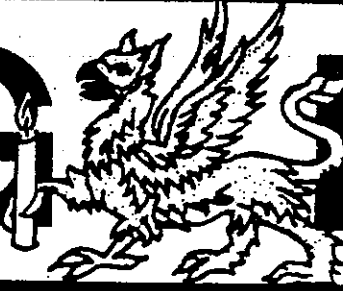


# MCG NEWS



March 1987

No. 192

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

## AGM AGENDA

The Annual General Meeting of the Mendip Caving Group will be held at 3.0pm on 4th April 1987, at Nordrach Cottage.

Chairman - to be decided.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 22nd March 1986.
3. Officers' reports should by now have been circulated and will be taken as read. Questions and comments are invited to:-

Treasurer	-	Mike Lovell
Cottage Warden	-	John Beauchamp
Editor	-	Yvonne Ward
Recorder	-	Ian McKechnie
Meet Secretary	-	Geoff Barton
Tacklemaster	-	Alan Dougherty

Election of officers for 1987/8.

Neil Hutchinson has been proposed for the post of Secretary. All other existing members are prepared to stand for re-election.

Any other nominations should be sent to the Secretary prior to the meeting.

5. Election of Auditors for 1987/8 - general and MCG shop accounts.
6. Amendments to the Constitution and Rules.
  - 5.1 It is proposed that paragraph 10(e) be emended from "... signing cheques in excess of £10" to "... signing cheques in excess of £200".
  - 5.2 It is proposed that parts 2, 3 and 4 be deleted and replaced with the following:-

"Part 2 : Caving.

The group recommends that all members read and act in accordance with the National Caving Code as published by the National Caving Association."
7. Any other business.
8. Date and venue of next meeting.

# SPELEODATE

## 1987 MEETS PROGRAMME

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAVE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
3 JAN	MENDIP	TYNING'S BARROWS	JON ROBERTS	01 575 6437
24 JAN	YORKSHIRE	PENYGHENT	ROGER WALLINGTON	0753 43384
7 FEB	MENDIP	THRUPE LANE	RICHARD STANSFIELD	0276 684983
21 FEB	WALES	D.Y.O.	IAN MCKECHNIE	0932 228292
7 MAR	MENDIP	RESCUE PRACTICE	ALAN DOUGHERTY	0934 863056
21 MAR	YORKSHIRE	JUNIPER GULF	MARTIN ROWE	0252 876783
4 APR	MENDIP	A.G.M. / DINNER	BOB SPELEO	-
18 APR	YORKSHIRE	S.R.T. TRAINING	ADRIAN DUCKETT	01 572 2374
2 MAY	SKYE	UAMH CINN GHLINN	JOHN MIRIAM	01 393 3955
23 MAY	YORKSHIRE	WEST KINGSDALE	ANDY BEARE	0734 790764
6 JUN	MENDIP	GEOLOGY WEEKEND	MALCOLM COTTER	07842 52643
20 JUN	WALES	TUNNEL CAVE	MIKE HAZELDEN	0703 464491
4 JUL	MENDIP	G.B. CAVE	YVONNE WARD	0252 876783
18 JUL	YORKSHIRE	GINGLING HOLE	MIKE LOVELL	0734 663747
1 AUG	MENDIP	BANWELL BONE CAVE	ROY KEMPSTON	0726 34338
15 AUG	WALES	O.F.D.	GEOFF BARTON	0923 49241
5 SEP	MENDIP	STOKE LANE SLOCKER	GORDON JISTER	01 579 3466
19 SEP	TURKEY	TAURUS	NEIL HUTCHINSON	01 267 1005
3 OCT	MENDIP	HALF YEARLY	-	-
17 OCT	YORKSHIRE	RIFT POT	PADDY NEWMAN	-
7 NOV	MENDIP	ST CUTHBERTS	ERIAN TERRY	0533 432533
21 NOV	WALES	DAREN CILAU	IAN PARRY	0296 87795
5 DEC	MENDIP	BLACKMOOR MASTER CAKE	HELEN MIRIAM	01 393 3955
19 DEC	MAJORCA	VARIETY	NEIL HUTCHINSON	01 267 1005

Note: Entry at 5 Dec does read cake, not cave.



SECRETARY: NEIL HUTCHINSON, 15H Gloucester Avenue, Camden Town, London, NW1. 01-267-1005 (home).

TREASURER: MIKE LOVELL, 4 Settrington Close, Loddon Park, Earley, Reading, Berks. 0734-663747 (home).

MEET SECRETARY: GEOFF BARTON, The Lodge, The Heath, Weybridge, Surrey. 0932-49241 (home).

TACKLEMASTER: ALAN DOUGHERTY, 'Wynhanger', Station Road, Wrington, Nr Bristol, BS18 7LL. 0934-863056 (home).

COTTAGE WARDEN: JOHN BEAUCHAMP, St Hugh's Cottage, Charterhouse, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XR. 0761-62929 (home).

RECORDER: IAN MCKECHNIE: 21 Conyers Close, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 4NG. 0932-228292 (home).

EDITOR: YVONNE WARD, 15 Jesse Close, Yateley, Camberley, Surrey, GU17 7AH. 0252-876783 (home).

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBER: GORDON LISTER, 127 Seaford Rd., West Ealing, London, W13. 01-579-3466 (home).

## An Orienteering 'Nightwalk'

by Yvonne Ward.

This event is held annually somewhere in the New Forest and organised by Speleo Rhal Caving Club. The MCG were invited to take part in this one on 31st January 1987.

We arrived at Mike and Sue Haselden's house just ahead of Gary Pairaudeau and his girlfriend Wendy Griffin. Sue had cooked us all a superb meal which set us up for the cold night ahead. We met up with the other teams at the event base in the Castle Hill car park, near Burley in the New Forest. We had to give ourselves team names so Mike, Sue and their friend Dave Hartwell were 'Hop Skip and Jump', Gary and Wendy were 'The Vagrants' and Martin Rowe and I were 'The Mantis Men'.

We were sent off at timed intervals and had 3½ hours to complete the course. As our set-off time was marked we were given our instructions which consisted of 20 map references and vague clues each worth points varying from 5 to 25.

We spent our first 20 minutes or so carefully plotting the map references on our O/S map and sorting out a route. Martin suddenly realized that as we'd followed Mike in the cars, we had no idea exactly where we were. Mike was very amused when with a map full of checkpoints to find, we had to ask him where we were so we knew where to head for first.

We finally set off towards our first checkpoint which we found without too much trouble but spent far too long trying to find the marker. We were about to give up when Martin found it had been pulled up and thrown into the heather. Martin threw a fit and said he wasn't going to play if they were going to cheat but after a bit of persuasion we went on and found the next checkpoint and marker.

We couldn't find the one after that as the clue was 'Junction of tracks' and there were many. I said we were looking at the wrong junction and Martin said the marker had been pulled out again. After a bit of a barney we made up and decided to do the course in reverse as no-one would have reached the last points at that time. It worked - from then on everything went fairly smoothly except for the vagueness of some of the clues e.g. 'Holly tree'; we found a holly tree at the right point but no marker but then in our headlights (Petzl, not car) we saw there were several holly trees! Another clue was 'Pond' - the place is riddled with ponds.

Another type of clue was for example, 100m bearing 278 deg mag from the previous map reference and we found to our luck that Martin's stride is just about a metre.

We passed Gary and Wendy en-route and were amazed to find that they had no lamps or torches and wondered how they were managing as it was a new moon and pitch dark. It was also very cold, -6deg in fact, and every time Martin breathed out the moisture froze to his beard and moustache - quite a sight.

We had found about 10 of the 20 checkpoints but time was running out so we headed back to base collecting a couple more on the way. We met Mike who was hurriedly doing the same thing. We just scraped in which was important because the penalties for being late were quite severe e.g. 5 mins late = -25 points, 15 mins late = -80 points, and so on.

We thought we had done about average in the event as we had not found all the markers and had got off to a poor start but to our surprise we came second. Mike, Sue and Dave came first and Gary and Wendy came sixth. A good effort by the MCG and great fun. The reward at the end of the event was a mug of hot soup and a roll which was most welcome.

We are planning an MCG Orienteering Nightwalk to be held some time in the Autumn. More details will be in a forthcoming newsletter.

EXTRACT FROM AN ARTICLE BY ALAN L. JEFFRIES "THE CRIMINAL UNDERGROUND".

Circulated with CSCC papers.

### Vehicle Security

The greatest crime burden facing cavers today is theft from parked vehicles. Every summer this kind of thing arises and occasionally, as happened in Yorkshire some years ago, reaches epidemic proportions. The fact that remote roadheads appear to be far from casual passers-by should not be construed as safe from criminals. Indeed, conditions could hardly be better for them. Here are some recommendations to consider.

Everything of value to you left in the vehicle should be locked in the boot or placed out of sight. Always close all windows, lock all doors and never leave keys or driving documents (Insurance, M.O.T., Registration documents) inside. They merely make it easier for a thief to sell the car. Avoid leaving material on roof racks. It is obviously good sense not to leave notes on windscreens clearly stating your choice of cave, E.T.A. or call-out contact time. Any caving council requirements to display permits should be amended. Notification in writing to the local farmer or keeper is suggested instead.

Thieves are not stupid. Hiding keys in exhaust pipes or inside sills and bumpers may be good news for shivering passengers standing in the rain, but criminals know hiding places you have never even thought of. Under a stone or in the wall beside the car is equally silly. I would recommend either that you take the keys underground in an ammo box or that they be hidden in a pre-arranged place some distance away from the vehicle. The ideal of course is to leave someone with the car and perhaps I could suggest that as a gesture of good neighbourliness, such a person could keep a friendly eye on the other vehicles. Locations such as GB Cavern and Marble Steps Lane, where congregations of cars are out of the public gaze, are particularly at risk. Personal valuables - watches, wallets and cash, radios and so forth - are better left back at the hut where, after all, you will in most cases be returning immediately after the trip.

Finally, a word or two on identifying belongings. Thefts of tackle and other equipment (cf the Clydach Gorge incident) are not only extremely annoying but potentially dangerous. I can recall times when entrance pitches had ladders and ropes removed whilst parties were underground, possibly preventable by tying them down at the bottom. There is no sure way of preventing these incidents - cowboys will always be with us - so perhaps we should turn our minds to ways of marking property in a unique and permanent way.

Property marking has been around for years. Many clubs tag or stamp ladders with stock numbers and initials but with such a similarity of club initials, a better way would be to utilise the nationally approved system of putting postcodes and street numbers on all equipment. For established clubs with premises, the postcode and abbreviated hut name would do. For others, the code and street number of a permanent contact address is recommended (e.g. EH8 7DQ-8). The unique number of such a code makes the identification of and return to the owner a much easier job if goods are recovered by the police. You should code your own possessions as well.

There are various methods, etching, die stamping and UV marker pens. It might be efficacious to consider adopting a club colour and painting tackle accordingly. One area not satisfactorily resolved yet is a reliable method of identifying ropes. Suggestions welcome!

These are just a few ideas on crime prevention, put forward in an attempt to help reduce an anti-social problem that frequently creates animosity and inconvenience. Should you happen to catch a thief red-handed, you are of course supposed to detain him with the minimum force necessary until the arrival of the police, but in the nature of things, I dare say this is asking too much! All I am prepared to say is: be careful. Criminals have been known to successfully sue assailants, even when they themselves are illegally within premises. By the same token, offensive measures such as wiring your window frame for 20,000 volts, are not allowed either!

If you have any specific problems, either with club premises or personal possessions, I urge you to seek the advice of the Crime Prevention Officer at your local police station.



### MCG ON THE MOVE

Jeff Holloway is now at 44 Orchard Ave., Bedfont, Middx. Tel: 01-751-3330.

Richard Hodgson is now at 1 Court Cres., Slough, Berks., SL1 3JP.

Steve Thompson is now at 102f Thornbury Rd., Isleworth, Middx., TW7 4NH. Tel: 01-560-0268.

Alan Rarity is now at 58 Horton Hill, Epsom, Surrey. Tel: Epsom 41803.

Alan Mellon is now at 36 Weavers Cl., Isleworth, Middx., TW7 6EH. Tel: 01-560-7268.

### FOR SALE

1 Pair Zamberlan walking boots size 8½  
As new - £20  
Phone Gordon Lister on 01-579-3466.

### WELCOME...

...to five new members:-

Janet Cursi of 39 Adelaide Rd., Chalk Farm, London, NW3. Tel: 01-586-6529.

Vince Simmonds of 46 Corner Croft, Clevedon, Avon, BS21 5DA. Tel: Clevedon 878517.

Jimmy Green of Naval Air Mountaineering Centre, Tai-Newiddion, Tyn-Y-Maes, Bathesda, North Wales. Tel: 0248-600416.

Domini Barrett of Monks Park Home, Southmead Hospital, Southmead Rd., Bristol, BS10 5NB.

John Coles of The Shingles, Chelvey Batch, Backwell, Bristol, BS19 3BZ. Tel: Flax Bourton 2976.

### CLUB SUBS

There are still a large number of members who have not paid their subs this year. Anyone who has not paid by the AGM will receive no more newsletters and will have to pay guest rates at the cottage. Those who intend to remain a member of the club but who pay their subs late affect our claiming rebates on covenants. So come on folks, play fair and pay up. Thanks.

### THE AGM DINNER

The menu as far as I can remember is Duck Pate or Home made soup as the starter; the main course is Boeuf Bourguignon with a selection of fresh vegetables; the sweet is a Pavlova or Apfel Strudel followed by a selection of cheese and biscuits and coffee. The tickets are £9.50 each and can be obtained from Neil Hutchinson, Geoff Barton or Gordon Lister. The dinner is at the Star Hotel in Wells and a coach is being layed on to take us from Nordrach to Wells at 7.0pm for a nominal charge.

### YV' DROPPINGS...

Mike Haselden, looking at Martin Rowe through binoculars:

"What type of cheese have you got in your sandwiches, Cheddar, Stilton or Double Gloucester?"

Martin: "Egg!"

During a game of Trivial Pursuit at the cottage between the men and the women, one of the men (I won't mention Bill Platt's name) asked:

"When were the Mexican Olympics held in 1968?"

Thinking it was a trick question, one of the women answered: "1962!".

## **Diggers move into action!**

AFTER 10 years of talk, argument, discussion, suggestions and debate the work has started!

The diggers have moved in to begin work on the new...

... to be continued in the next issue.

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION IN SINGLE ROPE TECHNIQUES.

When you take part in SRT, you take your life in your hands, literally. One careless move can be fatal, so it is important you know exactly what you are doing.

In the MCG there are three kinds of SRT caver: people introduced to SRT through one of the Whernside Manor's SRT courses; people who are self taught; and people who have picked it up from their mates.

Good SRT cavers could be in any one of these categories. For example, Mike Haselden is largely self-taught, Neil Hutchinson largely learnt from others and Ian Parry learnt at Whernside. All three recently bottomed the 1000m deep SIMA GESM.

Likewise, bad SRT cavers could be in any of the categories, which might be bad news for you if you are picking up SRT by watching your mates. Not even the most trained or most experienced MCG member is the best person to instruct others in SRT.

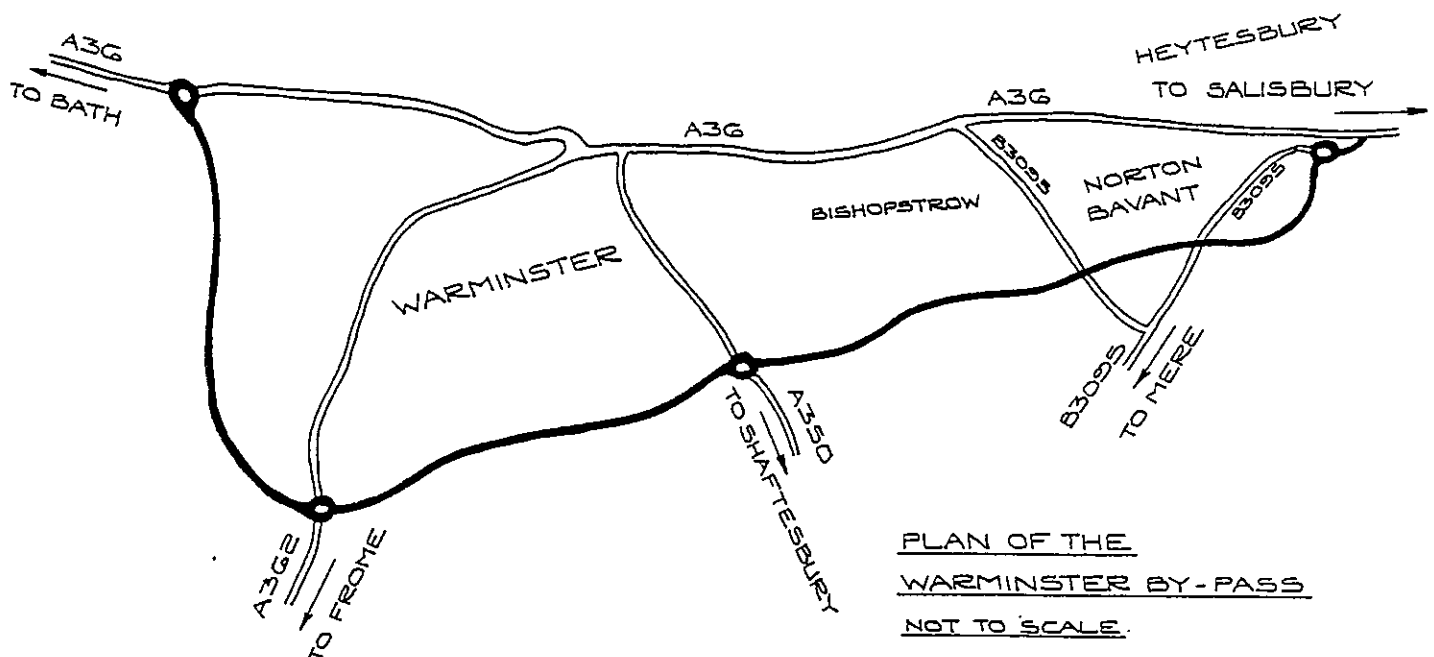
For this reason, you will find in the MCG meet programme, a date for an SRT training weekend. The intention is to arrange two SRT courses at Lizard Products, run by Dave Elliot. Despite his reputation he is actually a good instructor and quite a decent (if abrupt) character.

There will be one course for 'beginners' and another for 'advanced', these terms to be treated loosely. The date is provisionally set for 18/19th April but likely to be changed to fit in with everyone's plans. Cost is usually about £30 which covers use of SRT equipment, rope, lamps, etc. and accommodation is at NPC, Green Close.

Contact Martin Rowe for more details.

Below is a plan of the new Warminster By-pass. As well as this improvement it is also proposed to extend the new section of the A303 dual-carriageway throughout from its present end at Thruxton to the beginning of the existing dual-carriageway near Boscombe Down airfield. It will then virtually be dual-carriageway all the way to Stonehenge.

As Roy K can get from Camberley to the Hunters in under 1½ hours, I would expect him to do the journey inside an hour when the schemes are completed.



# 30 DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A 'WHIRLING DERVISH'

"How about a short article for the newsletter, Mike?" I asked. Anyone who knows Mike Haselden at all, knows he never stops moving, hence his nickname 'Whirling Dervish'. When it comes to writing an article it's the same - he can't stop! Here's part 1 of his abridged article.

Day 1. Friday 12th September - Weather fine.

With just enough miles on the clock to qualify for 'run in', Sue and I departed from home in our new VW Polo loaded with the requirements of a month's holiday in Spain. These included such essentials as 200m of potholing and climbing rope, six fruit cakes, a 12 volt soldering iron and a packet of toothpicks, as well as many others. Within half an hour of leaving home we were boarding the ferry at Portsmouth and six hours later were heading generally south west through France. France is a very well organised camping country and the traveller can choose to stop almost anywhere and find a well appointed pitch. We stopped at Nozay for the night having covered 202 miles by road.

Day 2. Saturday 13th September - weather overcast, better later.

782 miles by road in one day must rank as a marathon. By sharing the wheel Sue and I just kept going through the border past San Sebastian, Valladolid, Salamanca and at Plasencia we found a small campsite to pitch a tent and collapsed into our pits.

Day 3. Sunday 14th September - Weather fine and hot.

We needed a bit of a lie-in to recover from the last leg of our journey but soon we were on the move again with Sevilla our goal for the day. By now the climate and charm of Spain manifested themselves in many ways. The heat was overpowering and very few travellers braved the highway. We lunched for a couple of hours under the shade of a cork tree then ventured on down to reach Sevilla in the late afternoon.

Reported to be the most beautiful city in Europe, Sevilla also has traffic problems of matching proportions. After a couple of harrowing hours we abandoned hope of finding a secure parking place. We had been warned that a car with a GB plate is a target for all thieves in the city. We made for a campsite in the city outskirts and settled for the night having covered 271 miles.

Day 4. Monday 15th September - Weather fine and hot.

We made an early start and secured a place in a guarded car park in the city centre. We devoted the morning to viewing the famous sites of Sevilla followed by a traditional Spanish lunch before setting off for our rendezvous with the caving group in Benaojan near Ronda. For the next two weeks the group were to stay in a country holiday villa (Sue and I camped in the 'garden') from where about twenty cavers, friends and family, including our Spanish hosts Victoria and Genaro, would venture out on walking, exploration and caving trips.

Day 5. Tuesday 16th September - Weather fine and hot.

For a warm-up trip I joined the two Spaniards together with others of the group for a trip in 'Gato'. Half an hour from base this reurgence cave has a large impressive entrance with other cavities high in the limestone cliff, all of which resemble the face of a cat, hence 'Gato'. Even in high summer a plentiful flow fills a lake just outside the entrance which then flows on down to the valley and the Guadiaro river. Without boats and artificial climbing, low level progress is impossible. We followed Genaro up on a high level route where lakes and the river bed could be seen some 50 to 70 feet below. Various dubious wire traverses were passed until a floor-level route was reached further in the cave.

To a Mendip caver who is more used to intimate contact with the rock, walking along the 'Gato' was a rare treat. For hundreds of metres the passage was big enough to accommodate several double decker buses side by side. Progress along the cave was, however, potentially treacherous with polished slabs and massive boulders strewn about the floor. Generally the ceiling is very high, up to 100ft, with many ledges,

From p7.

hollows and hidden parts, all of which made one wonder what secrets awaited the explorer. Evidence of engineering of a former epoch is to be seen frequently on the high walls of the cave in the form of cantilever platforms and steel rope footbridges. I will mention these relics further on.

We had not seen many formations, Although this did not detract from the magnificance of the system, but then we reached 'Manhattan' where an unusual cluster of tall stalagmites on the far side of a lake resemble its namesake - with a bit of imagination, of course! Further on 'Dune Chamber' was aptly named. I have never seen such a vast mountain of sand in a cave before.

Still the passage went on in grand proportions until progress was impeded by deep pools. A previously installed tyrolean wire traverse across a deep lake seemed to dictate the end of exploration for the day, but Genaro confidently proved its security by traversing to the other side, so three of us followed. I wondered if the others had shared my feelings of mistrust for the thin wires which I feared might plunge me down into the deep. At this point the group split up into two. Andy, Ian, Neil and me continuing as far as the lakes would permit without total immersion. We made a slow return to the surface, exploring another side passage and taking in the unique ambience of 'Gato'. I concluded that 'Gato' merited far more attention.

Later that day I explored some roadside caverns in the cliffs opposite the villa with JR. (Jon Roberts).

Day 6. Wednesday 17th September - Weather hot.

The Gato through trip - Genaro, Victoria, Grant Shephard, Loise Curley, Alan Melon and me. We set off by car over the mountain pass to a valley west of Gato. The cars were parked off the road to the side of a rough track from where a concrete dam can be seen connecting the high rock walls at the bottom of the valley. Apparently the early century dam builders overlooked the fact that limestone is liable to be porous. To this day the valley, despite its vast catchment area, has never filled and the dam remains as an epitaph to engineering cockups!

The Gato consists of a 4km master system with a river flowing from the Hundidero entrance at the west to the Gato resurgence at the east. In the dry season the water flow disappears below the boulder floor but can be heard. In winter the flow can reach the roof in places. The few known side passages are inconsistent with the size of the cave so there must be potential for further discoveries.

Loaded with bags of kit we walked down the steep hillside into the deep blind valley below the dam with limestone cliffs towering above us. We followed a dry river bed into a huge cave entrance and in the relative coolness of the cave, within daylight penetration, we changed into caving gear which, for the first time in my experience, included a life-jacket. A little further in, three inflatable dinghies were pumped up. Each would carry a pair of cavers, plus gear, and one by one they were lowered into a deep lake and boarded by climbing down an old traverse line and iron spikes left by the dam builders. I shared with Grant and we cast off and paddled gently across the lake to the far shore. This was just the first of seventeen lakes. Often the lakes were separated by wire traverses and others had to be asealed down to, so once started on this trip we were committed - there was no possible way back. At one stage the passage narrowed considerably and the increased air current was sufficient to push the dinghies along the lake, indeed underground sailing by means of holding the paddles rigid against the wind. After hours of launching and fording the boats we arrived at the 'Bull Ring', an enormous circular chamber where we stopped for a brief rest and lunch which included freshly brewed tea.

From the Bull Ring and other parts, side inlets are barred by massive concrete plugs which the dam engineers put there in an attempt to stem the subterranean water course but they deluded themselves, as would have been understood with present day Karst and hydrology knowledge. For access throughout the 4km main cave passage the engineers installed electric lighting, gangways, platforms and aerial ropeways, but these have now decayed beyond use. The remains are a sad reminder of their fruitless toil.

Cont. on p9



From p8

After the lunch break we plodded on in the same way; lakes and dry passage - a slow process. Eventually the last of the lakes was passed and the dinghies could be deflated and bagged. From then on the pace was greatly increased and we recognised the passage from the last visit. A change in the cave atmosphere precluded the approach to the entrance even before the first telltale glint of daylight, then soon we were out in the full blaze of the searing sun. With the very satisfying feeling of a successful through trip under the mountains, we walked back to base.

Day 7. Thursday 13th September - Weather hot.

Did my limbs feel a slight twinge of stiffness following the long through trip of the day before? Well if they did I dismissed such feelings as imaginary. Today was set aside for Pilleta.

About 12km south west by road from the base on the side of a mountain there is a commercial cave with a difference. It is called 'Pilleta' (Little Fountain). It is hardly advertised, there is no electric lighting and very few manmade paths. It is owned by three brothers who live down in the valley and take it in turns to guide the visitors.

We stooped through the entrance and completed the formality of payment before being handed a Tilley lamp for group illumination. Our guide was proud to point out that our lamp was reliable, made in Birmingham.

At this point, I should explain to the reader that, having lived my first thirteen years in Spain, I am still fluent in the language which is, after all, my mother tongue. So I was the interpreter for the group consisting of Sue, Martin Rowe, Louise, Paddy Newman and Alan. Our guide, knowing that we were spelios and somewhat amused at my double talk, took a particular interest in showing us his magnificent cave which has a history of three separate occupations dating back to the Palaeolithic age. The wall paintings and hieroglyphics were the best specimens we had ever seen. The profusion of formations was quite delightful, some of very unusual shapes which seemed to defy the laws of nature. Our guide gave some very graphic (and rude) descriptions in Spanish of these and then waited with a leer on his face whilst the rest of the group awaited my translation! We came to some railings at the edge of a 100m chasm where human remains had been found but we were not permitted to go down.

On the return trip our guide allowed us a few privileges including a view across another deep rift to a adylight window in a afr off wall, but again this is a restricted part. Eventually we returned to daylight and all agreed that 'Pilleta' is a really worthwhile trip, and will remain fondly in the mind.

From the front of our villa across the valley, a 20m limestone cliff above the road appeared to have some midway holes associated with the caves which JR and I had explored before. Gary Pirraudeau, Martin and I spent the afternoon climbing down to explore these holes but all to no avail. Don't miss part 2 in the next issue.

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#### COTTAGE BOOKINGS

9/3 - 13/3	RNAS Daedalus	(18)
14/3 - 15/3	Wolverhampton M.C.	(12)
18/3 - 19/3	Somerset C.C.	(12)
23/3 - 27/3	RNAS	(10)
28/3 - 29/3	Barnet C.G.	(12)
30/3 - 3/4	RNAS	(10)
6/4 - 10/4	RNAS	(9)
25/4 - 26/4	Hounslow G.G.	(12)
28/4 - 1/5	Unicorn Leisure	(20)
11/5 - 15/5	Unicorn Leisure	(20)
18/5 - 22/5	Unicorn Leisure	(20)
2/6 - 5/6	Unicorn Leisure	(19)
6 & 7 June	Closed for flooring repairs	

THE HOUNDS OF THE BASKERVILLES WAS 'ERE!

This is part of a letter from Dave Hodby with an offer you can't refuse!.....

I now spend most of my time in Wales putting back together the Clyro Court Hotel. It was built in 1839 by Thomas Baskerville as his private house and immortalised by Conan Doyle in his book "Hounds of the Baskervilles" The local authority purchased the property from the Baskervilles and used it as a secondary school for fifteen years. It was then sold to a Mr. Knott in 1970 who converted it into a hotel and health farm. Due to a succession of bankruptcies it has been closed for the past five years but is capable of being a 37 roomed hotel. At present only 10 of the bedrooms are useable, although there are many function rooms in good order as is the heated indoor swimming pool. Up to 450 people come to our Friday night Discos and up to 350 for a wedding reception or birthday party.

Anyone coming to this neck of the woods is welcome to call in although since I still spend a couple of days in London every few weeks it is worth telephoning first, it is also easier to hear the telephone than the front door bell. Friends and acquaintances wishing to stay overnight we ask to contribute £5 per person per night. When originally converted this was the best hotel in Wales.

Yes we are in Wales actually Powys, it is only the Post Office trying to extend English territory giving us a postal address in Herefordshire. We are fully licensed and have real ale on draught. Locally you can go horse riding, canoeing, ballooning, Offa's dyke walking etc. The caves are ½ hrs. driveaway and the worlds largest second hand bookshop is reputedly owned by the King of Hay. There is even a helicopter landing pad for anyone wishing to just drop in.

While we are closed I am happy to use the buildings and extensive grounds for any purpose as long as it does'nt cause permanent damage. All suggestions welcome.

I hope the above whets your appetite and look forward to entertaining more M.C.G. members and friends in the near future now you know where to find me.

All the best,

