

* MENDIP CAVING GROUP BULLETIN *

NUMBER 9

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YOU DO HON RON, RON, YOU DO HON RON!

by Martin Rowe

In 1968, the MCG was a small London-based club with a fairly basic hut that lacked most facilities. Today, it is a thriving group of around 130 members drawn from all parts of Britain as well as overseas, with probably the best purpose-built cottage on Mendip, if not in England.

Although many people have contributed to the success of the MCG, one person's contribution in particular over 22 years stands out. First as an ordinary member, then as Treasurer and most recently as a Trustee, he has given exceptional service to the Group. Throughout this time he has given freely of his legal knowledge on all matters caving. For example, ten years ago after the cottage was destroyed in a gas explosion that wiped out many years effort, some of us thought that the MCG was finished, but at the EGM that followed he saved the day by announcing that we were adequately insured for our loss. Since then the Group has gone from strength to strength.

In recognition of his exceptional service, the committee are pleased to announce that Ron Saunders has been made an Honorary Member of the Mendip Caving Group.

Signed Jonathan Roberts, Mike Lovell, Yvonne Rowe, Martin Rowe, John Beauchamp, Brian Murlis, Steve Redwood and Wayne Hiscox. 4th March 1990.

A REPLY FROM RON AND MARGARET SAUNDERS

Dear Committee and Members,

You do excel at keeping a secret and giving wonderful surprises but to have you do it twice in 10 years is really quite exceptional.

Neither Margaret nor I had any notion of what was going to happen on 31st March at our annual dinner at the Webbington Country Club. It was not until Jonathan said that he had a piece of paper in his hand dated 1968 signed by Tony Knibbs and Brian Hillman being an application for membership by someone who later became treasurer that I realized that the allusion was to me.

You all surprised me with a birthday party in Swildons on my 60th birthday when you brought up quite a lump in my throat and now you've done it again when I'm nearly 70 by making me an honorary member. That in itself was honour enough but to give us presents as well! The binoculars are great and have excellent feel. Thank you very much.

It was Richard Kearton's book on British Birds Nests which has intrigued Margaret and me. How did you know that I was collecting them? It was several years ago that I discovered some of the Kearton brothers books in the Kearton Guest House in Thwaite on a visit to the Yorkshire Dales since when Margaret has made me presents of a number of copies, very difficult to find as they are all out of print (perhaps I should explain that the Keartons were our earliest successful naturalist photographers). The edition which you've given me is nearly 100 years old - published in 1895 and in very good condition too. How on earth you discovered that it was a volume I did not have we cannot imagine. I shall prize it greatly, once again thank you very much, you are all very kind.

Margaret and I were also deeply touched by your kindness in presenting her with a charming ammonite pendant. I feel it is appropriate to say that whatever I've been able to do for MCG has always been with her backing, help and encouragement.

We think you are the kindest of conspirators and the best of friends.

Yours sincerely
Ron and Margaret.

P.S. And to think that at the AGM I told you that I'd no wages as justification for making an amendment to the constitution!

OUT WITH THE OLD

Mike Lovell retired as Treasurer at the AGM, Jon Roberts narrowly missed re-election as Secretary, Steve Redwood was replaced as Tacklemaster and Martin Rowe retired as Meet Secretary. The Group extends its thanks for their work on the committee, especially Mike Lovell who has served as Treasurer for 5 years.

IN WITH THE NEW

Malcolm Cotter takes over as Secretary, Martin Rowe becomes Treasurer, Adrian Duckett is Tacklemaster and Dave Tooke is the new Meet Secretary. We welcome them and wish them well.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Bill Headington has become a full member after a proving trip in St Cuthbert's accompanied by M. Rowe and S. Cotter.

WELCOME TO...

...Steve Marshall, RADC Officers Mess, CAD Kinton, Lemington Spa, Warks, CV33 OYL who isn't yet a prospective member but who soon will be, we hope.

ON THE MOVE

Bill Headington, 126 Boston Manor Road, Brentford, Middx. Tel: 081-568-0189
Steve Albino, 2 Dorgan Close, Prescott, Merseyside.

Chris Nevard, 24 Ardmere Road, Lewisham, London, SE13. Tel: 081-318-5423

Bill Platt, 7 Coles Lane, Linton, Cambridge, CB1 6JS. Tel: 0223-894201
Correction: Arthur Spain's telephone no. 0749-67358

Does anyone know the correct address for Stephanie Bohin? Please tell the editor.

BARN DANCE & BONFIRE

This year the HYGM and Barn Dance will be on Sat 3rd November with an MCG bonfire and fireworks party. The hall is booked, and Simon and Val will be providing the music. We need volunteers to prepare the buffet - please let John Beauchamp know what food you can provide (cost to be reimbursed, of course).

WATERWHEEL SHALL ET

Following a change in management at Charterhouse Outdoor Activities Centre, MCG are once again the keyholders for Waterwheel. Full access arrangements will be announced ASAP, in the meantime the key is in the Upper Flood keysafe, which means that it is presently available only to Upper Flood leaders who may issue it to MCG members and bona fide visitors.

UPPER FLOOD LEADERS

The full list of current leaders is: Malcolm Cotter, Jon Roberts, Wayne Hiscox, John Beauchamp, Andy Beare, Vince Simmonds, Brian Murlis, Steve Redwood, Mike Haselden, Gordon Lister, Lee Hawkswell. The committee is undertaking a review of leaders. ANY OF THE ABOVE WHO WISH TO REMAIN ON THE LIST OF LEADERS MUST CONFIRM THIS WITH MALCOLM COTTER BEFORE 30.06.90. Unfortunately, any leader who fails to contact Malcolm will be removed from the list. Anyone else who would like to be a leader should also contact Malcolm.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

17 May	Wellingboro Coll	(20)
18 May	Dave Gibson	(11)
28 May - 01 Jun	Royal Navy	(??)
02 Jun - 03 Jun	Member's weekend	
08 Jun - 10 Jun	Dave Walsh VSU	(12)
08 Jun - 10 Jun	Plymouth Poly	(12)
22 Jun - 24 Jun	Barnet Cave Group	(6)
26 Jun - 29 Jun	Goff Daine	(??)
29 Jun - 01 Jul	Steve Taylor VSU	(12)
29 Jun - 01 Jul	Action Sports	(12)
03 Jul - 06 Jul	Goff Daine	(??)
07 Jul - 08 Jul	Member's weekend	

AGM YVS' DROPPINGS

Comment by Jim Hanwell of MRO in his speech at the MCG dinner:

"The MCG is the sort of club that MRO love - I needn't say any more!"

This could mean either (1) that we are competent cavers - or (2) that we never go caving!

MENDIP CAVING GROUP CONSTITUTION AND RULES

(as amended by the AGM, 31.03.90)

1. NAME. The full name of the Group is the MENDIP CAVING GROUP.
2. OBJECT. The object of the Group is, for the benefit of the public, the furtherance of all aspects of the scientific study and conservation of caves.
3. MEMBERSHIP. Membership shall be open to anyone over the age of 16 years with an interest in the objects of the Group.

There are four classes of membership as follows:

(a) FULL MEMBERS, i.e. people who have been probationary members for at least six months, who have completed a training trip (as defined by the committee) and who have been approved for full membership by a majority vote at a committee meeting.

(b) PROBATIONARY MEMBERS, i.e. people who have been proposed by two full members, who have attended at least one Group meet where committee members were present, who have been advertised in the newsletter or notice board for at least one month and who have been accepted as probationary members by a majority vote at a committee meeting.

(c) ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, i.e. either (i) former full members who are unable to play a full part in Group activities, but who wish to continue their association with the Group. Their change of membership requires the approval of a majority vote at a committee meeting.

Or (ii) persons who wish to become members of the Group, but who are unable to take part in the regular caving activities and who have been approved by a majority vote at a committee meeting.

(d) HONORARY MEMBERS, i.e. people who have given exceptional service to the Group. Election to this class of membership requires a unanimous vote of the committee.

Note: Persons aged under 16 years may be sponsored by a member and attend meetings as their guests.

4. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP. Use of the Group's cottage at reduced rates, use of Group equipment and the library, free publications and advice of meetings and activities. Full members may stand for election to the committee and vote at general meetings.

Associate members have similar privileges except that they have no vote at general meetings, and not more than one at a time may hold office on the committee.

Probationary members have the same privileges as associate members except that they may not stand for election to the committee.

5. EXPULSION FROM MEMBERSHIP. Membership may be terminated by the decision of two-thirds of the committee (all being present). The member shall be notified of the intention of expulsion, and shall be given reasonable opportunity of attending the meeting and presenting a case. A full or associate member may appeal against the committee's decision to a general meeting called for this purpose by the secretary.

6. SUBSCRIPTIONS are payable on January 1st each year. Members failing to pay by January 31st may have their membership terminated. Members joining after June 30th in any year shall pay reduced subscriptions at pro-rata rates. The amount of subscription shall be determined at a General Meeting and notified to members in time to take effect from the next due date of subscription.

Members may apply to the committee for consideration of a reduced personal subscription, in three circumstances: (i) Members aged 60 or over (ii) Members living overseas for at least 6 months a year (iii) Members on low income

7. COMMITTEE. The Group's business shall be regulated by a committee of eight members. They will normally be elected at the annual general meeting to serve for a period of twelve months. If a post falls vacant during the year, a substitute officer may be co-opted for the remaining period. The honorary officers shall be: Secretary, Treasurer, Meet Secretary, Cottage Warden, Tacklemaster, Editor, Recorder and Ordinary Committee Member.
8. COMMITTEE MEETINGS. Any officer may call a committee meeting. Four officers shall constitute a quorum. The decision of the committee shall be binding on all members unless varied by a majority vote at a general meeting.
9. GENERAL MEETINGS.
 - (a) An Annual General Meeting shall be held in the Spring. At other times an Extraordinary General Meeting may be requested by either the secretary, or three committee or five full members.
 - (b) Seven days notice in writing of a general meeting shall be given to all members by the secretary.
 - (c) The chairman of each meeting will be appointed by the committee.
 - (d) Nominations for office and proposals to change the Constitution and Rules shall reach the secretary at least 21 days before the meeting.
 - (e) Votes at general meetings shall be counted by two tellers appointed at the meeting. Voting for officers shall be by secret ballot and the number of votes cast shall not be revealed.
 - (f) The committee may grant a postal vote to any member who applies in good time to the secretary.
10. FINANCE.
 - (a) The Group's funds shall be placed in such account, or accounts, with banks or be otherwise invested as the committee shall direct.
 - (b) The treasurer shall keep proper accounts and receipts of all transactions.
 - (c) The signatures of two members, as nominated by the committee, shall be required on all cheques and notices of withdrawal.
 - (d) Two auditors shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting to serve for a period of one year. They shall audit the books up to the end of each calendar year, and may conduct audits at such times as they may deem necessary and report thereon to the committee.
 - (e) The signatories may require the authority of the committee before signing cheques etc. for sums in excess of £200.
 - (f) A member may not hold more than £150 of Group funds in the form of cash for more than 28 days.
11. THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES of the Group may be changed only if approved by at least four-fifths of the members voting at a general meeting. No amendment may be made which will cause the Group to cease to be a charity at law.
12. NEITHER the Mendip Caving Group, nor the committee of the Group, nor any member, can accept responsibility for any loss, injury or death arising from a Group activity, howsoever caused. In particular, members and guests stay at the cottage and camp and cave with the Group entirely at their own risk. Nor is responsibility accepted for the loss, or any damage to personal property. Members of the Group and guests are deemed to know of, and accept without qualification, this rule.
13. THE COMMITTEE shall have full powers to deal with any matter that might arise that is not otherwise provided for in the Constitution and Rules.
14. TRUSTEES. There shall be four trustees of the Group. The first trustees shall be appointed by the committee, and the property of the Group (other than cash which shall be under the control of the treasurer) shall be vested in them to be dealt with as the committee shall direct by resolution (of which an entry in the Minutes Book shall be conclusive evidence). The trustees shall be indemnified against risk and expense out of the Group property. The trustees shall hold office until death or resignation or until removed from office by a resolution of a majority of a quorum of the committee present and voting at any meeting. Where necessary, the committee shall, by a like resolution, nominate the person or persons to be

appointed the new trustees and, for effecting such nominations, the secretary is hereby nominated as the person to appoint the new or additional trustees of the Group within the meaning of Section 36 of the Trustee Act 1925. He shall, by deed, duly appoint the person or persons so nominated by the committee as the new or additional trustee or trustees of the Group. The provisions of the Trustee Act 1925 shall apply to any such appointment. Any statement of fact in any such deed of appointment shall, in favour of a person dealing bona fide and for value with the Group or the committee, be conclusive evidence of the facts so stated.

15. **DISSOLUTION OF THE GROUP.** In the event of the dissolution of the Group, and after satisfaction of all due debts and liabilities, any remaining assets may not be distributed amongst the members but will pass to a body with similar objects established for exclusively charitable purposes or to some other charitable body.
16. **THE GROUP** recommends that all members read and act in accordance with the National Caving Code as published by the National Caving Association, enclosed with this Constitution and Rules.

NATIONAL CAVING ASSOCIATION - The National Caving Code

SAFETY- A PLAN TO BE SAFE

CONSERVATION

Always include experienced cavers in the party.

Pick a cave or pothole within everyone's capabilities.

Leave a note of your trip and latest time of return with a responsible person and report to them on your return.

Ask for, and act on, local advice.

No less than four in the party and keep together.

Take notice of the local weather forecast.

One reliable cap-lamp for each person. Without light, you're lost.

Boots, helmet and warm clothing are essential.

Emergency lights, food and first aid kit should always be taken.

See that ladders, belays and ropes are inspected and rigged properly before hanging your life on them.

Accident underground is always easy: rescue is sometimes difficult, some-times impossible.

Falls, loose boulders, rising water and exposure cause most accidents.

Exit takes more effort than entry. Plan with the return in mind.

Clumsiness can wreck cave formations.

Observe marked routes - they are there to safeguard the cave.

Never leave litter or spent carbide in a cave - pollution kills cave life.

Set others a good example when caving - persuade them to follow it.

Enlist the help of the Regional Caving Council in passing on scientific information to be recorded nationally.

Responsible leaders will avoid taking novices where they may accidentally cause damage.

Vandalism means damage to stals, mud floors, rimstone pools, etc. - help prevent it.

Alert your Regional Caving Council to any developments which may possibly damage caves.

Take care not to disturb cave fauna or remains which may be of archaeological interest.

Invoke help in taping off formations to keep caves in their undamaged state for the generations to follow us.

Organise a trip to clear up litter now and again.

Nature needs YOUR help to safeguard her interests NOW!