathan Roberts
- HON. TACKLEMASTER Roy Kempston
- HON. MEET SECRETARY Geoff Barton.

It was noted that committee members remained fully responsible for the duties of their posts, but could delegate tasks as appropriate. The post of Cottage Warden formally was vacant (see item 6b below), as Martin Rowe had withdrawn his nomination due to gaining a new job in the Lake District.

6 EXTRA COMMITTEE POST:

6a The proposal "to change item 7 of Constitution and Rules to increase the committee from seven to eight members", with consequent amendments to the opening sentence of item 7, to read "The Group's business shall be regulated by a committee of eight members.", and to the second paragraph of item 7, to read "The honorary officers shall be: Secretary, Treasurer, Meet Secretary, Cottage Warden, Tacklemaster, Editor, Recorder and Ordinary Committee Member.", was agreed by the necessary four-fifths majority of full members present, with 30 votes for, none against, and 2 abstaining.

The discussion prior to the voting centred on the committee's expressed need for more formal help in carrying through the workload, now that the Group was a bigger, more active club with a major cottage. Tasks were already partly shared around the committee, and an eighth 'team' member was felt to be the best way of handling the business. Over the years, it would also encourage ordinary members to become involved in committee matters without the disincentive of having to take on specific responsibility for one area of Group activities. Tony Knibbs responded to Simon Knight that the committee was seeking a 'general duties' member, rather than an Assistant Secretary. The committee had felt a growing need for this new post, for example following experiences organising the Pyrenees expedition and the 30th Anniversary party. Covenants were also an administrative chore. Joan Goddard felt that a new committee post would help keep a wide spread of membership active with Group administration.

6b The post of Ordinary Committee Member formally was now vacant.

Members had been nominated from the floor for the posts of Cottage Warden and Ordinary Committee Member but, regrettably, the Constitution (rule 9d) required nominations for office at least 21 days before the general meeting.

Therefore it was now a matter for the committee to decide on co-options. Mike Lovell said it was unfortunate that the short warning given on this occasion of changes to committee posts, had meant that fresh names could not be nominated for election. He asked for advance notice to be given whenever possible.

7 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

The proposal to increase these to £15 for Full Members and Probationary Members, and to £7.50 for Associate Members, with effect on 1st January 1985, was agreed by 22 votes to 3, with one abstention. (Proposed by Arthur Spain, seconded by Tony Knibbs.)

The discussion focussed on the need for the increase. Tony Knibbs explained that the committee had taken a long-term forward look on financial commitments and running costs, before coming before the members with this proposal. Day-to-day cottage expenses and general cottage maintenance were set against cottage fees which had just been raised to keep ahead of costs. But there was still a gap in the forward budget, despite a critical review of expenditure. It was unreasonable to put the charges wholly on cottage fees, as inflation had continued while it was now some years since subs. had been raised to £10/£5. Group services cost money; facilities such as the present frequency of the newsletter, and the level of funding for tackle purchase, could not be sustained without an increase.

Bryan Pittman asked about charges and subs. at other Mendip clubs. Jonathan Roberts replied that these had very similar cottage fees, while subs. generally reflected the quality of the cottage and other facilities. Tony Knibbs said that it would have been possible to ask this year for a smaller increase for 1985, and again in 1985 for 1986. But it was preferable to go now for the higher figure. This would have two important benefits, as well as being simpler. First, the volume of caving groups visiting Mendip was appearing to decline - we needed a financial buffer to protect our cottage upkeep. Second, the Group needed to safeguard its major investments. Replying to Bill Jones, Jonathan Roberts said the MCG had about £3450 in hand at the end of 1983, but £1100 was earmarked for the cottage extension and £1000 potentially for land purchase. The remainder was too slim a margin for comfort, bearing in mind the major investment represented by the cottage and the Group's other assets; the committee thought it prudent to provide an increase in reserves.

Members asked the committee to keep in mind that some low wage earners and unemployed members might not easily be able to afford the full increase. While no particular provision for reduced subs. was possible within the present Constitution, options did exist such as Associate Membership.

8 1985 MEET ABROAD:

Members agreed that planning would be based on a return visit to Arbas, in the Pyrenees.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Last year's auditors were all willing to stand again, and were therefore invited to audit the 1984 books.

Steve Taylor asked about the present position on land purchase. Tony Knibbs replied that the probate on Jim Fry's estate had shut the door to purchase for an unknown time, but that we were to discuss other arrangements with Ken Fry. He agreed that the fencing, if constrained to the area of MCG ownership, would impose a severe limitation on the use of the rear yard.

Arrangements in the kitchen, on food storage, fridge capacity and the location of the dustbin, were queried. The committee agreed to consider the matter.

Arthur Spain gave a verbal advertisement for the MCG Sweatshirt (a snip at only £6.00, available from Tony Knibbs).

10 DATE AND VENUE OF THE 1985 AGM:

Saturday 23rd March 1985, Nordrach Cottage, 3pm.

The MCG F&F Column

SMALL WORLD

Fred Young used to run Lower Farm at Longwood, with his brother Leonard. Fred and Leonard were very helpful to cavers, and Fred was made an honorary MCG member in 1961. He still lives on Mendip, at Shipham. It now transpires that Leonard lives in Wrington - next door to one of our newer members, Alan Dougherty.

THEY WORDS

"I promise in future I'll only cave in daylight hours."

(Martin Rowe, on receiving his award of Gloom Dispersant at the AGM)

"Bill's away to the boozier, and Di's upstairs preparing her torso for tomorrow."

(A happy occasion in Scotland)

WORLD'S FIRST 12-LINE LIMERICK

"Last time I was pissed
'Twas not to be missed,
For so I am told
'Twas like Hell to behold
As consumed by fire
I could not lair.
But in the morn with a HEAD
When I felt like dead,
And with only a singe
To show'd been on the binge,
With a pain in the Brain,
I said I'd never again."

(At the Annual Dinner)

UM...

"SWILDONS

J.P. Burch
M. Dean

ETR 4.00pm

Not returning
to cottage."

(On the MCG caving trip board)

HANGOVER CORNER

A CROP OF LIMERICKS fell into the hands of the Editor after the Annual Dinner. A selection is published below - the full, unexpurgated set may be had in a brown paper envelope on payment of the usual fee. Recent events were clearly on the minds of our budding poets, when they set to and created these masterpieces. A certain popular opinion about the potential state of intoxication of certain members of the MCG may also be observed. I leave the rest to the sociologists and psychiatrists - to say any more would run foul of the libel laws...

We've been set a ridiculous task:
A limerick to write we've been asked.
The subject's so bad,
It makes me feel sad,
What on earth can you rhyme with HANGOVER ?
(GA)

There was a young chappy called Martin,
Who thought he and his mattress were partin'.
Pat said "Look 'ere,
You've put ash in my beer -
Hold fire or a bucket you'll depart in".
(RK)

After drinking the beer in my glass
And being a pain in the arse,
I went up to bed
With a pain in my head,
But found someone had stolen my mattress.
(MR, in a southern accent)

There was a young caver called Rowe,
To the MCG Dinner did go
In trousers bright pink -
And excess to drink...
The rest of the story you know !
(Anon)

There was a man from Stanstead
Who lost the mattress from his bed:
He raved round and about
Cos he'd been tippexed out -
And the water went over his head.
(PM)

There was a young caver called Terry,
Who always enjoyed making merry.
The smell was so foul
When he emptied his bowel
That everyone left in a hurry.
(JP+BD)

Gosh ! Roy is one of the jocks -
He really is a fox -
Apart from his trick
Of being sick at the Vic,
He sets fire to himself in a box.
(ST)

Oesophagus is too long for one word,
But it hints at what Roy thought had stirred,
When, with head in his hands,
His tum made demands,
And his-brain acquiesced through eyes blurred.
(JR)

If your drinking is taken too far
And you spend too much time at the bar,
The result of the rot
Makes your brain go to pot,
And your breakfast will go to JR.
(IM)

A drunken old sod, Simon Knight,
Had MUCH too much beer one dark night.
He felt pretty grog
As he crawled to the bog
And slipped on a big pile of s..te.
(JP+BD)

There was a young caver from Ealing
Who was fond of groping and feeling.
He tried cave formations
And other sensations,
But the Badger Best sent him reeling.
(Anon)

There was a young caver from Dover
Who was rarely found to be sober.
He went caving one day
And thought, with dismay,
This must be the effects of a hangover.
(Anon)

There once was an MCG raver
Who liked his draught beer for to savour:
After becoming quite full
On John Smith's and John Bull,
He threw up just to savour the flavour.
(DH)

Bob Speleo was never so drunk;
He fell to the floor from his bunk.
But was it the beer
That made him feel queer ?
Or was it his boyfriend, the punk ?
(KT)

The young men of Mendip are sunk -
As husbands and lovers they flunk.
They have headaches and pains,
And non-functioning brains;
They will have to stop getting so drunk !
(Anon)

The sherry I drank at the door
Was followed by vino galore;
And then I drank beer,
A very good year,
Which explains why I'm here on the floor.
(TK)

Mort d'un spéléologue dans les Pyrénées

Un spéléologue, Christian Péres, trente-cinq ans, descendu samedi 31 mars dans le gouffre Pierre dans le massif pyrénéen de l'Arbas (Haute-Garonne), bloqué par la crue soudaine d'une rivière souterraine à environ 60 mètres sous terre, est mort d'épuisement et d'hypothermie dans la matinée de dimanche. Le jeune homme, conaté sous une cascade d'eau glacée, n'a pas résisté au froid. Son compagnon, qui a pu remonter à la surface, a aussitôt prévenu les secours. La société de secours en spéléologie de Haute-Garonne n'a pu intervenir à temps.

Le Monde
..2nd April 1984

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL M.R.O., OR ELSE...?

Potholer killed after strike by rescuers

PARIS: A potholer died 200ft below ground yesterday after rescue workers went on strike.

Christian Peres, 35, died of exhaustion and cold only minutes after he was finally brought out from caves in the French Pyrenees.

Another potholer had raised the alarm but

volunteers delayed the rescue with a one-hour protest over expenses and insurance.

They said that teams in 43 other districts in France had cash agreements with the authorities.

The dead potholer had spent six hours trapped in a flooded cavern.

Four others escaped unhurt.

The Daily Mail
2nd April 1984..

A DAY AT THE FACES

by Andy Tizzard

IF, IN YEARS TO COME, someone says "What do you remember about the early months of 1984?", I expect we will all automatically recall the events surrounding the continuing Miners' dispute. But how many of us can say that we really know and understand what coal mining is all about? I am not talking about politics, but about the mechanical and geological problems of extracting coal.

As result of contact with the manager of Harworth Colliery, he is willing to allow privilege trips to the MCG around the pit-head workings and down to 'pit bottom' to see a working mine in operation. The total numbers will be restricted to 10-12 persons on a date to be fixed in due course. The most interesting time would be during a weekday, but accepting possible problems in days off, etc., a weekend may be more manageable. If interested, read on...

Harworth Colliery is situated in the North Nottingham Coalfield about six miles south of Yorkshire. It is a large, modern pit; the output for 1983/84 is in excess of one million tonnes. Coal reserves were first found in the area around the turn of the century, but it was not until 1913 that a German company commenced to sink the mine. Operations ceased when the German sinkers were interned, at the outbreak of the 1914/18 War. The mineral rights were purchased by the Barber Walker Company who owned other local mines.



Harworth No.1 pit-head

The sinking of the shafts finally commenced in the summer of 1919, reaching Barnsley Seam in the Autumn of 1923. Both shafts are 22' 4" in diameter and more than 2800' deep. Although SRT could be used, the return trip is thought to be difficult even by MCG standards, so the National Coal Board have kindly provided two winding engines, of 2400 HP and 4000 HP respectively, powered by two 875 kW generators. None of your 13-amp plugs here. Depending on whether you consider yourself man or mineral, they wind semi-automatically at either 45 feet per second or 62 feet per second. The original Harworth winding gear was featured on cigarette cards at the time as one of the wonders of modern engineering. This was replaced in 1981 by the gear described above.

Successful underground operations would be impossible without a satisfactory system of ventilation. At Harworth this is maintained by the main fan, 14 feet in diameter. Foul air is extracted from one shaft while fresh air is drawn into the other. To supplement this, booster fans are situated in the mine at intervals. As at many pits, methane is extracted from the strata and piped to the surface where it is diluted in a surface plant; it is used to fire two boilers which provide all hot water and heating needs for the pit-head.

At the present time, the colliery is maintaining three fully mechanised faces using up-to-date mining machinery and equipment. The coal is transported

to the 'pit bottom' by a trunk conveyor system, from where it is raised to the surface by a 9-ton skip in the down shaft. During full shifts, 938 men are employed underground, being transported to their place of work - up to 5 miles from the 'pit bottom' - by diesel locos and then by riding the conveyors.

During its height in 1936, 2000 men were employed at the mine; this has now been reduced to about 1200. Full First-aid and Rescue facilities exist on the site - even the local town surgery is held from an office near the entrance.

About 4 hours is spent underground on these tours, and it is an experience quite unlike normal caving! It is worth going along just to experience travelling 1200 feet vertically in about 45 seconds. I hope enough people will come forward to make a trip possible - contact me at 6 Middle Park Ave, Eltham, London SE9 5HP (01.859.7875). Finally, being 1200 feet nearer the centre of the earth, the thermal heat makes this a warm mine - the miners work just in pants. The squeamish are warned!

NEXT ISSUE .. NEXT ISSUE .. NEXT ISSUE

- * Mendip Rescue Organisation in 1983.
- * Members' address & telephone list.
- * YOUR CAVING TRIPS !!! -- Just send the Editor your trip reports, and he'll do the rest...

