

# MCG NEWS



JANUARY 1985 No.175

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

Alan Dougherty wrote about the 1984 Whernside Manor camp in the Vercours, and his own caving adventures (including the Gouffre Berger), in MCG NEWS 172.

Mike Haselden also took part in the Whernside camp, and bottomed the 1150m-deep Gouffre Berger, solo. Mike writes here about his own trip, his lighting equipment, and his thoughts....

## BERGER SOLO

The village of Autrans lies at the foot of the French Alps, twelve kilometres west of Grenoble as the crow flies, in the National Park of Vercours. It is 1000m above sea level and was the site of the 1976 Winter Olympics - and my July 1984 caving venue.

Fifteen kilometres to the north by road and over 600m higher is the Molière where at times a magnificent view of the Alps is visible. Here, too, is the end of the road for the Berger which is one hour's walk through a craggy forest.

The expedition I joined was organised by Paul Ramsden and Dave Elliot of Whernside Manor. The £75 fee excluded food and transport. About thirty other cavers participated not just at the Berger but at other superb Grottes and Gouffres which abound in the area. We enjoyed the facilities of an excellent campsite which included a swimming pool and communal games room.

Immediately after establishing ourselves at camp a meeting was held to discuss and agree a general plan of action. The following day, Tuesday 3rd July, rigging the Berger was commenced by Dave Elliot and a small team backed up by other sherpa groups. The final rigging was completed by Paul Ramsden (Whernside) and Rob Sermon (Crewe). They entered the cave on Thursday morning, 5th July. Altogether 820m of rope, 80 bolt hangers, 20 karabiners, a few slings, and 60m of line and 1 dinghy were used. One party of four set off late that morning to make their bid for the bottom.

At 3.30pm I entered the cave intent on reaching the bottom, solo. I was

carrying food, spares and camping kit. I descended Ruiz, Holiday and Cairn pitches, then the meanders followed by Garby's, Contard, Relay and Aldo's Shaft. Next came a short meander passage, through a boulder gap and into the grand master system. The Great Gallery, where boulders are as big as houses and in places heaped like blocks of flats, has to be seen to be believed.

Lake Cadoux was only a stream - the dinghy which proved to be unnecessary was nevertheless a comforting precaution. This part of the system often fills up to form a wall to wall deep lake. The Bourgin Hall followed which I remember as a stalagmite forest. I can't recall their names but a couple of small pitches and traverses led me to the Big Rubble Heap. Here the passage is immense and steep. It was like climbing down a mountain at night: you looked up expecting to see the stars. At Camp One I deposited my heavy pack. From now on I would be carrying just personal gear, spare lighting, food and emergency items.

Having been in the sherpa teams the route so far was familiar to me but now, despite my lighter pack, I had the extra weight in my mind of unknown territory beyond Camp One. I pressed on without delay, pacing myself for an endurance trip; I had another nineteen pitches and traverses and a lot of passage to go before my goal.

Just below Camp One, the Hall of the Thirteen with its deep gour pools and massive stalagmites was a spectacle to be seen; little wonder it is so photographed and speleologically famous.

continued on page 9 ...

# SPELEODATE

(Saturday's date shown)	NORDRACH AND MENDIP & cottage bookings	OTHER REGIONS
Feb. 2	LONGWOOD-AUGUST (Ian Parry)	. . . .
9	. . . .	. . . .
16	Ealing College + 12	. . . .
23	. . . .	TOP SINK YORKS (Mike Lovell) NPC
Mar. 2	STOKE LANE SLOCKER (Jon Roberts)	. . . .
9	CSCC meeting, Priddy	. . . .
16	. . . .	. . . .
23	MCG AGM + DINNER	. . . .
30	. . . .	. . . .
Apr. 6	EASTER ON MENDIP . . . .	MEREGILL HOLE (Derek Walsh) NPC (long Yorks weekend 5-8 Apr)
13	. . . .	. . . .
20	. . . .	. . . .
27	. . . .	CRAIG-Y-FFYNNON (Roger Wallington) SWCC
May 4	GB GREAT CHAMBER (Andy Beare) (long Mendip weekend 4-6 May)	. . . .
11	. . . .	. . . .
18	British Cave Rescue Conference	. . . .
25	. . . .	LINK POT (Neil Hutchinson) NPC (long Yorks weekend 25-27 May)

THE CHISWICK ARMCHAIR MEET

9pm prompt in the back-room of the Mawson Arms !

- 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
- Thursday 13 June : any offers for this prime venue?



.. 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. S  
H Contact him at 07842.52643. H  
O O  
P P

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

February and March contain a number of events for the discerning caver...

Away from Mendip, the Northern Pennine Club hosts an MCG Yorkshire contingent on 23-24 February, with Mike Lovell (0734.663747) in charge of a visit to Top Sink, which is definitely a pothole for all tastes, entering as it does the Easegill/Lancaster complex via one easy pitch of 60ft, a squirmy bit (PiR<sup>2</sup> Passage), and an even simpler pitch of 15ft. For those who have never been before, the trip into Easegill is one of the most enjoyable in the Yorkshire Dales, while those who have, know why they're going again.

Mendip sees a visit to LA (Longwood/August) on 2-3 February, masterminded by Ian Parry and his flash slave units. There isn't much to say about LA, except that it's always a favourite, and that this is a good chance to push every known crevice to the limit in the company of others.

8pm on Wednesday evening 13th February is the time and date for a talk by Rob Palmer on diving the Blue Holes in the Bahamas, being the annual Paul Esser Memorial Lecture at the Arthur Tyndall Theatre at the University of Bristol. Admission is free, if anyone's in the locality that evening. More details on this from Oliver Lloyd on 0272.683229.

And 2-3 March is a must for all sump-bashers and those who collect superb formations (on film), as Jon Roberts leads an assault on Stoke Lane Slocker and the Stoke 2 series. Jon claims not to have lost anyone yet in Stoke Lane Sump One, and the formations on the far side are the best in Mendip outside of Fairy Cave Quarry complex. Take LOTS of spare film, you won't regret it.

The 1985 MCG AGM is on 23rd March, at 3pm at Nordrach Cottage. The Annual Dinner, and the apres-dinner entertainment, promises to be grander and even better value than last year's eventful evening. We shall be dining at The Star in Wells, and a coach will be provided. Tonk Knibby (I'm sorry I'll type that again) Tony Knibbs will soon be selling tickets; advance orders to TK, please, at £8.50 per person. The menu will be:

Mushrooms, with cream and horseradish sauce

OR

Home-made chef's soup and french bread

(is that the soup that's home-made, or the chef ?)

Goujons of plaice with tartare sauce

Roast loin of pork, with green peppercorn sauce  
and raisin and sultana seasoning

A full selection of vegetables

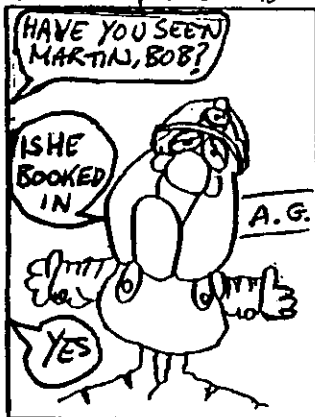
Hot apfel-strudel and cream

OR

Cheese and biscuits

Coffee & mints.

Bob Speleo B



# MCG doings

... Nominations for your 1985-6 committee are now open, with the AGM only two months distant. We have eight posts on offer:

Secretary  
Treasurer  
Tacklemaster  
Meet Secretary  
Cottage Warden  
Recorder  
Editor  
Committee Member.

There will definitely be a vacancy for Editor, while it is a long time since we had a neck-and-neck vote for the other positions. Prospective new faces will be very welcome from the ranks of full members - please get in touch with your committee if you want to help with activities. Topics to discuss, and any formal proposals, are also wanted in good time, within 21 days of the event, by Tony Knibbs ...

... Arthur Spain retired from the MCG committee at the end of 1984, after several years as Hon. Treasurer, this having followed many years as a regular auditor of the annual accounts. The Treasurer's task is less obvious than many, but is absolutely vital to the effective running of an active, expanding Group. We owe Arthur many thanks indeed for putting his spare time and efforts to the Group's benefit ...

... Thanks to the willing services of Mike Lovell, we have continuity in the Treasurer's post. Mike has been coopted initially until the AGM in March, and has been managing the Group's accounts from the start of our new financial year, which began on 1st January 1985. Mike can be reached at 4 Settrington Close, Mill Green, Reading, Berks, or on 0734.663747 ...

... Mike's first task is the collection of 1985's subscriptions. Early payment greatly helps his job, as it saves him having to breathe down errant members' necks, however pleasurable this might

be to the offending party (Mike sometimes sports a tickly moustache). So please pay up, promptly:

£15 for probationary & full members  
£7.50 for associates.

In return, Mike will issue 1985 Membership Cards, which include the full programme of 'home' and 'away' meets ...

... Without trying to make subs. payment too complicated, the committee is terribly keen that those who can fill in covenant forms, do. Our covenants' income ought to be around £500 yearly, but we generally reckon ourselves lucky to see £50. We are still working on getting 'automatic' covenanted membership from the Inland Revenue, for the 90% or so of membership who are eligible and whose tax position permits this. At the time of writing, we shall EITHER enclose in this newsletter or the next a perfectly dreadful Form designed by someone nameless in the Great Tax Inspectorate, which we implore people to fill out correctly in accordance with the accompanying instructions, OR Alan Mellon will write separately to you, again enclosing the form and instructions ...

## Bob Speleo β



... It's not often you see four 'more matured' MCG members underground at the same time, but one line-up for a visit to Charterhouse Cave on Sunday 8th April last year included: Malcolm Cotter (MCG since 1953/4), Tony Knibbs (1954), Robbie Charnock (1956) and Joan Goddard (1964). Over 110 years of caving experience between them ! ...

... Just to prove it wasn't another long tale from the Hunters, the November/December 1984 issue of DESCENT has a photograph of Swildon's Sump One when it was a duck during September 1984 ...

... High marks for high jinks over the Christmas and New Year holidays, for two MCG members. Steve Taylor is reported to have passed out at his departmental Christmas Dinner, while Paul Merron cracked two ribs demonstrating cottage games. Goodness knows what you could break if you did such games for real ...

... The SRT tree route at Nordrach Cottage is complete. Instructions will be provided on the cottage notice board, on how to initiate access to tree no.1 ...

... WELCOME to new members

Jo Davies,  
1 Lyndhurst Avenue, Blackwater,  
Camberley, Surrey.  
Tel: 0252.874454.

Andrew Paterson,  
15 Belgrave Avenue, Watford,  
Hertfordshire.  
Tel: 0923.47017.

Bill Platt,  
17 Woodbine Close, Harlow,  
Essex.  
Tel: 0279.412683.

CONGRATULATIONS to Alan Dougherty,  
accepted as a full member at the  
January 1985 committee meeting.

CHANGES of address are:

Pete Dymont,  
Room 6, 79 Eaton Rise,  
Ealing, London W5.

Chris Whittle,  
17 Apple Cottages, Old Dean,  
Bovingdon, Hertfordshire.  
Tel: 0442.832994 ...

## AWAY MATCH

... LAST CALL for the Pyrénées? So far Tony Knibbs has 10 places filled on the 1985 French summer trip to Arbas and the Haut Pyrénées. Fun, and caving, are the expedition's main objectives. If you find this combination irresistible, TK is at the other end of 01.997.2032, and is waiting to hear from you now ...

## & HOME MATCH

... CALLING International Rescue ?? Then Thunderbird 5 is the one for 1985, come 18-19 May, when Mendip sees this year's British Cave Rescue conference including a karst of, well, tens if not hundreds, including extensive international participation. The main Mendip clubs will offer to host their guests free that weekend. Regardless of what happens in Geneva, we can expect a distinct improvement in UK and international relations that weekend, with excellent opportunities to cement friendships over a litre or three of Badger Superieure, and possibly even to organise a reciprocal visit to XYZ caving club in 198? . But, if you are on Mendip in mid-May, don't actually go and precipitate a real rescue call-out - imagine the problems of co-ordinating a multi-lingual recovery through Swildons Sump One ...

## Bob Speleo β



# RAGS

ON THE HALF-YEARLY weekend, two MCG parties visited Longwood/August with their litter-baskets, and came out with several bags-full of litter. The 6th October party (James Davies, Tony Knibbs, Denise Samuel, Richard Stansfield) collected 1.5 cu.ft of rubbish, while the second party, on 7th October (Andy Beare, John Beauchamp, Roy Kempston, Steve Thompson, Yvonne Ward), recovered an amazing assortment of detritus.

The two days' work revealed: buttons, shredded boiler-suits, neoprene, steel toecaps, sweet papers, and flash-bulbs. Less likely items were a spent .22 cartridge and a tin of Andrew's Liver Salts.

The GB parking space also received an autumn-clean on 7th October, following an MCG visit to Charterhouse Cave by Victoria Arbizu, Joan Goddard, Mike Lovell and Ian McKechnie. Our heroes removed 1 frayed boiler-suit, a large sheet of torn polythene, 47 sweet papers, 14 assorted drinks cans, a worn-out pair of steel-toecap boots, a Clarks sole, 1.74 metres of string, one milk bottle and lots, lots more.

Even now there's more awaiting removal, too. The mess really is unnecessary, when you consider that plastic dustbin-sacks are easily stowed in cars, to receive detritus when you return from underground.

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## GLORIOUS MUD

A RARE VISIT TO Compton Martin Ochre Mine was made on Sunday 4.11.1984, by Victoria Arbizu, Linda Gates, Roy Kempston and Gill Warren. Linda Gates writes:

"Some difficulty was experienced in finding the entrance, as it was not in the most obvious position below the main cliff face. However, after some exploration and a slippery climb the entrance was found. A smallish mine, with every wooden support rotten through, but it was still an interesting trip. There were many different and unusual forms of fungi growing on the wood beams. The animal life was varied, too, including loads of spiders ... Most of all it was the red mud which made the lasting impression."

# & BONE

SUNDAY, 21.10.1984 saw Bone Hole (West Rift Dig) visited by Neil Hutchinson and Jon Roberts. They made a brisk trip down the rift accompanied by three stemples and various bits of assorted ironmongery. The objective was to allow further shoring of boulders above the dig site. The bang of six months' ago had certainly done its job as the two large boulders blocking the way down were now lots of pebbles, mostly!

A team led by John Miriam made a further foray into Bone Hole on the last day of 1984, and dug downwards and forwards successfully for 2-3 ft. Mud was omnipresent, but the combined efforts of JM, Victoria Arbizu, Andy Beare, Ian Parry and Martin Rowe made short work of this. Progress was finally slowed by the unsurprising discovery of more boulders.

1985 was brought in with style with a further digging trip on 1st January, this time with AB, IP, MR and Jon Roberts. Three large boulders were unearthed and shifted around, but they require a more forcible means of disposal than crowbars alone. Beneath, there is a clean-washed narrow rift (and we know how deceptive those can be!) containing more boulders and a goodly draught. Prospects are very encouraging, and deserve constant loving attention from the MCG.

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## UBLEY HILL FARM RIFT

(see MCG NEWS 174, pp 8-9)

Surface team support on 3.11.84 while Tony Knibbs was underground



## MCG COMMITTEE

Secretary: Tony Knibbs  
85 Cavendish Ave, London W13 0JY.  
01.997.2032h, 01.546.7741 x2199w.

Treasurer: Mike Lovell  
4 Settrington Close, Mill Green,  
Reading, Berkshire. 0734.663747h.

Meet Secretary: Geoff Barton  
5 Cricket View, Princes Road,  
Weybridge, Surrey. 0932.24924lh.

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, 01.278.3825/3888w.

Cttee Member: John Pudduck  
9 Windermere Road, London SW16.  
01.764.8454h.

MORE SWEATSHIRTS,  
AND A T-SHIRT COMPETITION !!

Popular demand has caused us to order 100 more sweatshirts. Half will be burgundy-coloured (maroon), while the other half will be chambray (that's blue), with a cream print.

T-shirts, too, will be ordered - in good time for summery weather. But first we need to decide on a new design... so here's a chance for all to participate.

Any suggestions, please, for a T-shirt design, preferably illustrated so that we can all 'get the picture'.

For example, here are just three ideas - members better at drawing may be able to transmogrify them into award-winning sketches:

- \* Bob Speleo posing
- \* a cave(ing) scene
- \* an apt slogan.

All ideas will be put forward to compete at the AGM, possibly with a prize (eg: the winning entry gets the designer a free T-shirt incorporating their own handiwork).

Ian McKechnie and friend



CASTING COUCH  
OR  
KARSTING ASPERSIONS ??

The MCG Embarrassing Picture competition (MCG NEWS 174) is very much alive. McRecorder McKechnie is keenly awaiting the next crop of photos you would like to blackmail others with, which will of course arrive at 30 Brittain Road, Hersham, Walton on Thames, KT12 4LR, in good time for Judgement Day (the AGM, in case you were wondering). If the photos happen to implicate Mr McK, you could of course send those to OTHER committee members, to ensure a comprehensive selection on 23rd March.

2001 = 5800

Yes folks, the year 2001 is just 5800 shopping days away in mid-February, including Sunday trading. And then the MCG 2001 Fund will come into its own, with our S P E C T A C U L A R tree-climbing ceremony and Party. So if the pound in your pocket is wearing a hole in the lining, donate it at once to our treasurer, who will be delighted to invest it for 21st century posterity.

# CHOCOTTERLATE

by Ian McKechnie

In  
Otter Hole  
21.7.84



Leaders: John Adams and Steve Flucker.  
Participants: Geoff Barton, Dave Baxter, Louise Curley, Adrian Duckett, Neil Hutchinson, Roy Kempston, Tony Knibbs, Gordon Lister, Mike Lovell, Ian McKechnie, Denise Samuel.

We set off soon after 07.00 from Nordrach Cottage, and entered the cave at 09.00 after an 08.20 gathering at the local car park. The entrance is at the foot of a long walk through the woods, and is just above the high tide level of the River Wye, being subject to flooding in the entrance series. Trips must therefore be organised on a low-tide to low-tide timetable. (The entrance could be permanently flooded if any Severn Barrage scheme were authorised.)

The entrance itself is a classic limestone outcrop with the hole below it, and soon leads into a muddy bedding-plane crawl. The texture of the mud, on this occasion, was rather like that of melted chocolate, though the taste was not up to cordon-rounville standard. The mud oozed, everywhere, and soon ammo-boxes and bodies alike were thickly caked, and therefore heavy.

After a decorated, but mud-caked, chamber, a slippery slope leads down to the stream. This is the first opportunity to start washing off the mud - but it doesn't come off with a rush, owing to its omnivorous and glue-like affinity for wet-suits, boiler-suits, ammo-boxes, boots, faces, hands, gloves, and every other possible crevice a caver offers.

The tidal sump is at this point. It was low tide, so presented no problem. There follows a climb back up above the stream for a while (still muddy), then back down to the stream, up again (less muddy), and eventually to the boulder pile which requires a ladder at the far end. We had omitted to bring a ladder, owing to early-morning double-vision, but fortunately one of our gallant leaders had one. This pitch leads back to the stream, again, which ends in a sump after about 100ft.

A climb to the right just after the pitch gains a high-level series and some tortuous crawls and wriggles through boulder ruckles. Eventually the passage opens up, and straws and other decorations become frequent.

The cave keeps on improving, the passage becoming ever larger and better-decorated: pure-white straws a-plenty, attractively stained flows in red ochres, and some yellow and black pretties too. Then into the Hall of the Thirty (17 more than the Gouffre ?), a long sloping chamber with bee-hive bosses, many ochre-stained and some pure-white.

Traversing up the left of the chamber, a hole at the far end leads through more decorated passage to Bivouac Chamber. Here we took water, and some went on to yet further delights while others just photographed, and photographed, and... It made the coating of mud all worthwhile, even the new layer of chocolate that we all collected on the return trip. ■



# BERGER SOLO

... continued  
from page 1

During my downward trip I came across the first bottoming team who had aborted for various good reasons.

At 1.30am after about ten hours of caving, I stood astride a deep stream passage, peering at the pseudo sump of the Berger. That brief moment was the climax to my trip. 1150m down; there was no-one there to share the occasion, or camera to record the event, just the Omnipotent and I. I wish I'd had more time to linger around and savour the moment, but making good my return to Camp One became a greater priority as already I could feel the strain of the Berger and it would be uphill all the way.

I had traversed a long way over deep water and had been up to my thighs in places, but my thermal suit soon drained off and I suffered no loss of temperature, other than when I was in the water. Eventually I was clear of deep water and, as I looked ahead to study the way on, I became aware of a point of light way above in the distance.

It was like a single star breaking through a cloud gap on a pitch black night. I had to stop and look before realising the meaning of this apparition. The light was from either Rob or Paul who I had met at the top of the Hurricane Pitch (Puits de L'Ouragan), as they made their way out from the final rigging. They had decided to come up just ahead of me on the return to Camp One. The immenseness of Berger passages manifested themselves in this and many other ways.

Soon I was below Hurricane where the waters plunge 170ft into a large pool where the wind and spray reminisce the name of the pitch. Now it was time for prusiking. I checked my equipment, attached myself to the rope and started to climb. For about the next four hours my upward journey, constantly on and off ropes, climbing, traversing, prusiking, scrambling and occasionally struggling, continued close on the heels of Rob and Paul. Finally at Camp One it was time to relax and chat over a hot meal. The others then started back out but I peeled off all my caving gear and crawled into my pit, blew out the candle and lay there in complete solitude, halfway down the Berger, the silence and the darkness absolute.

I became aware of a rumbling sound and in my semi-consciousness I did not know where I was. I opened my eyes and saw a cluster of lights approaching, then my senses returned from sleep; it was a party of cavers who had entered at dawn to make their bid for the bottom. At Camp One they stopped for a cooked breakfast and photographed me in my pit where I continued my interrupted sleep.

Later another bottoming party came by breaking my sleep once more, but then I felt it was time to start moving again. Still in my sleeping bag, I cooked breakfast consisting of hot muesli, cocoa and biscuits. My cold wet thermal suit was unpleasant at first but it soon warmed up. However the wetsuit socks were icy cold. I resolved this problem by pouring the remains of the hot brew water in them. Then with warm feet I soon felt ready for caving again.

Carrying my heavy pack again on my back (this is so unlike Mendip caving), I set off from camp to be immediately confronted by the massive boulder slope which seemed to go on for ever, sapping my strength with each step. However, as all cavers know, these unreal feelings dwell only in the mind. Leaving my sack at Petzl Junction I explored its gallery for some distance until it became smaller and less interesting. The absence of constant traffic has left this part of the cave in a more natural state, devoid of carbide and wires. I made my way out of the cave looking at other minor junctions and taking in the character of the system.

I stood on dirty snow just below the final climb and looked up into daylight for the first time in twenty-seven hours and two familiar faces greeted me: my wife Sue and son Oliver. A perfect moment to my finest trip.

Next day I had a rest.

By the end of that week storms were forecast so it was decided to de-rig before possible flooding (which did not, however, occur although the change in the weather indicated that storms had passed not too far off). Bottoming teams only had a two-day gap in which to make their attempt.

Every single day of the two weeks of  
continued on page 10 ...

# BERGER SOLO

... continued from page 9

our stay in the area saw teams going off on various trips. I had just the one day off following my Berger trip; the caving opportunities were too good to miss and Sue, bless her, encouraged me to do as much as I could. (Alan Dougherty's article in MCG NEWS 172 details some of these visits.)

The two weeks ended too quickly but we made new friends and had a super time. We can strongly recommend the Vercours, which also offers many surface attractions, for a summer caving holiday.

The amount of carbide and other waste to be found in the Gouffre Berger and other French caves is a sad reflection on foreign and British cavers. I did all my caving, including the twenty-seven hour trip, by electric lighting. My main light consists of four 7 amp/hour NiCad cells sealed in an old NiFe cell case, leaving a recess at the top of the cell to house a connection block and fuse and spares. I use an ordinary Oldham headlamp which accepts screw and pre-focus bulbs. Using an Ever Ready 4.75v 0.5 amp krypton bulb I get over seventeen hours good lighting of constant use. On long trips I can economise to get twenty hours. The whole unit

weighs 4.5 lbs, and is rechargeable overnight from a car battery and adaptor, or ordinary charger.

My spare light comprises three MN1300 alkaline cells in an adapted Ever Ready lighting pack wired to a headlamp using 0.5 amp bulbs from which I get twenty hours constant lighting, but these cells are not rechargeable. This unit weighs under 2 lbs. I have also a small emergency light attached to the rim of my helmet. I think this proves that it is quite feasible to undertake quite prolonged trips without carbide.

My solo trip may give rise to some criticism but I defend my action by claiming a right to cave alone as long as I take all necessary precautions. Those who occasionally cave solo will know just what a special experience it is and those who don't should respect that. In some ways soloing is safer because one has a greatly increased awareness.

Finally a note of praise for Paul and Dave of Whernside who did an excellent job of organising the Berger and many other trips. ■

## WHAT THE BEST DRESSED CAVERS WEAR:

Dik Houseago in Goatchurch morning dress >

A\*\*y B\*\*r\* in birthday suit

