

MCG NEWS

February 1986 No 133

Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group

AGM Agenda '86

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Nordrach Cottage on Saturday 22 March at 3 pm.

Chairman - Jonathan Roberts

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 23 March 1985.
3. Officers' Reports as circulated with MCG News No 133. Comments and questions are invited to:



Secretary
Treasurer
Cottage Warden
Editor
Recorder/Librarian
Meet Secretary
Tacklemaster
Ordinary Committee Member

Tony Knibbs
Mike Lovell
Paul Merron
Kate Taylor
Ian McKechnie
Geoff Barton
Roy Kempston
Steve Taylor



4. Amendments to the Constitution and Rules (Revised April 1984).
 - a) Proposal to delete clause (a) from Part 1, Section 10. Finance, which reads: 'The signatories may require the authority of a majority vote of the committee before signing cheques, etc, for sums in excess of £10.'Signatories here refers to the two committee members (one of whom is the Treasurer) who are appointed under clause (c) of Section 10 Finance.
 - b) Proposal to amend clause (f) of Section 10. Finance to read as follows: 'A member may not hold more than £100 of group funds in the form of cash for more than twenty-eight days.'This amendment substitutes £100 for £50 and extends fourteen days to twenty-eight.
- 5 Election of officers for the term 1986-1987. Nominations will be accepted for the following committee posts:

Secretary
Treasurer
*Cottage Warden
*Editor

Recorder/Librarian
Meet Secretary
*Tacklemaster
*Ordinary Committee Member

NS Committee members currently carrying out the functions marked with an asterisk * are unable to offer themselves for re-election.

▶ Continued on page 3 ▶

Speleodate

Mar 8	Members' weekend Tynings Barrow (John Beauchamp)	-
March 15	Wolverhampton (12)	
Mar 22	Members' weekend AGM & Dinner	
Apr 5	Queen Mary's	
Apr 12	Members' weekend Assault course (Sat) Box Mines (Liz Price) (Sun)	
Apr 26	-	Birks Fell, Yorkshire (Roger Wallington)
May 3	Members' weekend Swildons (Andy Beare)	-
May 10	Wolverhampton (12)	
May 24	-	Bakers Pit, Devon (Arthur Spain)
June 7	Members' weekend Geology (Malcolm Cotter)	-
June 28	-	Pant Haur, Wales (Steve Taylor)
July 12	Members' weekend St Cuthberts (John Miriam)	-
July 26	-	Lancaster Hole, Yorkshire (Ian Parry)
Aug 9	Members' weekend Redstock Mine (Yvonne Ward)	-
Aug 23	-	Tunnel Cave, Wales (any offers?)
Sep 13-27	-	Malaga, Spain (Adrian Duckett)
Oct 11	Members' weekend Half Yearly	-
Oct 25	-	Lost John's, Yorkshire (Mike Lovell)
Nov 3	Members' weekend Cheddar Gorge (Jon Roberts)	-
Nov 22	-	Dan Yr Ogof, Wales (Tony Knibbs)
Dec 13	Members' weekend Mangle Hole (Dave Baxter)	-



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 Marron, 21 Howbarry Road, Thornton Heath,
Surrey CR4 3HZ. 01-771 0366 (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).

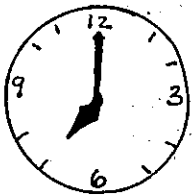
Editor: Kate Taylor, 58 Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint,
West Sussex BN6 9SB. Hurst (0273) 834035 (home).

◀ AGM Agenda continued

6. Election of Auditors for the term 1986-1987. Two auditors are required to deal with the Group's general funds and two are needed to deal with the Group's Shop Account.
7. Any other business.
8. Date and venue of the next Annual General Meeting. ■

REINDER A coach has been arranged to provide transport to the Annual Dinner at the Star Hotel, Wells. It will depart from Nordrach Cottage at 7 pm and will return, leaving the Star at approximately 11.45 pm. The return fare is £1 per person.

Most people have already bought dinner tickets at £3.50 a head from Tony, but in case you haven't taken the plunge yet, here's the menu to tempt you!



○	Mackerel with gooseberries <u>or</u> soup	○
○	Roast sirloin	○
○	Pavlova <u>or</u> Cheese and biscuits	○



▶ Challenge ! ◀

Dear MCG,

Regarding your challenge to Cerberus on the Assault Course on April 12, we will be happy to accept, and in return challenge you to provide a barbecue at Nordrach on the Saturday evening.

We hope this meets with your approval and look forward to seeing you on the 12th.

Yours speleologically,

Liz Price

(op Cerberus Speleological Society)

Editor's Note: the barbecue had better be an indoor booze-up, the committee feels, as a heat wave is unlikely... any volunteers to help with some food?

The assault course sounds great fun - John Beauchamp says there's a marine rope bridge, a rocking bridge, a Terzan (Heseltine?) swing, a rabbit run, and probably a death slide. You'll get muddy and totally soaked with any luck so it's just the thing for the MCG!

More details will appear on the cottage notice board shortly, but

the assault course is in Bath and the challenge takes place on Sat April 12. Please come and help to beat the Cerberus! Ring John to let him know if you're interested: 0751 (Blagdon) 62929

They've moved:

Karen Lewis, 25 Mount Street, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7LW.

Grant Shephard, 142 Mill Lane, London NW6 1TG. 01-435 8926.

Phil Elliot, 17 Pleasant Terrace, St Just, Cornwall. St Uust 737640.

Greg Smith, 3 Haistead Close, Barrowford, Lancashire BB9 6HH. 0757 609922.

Congratulations:

to Alan Dougherty and his wife on the birth of their daughter Hannah on December 15 1985.

to Roy and Wendy Kempston on the birth of their daughter Ellen Clare on November 12 1985. ■

ANNUAL REPORTS 1985-6

Honorary Secretary

It is amusing to see that my last report to AGM recognised the need for 'a really good discovery' to bring out the potential which we have within the Group. The extension to the Upper Flood dig - exciting though it was - just failed to unlock for us the bigger discovery of the Velvet Bottom system. Next time, perhaps...

We still maintain a healthy level of membership - 120 today, as compared to 125 this time last year. A surprising fact is that 30 members seem content to remain as Probationary Members; some have 'enjoyed' this status for several years. If you have been a Probationary Member for over six months, why aren't you seeking Full Membership?

Caving activity seems to continue unabated and this is evidenced by the interest in overseas trips - Majorca at Christmas, Malaga in September this year. You'd think that home fixtures would be a sell-out, wouldn't you?

In a general sense, the Group is poised to improve its position in 1986. For several years, funds have been available for an extension to Nordrach Cottage and the purchase of more land; both of these aims should soon be achieved. In other areas of administration and finance, we are on a steady course - the balance sheet tells a satisfactory story.

Caving politics on both regional and national levels retains its usual ponderous progress. Nothing more has been heard of the Avon and Somerset County Councils' Strategy Plan for Mendip; Cave Conservation Year has provided caving with red and blue stickers; Whernside Manor's training facility has gone forever, leaving a vacuum which only determination and enterprise will fill; talk of amalgamating BCRA with NCA continues. Cynicism aside, we are usually represented at CSCC meetings, which is something that about 60 per cent of the Council's paid-up membership doesn't do.

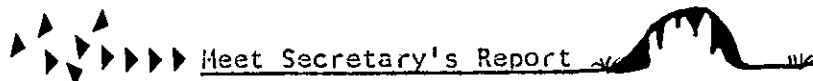
The training issue, together with allegations of overcrowding, still provide food for discussion on Mendip. They are often fused into an uneasy relationship and applied to the emotive subject of local school and youth group parties using or abusing Mendip caves. Two statistics stand out from a recent discussion paper - 38 per cent of state schools in Avon are involved in caving activities, and only about a third of these have a teacher/leader who is a caving club member. I'm not sure whether to be impressed by these figures or not, but it is obvious that occupancy of caves is not the prerogative of club cavers and that we should seek accommodation rather than confrontation with the veritable horde of unaffiliated cavers.

With such weighty matters hovering in the background, it is a welcome alternative to reflect on the possibility of being able to purchase a genuine MCG T-shirt later this year. Bob Speleo strikes again!

I had persuaded myself that I should resign at this coming AGM (hooray!), but several other committee members expressed a similar desire and I decided to seek re-election for one more year (boo!) to maintain more continuity as the committee personnel changes. Committee meetings have been well attended throughout the past year and we must thank the members for their efforts on the group's behalf. Fond farewells are extended to those who are unable to continue their involvement: Kate Taylor, Paul Merron, Roy Kempston and Steve Taylor.

I wonder if the label 'Thatcherite' will still apply to the committee if the PM resigns (renewed cheers)?

Tony Knibbs.


 Meet Secretary's Report

You will see from your membership cards that there is once again a splendid choice of meets arranged. If you feel there are additions that are needed or a change of emphasis required, then please speak to me before or at the AGM.

.....

Note that telephone numbers have been added this year so there is no excuse for not knowing what is happening. Also many additional trips are carried out and you can participate by phoning me beforehand or joining us at the Mawson Arms on Thursdays.

Eagerly awaiting your requests,

Geoff Barton.

£££

Treasurer's Report

£££

Overall the Group's finances have remained in a healthy state in 1985. Membership was at a similar level to 1984, but the increase in the annual subscription from £10 to £15 brought in nearly £500 in extra income. Bank and Post Office interest increased, the majority of the Post Office interest being derived from money set aside for land purchase and the cottage extension, both of which still have to come to fruition.

Once again our thanks go to the MCC caving shop for their handsome donation.

We received £47 from the Inland Revenue in respect of covenants for the year 1982/3. Alan Mellon is processing the covenants for the years 83/84, 84/85, and 85/86 and with any luck we should receive refunds for these in the current year.

There was an increase in the use of the cottage during the year, probably as a result of the Upper Flood breakthrough. The cottage continued to pay its way and it contributed over £600 to Group funds, after allowing for gas and rate payments deferred to 1986.

A small profit was made on the Annual Dinner, but this was counteracted by a loss on the Half-yearly Dance. Sweatshirts continued to sell and a further stock purchase of 100 shirts was made during the year.

The Journal was published during the year and was the major item of expenditure against group funds.

The increase in membership fees has been proved more than necessary. Even after the increase, annual subscriptions alone (£1530) were not sufficient to cover the general running costs of the Group (£1690). The major items of expenditure were the newsletter (300), tackle (£200) and books (£155).

If the land purchase and the cottage extension are completed this year the interest earned by our Bank and Post Office Accounts will halve. Although this reduction may be offset by covenant refunds, it will still be necessary to review the Group's financial situation at next year's AGM with a view to deciding our priorities - decrease expenditure or increase subscriptions?

Mike Lovell.

Tacklemaster's Report

A detailed inventory of the Group's gear will be available at a later date, so that I can hand over 'custody' to the new tacklemaster in an orderly fashion; (for those who did not know already, I shall not be available for re-election at the 1986 AGM!)

During the year we have added some new equipment and also replaced old or lost tackle as appropriate. The group now has an altimeter which was jointly funded by the Christmas 1985 Majorca team, and is now available for general use, and in fact played a large part in the success of the expedition. Extra tackle bags and guest helmets/lamps have also been purchased.

The rope debate rumbles on, both in the life-line and 3RM areas, as well it should. The safety of every cover is paramount, so we must get the techniques right. To this end, a year's trial is being set up to assess the suitability of various ropes for life-lining use. A specimen of four different ropes will be available for use and members will be encouraged to try them out and supply constructive comments, which it is hoped will lead to a recommended rope for future use. The rope types are: 'Viking' hawser laid (as we currently use), 'Aquaguard' (a new type of membrane protected kernmantle rope)

continued...

'Cousin' (conventional climbing rope), and SRT rope.

In parallel with the trial we should also assess our life-lining techniques, which can change if we get away from heavier laid rope (the weakest link is most likely to be the life-liner, when we life-line with the rope around our backs).

Finally, please support the trial, and make the new tacklemaster's job easier by keeping him informed and leaving the tackle store tidy! Roy Kempston.

□□ Recorder's Report □□

The principal activity during 1985 has been to maintain the library. New additions have included several general European country guide books (eg Greece, Germany), and we have a fast-growing collection of articles on Spain, courtesy of Victoria.

We exchange newsletters with about 30 other clubs, and this means a considerable amount of new material each month. The library shelves are becoming overcrowded and the plans for next year include some new shelving. Also under way is the fitting of a display cabinet to the library wall, principally for mineral specimens, of which we have a fair selection already.

Newspaper cuttings, photographs and slides have all been added to our collections, and the HCG video library (VHS) is available on loan from Roy Kempston.

If there are any particular books you would like the library to purchase (eg a guide to a caving area you're going to visit this year?) let me know and I'll see what I can do. Ian McKechnie.

Bob Speleo β



▲ Cottage Warden's Report ▲

It has been a good year for guest bookings at the cottage, in the period from AGM 85 to AGM 86 there have been 546 bed/nights booked for guests. Unfortunately not all those bookings were taken up. This is a pity in two respects - firstly a potential revenue from guest bookings of £955.50 has turned out to be somewhat less in reality; secondly, I have had to turn away small groups of guests that could have been accommodated. Our thanks to Adrian Duckett who had the greatest number of bookings at 5½ bed/nights.

As reported in the newsletter, we had a leak in the attic which damaged the ceiling in the foreman's lounge. This has now been repaired and claimed for on the cottage insurance. The cause of the overflow has also been rectified.

Unfortunately there has not been any response to my request for people to help build the cottage extension and that is why there has been no progress. All the plans are made and the only thing stopping us is manpower. I hope my successor has more luck in getting things started.

As I will not be standing for re-election, may I take the opportunity of thanking you all for your help and support in the past two years. Paul Merron.

Committee Member's Report

As committee member without portfolio my responsibilities (other than being a nuisance at meetings) have been concerned more specifically with organising the half-yearly Barn Dance, sale of club sweatshirts and purchase of the new club T-shirts, as well as organising armchair meets.

The barn dance was run on the established formula, seemed well-received, but made a small financial loss. I would suggest that a change of formula for the 1986 event might generate a better attendance and therefore improve the financial aspects.

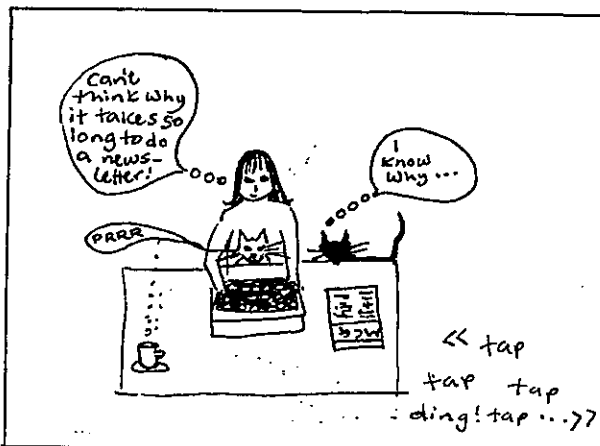
Sweatshirt sales over the year have amounted to just under fifty, and I think most members are now properly dressed.

Hopefully the new club T-shirts will be as popular as the sweatshirts were when they were first available. I have tried to provide enough choice of colours and sizes for most tastes without taking on too much stock.

Armchair meets have been provided each month during the autumn and winter and attendance has been encouraging - especially at the Majorca '85 slide show. Perhaps the sale of ice creams should be considered as a fund-raising scheme?

Many thanks on behalf of the attendees to those of you who have provided the 'entertainment'.

Unfortunately, due to the combined effects of extra responsibilities at work and considerable distance to travel to the Mawson Arms, I shall not be standing for re-election in 1986. However, I would heartily recommend others to become involved with the running of the club - particularly the vociferous, active members. It's your club so stand up (for election) and be counted! Steve Taylor.



Editor's Report

This is my sixth newsletter since being co-opted as editor in mid-April last year. I must say I've had a good time doing it. First there's the thrill of being the only woman to walk through the door marked 'Gents' at the Mawson Arms every committee meeting. Then there's the excitement of interesting packages in the post full of club news, trip reports, gossip and the inimitable Bob Speleo cartoons. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the newsletter, especially my regulars and Helen Miriam who can type and move house both at once!

If I haven't published your article yet, don't worry - I'm probably saving it for the next Journal, which should be coming out later this year.

Alas I'm unable to stand as editor next year due to a definite lack of 'free' time in my freelance career... plus exhaustion after each committee meeting, not because Geoff's such a chatterbox, but because it's a long way home from London to Brighton after a few pints!

Printing costs are high, so the editor has a big budget to handle, making this a responsible committee post (so the next editor needs to be power-mad, like me!). I have spent £112 average per issue on printing 155 newsletters inc postage and the odd bit of Tippex! Issue sizes have been between 10 and 13 pages per edition, and production costs have varied accordingly.

Good luck to the next editor... whoever she or he may be!

Kate Taylor.

AGM 1985

Minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting of the Mendip Caving Group, held at Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, at 3 pm on Saturday 23 March 1985.

Attendance: 44 members (32 full, 7 probationary, 5 associates)

- 1 Apologies for absence: Peter Spain, Adrian Duckett.
- 2 The minutes of the 1984 AGM were agreed, and there were no matters arising.
- 3 The honorary officers' reports were mostly published in the newsletter. Greg Smith suggested that all reports should be read at the meeting. It was generally agreed that this was not a good idea.

3.1 Matters arising from officers' reports: Neil Hutchinson suggested that SRT ropes should be cut over-length to allow for shrinkage. Others agreed, they will discuss this further with the tacklemaster. Why not write length on the shrink-sleeves?

4 Election of officers: The following were re-elected unopposed:
 Secretary - Tony Knibbs; Treasurer - Mike Lovell; Recorder - Ian McKechnie;
 Tacklemaster - Roy Kempston; Club Secretary - Geoff Barton.

There were two proposals for Ordinary Committee Member: Denise Samuel and Steve Taylor. The result of a secret ballot was: Steve Taylor 15; Denise Samuel 11. Steve Taylor was elected to the committee.

Jon Roberts was unable to stand again for re-election as editor, and as there were no further nominations (or volunteers) the post was kept open. There was a vote of thanks for the works of the retiring editor.

Bryan Terry and Peter Spain were accepted as auditors. Alan Mellon and Geoff Barton were accepted as shop auditors.

5. Any Other Business:

5.1 Two barrals of ale were provided. Thanks to the retiring committee for one; Tony Knibbs and Geoff Barton (birthdays) for the other.

5.2 Pat Walsh suggested that a Women's room be provided and kept as such. Jo Davies and Yvonne Ward said they didn't mind where they slept in the cottage. Joan Goddard said she'd prefer to get away from snorers and 'getters up in the night'. There was no demand for a family room, following a request for a show of hands. Phil Ingold said that all MCG wives he knows agree with the status quo. Greg Smith pointed out that the back room was originally intended as a women's room. Roger Wallington disagreed with this. Pat said he wanted to establish a principle, not a rule. Robbie Charnock said he did not like sleeping next to women other than his wife. Ian McKechnie proposed that a notice 'Ladies Room' be fixed to the door of the small room, thus establishing a principle but not a rule. Geoff Barton seconded. No vote was taken.

Jon Roberts said that use of the cottage by members had gone down considerably and he didn't see why there should be a problem. He recommended intelligent use of rooms. Carol Nunn said that there is no need for a women's room, as inevitably some women will have to sleep in other rooms if the cottage is full. If the cottage is not full, there is no problem.

5.3 John Miriam asked what the cut-off point should be for accepting cottage

bookings. There is obviously a problem if members book at the cottage and a large group has already been booked in by the Cottage Warden, but the booking hasn't reached the cottage book.

Bryan Terry said that some weekends the cottage is filled with guest clubs. Phil Ingold had been refused access to a bed recently because they were all taken by a visiting party. Bryan Terry suggested that the book be the definitive document, and no booking is valid until it's in the book. Malcolm Cotter agreed saying that a visiting club's booking shouldn't be confirmed until it's in the book. Paul Merron agreed. John Miriam said problems had arisen because members had brought down large parties of guests when guest clubs were already booked in. He stressed that members can normally bring only one guest each; if they want more, they should check with himself or the cottage warden. Pat Walsh (tongue in cheek) said it should be stressed to guests that they are here as privileged guests and should enter with due humility!

5.4 Bryan Terry pointed out that he had had no entries for the crossword.

5.5 Tony Knibbs asked for a more orderly meeting, with comments addressed through the chair.

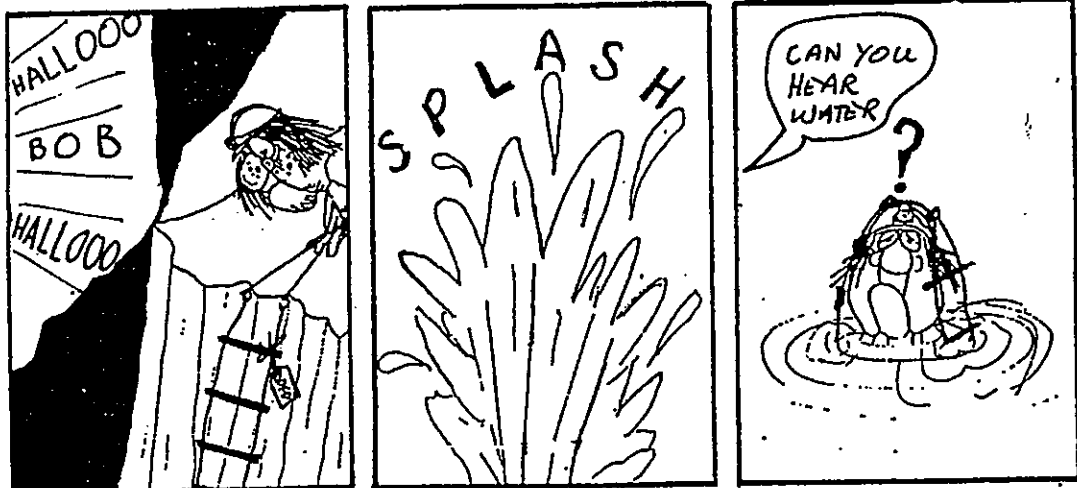
5.6 Tony Knibbs presented T-shirt designs. They weren't too good so further entries were requested. Closing date: April 30. If there are enough entries a ballot will be held through the newsletter.

5.7 Pat Walsh asked about the cottage extension. Paul Merron said plans were with the quantity surveyor. Date to be set when the material is available. Lots of hands went up following an appeal for volunteers to help build the extension. Paul asked people to give him their names.

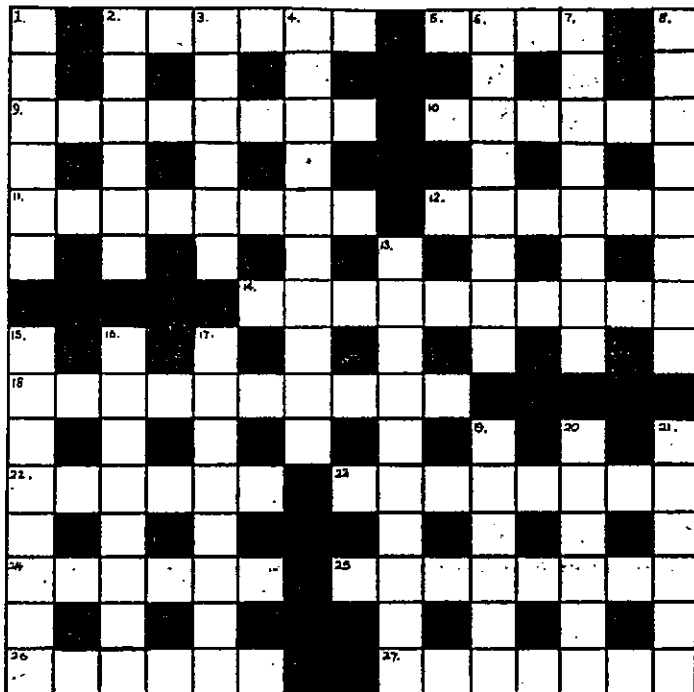
5.8 Tony Knibbs introduced the subject of extending the land purchase. There are problems with purchasing more land behind the cottage. Malcolm Cotter said he had been to see Max Brown, who owns the farm land next door. He is negotiating to get as much as he can for a reasonable price. Currently Mr Brown is offering to sell 12 yards more at the front, 4 yards more at the back, the same depth as our existing plot. Pat Walsh said it wasn't enough. It wasn't clear who owns the land from wall to road. Gordon Lister said we should find out. Paul Merron pointed out that we use that anyway. The feeling of the meeting was that the purchase should be pursued. A vote of thanks was proposed to Malcolm Cotter.

6 Date and venue for the 31st AGM: Saturday 22 March 1986, Nordrach Cottage, 3 pm.

Bob Speleo B



CROSSWORD N° 6. by Bryan Terry



Across

- 10 Medicines perhaps or mixers for gin? (6)
 11 Huge rain storm will produce excellent wine from the Rhine near Wiesbaden (8)
 12 An Italian Liqueur - but witch one! (6)
 14 A crust here can be made into a liqueur by Carthusian monks (10)
 13 Reputedly the greatest white Burgundy - to merchant anyhow! (10)
 22 You are able to do it to a screw-stoppered bottle (6)
 23 A half of shandy (3) 24 A Belgian port (6)
 25 Another name for pewter tankards? (3)
 26 Good wines are usually considered to be this (6)
 27 Mr Bennet's favourite brand of gin (7)

Down

- 1 Earn T.V. recognition for a hostelry (6)
 2 Possibly descriptive of a warehouse containing spirits (6)
 3 In the beginning, January 1st could be termed thus (3,3)
 4 English term for white wines from the Rhine (6;4)
 6 Birds usually identified with courage (3)
 7 Bacardi is one example of this (5,3)
 3 Dust came to ferment a dry white wine (3)
 13 East Anglian Brewery producing Abbot Ale (6,4)
 15 Famous brand of vodka (3)
 16 Liqueur similar to Pernod (3)
 17 How can a gram produce such a fine brandy (3)
 19 A stout carrier (6)
 20 Graduate on top of a sweet produces one of Italy's best red wines (6)
 21 Soft drinks - but not cokes (6)

Editor's note: I always thought liqueur was spelt licueur - but Bryan warns me not to tamper with a single punctuation mark or spelling just in case! Good luck....

Several members have asked if I would compile another crossword, so here it is. The last five had caving as the main theme, not surprisingly. But I did not receive a single correct solution to No 5, so this time I have changed the subject and adopted one at which most MCG members seem to excel - booze!

A bottle of plonk for the first correct answer received by me.

Bryan Terry, 12 Wair Lane,
 Loughton-on-the-Hill, Leicester,
 Leicestershire. 0533 432533

Across

- 2 Be a dog - go to a Spanish wine cellar (6)
 5 How you make tea or beer (4)
 9 Martha has a famous one on the Massachusetts coast (3)

MCG doings

ARMCHAIR MEETS at the Mawson Arms, Chiswick Lane South, London W4, in the back room at 9 pm.

March 20 All our Yestercaves - a look back at the last three million years of caving - Malcolm Cotter (this was postponed from last time because those of us who went to Majorca couldn't wait to see the slides)

After the AGM, please let the new ordinary committee member have all your ideas and offers for armchair meets.

MONEY MONEY MONEY MONEY MONEY MONEY

Thanks very much to all members who have now paid their annual subs to Mike Lovell. You should have received your membership cards by now... sorry for the printing delay, but Geoff did get a good price!

If you haven't yet paid up, don't forget that time is running out. All members who haven't paid by April 1 will automatically become lapsed... and we don't want to lose you!

RESCUE PRACTICE: GB DEVIL'S ELBOW * Alan Dougherty

The morning of Saturday February 8 dawned with a severe frost as 13 members gathered at Nordrach cottage for the practice rescue. We decided, because of the severe weather, to miss out a practice haul in one of the trees and only to demonstrate how to tie up the drag sheet, before departing for the cave.

■ Mike Haselden, Gary Pairaudeau and Grant Shephard went to rig the Devil's Elbow pitch for hauling. They were later joined by Ian McKechnie, who had travelled down that morning.

■ The rest of us went to the Bridge in the Gorge, where we split into two groups. ▶

FOR SALE 80p

Pamphlet boxes. Stout card, self-assembly, with metal label holder/handle. Makes up into a useful box 14 inches high by 11 inches deep, by 3.25 inches wide (355 x 230 x 85 mm)

As used in the MCG library. Surplus to requirements. Few only in stock, unused, 80p each.

Contact the honorary recorder, Ian McKechnie. (Address on page 2)

CAVE SURVEY STUDY WEEKEND

14 - 15 March 1986

The British Cave Research Association is holding a study weekend at the University of Sheffield. On Saturday there will be lectures on all aspects of cave surveying. On Sunday there's a field trip to Peak Cavern to practise surveying. There's also a mystery 'event' planned for Saturday night... To make sure of a place, book in advance:

Lectures, field trip and Saturday lunch: £5.

(without Saturday lunch: £2.50)

Lectures only, with Saturday lunch: £4.50.

(without Saturday lunch: £2)

Contact: Charlotte Roberts, 8 Victoria Street, Queensbury, Bradford. Bradford 816793.

Cheques payable to BCRA.

£\$£\$£\$£\$



Bob Speleo β



Practice Rescue contd...

John Beauchamp lead one party in carrying the stretcher to the base of the Devil's Elbow pitch. Here Mike Haselden was to direct operations using the second team. While the rest of us tackled the passages above the pitch, John's team were to de-tackle and exit by the Mud Passage route. Working in from the entrance end, they would sort out the fixed ladder descent from the First Grotto, and come on to meet the stretcher party.

At the Bridge Yvonne Ward (our surprisingly willing victim) was put on the drag sheet. Underneath her we placed a foam mat and a padded bivvy bag. A figure of eight thigh sling was tied into the lacing ropes to prevent the victim slipping downwards. A foot-loop was provided for the same purpose. Yvonne was dressed with an extra fibre-pile suit over her normal gaving gear. She wore wollen and rubber gloves, and a balaclava. Throughout the practice, Yvonne kept quite warm.

The face visor was used, but this necessitated a change of helmet, because it would not fit the peaked variety. It proved useful, except that it misted up.

Movement up the gorge was pretty rapid, with all the party helping on the incline at the top. A drag rope was used for the first time in the crawls and climbs up to the Devil's Elbow pitch. Here the 'B' team went up the pitch to form a hauling party, and Ian McKechnie was positioned at the pitch head. The climb was equipped with a ladder and a hauling rope running through a pulley. Both of these were belayed to the stal thread at the pitch head. Ian was secured with a long belay rope back to an anchor at the head of the 10' climb. Lack of good belays proved a major problem. A stamper high up would have made things easier.

Communication round the crawl was difficult because of the noise of running water. Messages were relayed by cavers in the crawl. After much difficulty Yvonne was hauled to the pitch head. One problem was that the pulley twisted on its belay and we had to lower the stretcher to re-organise things. Had Yvonne's arms not been free from the drag sheet, I don't think we'd have been successful in negotiating the Devil's Elbow. She was able to help a lot by pulling on her arms.

I was able to place a short sling around a small chockstone in the roof of the crawl, on which Yvonne was able to pull. With Gary Pairaudeau at the head of the drag sheet and Mike Haselden at the foot, the bends were passed after a lot of effort. We had the victim on her side for this section, but it was still a tight fit. A major problem was friction on the hauling rope, as it passed round several corners. The water was bitterly cold, and if things became any more prolonged I was ready to call it a day.

Hauling up the 10' climb proved a strain because only two people could be at the pitch head. At this stage the drag sheet was slipping towards Yvonne's feet and rucking up, so we took her out and fixed her back in again, in the little chamber by the letterbox. The letterbox did not prove too difficult, with Ian McKechnie positioned down in the slot, below the squeeze.

Good progress was made along the double passage crawl, until the drag sheet began to ruck up again, in the vicinity of the climb downwards. I decided to call a stop at this stage. We had overcome the main problem, and given time, would certainly have made it to the surface. Coming out into the dark in the severe cold could have been courting disaster. We all found it very cold on regaining the surface, and in the bitter wind fingers began to freeze.

I considered the practice a great success, especially considering the relative inexperience of the group and the cold conditions.

Yvonne may like to know (in retrospect!) that Sue Haselden was once stuck for several hours as the victim on a practice some years ago - and guess where? Sue informed me that this was in the days of the late Oliver Lloyd's participation and that after her release, the team were so tired that she had to carry some of their gear for them!

Many thanks to all those who turned out - I hope you learned something and enjoyed yourselves in the process. The caver who thought cave water stayed at a constant temperature is certainly no longer under that illusion!

Those present were: John Beauchamp, Jo Davies, Alan Dougherty, M Francis, D Harper, John Harvey, Mike Haselden, Andy Hawkins, Ian McKechnie, Gary Pairaudeau, Andy Scully, Grant Shephard, Richard Stansfield, Adrian Thomas, Yvonne Ward.

Time underground: 4½ hours.

On the previous practice, Sue got stuck in the slot at the top of Devil's Elbow - you have to keep the drag sheet high in the passage at this point.