

MCG NEWS

FEBRUARY 1988 No. 198

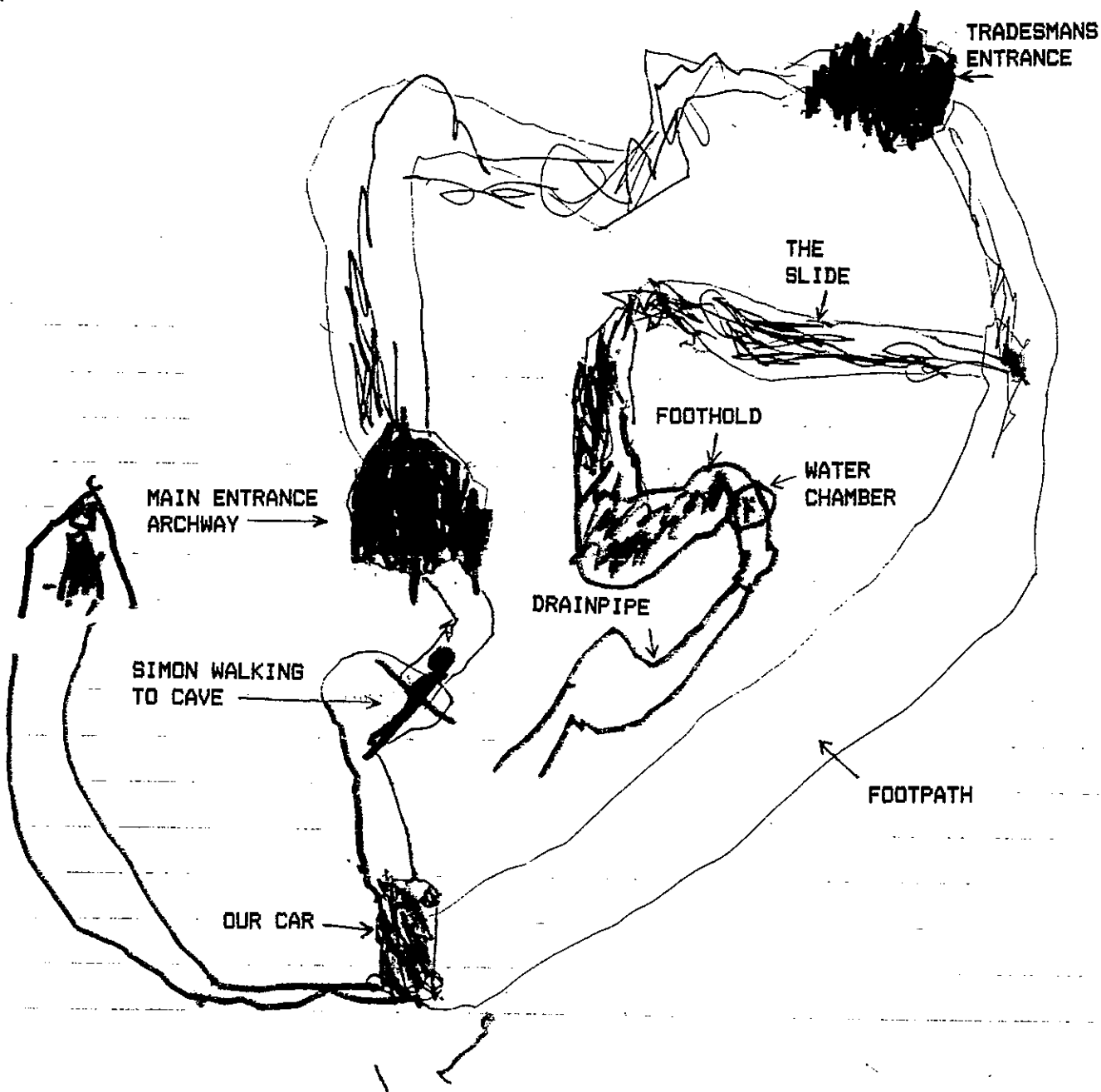
NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

NEW MCG GOATCHURCH SURVEY PUBLISHED!

CAVE: Goatchurch. **DATE:** Saturday 26th Sept '87. **TIME:** 1hr, 45 mins.
PARTY: Simon, Phil and Helen Ingold, Bryan and Michael Pittman.

This survey of Goatchurch, by Simon Ingold age 4, was drawn on only his 4th caving trip. Simon made the survey without any assistance or guidance, after caving on a Sunday. The names were dictated later for Helen to complete.

If Simon continues like this, we hope that he will survey all the Mendip caves before he starts infant school, Wales whilst he is at Junior school and Yorkshire at Secondary school. Hopefully, he will go on to University and continue his surveying exploits abroad.



SPELEODATE

1988 MEETS PROGRAMME

05 FEB	MENDIP	CHEDDAR CAVES	IAN McKECHNIE	0932-228292
06 FEB	MENDIP	RESCUE PRACTICE	ALAN DOUGHERTY	0934-863056
26 FEB	YORKS	LITTLE HULL POT	MIKE LOVELL	0734-663747
04 MAR	MENDIP	SWILDONS HOLE	MIKE CARSON	0753-655143
20 MAR	S.WALES	CRAIG-Y-FFYNNON	PETER COLLINGS-WELLS	01-423-5601
25 MAR	MENDIP	ANNUAL DINNER	BOB SPELED	0761-62797
15 APR	S.WALES	DAN-YR-OGOF	ROGER WALLINGTON	0753-43384
06 MAY	MENDIP	HOLWELL CAVERN	ROY KEMPSTON	0276-34338
20 MAY	N.WALES	TAY NEWYDDION	JOHN BEAUCHAMP	0761-62929
03 JUN	MENDIP	GEOLOGY	MALCOLM COTTER	07842-52643
17 JUN	YORKS	BIRKS FELL	JOHN MIRIAM	01-393-3955
01 JUL	MENDIP	CHARTERHOUSE	YVONNE WARD	0252-876783
15 JUL	S.WALES	TUNNEL CAVE	MIKE HASELDEN	0703-46491
05 AUG	MENDIP	LIONELS HOLE	ANDY BEARE	0494-449955
13 AUG	SPAIN	SIMA GESM	NEIL HUTCHINSON	01-267-1005
02 SEP	MENDIP	BLACK HOLE SWILDONS	GILL WARREN	0252-835051
16 SEP	YORKS	PEN-Y-GHENT	MARTIN ROWE	0252-876783
07 OCT	MENDIP	HALF-YEARLY	BOB SPELED	0761-62797
15 OCT	DERBYS	PEAK CAVERN	JOHN BEAUCHAMP	0761-62929
04 NOV	MENDIP	STOKE LANE	MIKE MINTRAM	01-673-2057
18 NOV	S.WALES	OGOF FFYNNON DDU	GEOFF BARTON	0932-849241
02 DEC	MENDIP	GB CAVERN	GORDON LISTER	01-579-3466
16 DEC	MAJORCA	VARIOUS	MARTIN ROWE	0252-876783

CAVING ACCOMMODATION for 30 people is available at the MCG headquarters, Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XW Tel. 0761-62797 National Grid Reference 5147.5606 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 sheet 182

COTTAGE FEES per night:

Prob., Assoc., Full and Hon. members	£1.25
Members children	£1.25
Reciprocal members (SWCC, NPC)	£1.25
Guest clubs and members guests	£1.75

CAMPING FEES per night: Charged at the same rate as cottage fees.
COTTAGE DAY FEES: Members using any of the cottage facilities but not staying overnight, are asked to make a reasonable donation via the donation box.



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ON THE MOVE

Pat Newman has moved to Flat 3,
116 Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor,
Stockport, SK4 4JY tel: 061-442 8808

Geoff Fisher has moved to Old Mill
House, Sandy Lane, Neptown Road,
Henfield, Sussex, BN5 9UX tel:
0273-493755

SRT COURSE

Sue Haselden is organising an SRT course for beginners over the weekend of 20th-21st February. Instruction will be by Dave Elliot of Lizard Products, at his base in Sedbergh, Yorkshire Dales. The course includes a full day's instruction indoors on Saturday, use of SRT gear and ropes, course information and guided descent of a classic Yorkshire pot on Sunday. The cost is about £40. Accommodation is not included, but packed lunch each day is. For more details, contact Sue at 3 The Close, Thornhill Park, Southampton, Hants, SO2 5RB Tel: 0703-464491

DEAR ED...

I very much enjoyed JB's article about Redding Pitts in Newsletter No.197. As I had nothing better to do on New Year's Day I resolved to visit these interesting mines and set off with my copy of the article. Alas! They could not be found, as there is no such place as Winfold. I have written to Chief Jonathen Bowtchampee of the Red Kaffiro tribe, PO Box 27, The Transkei, to see if he knows where Winfold is. Unfortunately, he is in the West Indies en-route for the Philippines and has not yet replied.

I am red with ochre - sorry, anger - and I demand an immediate explanation of where this Winfold place is. *Bob Speleo*

EDITORS REPLY:

I am soddy four the spilling pistakes in the nudeslater. I apolloquise hole-fartedly bot I did worn the comtitty that thus wood hairpin. I will muck it a Nude Yeahs Revolution to hymnproof.

signed. The Idinter Heaveen Wierd

UPPER FLOOD

Work is continuing at the choke beyond the long duck. A new bang wire has been laid and chemical persuasion has been applied.

Over Christmas, it was noted that in very wet weather the beginning of the long duck (the Lavatory Trap) will almost sump - beware! Also, the rift passage between Hannah's Grotto and the Lavatory Trap takes a small stream. If entering the dig in bad weather these points should be borne in mind.

FROM THE LOGBOOK...

25.11.87 SWILDONS

Phil Ingold, Carol Nunn, Bryan Terry, Melanie Terry, Jayne Culpin

Wet to start with, then a crawl. Got to waterfall after a few minor incidents. Came down Jacob's Ladder. Nice cave, thoroughly enjoyed it, a bit wet. Liked the Mars Bars down the cave. They grow on trees down there you know! Came the wet way back, it was much quicker. We were awarded the Gold Medals for trying and succeeding. Came out looking like the bloke off Bank's beer advert.

Jayne Culpin and Melanie Terry

MAJORCAN YV'S DRIPPINGS

Yvonne: "Toss him off, he's struggling."
Andy: "Yes please!"

Mike: "Now, put your descender on."
Sue: "What's a descender?"

Oilly: "Mike's got a lot of spare bits!"

Oilly: "What's Gorg Blau like?"
Martin: "Vertical."
Oilly: "How vertical?"
Martin: "Very!"

Dave: "A rock anchor is really an industrial method of putting a shelf up."

Sue: "Are your contact lens transparent Neil?"

Mike: "My leg's gone to sleep."
Lesley: "That makes a change!"

DEADLINE...

...for the next newsletter is Feb 28th.

CAVING AND WALKING IN FRANCE

by Mike Haselden

With only twelve days to savour the riches of the Vercors, we came away with more planned activities for the future than we started off with! However, despite the low number of cavers we achieved a fair score of trips, including some spectacular surface walks, before travelling north-east to the Haute Savoie in search of the high entrance to the Gouffre Jean Bernard. Sue and I motored down with guest Peter Eckford who is a member of Speleo Rhâl CC, BEC, CDG and now MCB! Pete and I are long-standing friends and have enjoyed many caving trips together. We arrived at Villard-de-Lans on Friday evening, 4th September, just in time to pitch tents in the dark. We were supposed to meet up with Tony Knibbs, Denise Samuel, Peter Harvey and Wendy but by Monday had almost given them up when we saw the familiar shape of Peter in shorts parading the streets of Villard. Soon we were all together making plans over drinks at the bar.

Malaterre A 120m daylight shaft with a metal footbridge spanning the chasm. On our first attempt, Pete and I went over the balustrade but with the wrong choice of direction and a hatless French team below us, we decided to postpone the full descent for another day. Some days later, Pete and I returned. This time we had the pothole to ourselves and succeeded in reaching the bottom uneventfully. From below, the entrance appears as a small point of light with just a faint glimmering on the shaft walls, creating a unique atmosphere about the place. The footbridge has a removable floor panel which offers an ideal Y-hang but the balustrade has to be roped off securely at both sides for public safety. Lamentably some of the French types did not bother with this precaution, a practice consistent with potholing without hats!

Trisou Trisou comprises two entrances and a total of twenty pitches and a couple of nasty rift sections where tackle transit is "fun". It is a classic system offering an excellent sporting trip. Regrettably though, rock anchors leave a lot to be desired. I will not say too much about our difficulty in locating the entrance. Eventually Tony, Denise, Pete and I started the descent early in the afternoon, loaded with six tackle-bags containing enough rope for about 400m of pitches and traverses. About half way down the system we ran out of time but left the bags and ropes, except on the entrance pitch, ready for another day. Pete and I returned to continue the descent and managed to just bottom with no spare rope. Half way out we were beginning to struggle with bags of wet rope when Tony and Denise presented themselves to give a much needed hand. Even so we exited late evening to be greeted by the rest of the group.

Gournier Only by dint of the resourcefulness of Peter Harvey were we able to contemplate a trip in Gournier. He produced an inflatable boat from his car boot and all the necessary hardware for the trip which was attended by all except the strictly non-caving Wendy. We explored the entire fossil passage of the system comprising 4km of very large bouldery passage with much to engage the eye of the beholder. Access to the passage is across a large and deep entrance lake, and up a ladder. The leader of course has to negotiate a tricky rock climb. Judging by overheard exclamations, the unusual technique of starting and ending a ladder climb from an inflatable boat was much enjoyed by all!

Bournillion The two Peters and I did this easy walk-in trip, exiting via the narrow and more complicated oxbow passage which requires some trial and error to find the right way. The most notable feature of this cave is the huge entrance which I believe is the biggest in Europe. It is set in a 400m limestone cliff and the entrance arch spans some 200m. Vegetation and even trees grow well inside the cave within its far-reaching daylight penetration.

Molier and Sornin The Molier, situated some 2000m above sea level at the end of the Alps, can be reached by car and offers a magnificent panorama of the mountains. Walking eastward from Molier, the entrance the Gouffre Berger can be reached in about an hour if you can avoid getting a bit lost. During our walk we could not help thinking back on the recent tragedy of the young British caver who disappeared in this area without trace only about a month before. However, the many open holes, fissures and dolines that abound in this forested karst area invite such a disaster. One has to say that solo walking or caving in such an area is a serious undertaking.

Pic de San Michelle This is a high ridge running east to west, south of the Vercors, with some peaks, dotted here and there, of about 2000m above sea level. Tony, Denise, Pete Eckford, Sue and I spent one day climbing to a peak after my namesake. The company, the weather, the fabulous views and abundance of tasty wild berries made a memorable day.

Scialet du Pot 2 Situated some twelve miles south of base camp and only accessible on foot within about seven miles of the nearest road, this more-or-less single drop of 320m has the charm of concealing itself in a deeply-rifted wooded karst region which lives up to its name of "Le Purgatoire". It took a second attempt by Pete, Sue and myself to locate the entrance and I confess that luck had a part in our success. I have heard anecdotes of crack teams who have spent up to two weeks looking for the place! I might also add that despite extensive enquiries, the French National Grid system still remains a mystery to us so guide book references were of little help. Although Pete and I had toyed with the idea of attempting a descent of Pot 2, we soon realised that a serious attempt would require a team of at least four with better equipment and more time than we had. However, having located the entrance we are now keen to crack this one some time in the future.

Gouffre Jean Bernard Ranking as probably the deepest known system in the world, the Jean Bernard entrances are grouped 2000m up on the Montagne du Folly, north-east of Samoens in the Haute Savoie. This very deep cave is not much talked about for it lacks the glamour of other systems like the Gouffre Berger or PSM. It has very few pitches and none of any significant depth. A full descent of the system, which has to be done in winter when the water is icebound on the mountain, involves a mega-epic long trip so I think we ought to do it soon. To this end, Sue, Pete and I have reconnoitred the area. We camped near Samoens and spent a day on the mountain which, apart from the interest of finding entrances, provided us with a hard slog which was well rewarded by an unfolding panorama of an area which included a glacier and many spectacular rock towers.

As usual, our venture was too quickly over so many things to do were left undone, but at least fond memories were made and a longing for more prevails.

ABANDONED COFFIN BAFFLES YORKSHIRE POLICE

A new coffin found abandoned on a lonely stretch of moorland in the central Pennines is baffling Police and Undertakers in North Yorkshire. One theory is that it is an ingenious, though macabre, piece of potholers equipment for ferrying excavated earth through narrow tunnels.

The varnished box, lined with pink plush and fitted with six gilt handles, was discovered by a farmer checking his sheep on the slopes of Ingleborough. Inside, Mr David Gardner found an Indian takeaway meal, yards of computer tape and a large number of co-op stamps. The coffin had been dumped a third of a mile from the road at Chapel le Dale.

"There wasn't a body or any sign of one and the coffin wasn't from round here," said a Police spokesman at Ingleton. "We checked with our local Undertakers, but they do a different style altogether."

Police enquiries have been extended to co-ops at Blackburn, Burnley and Bradford. But the answer may lie closer to Ingleton, according to Mr Tom Farrer, who runs the Hill Inn at Chapel le Dale. "We get all sorts going on up here, especially when cavers are around. Now this coffin were on path to Great Douk Cave. Imagine, if you were a caver digging out a new passage, what would you find handy for getting out the rubble? A coffin can slide along nicely and it's got six handles..."

No cavers have yet claimed the coffin, which is taking up most of the lost property cupboard at Ingleton Police station. But other happenings in the area, including the discovery down potholes of a litter bin and a model dinosaur used to advertise local show caves, lend weight to Mr Farrer's opinion.

MALLORCA '87-'88

by Martin Rowe

The fourth MCB Christmas expedition to Mallorca took place from 23rd December '87 to 6th January '88. Six members of MCB (Neil Hutchinson, Andy Beare, Lesley Robbins, Yvonne Ward, Martin Rowe and Mike Haselden) were joined by five others (Sue and Dilly Haselden, Frank, Val and Phyllis Murphy). A total of 10 caves were visited. Most of these have been described in the reports of previous years (see newsletters 179, 185 and 191). Caves found or descended for the first time this year were:

Cova de Muntanya (Descended to 2nd pitch) Although beginning as a horizontal cave with an entrance at the foot of a rocky outcrop we soon realised this was really an avenc (ie. a shaft). We were able to place bolts for the first pitch only, so a return visit will be required.

Avenc Fonda (Descended) This has eluded MCB in previous years and almost did so again. As we were about to give up the search, NH uttered the now famous words "I think I might have found something". What he found was the entrance to the longest single drop on the island - some 168m. Unfortunately a very large boulder was poised above the entrance, which threatened those below and although it was possible to descend to the first rebelay, it was decided that it would be advisable to do some gardening. As a result the large boulder above the entrance is now a few metres below the entrance and resisting all encouragement to be 168m below the entrance.

Cova de Lienaire Close to sea level, and basically one very large chamber full of mud almost to the ceiling. The space between the top of the mud and the roof is accessible to cavers, and varies in height from flat out crawls to a few high avens. Some parts of the cave are very well decorated, but care is required as CO2 levels are high.

Five-to-Three Found during the search for Fonda, at 2.55pm according to MH's (broken) watch. A small joint in the rock was noticed, and it was possible to drop stones to a ledge below. A few minutes work soon enlarged the joint to allow access to a shaft, at least 15m deep by the "dropped-stone" test. Descent not completed due to the discovery of Fonda.

Avenc de na Blanca (Not descended) Another cave which has eluded MCB on earlier visits. Found by AB and NH, an 84m deep avenc, not descended due to lack of time.

Each time we visit Mallorca we expect to tie up the loose ends from previous visits and leave the island for the last time having done everything worth doing. Mallorca however is full of surprises and each year we leave behind more loose ends than we started with. Besides the known covas and avencs, there must be many more waiting to be found as Five-to-Three illustrated. The MCB will probably be in Mallorca again next Christmas.

Fonda footnote Dave Elliot organised a hauling party after we left and by attaching slings and a pulley system they managed to lift one end of the boulder, until it was able to slide past the narrow section and continue the 500 or so feet to the bottom of the pitch. With the boulder out of the way, they were then able to descend.

EXPEDITION NEWS -SIMA GESM UPDATE

Anyone still interested in prussiking a kilometre with a bag of wet rope, should contact Neil Hutchinson BEFORE FEB 28th as the transport and permit arrangements are now being finalised. It will not be possible to include more names after this deadline so it's make your mind up time. The overall cost per person is expected to be £250 max, which includes travel, accommodation, equipment purchase, permit and insurance but not food and drink. A deposit of £50 from each caving member will be required by Neil before March 1st so that rope may be purchased.

Travel to Ronda will be by ferry to Cherbourg followed by a long drive, aiming to arrive by the evening of Sat 13th Aug and returning home by Mon 29th Aug. Accommodation is still not finalised, but will probably be a campsite.

Cottage doings

AGM C AGENDA

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

The cottage is extremely busy at the moment - here is the complete list of bookings in the near future:

13 FEB-14 FEB FARNBOR. & CAMB. YHA (8)

POWER SUPPLY

Bryan Pittman has provided the following information concerning the electrical supply to the cottage:

The cable laid to the cottage from the Fry's is of limited capacity, and the Electricity Board only guarantees to maintain voltage within 5% if a maximum of only 15 amps is drawn. Above this current only heating loads are advised. Use of televisions or freezers would not be recommended.

Now that the storage heaters may be replaced, it would be wise to consider whether the cottage ought now to be equipped with a 100 amp supply direct from the road. Although it would not be cheap, it would enable the club unrestricted use of electrical equipment. If the club does not take this option it ought to confirm this information with the Electricity Board, and put a plaque by the circuit breaker boards to remind future members of the restricted power available.

While on the subject it might be wise to remind members that the whole of the electricity used is on off-peak during the off-peak period, and that the bottom element of the hot water tank is automatically switched on then, the top element only remaining on during the day (unless the booster switch has been put on which will put on both elements until the next off-peak period).

SHOWERS

The extractor fan in the showers no longer operates automatically when the lights are switched on. It is now necessary to switch the extractor fan on at the box adjacent to the shower room door. Please make sure YOUR HANDS ARE DRY when doing this!

The Annual General Meeting of the Mendip Caving Group will be held at 3pm on Saturday 26th March 1988 at Nordrach Cottage.

Chairman - to be decided.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 4th Apr 87
3. Officers reports.
Questions and comments are invited to:

Secretary	Neil Hutchinson
Treasurer	Mike Lovell
Cottage Warden	John Beauchamp
Editor	Yvonne Ward
Recorder	Ian McKechnie
Meet Secretary	Geoff Barton
Tackle Master	Alan Dougherty
Ordinary Member	Gordon Lister

4. Election of Officers for 88/89.
Any nominations should be sent to the Secretary prior to the meeting.
5. Election of Auditors for 88/89 - general and MCG shop accounts.
6. Any other business.
7. Date and venue of next meeting.

The annual dinner will be held in the evening at the Star Hotel, Wells. A coach will leave the cottage after the AGM, returning to Nordrach at 12pm.

Tickets for the dinner are available from all committee members.

MCG GETS ME DOWN!

There are still plenty of sweatshirts for sale plus the new "MCG GETS ME DOWN" t-shirts, in many sizes and colours. If you want to fly the flag for the group then Gordon Lister is the man to see.

He will have a selection of t-shirts at the Mawson Arms on Thursdays but if you want a sweatshirt could you please let him know in advance.

The t-shirts are £3.50 each
Sweatshirts are £6.00 each.

PWLL DYFFN, OR THE UPS AND DOWNS OF SRT

by Steve Redwood

Members of party: Steve Redwood, Brian Murlis, John Beauchamp and Digger Hastilow.

Pwll Dyffn is a purely vertical cave consisting of five consecutive pitches. The entrance is on the mountain above Dan Yr Ogof and about an hours 1-in-4 walk from where the cars are parked.

As usual John was changed and ready before the rest of us had even opened the boot. The walk to the cave was somewhat uncomfortable in wetsuits especially as we had spent four hours the previous day tramping around Pant Mawr looking for Pant Mawr Pot (but that is another story). After John's superb map reading we eventually found the cave using divining rods.

The entrance is fairly restricted and leads almost directly to the head of the first pitch. Using two hangers, this was rigged taking us 30ft to the head of the second pitch where a traverse line was needed to give us an unrestricted abseil for 50ft to the bottom. A squeeze through a short rift took us to the third pitch. This is about 50ft but the rope ran out after 30ft. Luckily a full descent was not necessary as a swing across led to an inlet passage at the head of the fourth (big) pitch.

A traverse was necessary to take us out over the pitch which as well as dropping 100ft below extended at least the same distance above. From the bottom, a scramble through boulders led to the final 50ft pitch. A traverse line gave us a clear drop down a fine cylindrical shaft. At the bottom was a deep pool which was crystal clear (at least it was until Brian jumped in it!).

Up to now things had gone smoothly but we had not reckoned to the mischief Steve and Digger get up to whilst de-rigging. Everything was fine until the head of the big pitch. After removing the bolts and karabiners and securing them together Steve somehow managed to drop them with the spanner down an impenetrable rift. Much swearing and cursing followed. A message was sent up to the surface, where Brian and John were patiently sitting, to send down another spanner for de-rigging. Brian begrudgingly sent his down the rope and Steve carefully passed it to Digger imploring him not to drop it. Of course he dropped it!

With the remaining hangers left *in situ* the party dejectedly left the cave and tramped (*sic*) back down the mountain in the darkness.

WOOKEY HOLE, ABOVE CHAMBER 9

by Brian Murlis

Members of party: Brian Murlis, John Beauchamp, "Tom" Thomas and Carl Wright.

This was primarily a trip to the upper extensions of chamber 9, led by Carl, who is one of the showcave guides.

We had a luxury start to the trip, changing in the cave, with the lights on! We followed the showcave route to chamber 9 (still with the lights on) where a climb over the rails, and a traverse around, leads to the start of the climbs.

The climbs are rather exposed, as John kept reminding us, but not too difficult and soon reach a landing about 100ft above chamber 9. The view down, especially with the showcave lights still on, is awe inspiring to say the least.

The next climb takes you to a taped-off grotto where a rather blunt sign reminds passers-by of the damage caused in the past.

The final climb (John's favourite) leads past the "Donkey's Dick", an aptly named stalactite which was dripping well, to a horizontal rift passage very near the surface - definately not a place for those with a phobia about spiders!

The descent was interesting with John changing his underwear at regular intervals. The exposure being made more evident by the fact that all below you is lit up giving a very real feeling of depth!

Safely down we retraced our steps almost to the entrance where a passage on the left takes you into a series of crawls leading to a wide but very low bedding plane involving two caving classics. The first being The Grille, a row of columns and a squeeze through the widest gap. Unfortunately John was larger than the gap and had to stay there. The bedding plane continued, getting lower (12ins or less) leading to the second classic, a very awkward squeeze especially on the return over some knobbly stalagmites and up into an extensive but very low bedding plane.

It was interesting to note that the whole cave is formed in Dolomitic Conglomerate. Many thanks to Carl for a very enjoyable and spectacular trip.

MCB CONQUER MT BLANC

Determined to teach his offspring a thing or two, Reg Clarke, proposals manager EW Division set about proving that he wasn't just a decrepit "old baldy" but in fact followed in the same vein as the likes of Sir Edmund Hilary.

However, Reg fully realised that many months of continued hard training would have to be suffered before he could attack his goal, the summit of Mt Blanc. A fitness programme building up to five mile jogs or a mile of swimming, every night, was started at the beginning of the year and rehearsals for the grand event included expeditions to the Lake District in February and Easter and the Isle of Skye at the beginning of May. Accompanying him were four members of the Mendips Caving Club (!) led by Geoff Barton.

At the end of May the team set off for the first attempt on Mt Blanc but excessive amounts of snow prevented them from going higher than 11000ft.

Encouraged by this experience a second attempt was made in August by Reg and Cliff Hickman. The climbers set off on foot starting at the "Col de Voza" at 5528ft progressing to the "Aiguille Du Gouter" 12656ft before the final assault. Reg slogged his way to the top completing the trek along arrets with the world falling away on either side.

On 21st August Reg reached the summit providing in his 50th year conclusive proof that he isn't just a decrepit "old baldy"!

The MEL Bulletin October '87

WARDEN FOR THE MENDIPS

The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has appointed a Warden, Tom Elkins, who in turn has recruited a band of seventy volunteer Wardens to help with the work.

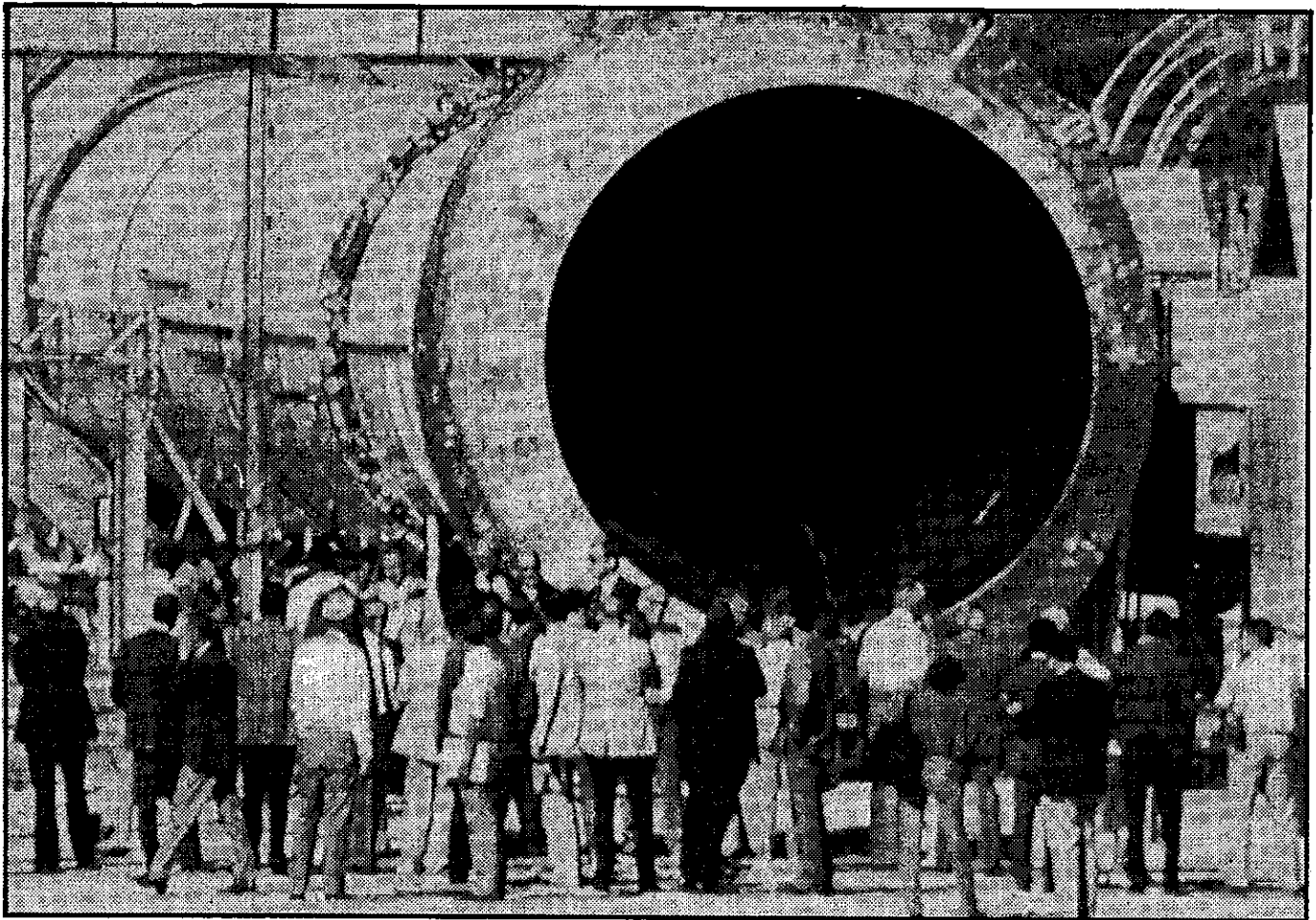
Ian Dagger of Somerset District Association is one of those seventy and, in a recent issue of the D.A. magazine, *The Cyder Press*, he explained to fellow members what the job entailed.

"The warden service is an advisory service available to visitors and the landowners who live in, and in many cases derive their living from, the area."

Volunteer wardens "visit the popular areas at weekends to ensure that everything is running smoothly. Many of the wardens are also plodding the footpaths and will be instigating policy of liaising with landowners to ensure that footpaths and bridleways are kept in a useable state and waymarking these paths."

IMPROVED ACCESS TO UPPER FLOOD

The recent article in *Descent* about our 300ft extension to Upper Flood stimulated great interest on Mendip. This led to severe congestion in the narrow entrance pipe and long queues were forming at weekends. To alleviate this problem, the joint Mendip Caving Group / Somerset County Council Access Control Committee agreed to install a larger pipe. The contract was awarded last week to Euratunnel, and our picture below shows the first section of pipe being lowered into position. (Note Bruce Bedford Editor of *Descent*, eighth from right talking to MCG Secretary Neil Hutchinson ninth from right, and MCG Editor Yvonne Ward sixth from right).



Patrick Murphey, site engineer for Euratunnel, said "We are very pleased to win the contract. We are treating this as a pilot project and are not passing the full cost onto Mendip Cavers Club. We are negotiating with the South Whales Caving Group to install a pipe of similar dimensions in Otter Cave, and intend eventually to join them together beneath the River Severn. We believe we can undercut the toll charge for the Severn Bridge by 20%."

Our second picture shows Malcolm Cotter emerging from the mud crawl in Upper Flood soon after the breakthrough was made. Malcolm said "I think the new pipe is a boon to digging but I am a little concerned about conservation. I had hoped that Upper Flood could be designated an SSSI. I intend to raise this matter at the Annual General Meeting."

Following the success at Upper Flood the BEC, the Wessex and the Shepton have formed themselves into the Amalgamated Rectum Construction Group and have begun building a 12 lane tunnel - the Great North Atlantic Tunnel, Somerset to Philadelphia Excavation Expedition (GNATSPEE). As this is well beyond their own finances they have sought sponsorship. A well known brewery has stepped in to help and their scheme is to be known as the Whatneys GNATSPEE Project.

