

# MCG NEWS

November 1985 no 181

Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group

EXCLUSIVE

## LOGBOOK

REVEALS...

MCG members are famed for their capacity for enjoyment. Whooping it up at barn dances, meeting in pubs all over the country - Chiswick, Mendip, Wales, Sussex, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Yorkshire.... and laying on vast quantities of beer at the cottage at the merest hint of a birthday.... But what about caving?

At last John Beauchamp has saved the reputation of the club (or ruined it, depending on your viewpoint) by sending me hard evidence that some members have been involved in...  
CAVING ACTIVITIES.

Forgive spelling errors due to editor's translation difficulties.

### Extracts from the MCG Cottage Log

Swildon's Hole, Monday 26 August 1985. Tony Knibbs, Mark Knibbs, Sarah Knibbs, John Harvey.

Taking our sanity in our hands, we chanced a visit to the most popular cave in the area (world?). Despite today being a bank holiday, the cave was almost empty. We met eight other cavers during our four-hour visit.

The stream was still in good form following recent rain and the trip was enjoyable, reaching sump 1 via Barnes' Loop and Tratman's Temple. TK.

Lancaster-County, Yorkshire meet, Saturday 24th August. Neil Hutchinson, Ade Duckett, Steve Taylor, Clive Towner, Geoff Barton, Roy K, John B,

Liz, Richard.

Good trip in what must have been the only dry cave in the Dales that weekend. NH got lost at poetic justice (again!)

Harnell Morss trip, 25 August. Neil H, Ade D. Aborted trip - stream about 15 ft wide going down Poseidon.

Rawten Pot trip, 26 August. Neil H, Ade D. Aborted trip. Entrance pitch unpassable due to excess of cavers. Diverted to Jingling Pot to save face. Neil H.

Yorkshire - Short Drop Cave. 25 Aug. Geoff B, Roy K, John B, Liz, Richard. Our enthusiastic efforts to do a Bar Pot to Gaping Gill trip were thwarted by finding suitably gloomy looking cavers returning off the hillside reporting, 'It's too wet.' and, 'They stopped the winch.' And we would have ended up in the pub if our MCG caving spirit had not been so strong.

A good 2½ hour trip along some 4000 ft of fine scalloped streamway, reminiscent of Swildons 2. The first pitch was exhilarating, but the second looked too demanding under the conditions - ie, we didn't take enough tackle! John.

Bar Pot to Gaping Gill. 26 August. Geoff B, Roy K, Steve Taylor, Richard (Bar Pot). Joy & Paul Merron, Pete B, Clive T, Amanda Taylor, John B, Liz (Gaping Gill).

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# Speleodate

**STOP PRESS: UPPER FLOOD**  
 Malcolm reports there's  
 a way on. Formations  
 spotted. On with the dig!

Saturday's  
 date shown

Cottage bookings  
 & Mendip meets

Other regions -  
 MCG away meets

Nov 16	NPC (12)	.....
Nov 23	Members' weekend	Hillocks, Derbyshire
Nov 30	Mercury Ventures (12)	.....
Dec 7	Lamb Lear (Paul Merron)	.....
Dec 14	Members' weekend	.....
Dec 21	Members' weekend	.....
Dec 28	Members' weekend	.....
	Hunter's Hole (Alan Mellon)	.....
Jan 4	.....	.....
Jan 11	Members' weekend	.....
Jan 18	Members' weekend	.....
Jan 25	Wolverhampton Caving Club (12)	.....
Feb 1	.....	.....
Feb 8	South Wales Caving Club (12)	.....
Feb 15	Steve Conquest (12)	.....
Feb 22	Members' weekend	.....

**ARMCHAIR MEETS**

at the Mawson Arms, Chiswick Lane South, London W4.

In the back room at 9pm (or whenever the committee finish)

Nov 14	<u>Roy Kempston's Video Nicies</u> by courtesy of Geoff Barton.
Dec 12	<u>Malcolm Cotter on his Malayan caving experiences.</u>
Jan 16	<u>Caving in Cephalonia</u> (that's a Greek island near the Gulf of Corinth - not a new type of dry suit) from <u>John Miriam.</u>
Feb 13	<u>All our Yestercaves</u> - a look back over the last three million years of caving - from <u>Malcolm Cotter.</u>
March 20	To be announced. Any offers for future armchair meets will be gratefully received - Steve Taylor. 0273 834035.



**Secretary:** Tony Knibbs, 85 Cavendish Ave, London W13 0JY. 01-997 2032 (home) 01-546 7741 x 2199 (work).  
**Treasurer:** Mike Lovell, 4 Settrington Close, Loddon Park, Earley, Reading, Berkshire. 0734 663747 (home).  
**Meet Secretary:** Geoff Barton, The Lodge, The Heath, Weybridge, Surrey. 0932 49241 (home)  
**Tacklemaster:** Roy Kempston, 13 Florence Road, College Town, Camberley, Surrey. 0276 34338 (home).  
**Cottage Warden:** Paul Merron, 21 Howberry Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 3HZ. 01-771 0666 (home).  
**Recorder:** Ian McKechnie, 21 Conyers Close, Hersham, Walton on Thames KT12 4NG. 0932 228292 (home).  
**Ordinary Committee Member:** Steve Taylor, 58 Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex BN6 9SB. Hurstpierpoint (0273) 834035 (home).  
**Editor:** Kate Taylor, 58 Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex BN6 9SB. Hurst (0273) 834035 (home).

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The Bar Pot mob had their wrists slapped for coming up the winch without a dog-tag, but Geoff's charm got them out of trouble again. The rest of us did it legally!

Sanwell Bone and Stal caves. Wednesday August 28. John B, Adrian Thomas, Darren Bartlett, Helen W.

A trip that was arranged to avoid the closure of the caves on 1.9.85 for bat breeding season (?) but the house owners didn't seem too worried about subsequent trips. Their only worries were about disturbing the bones or pinching the candles in the show cave (of the Bone cave). Crawled/walked everywhere except G. Lake Chamber. A very interesting cave to visit. John.

Bone Hole. Saturday 31 August. Neil H, Pat and David W.

All spoil from previous trips stacked in side chamber and about 15 bucket loads and two large boulders removed from face. PS. Face still quite wet. NH

Bone Hole. Sunday 1 Sept. Neil, John, Geoff. A number of large boulders removed. Dig is now bending back under the very large boulder into an alcove on the right and straight down. Still very wet and muddy. Two large boulders need breaking into smaller lumps - chemicals required. NH.

Upper Flood. Sunday 1 September. Alan Dougherty, Victoria Arbizu and Yvonne Ward. Weather - showers. Digging, 18 skips removed. Social visit from Alan Mellon et al. Stream low. 5 hours. APD.

Wigmore Swallet/Wigmore Mine Shaft.

Sunday 1 Sept. An inspection of this sporadically dug swallet revealed a 25 ft entrance pitch with a low connection with a loose roof! A descent through a dug out rift led to a long dog-leg crawl to a too tight (for me!) wet, flat-out double squeeze. I was told there was approx 80ft of passage to the dig face beyond. Total cave length approx 300ft. The shafts inspected were approx 25-30ft deep and were supposedly vent shafts for an old lead mine. Dirty, smelly and very loose material at the bottom. John B.

I thought it was in code at first...KT

*chimney, joining in  
new shaft. All this  
is an old swallet  
& long lead mud  
st. joint papers,  
do all joined together  
a shaft to old  
which covers entry  
80' & so. O.K.*

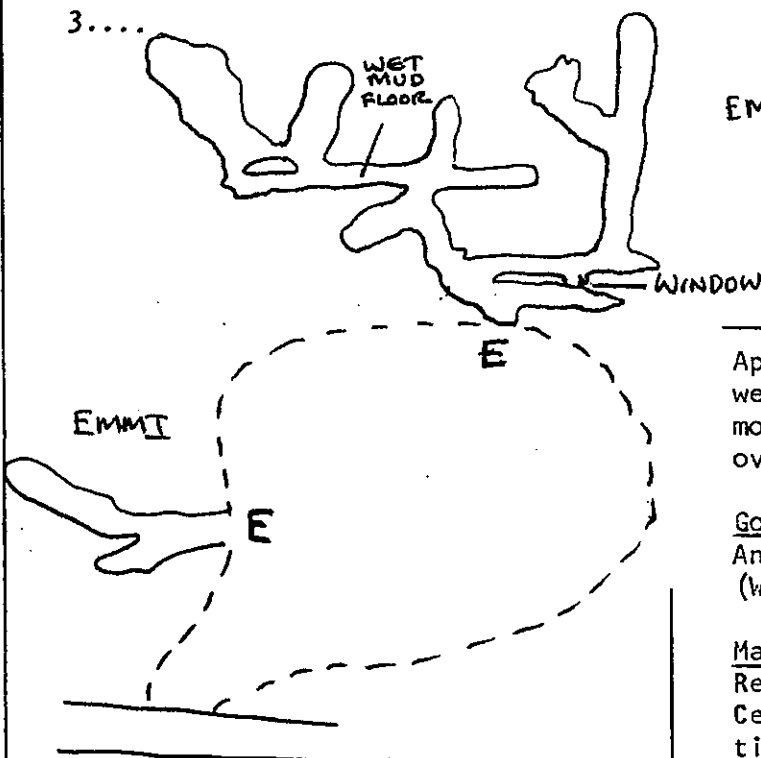
Nordrach Mine. Saturday 7 Sept. C Richards, Alan Dougherty.

Visit to this mine in the groove on the other side of the road from Pine Tree Pot, to take photos and notes. Entrance shaft, rectangular, in worked out vein. Entrance series in same vein. Runs NW/SE. Sockets in each wall near North end for a pulley bar above shaft (blocked after 6ft. The next shaft through solid rock, threatened by a large precariously perched boulder in a chimney in the roof, goes down 30 ft. AV 25ft. The miners drove Northwestwards (in the same vein) finding a 4ft increase in the width of the vein. Approx 20ft, going NW through a small chamber with a chimney, going on for 12ft to a chamber of new rocks. All this lower part of the mine is an old seraled (?) (Editor despairs of handwriting!) infilled with mud & pebbles. Tackle required: 80ft ladder all joined together, tether at top of entrance shaft to old agricultural machinery which covers entrance, \* (short tether), lifelines 80ft and 90ft. Chris Richards.

Eastwood Manor Mines I & II. Tuesday 10 Sept. GRs: ST 57625513. ST 57565514. John B, Alan D, Liz P.

A more determined look and armed with some digging tools to create a safer entrance crawl were rewarded with some 200ft of passage of mainly stooping height.

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SKETCH  
ONLY  
NOT TO SCALE

EMMI II

EMMI is entered by a 5ft wide slot in the left bank of the 'quarry' and is one single passage basically totalling about 50ft. Evidence of human activity is confirmed by odds'n'ends near the entrance.

EMMI I is more of a mystery. Entered by a low entrance crawl in the south bank, passes numerous spiders' nests in the roof and a badger's lair on the left dropping into passage at height of 5ft and going off in a southerly and easterly direction. The wall and roof material is very friable and should be treated with extreme caution.

One bat (ah!) was seen in the further reaches together with animal remains.

Alan has taken samples to analyse and plans a further scientific visit (& survey?). John B.

Upper Flood. Tues 17 September.  
Alan Dougherty and Pete Johnson (guest) Upper Flood digging and photography. Left after 3½ hours to make way for John B et al. Water very low. APD.

Upper Flood. Tuesday 24 September.  
JB & 3 guests (CSS).  
Entrance now stinks of WD40! Padlock refused to respond to the actions of the key. Visitors acknowledged the concern over conservation.

Approx 6-7 skips removed. I think we need some extra tools! Have moved Andy's mud sculpture to oversea the main spoil heap. John B.

Goatchurch. Tuesday 24 September.  
Andy S & 2 Kevin Moss & David.  
(Wot, no comment? Editor)

Maesbury. Wednesday 25 September.  
Reciprocation to visit the Cerberus dig. Cavers may like it tight and wet - but this is bloody sharp as well! Experienced my first underground 'bang'. Looks as if it will go somewhere - but don't they all? They ought to have called it Thrupe II. John B.

Swildon's. Saturday 28 September.  
S Taylor, B Ducklin, Joy Merron, Paul Merron, Peter Merron, Penny Merron. The cave was quite crowded so it was a long time before we got to Trat's Temple via wetway and Barn's Loop. Had Mars Bars etc. PMerron, P Merron and Steve Taylor took round trip while Joy Merron, P Merron, Bill Ducklin went back out. Round trip was very tiring, only had to bail one duck but the air seemed to lack oxygen. All became quite weak at various points. It was a delight to see sump 1 (back on familiar ground). P Merron (confused!)

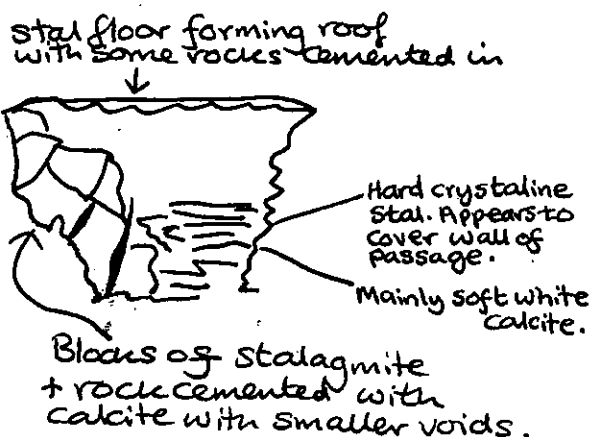
Same as above. Why is it that each time I have gone caving the person below me on a difficult downward climb insists on helpfully breaking my arm!! 'Just bring your left foot lower now' they say, with a tug at my ankle, and no amount of painful screams deter them from their kind gesture!! And my arm jams in all the more securely! P Merron (more confused!)

Little Neath River Cave. Saturday 28 Sept. Domestic circumstances...

(ie no car!) delayed a Friday evening trip to SWCC. Arranged to meet AJK et al but overslept. Went down to find them, searched upstream to the Bridge Cave sump, the canal, the froth of the sump 2 pool, the canal by-pass and finally met them just before Sand Chamber - coming in! Perhaps we'll cave together one day Tony! John B.

Rod's Pot. Tuesday Oct 1. JB, Liz, Steve Passey, Darren B, Andy S, JB. A visit to Rod's Pot to practise some abseiling and lifelining! Stopped at the Plume & Feathers for a drink and found that the pub closed at 10.30pm. I'm now on my way to the Wellsway Inn for a drink, which I know I'll get, because I live at the Inn. Andy S. PS 3 course Sunday lunch £4.50, bar snacks available till 11pm, 7 days a week.

Upper Flood. Fri/Sat 6-7 October. Yvonne Ward, Joe, Malcolm. Dug for three hours, removing 10 skips from the end. Some large cemented pieces of old stalagmite floor chiselled free.



Bone Hole. 5 October. John & Neil. Went down Bone Hole, bashed some boulders, got muddy and came out again. Not much progress made. Neil H.

Longwood. 5 October 1985. Alan Dougherty and Andy Scully. To Fossil Passage. Fixed bolt to back-up ladder belay piton. Head of passage calcified and would require blasting, which may destroy nearby helectites. Have left ladder in position so that members may

have a look. Investigated BEC (?) dig in Fault Chamber grotto. 3 hours. In via August, out via Longwood. APD.

Ubley Hill Pot. 6 October. Ian McK and Yvonne W.

The entrance shaft (concrete pipes) is now almost submerged in slipped mud! If it gets any worse, we may need to put in another section.

The cave is as muddy as ever. At the foot of the second pitch were a lot of loose bones - some could be human size and looked very old.

At the end of the cave, there was a strong solvent-like smell, similar to wetsuit adhesive. Has someone been dumping chemicals near which have percolated through into the cave?

Fortunately, it was raining hard on the walk back, which washed some of the mud off. Ian.

Fairy Cave. 6 October. Jo Davies, Linda Gates, Joan Goddard, Arthur Spain, Pat Walsh, David Walsh.

At the boulder ruckle at the entrance it was quite tricky to find the way on. It is important to remember to climb up and to the right. A very squeazy crawly cave with some lovely formations. The level of the water in the duck was lower than it had been previously and it was possible to get through without washing your ears. Further flat out crawls and squeezes eventually led to the 'fairy grotto' and the general consensus was that the discomfort was worth it. We sat in the grotto for refreshments and Linda peeled off her wetsuit to reveal a chocolate sodden T-shirt. Would anyone like a lick of my bounty bar? she said! The route out seemed a lot quicker and more straightforward.

A very enjoyable trip. We explored the quarry and found two more eaves. One of which I am sure was Balch but the entrance was not gated as it previously was. A fixed ladder was in an open hole in the ground. It really should have been covered although there were no bodies at the bottom. Maybe Cerberus are digging there. Jo Davies.

Upper Flood, 6 October. M Cotter, Denise and JP Burch.

As we entered the cave a blue sky gave the old feeling 'Oh, why am I going underground with weather like this?' Once the light of day was lost around the first corner, blue skies were forgotten and a passage led us on. The water level was very low and Malcolm remarked that he had not seen it so low all year. Digging began, and apart from removing two rather large, stubborn boulders it all went fairly easily. The spoil mainly consisted of mud mixed with calcite. Our main problem was that the shovel should have been a spade. The length of handle made it hard, almost impossible, to use. Filling the skip was easier just using our hands. After about 1½ hours and 15 skip loads I think we made about 3ft of progress into the tunnel. On the way out, Malcolm and I stayed behind while Denise left the cave. We spent about another hour taking photographs. Our attempts on the way down had been ruined because the flash had become damp and refused to work. However, our second attempt was successful, and I look forward to seeing the prints. Thanks Malcolm, JP.

Longwood/August 12 October. Roger Morriss, Bob Jenkins, Clive P, Red Rose Caving & Pothole Club.

Low water fine day, shame to go underground. Clive remembered very little of the cave and so too much time was taken up by route finding - well, being careful of the unknown! Went to main chamber and back to Drain. Enjoyable and next time we can be more sure of the way.

GB & 9 Barrows, 13 October. Dave Baxter & Co, Newbury & Dist CG, JR, DB etc to GB. Another party down 9 Barrows while JR escorted two BEC parties down UFS. All suitably impressed, & agreed need for conservation. Tony Jarratt reckons the sump at the end of UFS is only about 15-20ft long, but who's going to be the first to try?!

Sidcot Swallet, 12 October.

Attended an MRO practice to see what we are letting ourselves in for early next year. The assistance of approx 12 rescuers recovered the patient from the end of the cave to the entrance in approx 3½ hours. Q: Have we yet got enough willing local members for such an activity? John B.

NEXT ISSUE: Alan D's Logbook analysis



THEY'VE MOVED....

Oops, I muddled Victoria and Andy's new addresses up last time. Sorry! Forget what I said in the last news-letter, here are the new addresses:

Victoria Arbizu, 8 Perrymead Street, London SW6. 01-731 4354.

Andy Beare, 27 Watmore Lane, Winnersh, Berkshire. 0734 790764.

Geoff Barton, The Lodge, The Heath, Weybridge, Surrey.

Paddy Newman, 61 Mulgrave Road, Ealing, London W5.

Ian McKechnie, 21 Conyers Close, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 4NG. 0932 228292.

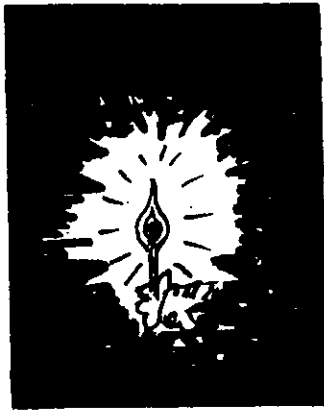
Lesley Robbins, c/o 106 Limes Avenue, Aylesbury, Bucks. 0296 20003.

Also, since February, Yvonne Ward's phone number has been mis-coded. Her number is: 0252 826783

NEW PROBATIONARY MEMBER: Alan Rarity, 2 The Cedars, 134A Maple Road, Sunbiton, Surrey. 01-390 5933.

# SPELEO

SPOTLIGHT



ON SAFETY

## SAFETY

A regular column by the MCG's new rescue and training representative, Alan Dougherty.

Now that the colder weather is upon us, it's a good time to think about a couple of easily carried items which could be real life-savers.

1. Take a balaclava made of thermal fabric. Remember, huge amounts of heat are lost through the head. In addition to use in emergency situations underground, such hats are a great comfort in windy shafts.

2. A thin-gauge polythene survival bag sealed in a small packet.

Both items will fit inside most helmets.



Must be some of Alan's new safety gear...

## CUT PRICE Caving (and other) Gear

By Tony Knibbs

Ever heard of Culverhouse, 96 The Parade, Watford, Herts?

No, I hadn't either until their contract and mail order price list landed on the doormat. Apart from caving equipment, they cater for walking, climbing, canoeing, backpacking, camping and survival gear.

The Culverhouse 48-page price list offers a good selection from almost all the brand leaders - well-known suppliers in the caving gear section are Troll, Petzl, Blue Water, Premier, Speleo Technics, Jumar. Price reductions are quite considerable judging by the brief selection of gear shown compared with current Caving Supplies' prices, VAT inc:

Troll PVC oversuit, £26.91 (£31.90 from Caving Supplies).

Wetsuit, 4mm two-piece, £46.81 (£57.75 from CS).

Premier carbide caplamp, £8.34 (£9.35 from CS).

Carbide, 1 kg, £2.05 (£2.35, CS).

Petzl Troll chest ascender, £13.25 (£14.95, CS).

Ladder, 25ft, 10in spacing, 3mm wire, £26.44 (£30.65, CS).

Bluewater 2 rope, per metre, £1 (£1.33, CS).

Viking 10mm rope, per metre, £0.72 (£0.81, CS)

Ammo box, 12inx6inx3in, £2.30 (£2.85 from Caving Supplies).

Culverhouse claim to probably hold '...the largest stock of outdoor pursuits equipment you are likely to see under one roof.' Their contract prices are cheaper than their retail prices, and are available to bona fide organisations such as MCG. All orders can be collected (saving postage) from Watford, giving at least 24 hours notice of order.

Their shop is in Watford Town Centre and is open Monday to Saturday, 9am-5.30pm. I intend to pay them a visit soon; maybe they'll have a Santa's Grotto for the Christmas season! Yes, of course you can borrow the price list, anytime.

# SOUTH WALES CAVES

## MCG GETS PERMIT

Tony Knibbs reports

By arrangement with South Wales Caving Club and the local Nature Conservancy Council, the Group has been granted an annual permit for visits to OFDII and III via Top Entrance and Cwmdwr Quarry Cave. The permit also allows access to Pwll Paut Mawr and Tunnel Cave/Cathedral Cave via the Tunnel Cave Top Entrance.

The permit is permanently lodged in the Duty Officer's cupboard at SWCC's Penwyllt HQ where a key may be obtained for OFD Top Entrance and Cwmdwr Quarry Cave. Tunnel Cave Top entrance will eventually be locked but Paut Mawr requires no key.

Unless you are known by the Duty Officer, he or she may ask for some means of personal and club identification, so make sure you take your MCG Membership Card.

Because our annual permit cannot easily be examined in advance of the visit, the access rules which appear on the reverse of the form are set out below. Visitors enter the Nature Reserves and caves entirely at their own risk and subject to the following conditions of access:

1. Unless SWCC HQ is closed (when other arrangements must be made) a keyticket must be completed with the name of each person entering the cave. The destination board must be used. Parties are required to leave the cave by 5pm on Sundays.
2. This permit is for entry only. Camping, digging and the use of explosives, dyes and traces and other

research projects require special permission.

3. The gates are to be kept locked at all times.
4. Marker tapes must not be crossed or moved under any circumstances.
5. No litter whatsoever is to be left either in or outside the cave.
6. All lighting must be electric. Carbide must not be taken into the cave.
7. Installations, apparatus and equipment must not be damaged.
8. The leader is responsible for the conduct, safety and equipment of his party, which shall not exceed 7 persons including himself.
9. This permit also allows access to the land surface within the nature reserve. This land is subject to a full agricultural tenancy and visitors must respect the farming activities taking place.
10. Failure to observe these conditions may result in any future application being refused.

**IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY CONTACT SWCC HQ OR DIAL 999 AND ASK FOR CAVE RESCUE.**

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu II Streamway: NB

- a. Cavers are advised to wear wetsuits in this streamway.
- b. It is recommended that novices should not be taken into the OFD II Streamway.

## BOOKS CAVE TRAVEL & MORE....

Yes, Ian's been buying things again! Here's his round-up of new library books:

The Greek Caves by Anna Petrochellou.

'A lavishly illustrated guide to the show-caves of Greece, by the President

of the Hellenic Speleological Society. Descriptions (in English) are clear, and the colour photographs good. The maps give an idea of the main caving areas - everywhere!'

The Concise Caves of Devon by Oldham and Smart. 'This little book describes all the main caves in Devon, a total



of 270. New edition, republished in April 1985.'

Charterhouse Cave reprinted from UBSS Proceedings. 'A detailed scientific study of Charterhouse cave, its flora, fauna and geology. Includes a fold-out survey and photographs.'

Photographer sous Terre, Francois-Marie et Yann Callot, Paris 1984.

A beautifully produced and comprehensive treatise on underground photography worth looking at for the photographs alone (78 in colour, 123 in b/w). Each photo has a full technical description. Chapters cover equipment, materials, technique, composition, all you need to know. Pity it's in French!

London under London, Richard Trench and Ellis Hillman, London 1985.

An entertaining dabble into the history of tunnels under London. Covers sewers, piped streams, underground railways, defence, the London Hydraulic Power Company, and more. Pleasant bedtime reading.

Dictionaries (French, German, Spanish, etc). We have in the library an assortment of dictionaries to assist your translation from French, German, Spanish, etc. If you need assistance with translation from any language, please contact the hon Recorder, who is not a polyglot, but may be able to suggest someone who is!

Peru 84 Imperial College Caving Club.

A report of exploration in the Ninabamba region of Peru, during which 5 km of passage were explored and surveyed in a major river cave system.

Westminster Speleo Group Newsletter, 44 (April 1985). Includes an article on Rejuvenating defunct Oldham cells. WSG use Chelsea Fire Tower for SRT practice on Thursday nights, courtesy of the GLC. Anyone interested in setting up a similar arrangement for the MCG?

NSS News. Vol 43, no4, April 1985.

Marble Mountain, N California; Nutritional considerations during rescue; plus all the usual stuff.

Descent, no 65, August 1985.

New access requirements for Lamb Leer, Banwell Bene and Stal caves and

Brown's Foily; China caves 1985; Basic caving techniques part I (Elliott); the ascent of Nettlebed (New Zealand); Nare River; Cave photography part I (Howes); and all the usual news and letter features.

Cambrian Caving Council Newsletter

June 1985. OFD 11; request that cavers do not take short-cut on route to OFD11 (top entrance) as this is causing excessive erosion. Promise of CCC Journal no 12 soon!

Mendip - a New Study, ed Robin Atthill, David & Charles, 1976. Chapters include 'Mendip Today', 'The Physical Environment of Mendip', 'Early Mendip', 'Transport and Communications', 'Industry', 'Recreation', contains 279 pages, 49 photos plus maps and diagrams. A book to dip into, rather than to sit down and read.

Hohlen in Deutschland, ed Von Stephan Kemp, Bildatlas Spezial no 4.

A general guide to caves and caving in Germany. Profusely illustrated in colour. Page 92 onwards describes show caves in all areas of Germany, and provides a map of caving areas. Page 113 gives a list of further reading and addresses for caving info. And if you're not feeling too good... in Kluterhohle, North Germany, patients with respiratory disorders are given, under medical supervision, 'speleotherapy' ! Ian McKechnie

## BOB'S

### RIGHT TO REPLY

It was nice to see members from afar venturing down midweek - it's usually so lonely down here. Apologies are made for no note being left at the cottage - but who goes there midweek at the moment? It was also good to see a full party of seven - or was it one party of four and one party of three?

With bated breath the log entry was awaited. But who would have thought that it was to appear in the newsletter first?

By a Speleo Victim.

# Earwig ...

on the MCG  
Half Annual  
Forum,  
5/10/85,  
at Nordrach  
Cottage.



Present: Tony Knibbs, Roy Kempston, Geoff Barton, Steve Taylor, Kate Taylor, Mike Lovell, Ian McKechnie, Paul Merron, Pat Walsh, Don Vosper, Arthur Spain, Denise Samuel, Derek Walsh, Phil Eliot, Bryan Pittman, Bryan Terry, Carol Nunn, Bill Ducklin, JP Burch, Linda Gates, Yvonne Ward, Jo Davies, Alan Dougherty, Adrian Thomas, John Beauchamp, Neil Hutchinson, John Miriam, Andrew Scully, Ron Saunders, Eric Dowley, Roger Wallington, Alan Mellon, Louise Curley, Adrian Duckett.

Tony Knibbs chaired the forum.

1. As Whernside is in trouble and Bryan Terry has moved to the Midlands Alan Dougherty has agreed to be the club's training and rescue rep.

2. We now have 115 members. 14 left in July, but 17 have joined since AGM. Next year April 1 is final deadline for subs.

3. Cottage Warden, Tacklemaster and Editor will resign from committee next AGM. Any volunteers for the jobs?

4. 19 probationary members are currently eligible for full status.

5. Mendip Hills Local Plan - we've told Southern Caving Council our feelings. Plan suggested greater control of caves by groups. Cavers say its controlled enough already. Southern Council suggests cutting down on large groups of novices, the army, youth groups.

6. Newsletter. Kate appealed for copy. Alan D offered to write up logbook material. Bryan P offered to get a cheap quote from local printer. Meeting said very nice things about content & necessity for newsletter.

7. Tackle - Roy says it's OK but SRT rope needs watching. He stressed that every user of every rope should examine it before taking it caving. Long discussion of SRT & lifeline ropes. Buying rope - Roy buys new lifeline

rope when it looks bad. Old stuff can be used in digs. Old SRT rope only fit to throw away. General feeling - individuals must buy their own SRT rope, unless there's a club expedition when club may pay half and rope reverts to club after trip. Several people stressed that SRT isn't odd or bizarre. General opinion - club should buy one SRT rope for training. Also, Roy should buy more tackle sacks to protect all ropes. Alan stressed that lifeline rope is just as vital as SRT rope to your safety.

8. Money - Mike says club funds are OK. Banker's order idea for subs thrown out because we'd need a bond. NB covenants are important to us, hence April 1 deadline for subs.

9. Meets - Geoff appealed for ideas for 1986 meets.

10. Armchair meets - Steve appealed for ideas & offers. Malcolm will do Malaya, John M will do Keffalonia...

11. Cottage - Paul is planning work to start in spring on new extension.

Roy suggested shower fee for mid-week cavers not staying overnight. General feeling: midweek use is a good thing, and donation box is there for casual use of cottage resources.

A note will go on the box explaining philosophy. Cottage is damp after wet summer. Please air it when you're there; prop shower door open when leaving cottage. Drains and gutters need regular inspection. Lounge needs decorating. Land purchase - size of plot agreed; contracts not yet signed.

New access to field for farmer needs Planning Permission - Roger will apply for MCG, in respect of farmer's land. Ownership of grass verge unclear, so farmer will sell land he owns 'and any land between road and his land he has title to'. We have to erect 2-strand barbed wire fence & can use existing sleeper posts, moved over. We must place bins of hardcore & scalpings from road and 10ft into field for farmer's new access. He will first plough gateway to bins deep. We can use black slag if we like.

12. Jo asked Roy if we cater for guests adequately on lamps & helmets. Roy says we have 7 helmets. Lamps on sale in cottage shop. Malcolm, Phil & committee can open the shop. Malcolm suggested we need local person too. John Beauchamp nominated.

13. Neil asked for personal lockers.

Bryan Terry says this was a disaster in old cottage. Extension will have space for some wet gear.

14. Malcolm is still worried about Upper Flood. More damage in last month. No idea who did it, but we must be careful. Malcolm suggested even tougher guidelines to limit access further. General feeling: full members should have easy access. Stick to new rules and see how it goes. After all, Field Centre parties aren't under our control.

15. Otter Hole trip - Mike complained he didn't know in advance if he'd been chosen to go. (As it turned out the cave was flooded anyway.) Geoff explained booking system.

16. Tony announced AGM is on March 22 and dinner is booked at the Star. (It's also just after Tony's 50th birthday).

And so the meeting closed. Steve and Kate rushed off to Chewton Mendip Village Hall to help prepare the hall for the barn dance... and all the hard work had been done! Thanks to everyone who missed out on the meeting in order to prepare food - and thanks to everyone who helped in any way with the dance, especially the wonderful Velvet Bottom Band and incredible guest caller! Thanks to Val for booking the hall. Hope BEC dinner was good. The MCG barn dance was GREAT! ■

# The Bob Speleo Column

OH THE FARMER....in one barn dance we shy retiring females had to pounce on the farmer and rip off his shirt. Feeling a bit left out, no doubt, Bryan Terry anticipated his turn & had his trousers down in a flash!

THE MCG YORKSHIRE MEET in August caught NPC by surprise. One bedroom closed for redecoration, 4 spare bunks & 14 MCG! The library floor was bliss....zzzzzzz.

WHERNSIDE seems to be in confusion. Having said they're honouring all published courses until next year, now they're saying they may be cancelled. Check before turning up.

ANY OLD TACKLE? Don't throw old gear away - give it to Roy for the tackle store! Thanks.

### Bob Speleo B

