

MCGG NEWS

May 1987

No. 193

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

* Protect

Our Caves *

I'm pleased to say that we have had quite a few new members this year so for them and as a reminder to the rest of us I hope you will read and digest the article below - we have been getting reports of yet more damage in Upper Flood!

Caves are a unique and very special part of our natural environment. Because of their slow and gradual formation over many thousands of years, fantastic passages develop, break-down occurs, sediments are deposited, beautiful calcite formations build up, and various creatures find a home. To be the first to enter such a place is an experience unlikely to be forgotten, but unfortunately one that only a few people will be privileged to have.

Once a cave has been entered a process of deterioration begins. Sometimes this is extremely rapid, but usually it is steady and barely noticeable. Whatever happens, the end result is the same, a place retaining little aesthetic value and interest. Such destruction is a crime against nature and there is a moral responsibility on the part of everybody using this environment for their enjoyment, whatever their motivation and purpose, to ensure its preservation for others.

To damage or remove any of the beautiful features in a cave would be like tearing out a page from a historic document. Unfortunately, formations are often in close proximity to passers-by and damage, both intentional and accidental, does occur. It should always be remembered that a moment's thoughtlessness may deprive someone else of the pleasure of seeing what was once there.

Tapes are installed to protect formations and other features. Often, cave mud and floor deposits are of even greater value to cave scientists than are the more visually spectacular calcite formations. Their preservation is therefore equally vital.

Listed below are some important points that all cave visitors should remember:

LITTER AND POLLUTION

Regular clean-ups of sites involve the removal of huge amounts of rubbish eg. chocolate wrappers, ripped clothes, dead batteries and spent carbide. It takes no real effort on the part of an individual to take out of a cave what he takes in, and little extra effort to take out someone else's rubbish. Spent carbide and items that decompose, can cause pollution and harm cave life. This is a special problem since spent carbide is difficult to remove, and its use is being banned in an increasing number of caves.

FAUNA AND FLORA

To the untrained observer bats are the most obvious life form found underground. All species of bat are endangered and protected by law, and great care should always be taken not to disturb them. If you see a bat, pass by quickly and quietly. More abundant than bats, but less noticeable, are the numerous other creatures that live throughout the cave on the floor and in pools of water. They are part of a delicately balanced ecosystem and the less disturbance that man causes, the more chance they have of survival.

SPELEODATE

1987 MEETS PROGRAMME

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAVE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
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	BRIAN 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.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

11/5 - 15/5	Unicorn Leisure	(20)	The cottage will be closed 13/14th June for floor treatment.
18/5 - 22/5	Unicorn Leisure	(20)	
2/6 - 5/6	Unicorn Leisure	(19)	
16/6 - 17/6	Somerset C.C.	(15)	
4/7 - 5/7	S. Conquest	(10)	



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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).

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From pl

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographers and their models have caused damage in their eagerness to obtain a better picture. The taking of photos is rewarding, but special care is essential owing to the close proximity to formations that is invariably involved. Never cross tapes, watch yourself and your model at all times, and take pictures of damaged formations as well as others to demonstrate the need for conservation.

ARTIFICIAL AIDS

Artificial aids should be installed only if absolutely essential. In recent years with the increased usage of Single Rope Techniques we are presented with another problem, the proliferation of bolts and anchors appearing at the heads of pitches. These can be very unsightly and even dangerous, as excessive numbers can weaken the rock. Wherever possible, natural belays should be used; additional bolts should never be installed where existing ones are adequate.

DIGGING AND EXPLORATION

Most people have a desire to see what lies around the corner. This need not be discouraged but requires appropriate care. If exploration of a side passage may cause damage, first consult someone with a knowledge of the cave to find out if it has already been investigated. If starting a new dig, keep it tidy and avoid carrying mud on your clothing through the rest of the cave. If you find something, explore carefully and tape if necessary immediately.

VISITOR PRESSURE

It is widely accepted that the deterioration of a cave is directly related to the number and type of visitors it receives. Usage is continually rising and a large proportion of these visitors originate from the military, outdoor centres, schools etc. Unless these groups are made more aware of the impact of their activities this trend is likely to continue, with the even more rapid deterioration of our caves. It is therefore vital that adequate supervision is provided for such parties and that they use sites of the lowest conservation interest.

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Most caves have specific access requirements, ranging from asking the landowner through to the need to obtain a leader. The reasons for these restrictions vary; the landowner may require them, quite apart from any need to control access for conservation purposes, or they may be for conservation reasons alone. It can be guaranteed that invariably where there is some form of access control there is good reason for it. Failure to comply with these requirements can lead to a loss of access for everyone or to the destruction of some valuable features.

EXTERNAL THREATS

There are a number of activities carried out on the surface by non-cavers that can threaten a cave, the most serious being quarrying, which can often completely destroy a cave system. Land reclamation for agriculture and other purposes can lead to the blocking of entrances, as can indiscriminate tipping. The tipping of anything but inert material can result in pollution which can harm or destroy cave life and prove a danger to cavers. Silage effluent from farms can have similar effects. Anyone learning of any of these problems should immediately bring them to the attention of the NCA or a Regional Caving Council, especially if the cave is an SSSI or NNR.

These guidelines are taken from a National Caving Association publication. ■

FLY THE FLAG - There are still plenty of MCG sweatshirts and T-shirts for sale in various sizes and colours. There will be some in the MCG Shop at the cottage or contact Gordon Lister if you want to collect any at the Mawson Arms on Thursdays. Sweatshirts are £6 each and T-shirts are £3.50 each.

JINGLING POT, YORKSHIRE

with Mike Haselden and Martin Rowe.

by Yvonne Ward

After a little SRT practice up assorted trees, abseiling through-trips in Tunnel Cave and Cueva del Gato and a few short inclined pitches in Majorca, I decided I was ready for my first full SRT trip.

I wasn't at all nervous about this at first but I froze when I saw how I had to launch myself into the hole. The rope was rigged as a traverse line to the main hang; a tree overhanging the shaft.

Although I knew I was perfectly safe with my cows-tails clipped in at two separate points, I found it very difficult to leave the security of my rock ledge and swing out over this 120ft drop before abseiling down.

After a bit of soul-searching I committed myself and once I was sitting there in my harness I felt quite safe so I removed my cows-tails and off I went and - WOW! - it was really great.

When I was finally under way I heard Martin say to the others at the top that he felt like doing a Dave Elliot and giving me a helpful nudge over the edge. I shouted up "I heard that!". He shouted back "Oops, you weren't meant to - only joking".

The shaft has daylight to the bottom so the walls are full of shrubbery and very pretty. The only sour note was an awful smell which got worse as I neared the bottom. I feared it might be a dead SRT caver but Mike had found a dead rabbit and later Martin noticed a long-dead lamb (under my feet - yuk!).

Mike had noticed the rope rubbing on a ledge when a climber was on the rope so he put in a deviation before we all went back up.

Prussiking up was as much fun as abseiling down but more tiring. I had to stop for a rest now and again. This is where SRT has a distinct advantage over ladders as I could just sit there, arms and legs dangling free, which meant that after only a minute or two I was refreshed enough to carry on up.

When I was half way up there was a hail storm which felt as if someone was throwing small pebbles down on me. As I neared the top I wondered if I would have the same psychological problems getting back up on the ledge as I'd had launching myself off. I was feeling quite

relaxed by this time so I had no real trouble especially as Andy Beare and Co were there to advise me.

I know it was only straight down and up, apart from the deviation, but I really enjoyed it and asked when I could try another cave but Martin said that until I'd been on Dave Elliot's SRT course, I wouldn't be doing anything bigger than Jingling.

Perhaps he's right - there's so much to learn - I'll be off to Lizard Products on 23/24/25th May then watch out Berger - here I come!

DETONATORS AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS -

A POTENTIAL DANGER.

During the annual meeting of the Mendip Rescue Organisation, attention was drawn to the danger of accidental mis-firing of electrical detonators in proximity to 'through the rock' communication systems such as the 'Molephone', 'Ogophone' and 'Grunterphone'.

Tests are to be carried out to ascertain how close to one of these devices a detonator has to be to risk a spontaneous firing.

In the meantime, if you are using either detonators or one of these communication devices make sure the two do not come into close proximity.

It was also pointed out that high powered transmitters such as the Pen Hill mast could be a potential danger in this respect.

Literature is apparently available from ICI. It sounds like required reading for anyone with a bang licence or who intends to use a communications device.

Alan Dougherty.

FIRST - AID FOR CAVERS.

A series of lectures/demonstrations are to be given by Dr. Peter Glanvill, at 8pm, in the Hunters Lodge Back Room, on the following dates:

10th April
24th April
1st May
15th May

Cave Rescue Practice, March 7th 1987

In common with last year, our practise rescue day turned out to be rather cold. Sleet in Wrington Vale turned to snow as I reached the Mendip plateau. The raw, wintery weather continued all day.

To start the day, I gave a display of the MCG rescue kit. The kit is contained in three tackle-sacks, which are hung above the stair-well at Nordrach Cottage.

One sack contains 'comforts' - first-aid kit, survival bag, a large fibre-pile suit, food and an unbreakable thermos-flask. The second bag contains the 12mm diameter, low-stretch hauling rope and the final sack contains the drag sheet (which currently requires replacement), rescue pulley, harness, slings etc.

When replaced, the drag sheet will still require a short rope to lace in the victim.

I stressed that the purpose of the MCG kit was either to provide initial help to a victim, prior to a full call-out, or for simple self-help rescue; for example, hauling an exhausted caver up an entrance pitch.

The kit is not intended to replace that of the MRO and should only be used by persons competent in the techniques intended.

Tynings Barrow Cave was to be the days problem. A carry from the 'Aardvark Trap' to the surface was planned. I had produced a poster detailing the main problems of the route and, having ascertained numbers, members were designated tasks as indicated in the diagram below.

Stephanie Bohin had volunteered to be the victim. She was accompanied to the Aardvark Trap by John Beauchamp and Vince Simmonds. This party equipped the cave as normal and also carried the 'comforts' bag.

At 12.30pm Mark Buck, Alan Dougherty, Joan and Phil Goddard and Gary Pairaudeau entered the cave with hauling and rope sacks. John Coles, Vanessa Gill and Mike Haselden followed with gear to equip the narrow twenty-foot pitch for hauling.

Peter Cattemull, Neil Hutchinson, Martin Rowe and Marcus and Yvonne Ward followed latter as an additional hauling party.

We started to move the casualty at 1.20 pm, having prepared the drag-sheet in the small chamber beyond the Aardvark Trap. Early progress was good with all the novice-rescuers quickly adapting to the situation. We found that passing the drag-sheet over someones back or knees greatly facilitated progress over the numerous small drops in the passage.

The first real problem was the vertical squeeze following 'The Book'. Despite a thin victim, careful manoeuvring of the drag-sheet was necessary. The support team arranged a haul off two rather doubtful belays above the squeeze.

Continual re-assurance of the victim was necessary at this point and at the head of the pitch above.

Progress to the twenty-foot pitch was, again, quick, but as expected, this haul was the most time consuming aspect of the practice. Mike Haselden had drilled a pair of holes and fixed two 8mm bolt anchors at the pitch head. Other alternative natural belays, suitable for hauling, were not found. Lack of room above the pitch proved to be a major problem.

A horizontal squeeze follows the pitch and we found it necessary to guide the foot of the drag-sheet towards the horizontal and away from the direct line of haul. A life-line was provided to the victims sit-harness, but the haul was from the top of the drag-sheet. This proved unsatisfactory in that it constricted circulation to the victims arms. In future we intend to try hauling from a full body harness.

Too much time was spent on this haul, causing the victim some anxiety. I did not directly witness the the pitch-head arrangements, but suspect that, given the many hands available and the short pitch, a simpler approach to the problem would have been better. This feature, however, would be a very difficult problem with an injured or large victim.

The entrance pitch was quickly passed and the victim brought to the surface at 4pm. The cave was cleared at 4.30pm.

In the course of this practice the drag-sheet was worn to destruction and needs

From p5

replacing. I also hope to supplement the kit with a chest-harness and a pair of goggles as our visor does not fit most helmets.

Thanks are due to all those who took part, and especially to Stephanie Bohin as victim, John Beauchamp for obtaining permission and those who cleaned the tackle afterwards.

The growing local membership should mean that we can extend our call-out list; if you are interested to be included please contact the writer.

For next years practice I hope to use two new pieces of equipment with which MRO wishes teams to become acquainted: The 'Grunterphone' cave-to-surface 'Through the rock' communication system developed by Brian Prewer and the 'Baby-bouncer' harness designed for hauling up tight shafts.

Lost caves may hold Stone Age rock art

By David Keys

DOZENS OF examples of prehistoric cave art await discovery beneath Britain's countryside, according to two leading archaeologists.

Dr Simon Collcutt and Dr Nick Barton, Oxford University experts on Stone Age cultures in prehistoric Britain, plan to launch a search for the lost art works, most of which are likely to date from between 8000 BC and 1300 BC.

Although no Stone Age rock art has been found in Britain, both men believe that it is almost certain that several dozen Stone Age "art galleries" await discovery in hidden caves.

In a series of field studies the archaeologists have calculated that there are some 2.5 million undiscovered caves in Britain, 500,000 of which were probably open at some stage during the Stone Age.

"It's just like Gruyère cheese out there. Huge areas of Britain's countryside are riddled with undiscovered cave systems," Dr Collcutt said.

Nearly all the undiscovered caves are hidden beneath relatively recent superficial sediments bound together by modern plants. However, Dr Collcutt and

Dr Barton aim to locate lost caves by developing a "cave sniffer" — a highly sensitive device to detect ionised air which escapes from caves through rock fissures or porous sediments. They also plan to locate some caves by measuring differences in underground electrical resistance.

Apart from the special methods being developed to locate the British caves, even more modern technology will have to be used to locate rock engravings.

The walls of most caves in Britain are covered with calcite — the material stalactites are made of — and ultrasonic equipment will have to be used to detect the engravings under the calcite.

Moreover, normal methods of calcite removal would destroy the engravings, so new techniques will need to be developed. Dr Collcutt and Dr Barton have just completed a 12-month survey of all 60 known Stone Age cave sites in England and Wales. The survey was commissioned by English Heritage and its Welsh counterpart, CADW. Now, the two plan to launch their project to locate undiscovered caves.

Hopefully we will be able to invite an MRO Warder or two, to demonstrate these new items to us.

It appears to make sense to concentrate practices in our local area, and I look forward to your suggestions for 1988.

Photographer casts light on Dales cave

THE INDEPENDENT'S photographer Brian Harris waded through water up to his shoulders, climbed an enormous boulder called Big Bertha and removed several layers of clothing to squeeze through the Fox Hole — a small hole lined with thick mud — for this shot of Battlefield Chamber, part of a 236,000-year-old cave system near Ingelton, North Yorkshire, which is to be opened as a tourist attraction.

Discovered in 1974 but visited only by experienced cavers, Battlefield Chamber — so named because of the extreme difficulty in reaching it — is 300ft long, 60ft wide and 40ft high in places.

Yorkshire Dales National Park's committee has given planning permission to White Scar Show Caves to drive a tunnel 150ft long and 6ft wide to allow access to the chamber from a cavern already open to the public.

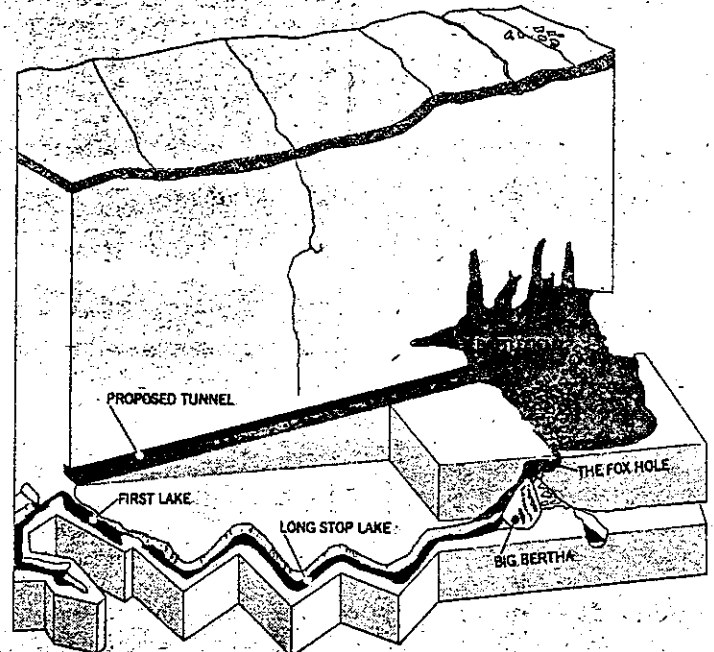
The present way in is sometimes submerged completely. It took Brian Harris more than an hour to crawl and clamber a third

of a mile through the passage to the cavern and squeeze through the Fox Hole at the third attempt.

When the tunnel has been excavated, walkways will be built and a lighting system installed to illuminate the chamber's kaleidoscopic rock formations and one of the finest collections of stalactites and stalagmites in Britain.

The White Scar cave system forms parts of the Ingleborough sites of special scientific interest. It features beautiful and delicate straw stalactites, which can be seen hanging from the cavern roof in the left foreground of the picture. The company satisfied the national park and the Nature Conservancy Council that the development would not damage 4ft-long straw stalactites near the point where the tunnel will enter the chamber.

Opponents of the scheme argued that unless an alternative means of escape was provided, the development could increase the risk of people being trapped by rising waters.



30 DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A

'WHIRLING DERVISH'

Part 2.

Day 8. Friday 19th September - Weather hot.

The next day, Saturday, had been set aside for the big trip so I had an easy day with Sue touring the local villages and sampling such delicacies as churros, cactus figs and coffee.

Day 9/Day 10. Saturday 20th/Sunday 21st September - Weather hot.

The BIG trip.

For the foreseeable future, no-one can know which or where the deepest pothole in the world is and the exciting possibility of discovering yet a deeper system exists for any keen potholer who explores abroad. In the meantime, plumbing the depths of a big one is satisfying enough. Sima GESM in the mountains east of Ronda, discovered in 1975, is currently one of the deepest at 4,300ft. The system is predominantly vertical with some awkward narrow rifts. It also sports a couple of big drops the best of which is over 200m, situated near the bottom.

Having checked and double checked our kit, those of us descending the Sima GESM accompanied by nearly everyone else staying at the villa set off in two cars and Gary's van for the mountains. Fortunately there is now a driveable rough mountain track which takes the caver to no more than an hour's walk from the Sima GESM's entrance, whereas before the nearest road was a day's walk in distance. Our Spanish leader for this trip was Pepe and thanks to his local knowledge we were able to walk more or less straight to our goal; without him we might not have found our entrance too easily in a terrain consisting of barren scrubland, limestone outcrops and shallow dry valleys, all of which have speleological potential.

In these situations, once I have changed I can breath a sigh of relief knowing that I have not forgotten some vital item. We were to descend in three separate groups. I was with Pepe, Neil and Ian and after the customary photographs and farewells we commenced our descent at 14.00hrs. Our intention was to travel light and move quickly to the bottom and out again without camping or bivouacking.

Pepe led at first. The entrance, more a steep slope than a pitch, was rigged with a Spanish style ladder and I hoped that there would be no more of these in the cave. I always find that within a short distance into a cave all apprehension ebbs away and my mind can focus on the task of moving safely along. Soon Pepe was struggling in a narrow section and I wondered if this was typical because if so we were in for a long trip. We arrived at the first pitch, only a small one of about 10ft but without rope or ladder. It was easily free climbed but for the sake of a few anchors and rope it was not worth the risk and again I felt a little doubt about our undertaking. Short sections of passages were broken by small pitches with the occasional deeper ones, but all roped although rigging and ropes were not of the best standard. Perhaps good judgment should have dictated an early exit but after months of training and waiting we were hyped up for this big trip and we forged ahead. The pitches then became deeper, up to 100m and more, followed by narrow difficult rifts. By this time we had taken the lead from Pepe who had passed his previous depth in this system. We made adjustments to some of the belays. One had the very real feeling of depth in this cave, and with every move we gained depth.

I arrived at a pitch head as Neil was going down, clipped myself to the traverse line and made ready to descend. I waited for the signal and as I watched Neil's light become more and more distant I knew this was the big one. Eventually a faint signal told me the rope was free. I checked it for slack, loaded the descender and carefully swung over to hang on to the main rope. I started the descent and looked all around me as far as my light would reach to take in the feel of this huge pitch of about 700ft. I passed a rebelay and continued the descent when I felt something wrong about the rope passing through my right hand. I stopped immediately and to my horror only inches away from the descender the rope was badly damaged. Before you could blink there was a

Cont on p 8

jammer on the rope above and I was ready to Prussik. The others were too remote for communication and there was a conflict of decision in my mind. My first reaction was to abort and make good my return to the surface but then I felt I had to effect a repair to the rig for the sake of my friends below. I hung there for a while sorting things out in my mind and then prussiked up to the last rebelay to rearrange it with some spare slack, then abseiled down close to the damaged rope and tied it off with a figure of eight. Having made safe the rope I passed the knot and continued the descent at a steady gentle rate. My left hand got tired of holding the brake in and the bottom was nowhere in sight, but I went on, observing a trail of steam coming off the damp rope generated by my very hot descender. Eventually the pitch bottom was discernible but even so it seemed an eternity before my feet touched down, much to my relief. There are times in life when words are inadequate for the expression of one's feelings. This was such a time.

In due course Pepe joined us and we pressed on down the system. At a pitch head near the bottom we were held up for some time by a Spanish team on their way out. However despite this and other difficulties we were making good time and our goal was within our grasp.

The rest of the descent and ascent was uneventful except when a Spaniard dropped a tackle bag from the top of the big pitch. Neil, who was on the rope, saw it pass by and thought it was a body. I can only leave his thoughts to your imagination. At the time I was prussiking up a lower pitch and the noise of the high velocity bag landing on the pitch bottom was amplified by the echoing walls and to me it sounded like a mass of falling rocks. I had visions of boulders severing the rope and cascading about me, so I swung into the nearby pitch wall and pretended to be a limpet. After a few seconds all was quiet again and my feelings began to improve so I continued my ascent with a little trepidation. It then fell upon me to carry the bag up the big pitch for the Spaniard.

For hour after hour we plodded up and up and at times resting briefly and occasionally eating a little food to restore our energy. We had been informed that the water in the cave was potable but we saw evidence to negate this; however we did risk a few mouthfuls whereit seemed to be safe. Nevertheless, on the exit run I felt a great thirst. Then finally after a total of twenty-five hours I climbed the last pitch into full daylight, there to be greeted by Sue capturing the moment with the camera and offering what I most wanted; a kiss and a drink.

About three hours later on our return to the villa there was a champagne celebration with a splendid meal and an evening of reminiscing. I was also volunteered to lead tomorrow's trip through Gato.

Day 11. Monday 22nd September - Weather hot.

Lesley R, Martin R, Yvonne W, Paddy N, Linda Gates and me.

The Gato through trip was regarded by most members as the highlight of the Spanish holiday; they were however limited by equipment and the need for a leader. It would have been unfair for Genaro to lead every time so after the first trip a member from a previous trip would lead. This duty fell upon me today.

Route finding is not a major problem in Gato but as I had not anticipated returning to the system I was unprepared for leading and on one or two occasions I was unsure of the way on. Neither was I fully recovered from the previous two days events so I was not feeling on top form. Nevertheless I would not have missed this second trip and I enjoyed it enormously as indeed all the others did.

Day 12. Tuesday 23rd September - Weather very hot.

Louise C, Adrian D, Alan M, Sue and me.

We were up before dawn. I remember gazing into the heavens and admiring the spectacle of a myriad stars and felt the cool, still night air about me interrupted only by the sound of nocturnal creatures in the background. A twenty minute walk saw us to the railway station where we caught the local commuter which slowly churned its way southward, stopping at every station and eventually reaching Algeciras. There we boarded a coach to La Linea. The border formalities completed we walked across the aircraft landing strip into Gibraltar where we spent the day doing the top of the Rock, the Mediterranean Steps, St. Michael's Cave, the monkeys and Marks and Spencers, amongst others. Sadly the cave, after my namesake, is the most spoiled underground system I have ever seen. It has been turned into a theatre with stage, piped music and coloured lights. The visit to Gib was worthwhile but I would not rate it highly nor would I wish to visit there again. Part three will be in the next exiting issue.

A Cave Rescue

by Stephanie Bohin.

10am Saturday March 7th 1987.

A very cold day with snow falling quite hard; what a perfect day for a cave rescue practice! We met at the MCG cottage and after the rescue kit was explained and demonstrated, and the rescue talked over, it was all change and off to Tynning's.

The rescue began just past the Aardvark Trap where laid on a flat boulder, I was tied into the drag-sheet. The furry suit felt fairly warm and comfortable, especially around my legs and back.

Going back across the Aardvark Trap Alan Dougherty had climbed into it so I could be supported from underneath. It felt so safe and comfortable that I hardly noticed being passed across. The actual lifting and pulling of me through the cave was not as bad as I expected. I felt evenly lifted and was placed down gently each time. It seemed to be going fairly quickly, and I found that everybody talking to me and telling me what was happening next helped a great deal, as lying on my back looking at rock after rock above me was very disorientating. I'd like to add that I enjoyed the rescue until I reached the pitches and the Squeeze.

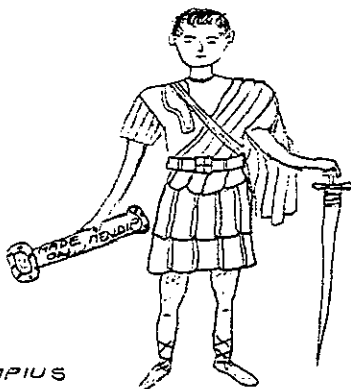
Being hauled at the first pitch we came across, I noticed that the drag-sheet pulled very hard under my arms and around my neck, almost cutting off circulation to my arms. It didn't help being left almost hanging while the pulling ropes etc. were sorted out. Going through the Squeeze was very uncomfortable; I felt jammed against rocks a number of times and when I reached a point where it would have been just as hard to go down as to go up I found I could hardly breathe, so I called out my own instructions to just be pulled. Although I appreciate that this was the hard part of the rescue, I felt very much on my own and used my legs to stop being hit against rocks, which if I was a genuine rescue victim with any injury would have been extremely painful. The final lift to the surface was smooth and to finally be out was extreme relief, on everybody's part, I feel, not just mine.

I think everybody at sometime should witness a cave rescue and see the physical effort and skill which is needed to bring a victim back to the surface; it would certainly lead to more thoughtful and safer caving.

CHARTERHOUSE LEAD

An historical snippet...

I went to Reading museum recently to see the large collection of artifacts found on the site of Silchester Roman Town. There amongst the wonderful goodies were some lead drainpipes made from lead that had been mined at Charterhouse.



JULIUS
BEAUCHAMPIUS
OF
CHARTERHOUSE

Charterhouse, Mendip, Somerset... Important lead-mining centre three miles north of Cheddar off the B3134. There was also a side product of silver and the whole enterprise was run under State control from shortly after the Conquest. The earliest known ingot from the area can be dated to 49AD, and it is known that Legio II Augusta controlled the area during the reign of Nero (54-68AD). Possibly at a later date private enterprise was allowed to lease the mines and work them. The latest dated 'pig' of lead known from here is about 168-9AD, but coin evidence shows occupation into the fourth century.

From 'Roman Britain' by P. Clayton.
Pub. Phaidon, Oxford, 1980.

MCA doings

ODE TO THE EDITOR

The member who edits the news -
Letter self have a mugful of booze,
'That went down quite well'
She said as she fell,
Hit the floor, shut her eyes and did snooze.

This sleep was a boon to the throng,
For this girl whom we know as Yvonne,
Though both helpful and kind,
Which we must bear in mind,
Tends to chat on and on, on and on.

Now I know that her wrath I am braving,
But I have this insatiable craving,
So I've come back again,
Through the mist and the rain,
'Cause I'm hooked and I want to go caving.

Anon.

An interesting entry from the logbook....

14.2.87 SWAN MINE John B, Liz
Price, Simon Knight and Son!

Good pub food at The Swan! Mine is not
locked at the moment. Probably the best
selection of mining antiquities, set
aside in display area and all still
intact. Even some cave pearls, old horse-
shoe prints etc. are around - look out
for the 'stone circles' protecting them.
Simon started playing with the crane
until I pointed out the enormous crack
in the roof slab!

John B.



FROM A RECENT "NEWS" ITEM

WELCOME....

...to two new members -
Vanessa Gill of 27 Sabrina Way, Stoke
Bishop, Bristol, BS9 1ST.
Tel: 685634

Mark Buck of Rose Cottage, Cleeve Road,
Downend, Bristol, BS16 6AD.
Tel: 560270

GREAT MOVERS! - What a busy lot you are.
Here are the new addresses of the
members who have moved...

Richard Stansfield - 15 Medlar Close,
Bellafields, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 1LS.
Tel: Guildford 300902.

Tony & Denise - 4 Rue Pecette, 31700
Blagnac, Toulouse, France.
Tel: 61-71-30-14.

Clive & Gill Towner - 2 Stanley Cottages,
Sheffield Park, Nr Uckfield, E Sussex,
TN22 3QS.

Dave Hodby - Clyro Court, Nr Hay-on-Wye,
Via Hereford, HR3 5LE.
Tel: 0497-820081.

Jeff & Gill Blackgrove - 141 Riverview
Road, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 0JQ.
Tel: 01-337-7926.

YV'S DROPPINGS...

Louise - 'Nah, if the club got a micro-
wave the members would use it to dry
their caving gear'.

While working in the cottage grounds...
Steve Taylor - 'Shall I get rid of this
old length of telegraph pole?'.

Phil Ingold - 'No, we need that for
tossing the hernia'.

STOP PRESS...

WESSEX CHALLENGE - 'In Search of the
Rusty Tankard'.

Last years winners, the BEC, are chall-
enging clubs to a chariot race and a
treasure hunt followed by Sofa Rugby etc.
Further details on venue, cost, rules,
etc will be in the next newsletter but
there will be a poster on the cottage
noticeboard. The date is June 6th -
we came third last year but only with
the help of the Army Medical Corp who
were at the cottage that weekend. Lets
really show them this year!

We need a volunteer to act as foreman
and organise a working party to supply
the materials and plans to build the
chariot. Any offers? Respectable offers
only to Yvonne at the Mawsons Arms or
on 0252-876783.