

# MCG NEWS

AUGUST 1984 No. 172

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

## MCG - Abroad at Elphin

by Ian McKechnie

At the 1983 AGM our newly-elected Meet Secretary asked for suggestions for the forthcoming programme. "Inchnadamph" said an anonymous voice in a back row. Geoff Barton duly tried to write that down. History does not record whether he succeeded with his first job.

And so it came about, that Good Friday afternoon 21st April 1984, that the MCG arrived at Elphin.

'The MCG', for the purposes of this article, compose (? compromised, comprisoned) the Meet Secretary (still en-nobled in office), Roy Kempston, Dik Houseago, John and Helen Miriam, and me.

'Elphin', for those not familiar with the NW Scottish district of Assynt, is a small village about 10 miles of Ullapool, in which may be found the headquarters of the Grampian Speleological Group.

'Scottish weather', for the illumination of those who do not regularly

encounter it, was present in large quantities that first night: high winds and heavy rain. It seemed the hut must blow away before morning.

It didn't. What's more the weather had improved a little by Saturday afternoon when GB, IM, RK and DH took a walk up Stac Pollaidh (that's Stac Polly to me and you).

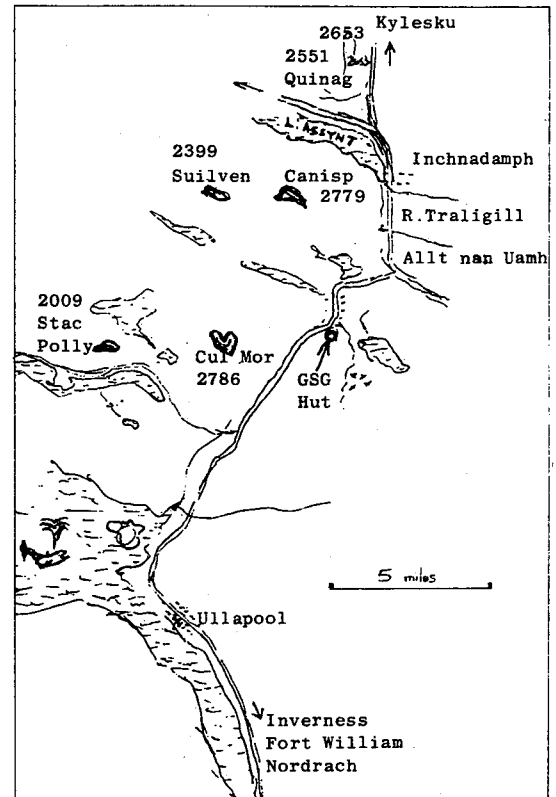
From the car-park beside Loch Lurgain, a path leads across rough grass and heather, around the back of this small but impressive sandstone outcrop. The summit ridge is reached by a scramble to a col. The route along the ridge wanders past pinnacles and pillars of rock, made more eerie that day by everchanging sheets of mist and drizzle alternating with sunshine.

Sitting down that evening with "Caves of Scotland", published by that gentleman-caver Tony Oldham, we decided to spend our next day (Sunday 23rd) exploring the major caves of the Elphin basin. GB, IM, RK, JM and DH left the hut at about 1.30pm, up the hill behind Elphin, with caving gear packed in rucksacks. This avoided a 1km walk over the moor in wet-suits. The caves are on two main streamways, which appear from the map as if they must join underground.

Uamh Pol Eoghainn sinks into a small stream through a tight rift, with a 15ft climb down the waterfall into a rocky chamber. To the left of a large, unstable, vertical flake, we climbed down two dry rifts, totalling about 30ft, to rejoin a small water flow. Following this for about 20ft brought us to the main stream again, with a murky sump to the right and a noisy cascade to the left.

Returning to the foot of the entrance pitch, IM went behind the waterfall to follow the stream down two vertical showerbaths of about 20ft each. In a small chamber at the bottom, the waterfall neatly filled a narrow letter-box, which IM found the courage to fight through only because GB's lamp was the other side. This then led to the noisy cascade found previously, and gave an alternative route for the return to the surface.

Walking down the surface stream for about 300m, finds another sink, in an 'unnamed cave'. DH disappeared down this rabbit hole of an entrance - and rapidly re-emerged feet first, ejecting one GB who was following him. "Scotland Underground", a timely new publication by Grampian-member Alan Jeffreys,



awards this cave a length of 20ft, so IM went down and removed rocks and gravel from the floor to reach a point within sight of the sump, and a good 19ft 11.75 inches from the entrance. [Ed: contributors please note, this word-processor doesn't believe in fractions.]

Over the moors again, for just 100m, to look for a "large boat-shaped depression". Depressions varying in shape from HMS Invincible to an SAS inflatable were examined, and eventually we found the entrance to Elphin Hole in the bottom of a badly-crushed coracle.

A muddy hole with delicately suspended rocks was carefully bypassed into a 25ft climb down a soft, crumbling rift, and into a rocky streamway. This was dark and peaty, and blocked in places with piles of large, freshly-fallen boulders. After about 150ft, the stream disappeared into a too-tight squeeze, and we climbed up and into a banged high-level bypass. Beyond this, the cave soon ended in a frothy sump. Upwards was a tight, muddy, high-level

continued on pages 2 and 3 ...

### Bob Speleo β



# MCG doings

# MCG - Abroad at Elphin

continued from page 1 ...

ONLY A FEW brief notes this month. The updated Membership List has all current addresses and telephone nos.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Gill Attwood and Clive Towner on their forthcoming marriage in October.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS Anthony Alston, John Beauchamp, Peter Johnston, Simon Leach, Chris Scrase, Yvonne Ward.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS James Chubb, Phil Eliot, Tony Ingold, Chris Martin, Lesley Robbins (again), Martin Rowe, Derek Walsh.

VALIANT WORK was done to the cottage on the first weekend in June, to maintain and improve facilities, but there's lots more there for resting hands. Paul is at the other end of 01.771.0666 and is waiting to hear from you.

WE NEED A LARGER FRIDGE. Cost: preferably nothing or near offer. To fit in the space under the cupboard currently occupied by the rubbish bag. Please contact Paul Merron (see above).

OVERDUE LIBRARY BOOKS please come back, Ian forgives all (this time).

- FUTURE EVENTS**
- \* Pen-y-Ghent and Gaping Gill winch meet, August Bank Holiday 25-27 August, staying at NPC. Martin Rowe organising.
  - \* OFD/DYO, September 15-16, staying at SWCC. Denise Samuel organising.
  - \* MCG Half-Yearly Forum and Party, October 6-7, at Nordrach Cottage.
  - \* Party on Saturday evening October 6, Chewton Mendip Village Hall. See p.8.

NOT CONTENT WITH improving the cottage, the Group has adopted Longwood/August for 'maintenance' (more next issue).

THE MCG-2020 FUND has been proposed by Alan Mellon. Object: An SRT trip in the year 2020 AD (short for Ade Duckett) from the cherry trees in the car park. A Party will then begin... Save now for the Party - the Committee is being asked to start a bank account for it!

- MCG COMMITTEE**
- Secretary: Tony Knibbs
  - Treasurer: Arthur Spain
  - Meet Sec : Geoff Barton
  - Cottage : Paul Merron
  - Tackle : Roy Kempston
  - Recorder : Ian McKechnie
  - Editor : Jon Roberts
  - Member : John Pudduck.

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.

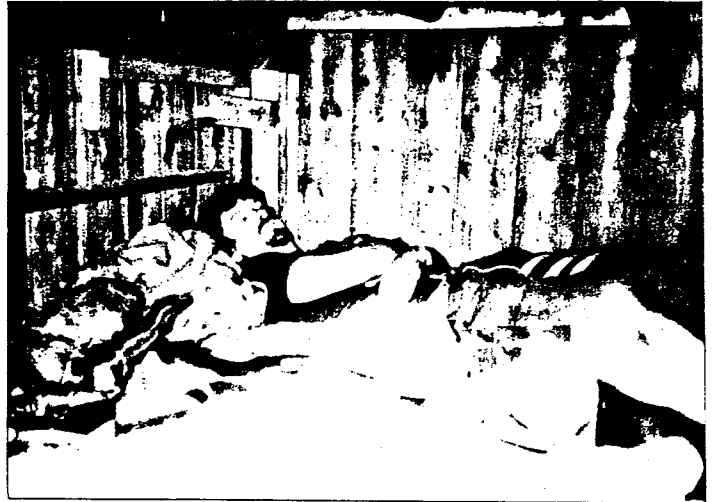
bedding plane which IM attempted to penetrate, and succeeded only in getting half-way back to the main passage before giving up. Then back to the surface, and five mins. sun-bathing before the rest of the party emerged.

The final cave of the day was another 100m down the now-dry stream-bed to another, lengthier stream, which was followed for about 200m to its sink. This is a large, roony cavern in the hillside, Uamh an Tartair. After the

wide entrance tunnel, the streamway narrows down to a succession of small, wet chambers for about 100ft, then opens suddenly into a vast, day-lit depression known as Uamh Mor (Big Hole)

Several slippery climbs led to other chambers just below the surface. At the lower end, the stream disappeared into a deeply resonating cavity - about 0.5Hz. Despite this body-shaking roar, we went in to find a 15ft cascade which was traversed to rejoin the stream further down. The stream soon ended in a sump, the walls of which were lined with fresh foam to a height of 20ft - a sign of recent high water! We sprayed down the face to remove the foam, then climbed over the top into another foamy terminal passage. IM tried unsuccessfully to climb over this one, then GB remembered the survey. This sump was in fact a 30ft crawl, followed by a 20ft pitch, which sometimes sumps! Oh well, we had done the best we could, and after convincing ourselves that the water level was falling, we returned to the surface, to wash down our gear and ourselves in a deep pool, and dry off in the evening sun.

Canisp and Suilven are two peaks worthy of a visit. Unless you are fitter than we, however, I wouldn't recommend them both in one day starting from Elphin. We did, and returned to the hut at 10.30pm, happy but weary. Quinag, further north, gave us a relatively easy day out, with pleasant views over the new Kylesku bridge, and south to Canisp, Suilven, Cul Mor and Stac Pollaigh.



MFET SECRETARY IN THE 'ELPHIN' POSITION

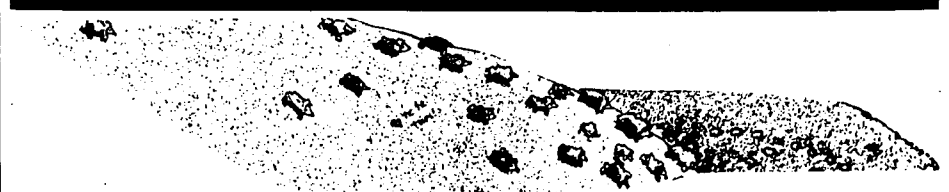
By Thursday 26th, we were feeling pangs of guilt about our neglect of the caving scene. There were two more areas to choose from, both near Inchmadamph: Trailgill and Allt nan Uamh. We chose Allt nan Uamh, and planned to visit the two main caves in this valley.

About 1 hour's walk from the road, then a climb up a large outcrop on the right of the valley, led to four or five short bone-caves, which we investigated briefly. Then a half-mile walk up a side valley to the right, brought us into a dry, peaty stream-bed, and a deep, rocky depression forming the entrance to Uamh an Claonite. A tight boulder ruckle led down to a clear, strong stream.

Claonite is described in "Scotland Underground" as "the most sporting stream cave in Scotland". This is easy to believe. It provides in its one mile of passages a wide variety of caving, both wet and dry. Following the stream from the entrance, the floor soon drops away to an impressive 15ft cascade, with a deep pool below. The passage opened into large boulder-strewn caverns, before closing down again to sump 1.

Through up to 100ft long, sump 1 has a bypass, a "low aqueous creep over boulders leading to a flat-out sloping crawl in water". This itself can sump in wet conditions, but only came up to nose-level on our visit. We emerged from the crawl into one of a network of

continued on page 3



# The BOB SPELEO Column

This is fine, that nice Mr Roberts has given me my own column to write. I'll have to be careful about what I say about nice Mr Roberts now, or I'll get Edited. (Isn't it funny how Mr McKechnie didn't do anything daft last Year.) .....BOB

"There is a young caver  
Named Bob,  
Who has a Loud Outside Gob.  
If something stupid you do,  
or get in a stew,  
In a picture you'll end,  
a bad Job."

SCENE: Mawson Arms  
TOPIC: MCG-2020 SRT trip (see this issue)

Louise C. "I'll only be 56 !"

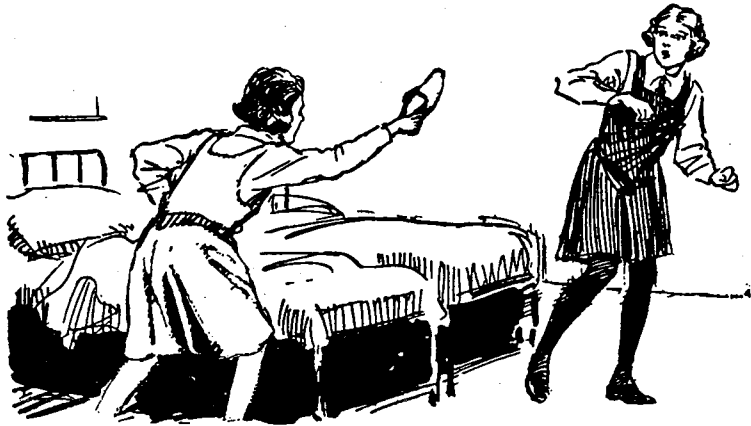
Adrian D. "And you still won't be able to get in the Fleece & Firkin"

from the minutes of the Cambrian Caving Council 16th AGM held on 11th March 1984 (item 9, CAVE RESCUE REPORT)...

"...The British Cave Rescue Council AGM was being held today. There was a possibility of another helicopter practice"

11.45 pm, in the cottage...

Roy K. "A pound whip...that'll do me nicely"



THEY COULD BEAT HER AS MUCH AS THEY LIKED: ROSEMARY WOULD NEVER REVEAL THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE LOWER FOURTH'S FALLOUT SHELTER

McG ABROAD AT ELPHIN continued from page 2 ...

dome-roofed chambers, connected by low arches, mirrored in a floor of clear water. A higher chamber to the right, known as the igloo for its shape, marked the entrance to the dry series, while ahead the stream continued through Claonite 2.

A long, gentle streamway reminiscent of Swildons 2 led to a free-climbable 8ft cascade, and two 10ft waterfalls, then the aptly-named cavity wall rift, a high, narrow passage with black limestone to the left, light to the right. This ended in a water rift, descending steeply for 30ft to more level streamway, and eventually sump 2.

Ascending to the right into dry, high level, banged bedding planes, led eventually to sump 3, where a waterproof survey was attached to the line with clothes-pegs. Thoughtful, are the GSG. Retracing our steps to the high point of the passage, a steep, muddy crawl led up to the left into East Block series. About 30 minutes of convoluted crawling and squeezing was rewarded with a large, decorated chamber, leading on to a maze of stooping passages, sand-floored, and finally to the infinitely improbable Infinite Improbability Inlet.

A swift return brought us to daylight after 4hrs underground. Our Surface Support Party, Helen Miriam, was still writing outside, and bashfully averted her eyes as we threw off our clothes to soak up the warm evening sun.

It was too late to do any more caves, so after a pleasant walk back down the valley, we felt obliged to visit the Inchnadamph Hotel to fill the water-containers, a necessary chore when staying at the GSG hut. (Of course we

had at least a pint while they were filling.)

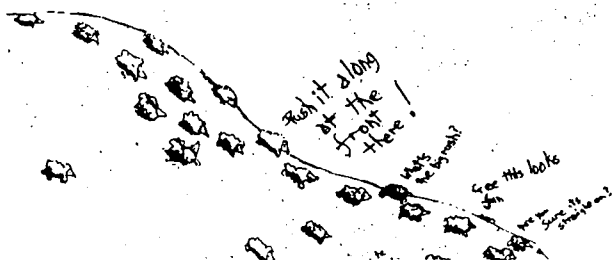
Friday, our last day in Assynt, was the hottest yet, and we had promised to take Helen up a mountain. Cul Mor was the closest to the hut, and at 2786ft just about counts as a mountain, so by lunch-time we were sun-bathing on the summit, enjoying the delightful views available from all the summits in this area, and suffering the less delightful view of an overheated GB in rucksack and underpants.

Friday evening we enjoyed hospitality on an estate some 40 miles drive away (though only about 20 miles had we chosen to walk). After a tour of the estate, in the back of a pick-up truck, we dined off the brothers of the salmon and deer we had been watching 30 minutes earlier. Then, next morning, away to Skye for our second week.

Assynt is to be recommended for a holiday, both for the walking and the caving. It is a long way to go for less than a week, but there is plenty to do if you do stay for a week or more. We could easily have spent another two or three days' good caving in the Allt nan Uamh and Traligill valleys. Ben Mor Assynt, the only nearby 'Munroe' over 3000ft, looked very tempting, too.

The Grampian hut is adequate though basic (car essential, since all water has to be carried at least 1 mile), but would have been rather less attractive in bad weather. (But then perhaps we are pampered on Mendip.) A wet suit is essential in all the caves we visited, even in relatively dry conditions. A good week, good food thanks to Helen, good camping, interesting caving, and some superb walking.

## Bob Speleo 3

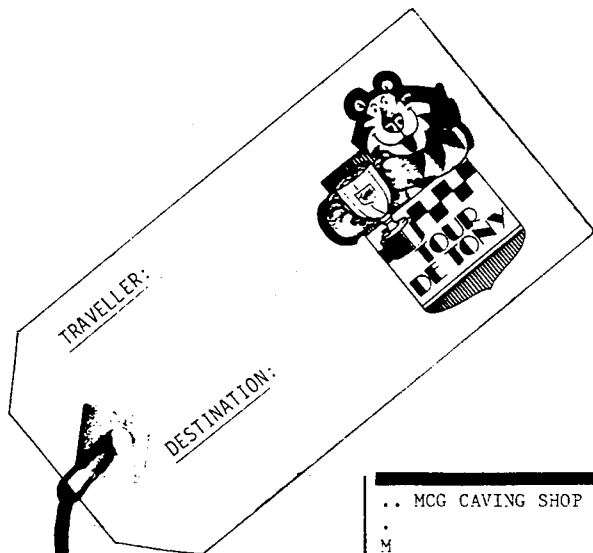


Last year Simon Leach, now an MCG member, bottomed the Berger in a group organised by Crewe Climbing & Potholing Club. This year MCG members Alan Dougherty, Mike Haselden and Steve Lane visited the cave...

# CHANGE OF REGULATIONS

Would Travellers intending to use the luggage carrier service offered by Mr. A. J. Knibbs please ensure that their Ammo boxes have the new label attached.

Failure to adopt this procedure may result in misdirection.



# GOUGG SUFFRER BERGER

by  
Alan  
Dougherty

It is not my intention in this article to provide a technical information sheet for would-be visitors to the Gouffre Berger. This has been variously attempted before, and as one group of pitch-riggers was reputed to be carrying both note-book and tape-measure, I presume may be presented in a quantitative form elsewhere. I do, however, hope to include some pieces of useful information gathered from experience.

I had been invited to join the Whernside Manor expedition, along with two other MCG members - Mike Haselden (also Speleo-Rhal) and Steve Lane (also BEC and Imperial College). The team consisted of some thirty cavers drawn from the regions of England and Wales, but with a predominance of northerners.

Travelling down in the Whernside minibus (which I met at Dover), I arrived in the Vercours on Sunday 1st July. Perhaps the most gruelling part of the trip was crossing London on the Underground, with two tackle bags and a large rucksack!

We had decided to camp in the village of Autrans. Although a twenty minute drive to the road-head at La Molière, the campsite in the village offered civilised facilities and can be highly recommended. Previous expeditions have camped at La Molière, but have found the water supply limited, and have experienced trouble with herds of tent-destroying bovines. One should remember that La Molière is two and a half miles from the Berger entrance. I can see little to be gained from camping at La Molière, and you would certainly need to be a sound sleeper to overcome the constant clanging of the cow-bells.

On the following day (Monday), a dozen British cavers were to be seen carrying tackle sacs to the entrance. The local 1:25000 maps were of little use as they showed only a few of the forest tracks found on the ground. The sketch map from the recent Crewe report was quite useful but hopelessly out of scale, as

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we found out when pacing the various sections. We did reconnoitre the route from La Molière back to Autrans, via the forest-covered ridge and the Pas de Bellecombe, but most seemed to consider that, if caught at the road-head without transport, it would be better to wait than walk back.

On Tuesday 3rd, a small group started to rig the cave. It was hoped to complete the rigging in one push, with one over-night stop at Camp 1. This could be made feasible by a second team carrying in bags of tackle for the lower section to the Hall of Thirteen, and by a third team carrying in the bivouac gear to Camp 1.

Together with Steve Lane, Mike Haselden, David Kay (Croydon), Robert Sermon (Moldywarps) and Bernard Taylor (Red Rose), I was in the sherpa party immediately following the riggers. We left a couple of hours behind the rigging party, with the idea of catching them up near Camp 1. However they found it necessary to place a number of bolts, and thus we caught them up very early on. The cave has numerous bolts in place, especially in the upper section, but many are in most peculiar places.

The whole of the rigging to the base of Aldo's Shaft was completed without a re-belay, but did include one rather awkward deviation.

Ice lined the entrance shafts, making them rather spectacular. The Meanders certainly required concentration, but are quite feasible without using the old wooden stemples that are present. Indeed, if carrying a tackle sac hung from your harness, the stemples are a complete nuisance because you are constantly lifting the sac over each one in turn. Although in places the passage is restricted in height, I found it far easier to carry the tackle sac on my back.

Once into the Grand Gallery the scale of passage becomes enormous. In many places the roof is not visible. We were lucky to find Lake Cadoux dry, but still had to leave a dinghy and line in case of a rise in water level. On reaching the Bourgin Hall we were treated to views of the first formations of the system, and they were on a huge scale.

The Tyrolienne, a traverse over a cascade, was good fun and led to the top of the Great Rubble Heap. Aptly named, this huge scree and boulder slope runs down to Camp 1. In clambering down it, one has the feeling of being on a mountainside, such is the scale of the place. Some of the boulders are enormous, and this section of the cave was hard going on the return.

The Hall of Thirteen is certainly a place any serious caver should try to visit. The approach is magical. From the base of the Great Rubble Heap you traverse the edges of huge gourd pools with the thirteen majestic stalagmites in the distance. Moving forward, their scale gradually becomes more obvious and impressive.

It was here that we thankfully handed over our tackle sacs to the rigging party, who were resting and feeding. At least they would have been eating had the tin-opener not been forgotten. Fortunately I was carrying a knife with tin-opener - this was not to be the only time it came in handy.

We made a leisurely return to the surface, which gave the opportunity for photography, and attempting to take in the grandeur of the place. We emerged in the dark, after a nine hour trip, and were most grateful to find that Rob's wife, Cathy, had prepared us all a meal at the campsite.

Wednesday was mainly a rest day for me, but along with Mike Haselden and Dave Kay, I paid a visit to the Grotte Bournilion in the Bourne Gorge. This cave has the most grand entrance - reputedly the highest in Europe - and provided an interesting one hour boulder hop. There are good formations in places. The terminal sump pool is very reminiscent of the Third Chamber in Wookey Hole.

We also paid a visit to Marbach's shop near Pont-en-Royans. The man himself, looking just like he does in 'Techniques de la Spéléologie Alpine', spoke good English, but only after I had failed to describe a rexotherm bivouac bag in French. I am assured the quality of his English improves in line with the amount spent.

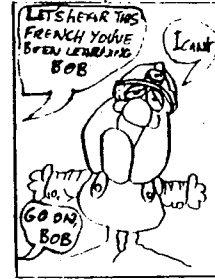
Late on Wednesday we learnt that the rigging party had decided to return from the head of Puits Gache. So on Thursday Paul Ramsden and Rob Sermon were to descend to finish the rigging below Gache.

Along with Dave Kay, Steve Lane and Bernard Taylor, I followed them a couple of hours later in an attempt at the bottom. Dave and myself made good progress to Camp 1. Indeed we actually over-shot the Camp and had to return from the Hall of Thirteen. The other pair arrived at the Camp some twenty minutes after, by which time we had brewed tea.

On our first trip into the cave we had not carried water and suffered consequently. Both Steve and I had felt very dehydrated and my lips had cracked. This time, lesson learnt, water bottle and purifying tablets were carried.

Following a short break, Dave and myself continued on down the system. After the Hall of Thirteen the passages close down and the formations became more easily visible. Of particular note was the 'Elephant's Trunk' stalactite. This hollow stalactite discharges a small stream into a pool a couple of metres below. From afar the sound of the falling water is so amplified as to make you think it is the main streamway you are hearing. Good helictites were present in this area.

Bob Speleo 8



This section was most sporting, especially the canals of the Couffinades. As these were rigged with traverse lines, I found it possible even to keep feet dry by climbing along the sides of the passage, but this probably used up more energy than would have been lost by wading. If available, pontonnières are the obvious solution to this section.

Going really well I clipped into a diagonally-rigged rope on a short cascade after the canals, only to find that two-thirds of the way down I had no slack in the system. The pitches had been rigged tightly and, as usual, I was using an additional friction krab with my descendeur.

Efforts to change to ascenders failed because there was no slack to get my chest ascender locked onto the rope. Eventually, after some twenty minutes hanging around trying to sort out the problem, I decided the best course of action was to cut the rope below me and ascend the then vertically hanging rope. Fortunately I was carrying the aforementioned knife, and had noticed spare rope coiled at the base of the pitch. On severing the rope I pendulumed with some force against the wall of the pot and under the cascade. Luckily I was able to bridge to keep out of the worst of the water, whilst I sorted out my ascent.

By this stage Bernard, Steve and a solo-travelling Mike Haselden had arrived at the pitch-head. Shortening the traverse line enabled us to provide Steve with enough rope to re-rig the pitch. This involved a spectacular pendulum across deep water, which Steve accomplished with fine precision, keeping his back-side just above the water level.

I was cold from my wetting, not to mention a little shaken, and decided to call it a day here. Very kindly Steve offered to accompany me out of the cave. I donned gloves, balaclava and spare polar jacket, and by the time we reached Camp 1 was nearly over-heating.

Following a late supper at the Camp we continued to make steady progress, emerging after some fourteen hours to struggle along the forest tracks to La Molière in the dark.

We arrived just as Friday's dawn was breaking, and witnessed the most spectacular silhouette of the Alps, viewed over the cloud-filled valley of the River Drac.

I am sure that had we descended earlier in the day (we had a 2pm start) that we would have felt much less tired. Timing of descent is important especially if  
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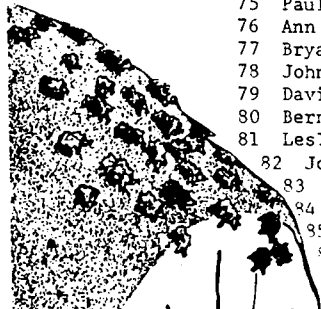
# MEMBERS

1 Gill Attwood	3 Rennie Terrace, Redhill, Surrey RH1 4HL	.	P
2 Darren Bartlett	15 Starling Close, Worle, Weston super Mare, Avon BS22 8SN	0934.511449	P
3 Jarrod Bartlett	15 Starling Close, Worle, Weston super Mare, Avon BS22 8SN	0934.511449	P
4 Geoff Barton	Cricket View, Princes Road, Weybridge, Surrey	0932.49241	F
5 Dave Baxter	52 Bradshaw Road, Watford, Herts WD2 4DE	0923.32504	P
6 Kathy Baxter	52 Bradshaw Road, Watford, Herts WD2 4DE	0923.32504	A
7 Andy Beare	c/o 30 Walton Way, Aylesbury, Bucks.	0296.87795	F
8 John Beauchamp	St Hugh's Cottage, Charterhouse, Blagdon, Bristol BS18 6XR	0761.62929	P
9 Steve Bedford	251A Lady Margaret Road, Southall, Mddx UB1 2PZ	.	P
10 Pete Bulling	22 Canterbury Road, Worthing, W Sussex	0903.35431	P
11 Jean Paul Burch	47 Chichester Court, Chessington Road, Ewell, Surrey	01.393.3890	F
12 Fred Burton	33 Woodford Crescent, Pinner, Mddx	01.866.6761	F
13 Julie Burton	33 Woodford Crescent, Pinner, Mddx	01.866.6761	A
14 Mike Bygrave	Rookery Cottage, Church Street, Effingham, Surrey	0372.54764	F
15 Robbie Charnock	30 Bassett Gardens, Osterley, Mddx TW7 4QY	01.570.4116	P
16 James Chubb	Flat 3, Wych Hill House, Wych Hill Rise, Hook Heath, Woking, Surrey GU22 0ES	.	F
17 Peter Collings-Wells	63 Jordan Road, Perivale, Mddx	01.998.3228	F
18 Steve Conquest	10 McAdam Drive, Enfield, Mddx EN2 8PS	01.366.3276	F
19 Dave Corr	57 Northcote Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3HF	01.949.4081	P
20 Malcolm Cotter	249 Feltham Hill Road, Ashford, Mddx	07842.52643	H
21 Louise Curley	53 Wills Crescent, Hounslow, Mddx TW3 2JA	01.894.1704	P
22 Anne Davies	72 Aldenham Road, Bushey, Watford, Herts.	0927.27154	A
23 Geoff Davies	72 Aldenham Road, Bushey, Watford, Herts	0927.27154	F
24 James Davies	'Doirlinn', Owlsmoor Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4TS	0344.771736	P
25 Mike Dean	29 Bonner Hill Road, Kingston, Surrey	.	P
26 Alan Dougherty	3 The Cottages, Wrington, nr Bristol, Avon	0934.863056	P
27 Eric Dowley	32 Chequers Orchard, Iver, Bucks	0753.653658	F
28 Joan Dowley	32 Chequers Orchard, Iver, Bucks	0753.653658	A
29 Adrian Duckett	130 St Stephens Road, Hounslow, Mddx TW3 2BW	01.572.2374	F
30 Bill Ducklin	5 Edinburgh Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3LX	01.644.1488	F
31 Peter Dymnt	Room 9, 79 Eaton Rise, Ealing, London W5	.	F
32 Dave Edwards	11 Milland Hse, Bessborough Road, Roehampton, London SW15 4BL	01.789.8088	P
33 Phil Eliot	c/o Belle Vue, Chiswick Mall, London W4	01.994.4621	F
34 David Forrow	5 Mendip Rise, Locking, Weston super Mare, Avon	.	P
35 Joan Goddard	10 Enstone Road, Charlbury, Oxon	0608.810382	F
36 Pete Goddard	10 Enstone Road, Charlbury, Oxon	0608.810382	F
37 Peter Haynes	14 Mays Road, Teddington, Mddx TW11 OSQ	01.977.7914	P
38 Peter Harvey	Brynawel, Castle Road, Rhayader, Powys	0597.810831	F
39 Mike Haselden	3 The Close, Thornhill Park, Southampton, Hants SO2 5RB	0703.464491	F
40 Dave Higginson	19 Princes Avenue, Acton, London W3	01.992.0162	P
41 Wayne Hiscox	3 Keward, Glastonbury Road, Wells, Somerset	0749.72081x273	F
42 Dave Hodby	'Dawn', 25 Aggisters Lane, Wokingham, Berks	01.286.3132	F
43 Dik Houseago	21 Western Drive, Shepperton, Mddx	0932.222142	F
44 Dave Howe	41 Wick Road, Teddington, Mddx	01.977.5370	F
45 Neil Hutchinson	15H Gloucester Avenue, Camden Town, London NW1	01.267.1005	F
46 Helen Ingold	31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3QS	0442.42029	F
47 Phil Ingold	31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3QS	0442.42029	F
48 Tony Ingold	30 Christchurch Close, Edgbaston, Birmingham 15	.	A
49 Peter Johnston	4 Cleave Avenue, Hayes, Mddx UB3 4EZ	01.573.7861	P
50 Bill Jones	6 Craighall Place, Alloway, Ayr, Ayrshire KA7 4XD	0292.42720	F
51 Roy Kempston	13 Florence Road, College Town, Camberley, Surrey	0276.34338	F
52 Tony Knibbs	85 Cavendish Avenue, West Ealing, London W13 0JY	01.997.2032	F
53 Simon Knight	14 Rowdens Road, Wells, Somerset	0749.75805	F
54 Val Knight	14 Rowdens Road, Wells, Somerset	0749.75805	A
55 Steve Lane	'Rossett', Hillcote, Bleadon Hill, Weston-s-M, Avon BS24 9JU	0934.812843	P
56 Simon Leach	c/o 87 Richmond Road, Southampton, Hants	.	P
57 Pete Lingwood	39 Holmbridge Gardens, Enfield, Mddx EN3 7EY	01.805.2538	F
58 Gordon Lister	127 Seaford Road, West Ealing, London W13	.	F
59 Mike Lovell	4 Settrington Close, Mill Green, Reading, Berks	0734.663747	F
60 Mick Lowe	'Merrilees', Molemer Road, East Molesey, Surrey	01.398.1616	F
61 John MacMillan	11 Whitehouse Way, Iver Heath, Bucks SLO OHB	0753.652339	F
62 Christine Martin	84 Grange Road, Ealing, London W5	.	F
63 Pete Mathews	15 Dellcott Close, Welwyn Garden City, Herts	07073.21018	F
64 Ian McKechnie	30 Brittain Road, Hershaw, Walton on Thames, Surrey KT12 4LR	0932.228292	F
65 Alan Mellon	133 Ellerdine Road, Hounslow, Mddx TW3 2PU	01.560.0205	F
66 Joy Merron	21 Howberry Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8HZ	01.771.0666	A
67 Paul Merron	21 Howberry Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8HZ	01.771.0666	A
68 Mike Mintram	18 Seaforth Avenue, New Malden, Surrey	01.949.7954	F
69 Helen Miriam	44 Chesterfield Road, West Ewell, Surrey KT19 9QP	01.393.3955	A
70 John Miriam	44 Chesterfield Road, West Ewell, Surrey KT19 9QP	01.393.3955	A
71 Pat Newman	148B Westmount Road, Eltham, London SE9 1XY	.	F
72 Carol Nunn	26 Spruce Hills Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4LD	01.527.8533	P
73 Ian Parry	30 Walton Way, Aylesbury, Bucks	0296.87795	F
74 Rob Penn	'Sunnybank', Hambleton Common, Lane End, High Wycombe, Bucks	0494.881963	F
75 Paul Phipps	105 Eastland Road, Yeovil, Somerset	.	P
76 Ann Pittman	36 Manor Way, Egham, Surrey	0784.37540	A
77 Bryan Pittman	36 Manor Way, Egham, Surrey	0784.37540	F
78 John Pudduck	9 Windermere Road, London SW16	01.764.8454	F
79 David Punter	66 Roxborough Avenue, Isleworth, Mddx	01.568.1205	P
80 Bernard Reeves	16A Newbury Way, Northolt, Mddx	01.864.3559	F
81 Lesley Robbins	243 Tring Road, Aylesbury, Bucks	.	F
82 Jonathan Roberts	17 Kent Avenue, West Ealing, London W13 8BE	01.997.2916	F
83 Martin Rowe	Asst.Warden, Youth Hostel, Keswick, Cumbria	0596.72484	F
84 Charlie Ruddick	10 Berryfield, Wexham Court Estate, Slough, Berks	0753.38494	F
85 Denise Samuel	85 Cavendish Avenue, West Ealing, London W13 0JY	01.997.2032	F
86 Ron Saunders	21 Rushmoor Avenue, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Bucks	0494.813487	F
87 Chris Scrase	19 St Johns Road, Westcott, nr Dorking, Surrey	0306.887330	P

continued on page 7...

correct to August 1984

A = Associate  
P = Probationary  
F = Full  
H = Honorary




MCG MEMBERSHIP

continued from page 6 ...

88 Don Searle	14 Hilda Vale Road, Farnborough, Orpington, Kent BR6 7AN	.	F
89 Greg Smith	15 Church View, Gisburn, Lancs	02005.270	F
90 Arthur Spain	57 Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, W Sussex	0403.64068	F
91 Linda Spain	57 Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, W Sussex	0403.64068	A
92 Peter Spain	64 Albion Road, Hounslow, Mddx	01.572.8765	F
93 Graham Sutcliffe	80 Hurst Lane, East Molesey, Surrey	01.979.3390	P
94 Kate Taylor	Flat 2, 29 St Pauls Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8NB	01.653.8707	A
95 Steve Taylor	Flat 2, 29 St Pauls Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8NB	01.653.8707	F
96 Bryan Terry	54 Brunswick Crescent, New Southgate, London N11 1EB	01.368.9877	F
97 Pat Terry	54 Brunswick Crescent, New Southgate, London N11 1EB	01.368.9877	A
98 Andy Tizzard	6 Middle Park Avenue, Eltham, London SE9 5HP	01.859.7875	P
99 Clive Towner	1 Long Copse Close, Bookham, Surrey	0372.54529	F
100 Bob Varley	Flat 2, Nokewood House, Church Lane, Beckley, Oxford OX3 9UT	086735.760	F
101 Don Vosper	5 Franklyn Terrace, Farrington Gurney, Avon	.	F
102 Roger Wallington	125 Langley Road, Slough, Berks	0753.43384	F
103 Derek Walsh	53 Northumberland Crescent, Bedford, Mddx	.	F
104 June Walsh	58 Munster Road, Teddington, Mddx	01.977.8414	A
105 Pat Walsh	58 Munster Road, Teddington, Mddx	01.977.8414	F
106 Yvonne Ward	15 Jesse Close, Yateley, Camberley, Surrey	0276.876783	P
107 Chris Whittle	18 Granville Dean, Bovington, Hemel Hempstead, Herts	0442.832994	F
108 Peter Whittle	139 Fletcher Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts	0442.61450	P
109 Allan Wicks	39 Sheridan Avenue, Caversham, Reading, Berks	.	F
110 Richard Woollacott	Old Church Farm, Main Street, Whissendene, Rutland	.	F
111 Fred Young	'Wanstead Cottage', Shipham, Winscombe, Somerset	.	H

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**Failing battery:** Two pills per cell.  
**Old battery:** Double application and slow charge.  
 Keep Out of Reach of Children.

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WHAT  
THE  
CAVING  
DOCTOR  
ORDERED

No, editing a newsletter is not done by numbers, but by poor and overworked humans - at least that's your Editor's story and he's sticking to it. Regulars at the Mawson Arms will know that for the past few months I haven't been arriving there much before closing time. (What of all the pubs he visited on his way, I hear you saying?) Well work is slightly easier now, so here's your newsletter, and apologies for its delayed appearance.

Apologies too for the mis-numbering last time... In case anyone noticed, and is confused, recent issues have emerged (or not) in the following sequence:

- 167... November 1983
- 168... 30th Anniv. issue, now scheduled by Ian McKechnie for Oct.1984
- 169... February 1984
- 170... March 1984
- 170... (ahem, should be 171) May 1984.

Ergo, this one should be 172.

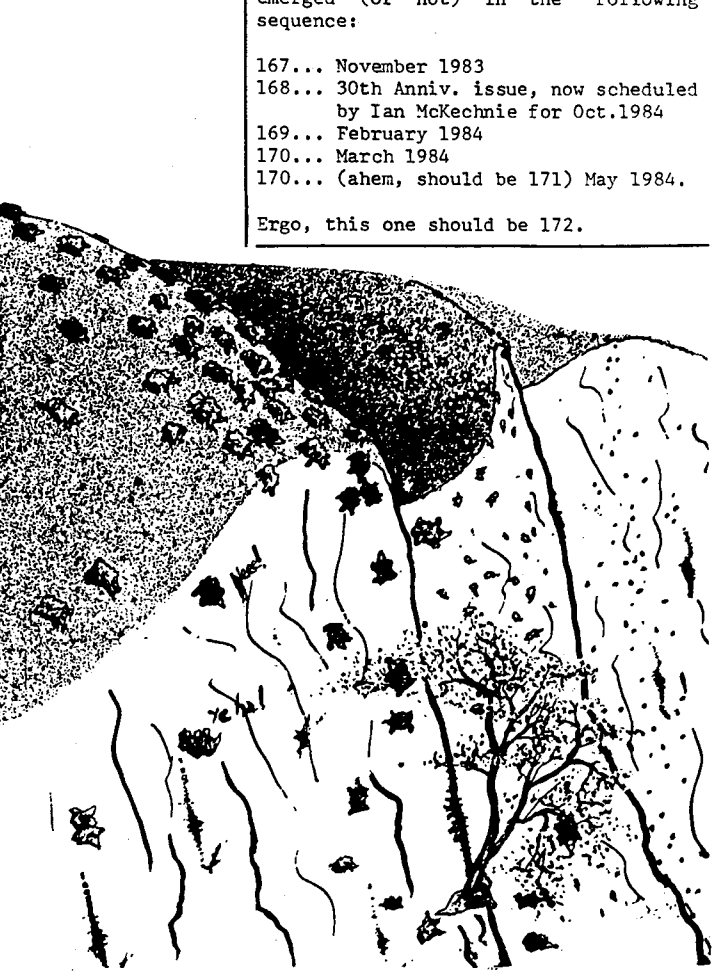
# Winter Warmer

by Adrian Duckett

The MCG summer expedition for this year took off like 99 lead balloons. The lack of response has been stunning, for Spain only 4... (though the problems of affiliating with the established clubs booked to go did not help matters). I know we all have our problems of time commitment or we have made other plans, but I would have thought that out of a club membership of over 100 we could have filled a 12-seater mini-bus.

Anyway those of us who do want to cave abroad in '84 are thinking of going, out of season, to take advantage of cheap flights and accommodation. What seems a good idea is to extend the Christmas holiday to take a full 14 day package deal with hire car and self-catering apartments. Not to just any old Spanish mountainside, either. We are at present looking at the Island of Majorca. Now this sort of caving is irresistible (warm weather, cheap and enjoyable living, days off by the sea...)

If the prospect appeals, then contact Adrian Duckett or Ian Parry (see members' address & 'phone list).



trying for the bottom and out, without a bivvi. Consider your biological time-clock and the possibility of having to walk back in the dark. Perhaps of greater importance is to try and avoid the flood-prone lower section between 6pm and midnight when thunderstorms are most likely. Mike Haselden used a planned overnight stop at Camp 1, and as a result surfaced looking fitter than most.

On Saturday a visit was made to Grotte Gournier with Steve Lane, on a short trip to photograph formations in the dry fossil passage section. The boat trip across the entrance lake was great fun.

On Friday storms had been forecast, and the decision was taken to de-rig the Berger. Although this made good sense, in view of our limited time in the Vercours and the large amount of abandoned tackle already left in the Berger, it was disappointing in that I would have liked to try for the bottom again.

So Sunday involved the ferrying of gear from the entrance to the road-head, whilst on Monday I descended the Scialet de Malaterre along with Rob and Cathy Sermon, Dave Kay and Roo Walters (York University).

This spectacular 400-foot shaft is spanned by a metal foot-bridge which has a removable floor section allowing for a fine 'Y'-hang belay.

Tuesday saw me back at the Gournier with Mike, Dave and Roo. This time we descended to the active resurgence streamway, and followed it upstream. The lower section obviously filled to the roof, and contained a squeeze, the

only one I experienced in the Vercours.

Soon, however, the streamway assumed spectacular proportions. We followed it for many metres, sometimes making use of the fixed traverse wires above the deeper sections of water. Eventually we were stopped by an eighty-foot high double cascade where the traverse line was broken by flood-water abrasion. Both Dave and I climbed up to the broken section and decided climbing rope and slings would be necessary to overcome the climb safely, so we reluctantly made our return.

Back at the lake we made use of a French speleo's 'canot pneumatique', which resembled a blow-up version of the QE2 - French cavers don't seem to do things in half-measures. On entry we had swum the lake, a pleasure which was repeated for Mike as we had to leave the boat on the inward side.

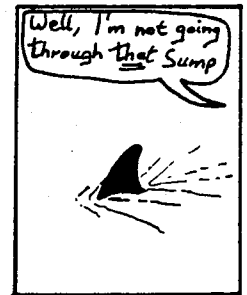
Knowing that we were to depart on Thursday, the next morning I accompanied the Haselden family to La Molière, to view and photograph the sunrise. Instead of the magnificent temperature inversion of the previous Friday the mist was down and good photography was out of the question.

All in all the Vercours is a superb caving area and the Berger itself a magnificent system. It was a little disappointing not to reach the bottom, particularly as I had hoped to investigate some of the avens which could be potential terminal sump by-passes. There is still a tantalising amount of limestone between the siphon at the base of the Berger and the resurgence at the Caves de Sassenage.

# Pyrenées

by Tony Knibbs

# 1985



As agreed at the AGM, it is intended to organise another visit to the Arbas (Réseau Tronbe) region of the Pyrénées, for summer 1985. Hopefully, this will enable us to build on our knowledge and experience gained in the area during 1983.

The objective will be to complete the major through trip from Trou Mile to Grotte de Pène Blaque. We have explored the upstream and downstream ends of the route, leaving us only to sort out the large middle section entered from Gouffre du Pont de Gerbaut.

Perhaps this time we can camp up on the plateau for a week or so to be within easier reach of the caves. To achieve this, it will be necessary to have a suitable vehicle with good ground clearance to pass the lumpier sections of the track to the top. I am looking into hiring a 12-seat Ford Transit complete with tachograph.

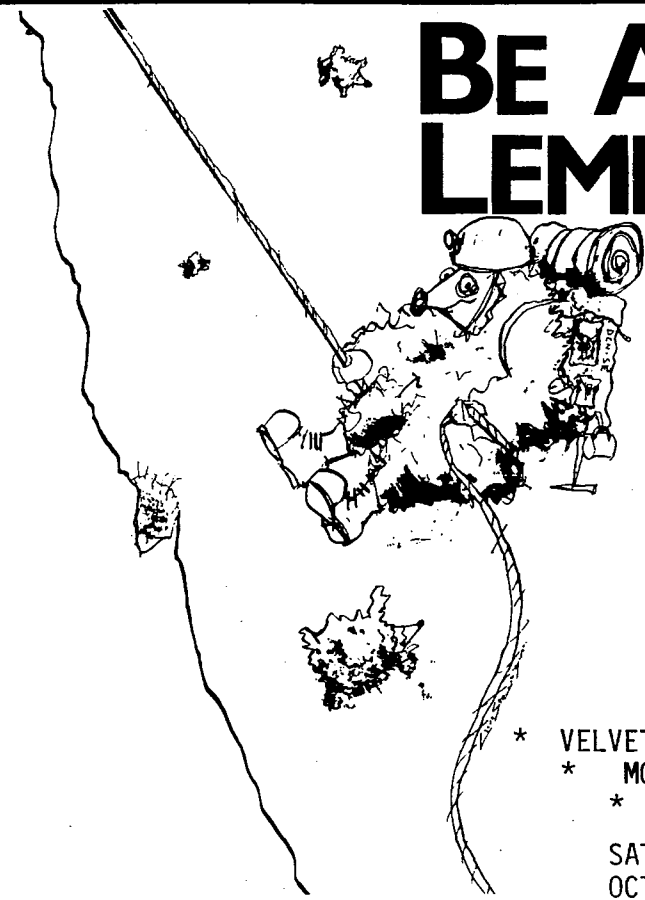
Nothing has been decided yet concerning the dates, but I assume that members would favour an earlier (i.e. drier) period than last time, which was from August 17 onwards to early September. July 27 onwards, for whatever duration, may be a better proposition.

We could also formally plan to visit the High Pyrénées, either for caving or for a few days of mountain walking.

Please give some thought to your plans for 1985 and let me know if you would like to join in this activity. Whatever happens, a firm decision is needed by 1st January 1985.

Members please note that we need willing cooks to produce food before the night... the more you make, the more we all eat. Costs will be repaid. Tell John Pudduck what's cooking...

# BE A LEMMING



DROP IN ON THE MCG HALF-YEARLY PARTY !

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7.30 PM

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SATURDAY EVENING  
OCTOBER 6TH 1984