

# MCG NEWS



DECEMBER 1984 No. 174

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP



MERRY CHRISTMAS  
& A HAPPY NEW YEAR

# SPELEODATE

(Saturday's date shown)	NORDRACH AND MENDIP & cottage bookings	OTHER REGIONS
Nov. 24	Barnet CG + 12 . . .	. . . . .
Dec. 1	MEMBERS' WEEKEND (Ian McKechnie)	
	Shepton Mallet CC buffet . . .	. . . . .
8	Kingston Poly SS + 13 . . .	. . . . .
15	. . . . .	AGEN ALLWEDD (Tony Knibbs) CSS
22	CHRISTMAS ON MENDIP . . .	(MAJORCA MEET IS ALL-SYSTEMS-GO !
29	NEW YEAR'S GATHERING . . .	(Adrian Duckett, Ian Parry
Jan. 5	NEW YEAR'S GATHERING continued !	. . . . .
12	. . . . .	. . . . .
19	Kingston Poly SS + 13 . . .	. . . . .
26	. . . . .	MEMBERS' MYSTERY MINING MEET Surrey (Ian McKechnie 0932.228292)
Feb. 2	LONGWOOD-AUGUST (Ian Parry)	. . . . .
9	. . . . .	. . . . .
16	Ealing College + 12 . . .	. . . . .
23	Jon Roberts + 12 . . .	TOP SINK YORKS (Mike Lovell) NPC
Mar. 2	STOKE LANE SLOCKER (Jon Roberts)	. . . . .
9	. . . . .	. . . . .
16	. . . . .	. . . . .
23	MCG AGM + DINNER . . .	. . . . .
30	. . . . .	. . . . .
Apr. 6	Easter Weekend . . .	JUNIPER GULF (Derek Walsh) NPC (long Yorks weekend 5-8 Apr)
13	. . . . .	. . . . .
20	. . . . .	. . . . .
27	. . . . .	CRAIG-Y-FFYNNON (R Wallington) SWCC

and for aficionados of the Mawson Arms, we proudly present the ...

## CHISWICK ARMCHAIR MEETS

9pm prompt in the back-room !

- Thursday 13 December: A hemisphere away - Southern Africa with Tony & Denise  
 Thursday 10 January : Grotto-gricing - McKechnie's Magic-Lantern Mysteries  
 Thursday 14 February: Geoff'n'Roy's Caving Video-Nicety part 1  
 Thursday 14 March : Greg Smith is down for something here  
 Thursday 11 April : The entire contents of Geoff Barton's caving handbag  
 Thursday 9 May : Son of Geoff'n'Roy - part 2 from the video-speleos.

FOUR MAJOR MCG caving gatherings happen this December:

\* Mendip on 1-2 December sees two birthday boys and at least one barrel. (And there's the Shepton Buffet too on Saturday evening.) Daytime caving will lead into Saturday late evening's MCG Sing-Sing, where the bars aren't on the windows but in the tunes and on the kitchen serving area. 'Sing-Sing' is a new McKechnie feature where everyone is invited to the MCG cottage to swell the chorus and render 'they words' till the rafters ring. Any instrumentalists will be very welcome to show the songsters where they're going astray. Points may be awarded for singing in tune, pints will be administered to the tone-deaf as tonic for the adam's-apples.

\* Agen Allwedd has been extended (again!) by the indefatigable Chelsea speleos, so once more Tony Knibbs is leading a contingent to Whitewalls cottage and the Mynydd Llangattock, on December 15-16. The recently-found Northern Stream Passage might be visited, while anyone with a taste for tight passages could try the 1500ft entrance crawl into newly-extended Daren Cilau (now over 2 miles long).

\* Adrian Duckett, Ian Parry, Andy Beare, Neil Hutchinson and Martin Rowe are gearing up for their MCG Majorca Meet over the Christmas period. A great time is promised, with the party self-catering at a rented villa. There is space for a sixth person at the villa, though you will need to book your own flight. Any offers, soon, to Adrian, Ian or Neil (A=01.572.2374, I=0296.87795, N=01.267.1005).

\* Finally, but not least, Christmas hols. for some will begin on Friday 21st December 1984 and may not end till Sunday 6th January. Christmas tends to be a family occasion, but some members may wish to get together for a 'Do' at Nordrach's home-from-home, and can liaise with the Hon.Editor who will be happy to act as an information exchange. Shortly after Christmas, many flee the city bricks and mortar for the Mendip pastures, and

intensive sessions of caving, digging and general fun are had by all. We have a growing number of local Mendip members too who may be pleased to say hello to the townsters. And of course, following New Year's Eve and the midnight gathering at the Hunters' crossroads, Tuesday 1st January 1985 could see an MCG Bed Meet ...

MCG COMMITTEE

- Secretary: Tony Knibbs  
85 Cavendish Ave, London W13 0JY.  
01.997.2032h, 01.546.7741x2199w.
- Treasurer: Arthur Spain  
57 Guildford Rd, Broadbridge Hth,  
Horsham, W Sussex. 0403.64068h.
- Meet Secretary: Geoff Barton  
5 Cricket View, Princes Road,  
Weybridge, Surrey. 0932.249241h.
- Tacklemaster: Roy Kempston  
13 Florence Road, College Town,  
Camberley, Surrey. 0276.34338h.
- Cottage Warden: Paul Merron  
21 Howberry Road, Thornton Heath,  
Surrey CR4 8HZ. 01.771.0666h.
- Recorder: Ian McKechnie  
30 Brittain Road, Hersham, Walton  
on Thames, KT12 4LR. 0932.228292h.
- Editor: Jonathan Roberts  
17 Kent Avenue, London W13 8BE.  
01.997.2916h, 01.278.3825w.
- Cttee Member: John Pudduck  
9 Windermere Road, London SW16.  
01.764.8454h.

CAVING ACCOMMODATION is available at the MCG, Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse on Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol BS18 6XW. Map ref. NGR ST.5147.5606. O.S. 1:50000 sheet 182. Guest groups requiring accommodation should apply in advance to John Miriam, 44 Chesterfield Road, West Ewell, Surrey KT19 9QP. 01.393.3955.

WEEKLY MEETINGS are held at the Mawson Arms, Chiswick Lane South, London W4, on Thursday evenings from 8.30pm. Close to A4/A316 Hogarth Roundabout. Nearest buses: 290 in Chiswick Lane North, and 27, 91, 237, 267, 290, E3, E4 in Chiswick High Road. Nearest tube: Turnham Green.

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

M  
C  
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S  
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P

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.

Malcolm Cotter has a range of books, and furry suits, overalls, etc.

Contact him at 07842.52643.

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

# MCG doings

... We have a growing enclave near the South Downs now, with Kate & Steve Taylor, and Pete Bulling, resident in the Brighton region. Perhaps we need to organise a visit to Beachy Head Cave, followed by showers and tea at a southern cottage-warming ceremony ...

... London member Pat Newman has moved from inaccessible Eltham to Shepherds Bush, just round the corner from Chiswick. He is at UMIST at present on a full-time course (Geoff Barton's old stamping ground) ...

... Congratulations to John Beauchamp and Dave Baxter on being awarded full membership at the November committee meeting - 'full' cottage keys are obtainable from Paul Merron ...

... Alan Mellon's proposal for a '2020 Fund', for an SRT trip in the year 2020 on the Nordrach Cottage cherry trees followed by a grand party, got a warm reception at a recent MCG committee meeting, with all in favour. There was one note of dissent, however: several members were concerned they might be in their dotage by then if they weren't already pushing up the cherry trees (so to speak). An earlier date was preferred. The considered opinion was that everyone would be as sober as a newt throughout the year 2000, so 2001 was pencilled in to provide a guaranteed 'hair of dog' restorative in the following year. Of course the cherry trees might not be very large by then, but Neil Hutchinson and his merry cohorts are already working on substitutes in the cottage grounds, it seems. The Treasurer has been asked to open a '2001 Fund' account, and Jon Roberts has donated £5 to start it going. Anyone may contribute towards the Fund - donors are reminded that £5 invested now will be worth a lot more seventeen years on! ...

... Closer to 1985, the forthcoming Christmas and New Year period could result in two continuous weeks' holiday for some fortunate members, owing to the happy juxtaposition this year of the religious and official holidays, and weekends. Derek Walsh - him in the white beard and big red Petzl furry suit - will be delighted to sell you your extended supplies of discounted Christmas drinks this year. Your 1984 Emergency Welfare Centre is at 53 Northumberland Crescent, Bedfont, Mdx, or 01.751.2063, and answers to the name of Derek or Jane. A Personalised Delivery Service may be available, subject to advance negotiations and bribery, on Thursday evenings at the Mawson Arms ...

... Anthony Alston has moved to Den Haag (pronounced Doen Haarrgh - that's The Hague to you, me and the British Post Office), where the nearest limestone is probably the White Cliffs of Cromer, or something like that. For Anthony's information, the contact address for Speleo Nederland is: Herman de Swart, Vereniging Voor Speleologische Aktiveiten, Koolstraat 56, 2312PT, Leiden ...

... the locks on the MCG cottage tackle-store and library doors have now been changed, as agreed at this year's AGM, to Union types (...one won't work, all won't work?) This means that a full member's Union key will now open the two external and the two interior doors. Probationary members and guests are to receive a modified Union key which will open the external doors. The interior doors have also been fitted with self-closers, so in the case of the tackle-store the door should always be closed and locked. Full members now have no need of the long mortice key - the one that wears holes in pockets - so could full members please hands their mortice keys to Paul Merron or another committee member - you never know, we might find another use for that key sometime! ...

... as a postscript to the last item, the blanks over the former locks were not fixed to the interior doors until the weekend after the Half Yearly Forum (when the new locks had been installed). And during that intervening week, a visiting party of members had used their mortice keys, whereas the members who arrived the following weekend had assiduously returned theirs... The consequent inability to get into the tackle-store nearly caused the best excuse for some time to avoid caving, but regrettably Jon Roberts used his initiative and grabbed a mortice key from a certain resident of Wells, Wayne Hiscox ...

... three score years and ten is alleged to be the mortal span. Certain necrophiliacs have however been in the practice of leaving caving ropes on the cottage's battery charging shelf, with potentially catastrophic effects on rope life and rope endurance under stress, after the rope has met acid or alkali. Warning notices (which as a general principle we do not like to impose on ourselves or others) have on this occasion been erected in the charging area, to ward off the evil eye ...

... ignoring this next item could be at your peril too! Five cars on Mendip were broken into while parked near several Blackdown/Shipham Lane caves, on the weekend of 1st September. Belongings were stolen. Anyone parking at Manor Farm, Lower Farm (for Longwood/Rhino), Charterhouse/GB and Tynings' Farm, is strongly advised to leave personal possessions elsewhere ...

... Lesley Robbins, on a visit to the Indian sub-continent, was fortunately in Nepal when the current Indian crisis arose. However she has to return to Delhi in December to catch an onward flight, so let's wish her safe travelling ...

... not so fortunate were Alan and Carol Dougherty, who received whiplash injuries in a road accident in September when another car did a very silly thing. Both cars were write-offs so everyone was lucky to survive without worse suffering. Our best wishes to Alan and Carol for their full recovery ...

... Arthur Spain gave advance notice at the Half Year Forum that he would be resigning as MCG Treasurer at the 1985 AGM, owing to personal commitments. The Group cannot function efficiently without a willing hand to supervise club monies, especially as the cash-flow is now over £4000 a year. Please sound out Arthur for the job-description if you think you might be able to fill the vacancy ...

... sometime, too, Jon Roberts will need a successor as Editor, as Jon tries to earn more from his spare writing time. Anyone with a friendly word-processor, or even a steam-powered John Bull kit, would get a warm welcome from the current Hon. Editor. Who knows, he might even buy you a pint! ...

... now the clocks have gone back, don't you feel that autumn chill creeping over you?? Well of course the real answer is plenty of exercise and stale air in Goatchurch Drainpipe, but for those who can't afford the luxury of a personal cave there's always the option of wrapping up warm. So contact your neighbourhood sweatshirt agent, John Pudduck, and give your goosepimples a present this side of the New Year. 01.764.8454, or 9 Windermere Road, London SW16 ...

... on the other hand, there's always the MCG DIGS, DIGS, DIGS that need some solid attention and could warm you up a treat. Where's the Friday Night Digging Club eh? A quick check list reveals the following prime sites suffering from lack of attention more often than not: Longwood Oxbows, Longwood September Rift, Blackmoor Valley Sink, Bone Hole, Netherwood, Ubley Hill Pot, and our very own Blackmoor Upper Flood Swallet, where Mike Haselden has recently been liberating the fill from its age-old resting place. Our passage-discovery record puts us about bottom of the Mendip league to date, yet no-one pretends that all except the very lucky make instant breakthroughs. Most of the miles of passage discovered by the other Mendip clubs in recent years have yielded to persistent nibbling away at the hole in question - even 20 bucketloads a session once a month is worth 240 over a year. Our reputation does not depend exclusively on finding the longest passage known to mankind, but there is more to caving than tourist-style trips. Just think, too, of the growing caving population and MCG membership - where will there be room for us to cave in years to come unless we make our contribution to Mendip's passages. So book a dig in your diaries, and help make "Mendip Underground" out-of-date ...

... big hellos to new members

Victoria Arbizu,  
15 Kelso Place, Kensington,  
London W8.  
Tel: 01.937.5936.  
(proposed by Tony Knibbs and  
Denise Samuel).

Linda Gates,  
77 Southwood Road, Cove,  
Farnborough, Hants GU14 OJH.  
Tel: 0252.542285.  
(Geoff Barton, Roy Kempston).

Karen Lewis,  
5A Helena Road, Ealing,  
London W5 2PA.  
Tel: 01.997.2694.  
(Alan Mellon, Ade Duckett).

Steve Thompson,  
4 Westbank Road, Hampton  
Hill, Middlesex TW12 1QD.  
Tel: 01.941.3710.  
(Ian McKechnie, Alan Mellon).

Gill Warren,  
253 Frimley Green Road,  
Frimley Green, Camberley,  
Surrey GU16 6ID.  
Tel: 0252.835051.  
(Roy Kempston, Geoff Barton).

changes of address are ...

Anthony Alston,  
Kazernestraat 104, 2514 CT,  
The Hague, Netherlands.  
(pity it isn't  
Kavernestraat.. )

Pat Newman,  
40 Ethelden Road, Shepherds  
Bush, London W12.  
Tel: 01.743.4499.

Lesley Robbins,  
c/o 24 St Mary's, Victoria  
Road, Otlands Drive,  
Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9QG.

Martin Rowe,  
Assistant Warden, Youth  
Hostel, Patterdale, Cumbria.  
Tel: 08532.394.

Kate & Steve Taylor,  
58 Cuckfield Road,  
Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks,  
West Sussex BN6 9SB.

Bryan & Pat Terry,  
12 Weir Lane,  
Houghton-on-the-Hill,  
Leicester, Leics.  
Tel: 0533.432533.

Clive & Gill Towner,  
3 Rennie Terrace, Redhill,  
Surrey RH1 4HL.  
Tel: Redhill.60743.

## MCG EMBARRASSING PICTURE COMPETITION

## Rules:

- 1 Anyone is eligible to enter.
- 2 You may submit as many entries as you wish.
- 3 Each entry shall be a cartoon or a photographic print, colour or black and white, any size.
- 4 The winning picture will be that which, in the opinion of the judges, causes the most good-natured embarrassment to an MCG member portrayed in the picture, and/or the most amusement to the rest of the club.
- 5 Each entry will have the name of the photographer/artist marked clearly on the back, along with an explanation of the action if required. A caption may be added if it is felt that this will improve the effect.
- 6 Unless requested otherwise, all prints will be retained by the Group for publication, display, or sticking in the MCG scrap-book.
- 7 Entries should be provided to the Recorder by hand or by post as early as possible, and no later than the afternoon of the AGM, 23rd March 1985.
- 8 The winner will receive a bottle of Mendip Wine and the runner-up a "surprise award". Judging will take place after the AGM and the winners will be announced at the Annual Dinner the same evening.
- 9 The judges' decision will be final.

## Pyrenees 1985

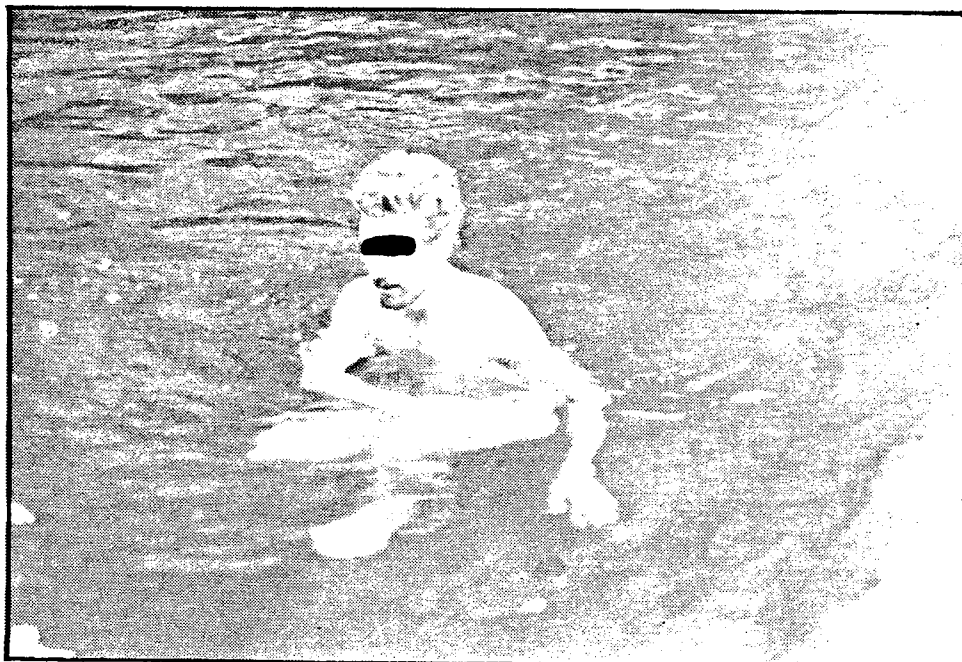
TONY KNIBBS needs to know who is interested in coming to the Pyrenees in 1985, in order to get transport organised in good time. We are hoping to hire a 12-seater Ford Transit. Pyrenees dates are tentatively from 27th July onwards, and could include a period in the Haut Pyrenees for climbing or caving, as well as the basic objective of undertaking a through trip from Trou Mile to Grotte de Pene Blaque, at Arbas. Please do tell Tony (01.997.2032) by mid-January, so that detailed planning can get under way.

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SATURDAY 16TH DECEMBER sees Adrian Duckett, Neil Hutchinson, Martin Rowe, Ian Parry and Andy Beare off to Majorca. All the very best, lads, and I'll hold the front page for the January issue!???

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A SPECIAL HELLO to Martin Rowe, believed to be in London on Thursday 13th December, and in the Mawson Arms that evening.  
H I M A R T I N !!



# 1/2 YEARLY

THE FOLK - DANCING party at Chewton Mendip was a superb occasion, with many MCG members, and welcome guests from other clubs. Especial thanks are due to committee-member-without-portfolio John Pudduck for his organisation, the Velvet Bottom band for the musical pleasures (and Val Knight's dancing instructions), and for the fortuitous arrival of a minibus to supply a twice-daily service between Nordrach and Chewton.

Even the occasionally modest were seen to distinguish themselves on the dance floor with reckless abandon - at least until Val recovered charge of the situation! The food was reckoned a great success, with thanks deserved by the many members who catered for demand, while the palate was rounded off by the fine bar service offered by the 'Mobile Hunters'. Next year's Party date is Saturday 5th October 1985 - make an early booking in your diary, and proffer suggestions to your committee on ways we can improve upon this year's merriment.

## HALF YEAR FORUM

THE COTTAGE, Group finances and the Mendip Hills Local Plan were the three major topics at the MCG Half Year Forum on October 6th. Various jobs around the cottage had been successfully dealt with during the summer, said cottage warden Paul Merron. Special thanks were due to those who had tended the window frames, filled the occasional hole, erected the fencing and put up the third shower-head. Nearly as fast as jobs were done, though, new needs were becoming evident: the cottage notice-board offered a selection of items which anyone can have a hand at in their spare time. (And an urgent reminder here, too, for a larger fridge if anyone can donate one or find a cheap second-hand variety.)

We shall install Duck-boards outside the back of the cottage to assist with hosing down muddy Ducketts and muddy gear, and a bigger basin will be provided. Preparation work on the cottage extension will begin at once, following Roger Wallington's news that we only need building-regulation approval rather than full planning permission. An 'Extension Sub-committee' will be delegated to oversee matters, with its first tasks being to define building-material requirements and plan the phasing of construction.

Arthur Spain's financial report was encouraging, with the committee's budgetting procedure working well. The agreed 1984 budget was based on breaking even - incoming cash matching outgoing expenses. Overall we were £500 up on target. Items like electricity charges were higher than expected, but this was balanced by lower expenses on items such as gas and fuel, and by slightly higher income than budgetted for cottage fees following a quiet spring and summer period. Membership subs were also above expectations, which was a healthy sign for the future.

The rest of the surplus was accounted for by not having spent funds (yet) on cottage extension or land purchase, so gaining extra bank interest. It is worth bearing in mind that Group cash-flow is now over £4000 yearly, so that a £250 difference in income estimates (only 5-6% of cash-flow) and the same again in expenditure can lead to fluctuations of £500 or more in the final year's result. It is worth noting too that the £500 just about makes up what we should be (but are not) receiving from covenants, if everyone who can filled in a covenant form.

The Mendip Hills Local Plan (MCG NEWS 173) was discussed

extensively. It was generally agreed that the Group should make a positive response to the planning authorities, while looking to the Council of Southern Caving Clubs to be the principal 'spokesman' on caving matters on Mendip. The MCG needed to safeguard its particular interests at Nordrach, Charterhouse and other digs. The Group had recently started to care for Longwood/August with a clean-up session that weekend. This care could be extended if official pressures dictated so.

The strong overall view from members at the meeting was that Mendip should remain much as it is, over the Plan period, and indeed that the planning should look to a longer term than just the year 1999. Caving groups had to acknowledge the localised effects their activities had on the area and to co-operate intelligently with the planning authorities. A meeting could be sought with the Somerset planning officers.

Other items accepted at the Half Year Forum were:

- \* more MCG sweatshirts to be acquired for sale
- \* T-shirts to be sold, with a different badge design possibly
- \* a sales cupboard would be arranged in the cottage, with committee members holding keys
- \* The SRT 'practice course' was available for use, and a rope tester was being designed. These could be used by Group members, and by others for a small fee
- \* storage of personal gear would not be permitted in the roof attic, due to the risk of loading stress on the roof joists and the expense and difficulty of modifying them
- \* modified caving lamps were available for guests - the lamps now had a Petzl-type battery holder.

## M.C.G. LADDERS

TALLY NUMBER	LENGTH (FT.)	COMMENTS (eg damage, loss, etc)
1	15	
2	20	
3	20	
4	20	
5	20	
6	20	
7	20	
8	20	
9	20	
10	25	

## TACKLE A-GO-GO

MUTTERINGS IN RECENT months, about tackle check-in and retrieval problems after meets, have caused Roy Kempston to devise a simple yet stunningly effective (we trust) tackle booking-out scheme. In place of the tackle log, we will shortly have a booking-out chit - similar in principle to the booking-out system on the cottage caving-trip board. A reproduction of an early prototype tackle chit is displayed here (the production version will allow for useful things such as borrowers' names, and will include space for ropes etc). The scheme is intended to work with the new ladder-numbering which Roy has now instituted.

The chit has the following advantages:

- \* with all ladders numbered, it is easy to decide which ladders are the right length for your planned caving trip
- \* it's easy to fill in and hook up on the board
- \* like trip bookings, you must remove the form from the hook on return from caving - giving the incentive to check the tackle back properly
- \* it provides an easy check-list for tackle requisitioning for away-meets, and for returning tackle after these meets.

## UBLEY HILL FARM RIFT

Tony Knibbs...

DURING THE LATE EVENING of Friday, 2 November, Brian Terry informed me that Mr Rees Lovell of Ubley Hill Farm had reported a hole having appeared in one of his fields. Brian had been taken to the site in darkness earlier, and he was able to give general directions.

A small group set out on Saturday afternoon to locate and explore the new hole. Verbal directions proved to be only loosely connected with reality, and it took us almost an hour to find it. The prize for discovery went to Andy Beare who found an old freezer door lying in the field, though it was not immediately realised that this covered the hole.

The hole had appeared about 300 yards north-east of the original Ubley Hill Farm (now a guest house) in an area of almost level grass in a large field sloping gently northwards. The approximate location was ST55.5195.5765 at an altitude of around 750ft.

We had been forewarned that the edge of the hole was of unsupported turf. A few minutes' work with a crowbar was enough to achieve a fairly stable lip, the diameter of the hole having been increased from 9 to 24 inches. A plank of wood was placed



to strengthen the lip and a 30ft ladder was hung over this and belayed back to a stake.

Attended by Andy on lifeline, Denise Samuel ready in caving gear in case the job needed two people, and Joan Goddard and Ian Parry as observers, I set off into the earthy depths.... all 25ft of them!

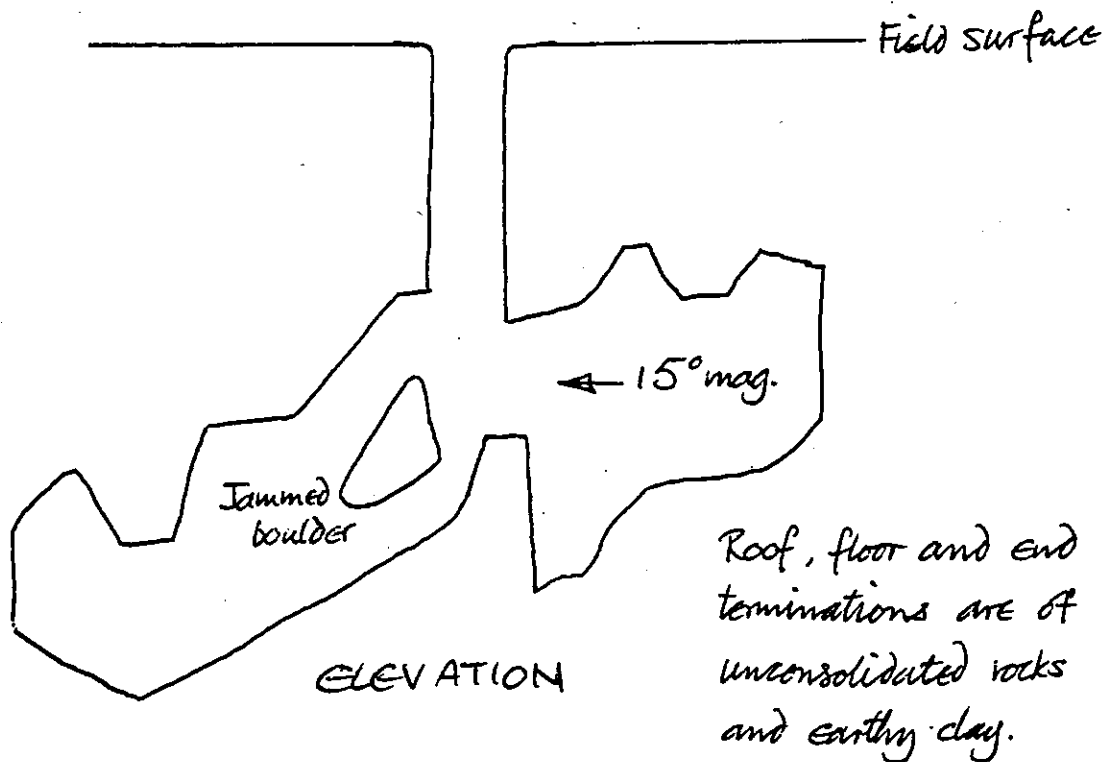
After 16ft I stepped off the ladder onto piled rocks and looked around the rift which averaged 20 inches wide. The rift extended away to either side of me. The horizontal continuation to the right (south) terminated after 15ft, roofed with boulders lacking any convincing means of support, and floored with boulders and earth which had succumbed to the force of gravity. The downslope continuation to the

north was only slightly longer, the roof and floor having the same characteristics as already seen.

I took a compass reading and estimated the principal dimensions before making my exit to find that Mr Lovell had arrived with two companions. He was relieved to hear that the rift was neither of great depth nor posed any immediate dangers of further collapse.

The 15-degree magnetic bearing of the rift corresponded to surface indications of a filled-in rift and it was concluded that the hole had been caused by slumping of this infill. Wooden pegs were positioned on the surface to show the full extent of the opening beneath the grass.

SUBSIDENCE CAVITY CAUSED BY SLUMPING OF  
ROCKS AND EARTH INFILL IN A MINED RIFT  
AT UBLEY HILL



0 10  
Scale - feet

NGR ST55.5195.5765 Alt. 750 ft.

AJK 3.11.84

NETHERWOOD  
SWALLET  
SHUT

CATASTROPHE!!! Netherwood Swallet dig has been shut by the new farmer. Following a report from Andy Beare that he could not see the entrance pipe to Netherwood Dig, Bernard Reeves and Malcolm Cotter went to look for themselves, at the first December weekend. On approach the site appeared to be normal, but arriving at the depression revealed the extent of the change. There were no pipes to be seen, because the top section at least had been extracted leaving a slumped mass in its place. The fence lay in a tangle in the hollow. The surrounding area showed evidence of heavy vehicle tracks.

This edition of MCG NEWS has been produced by the Editor in a flat-out panic. Items held over include a report of the autumn South Wales meet, Mike Haselden's visit to the Gouffre Berger, a letter from Darren Bartlett (who has been cycling around Europe), and Victoria Arbizu's notes on the 1986 International Speleological Congress at Barcelona. At least there's space to remind everyone that SUBS are due from 1st January 1985, £15 for full and probationary members and £7.50 for associates. Low-waged members are asked to consult the committee about becoming associates. Finally, Happy Caving for 1985.

**ROB**

**SPELEO**

"IF I DON'T take that ticket off the trip board, we'll have to go out and bloody rescue them"

Roy Kempston, 1st December, at the cottage.

UPPER FLOOD  
SWALLET  
PROGRESS

UPPER FLOOD SWALLET sees continuing MCG activity. The face has continued to receive one bang per month, put in by Mike Haselden. Fortunately the 'sump' at the end was large enough to take most of the spoil, so the small amount of cleaning that was done was just sufficient. With the disappearance of the sump the pile of rubble at the end could have stopped progress. However the weekend of 17/18 November saw a very good clearing session, with the complete removal of 14 tubs to the surface (and two more to near the entrance). The face was again treated to a charge. Steady clearance is still needed, to help keep the momentum. How about removing a load yourself?

