

# Mendip Caving Group

## NEWS

NUMBER 229

JULY 1993

### DERBYSHIRE "MINES" MEET, 22-23 MAY

by Tim Francis

Participants: Joe Frampton, Joel Corrigan, James Allen, Lee Hawkeswell, Pete Hollings (WLCC), Tim Francis.

Judging by the huge volumes of rope that arrived at Orpheus on Friday night, the more suspicious members might have suspected that something was afoot. Shock! Horror! The youth contingent were about to sabotage the "Derby Mines" weekend. The Beza-Elizabeth exchange trip down Nettle was on. Accusations that I had been deliberately vague about the exact nature of the trip are completely denied. However, the fall-out rate was kept to a minimum with one alternative trip down Jug Holes (Ed: see Joan Goddard's article on page 4).

After having parted company with a considerable sum of goodwill, six of us began the descent of the entrance pitch at around two o'clock. This 160ft pitch is broken up by three rebelay and a deviation before landing on the washed out lava beds of the Flats. Interestingly, several of the bolts have been filled in - surely a candidate for a spot of DMM-ing? After the Canyon (30ft) we split up into two groups. The first group (Joel, Lee, Joe) were to descend via Elizabeth Shaft. This 190ft pitch is the largest underground shaft in Derbyshire. It starts off fairly tight but soon bells out into a fantastic pot. At the foot of the shaft two small pitches, 25ft and 15ft, follow. Joel was successfully introduced to the delights of rigging from dodgy bolts. Roll on France! The second pitch is rather tight (cavers speak). So tight, in fact, that Joe abandoned an abseil in favour of the free-fall technique with considerable style. His fall was broken by Joel who conveniently hung around below.

The second team (Tim, Pete, James) were, by this time, descending via Crumble and Beza route. Unlike Elizabeth Shaft this route is constricted for much of its length, and follows a tight rift. A paucity of safe naturals means that a free hang is difficult to obtain towards the bottom of Beza (150ft). However, the team were able to reach the Shakes at the bottom in time to hear team one thrashing around in "the Sting". This section has a particularly nasty duck which is especially awkward if you are of large build, and hampered by bits of SRT kit. Once through, the two teams met up for a well earned Mars washed down with Ribena. Tim and Joel went for a potter down some of the interesting stuff below Beza. A promising void was noticed at the Oxlow end, and a tentative dig started. Despite removing several boulders, a crowbar would be needed to make any progress.

Having swapped routes, team one made a rapid exit. The only delay was at Beza where Joel discovered he could not heave tackle bags from the top of this tight rift. So it was back down to sort out the problem. Pete and James did their best to liven up team two's exit, getting stuck in the duck and at the top of the tight 15ft pitch respectively. Eventually both teams were reunited at the Flats, and a slow but steady exit was made. Joel was volunteered to carry out two tackle bags. This was only fair as he needed some Berger training. We eventually made it out by 10pm and hence missed the pub.

*continued on page 4*



## ON THE MOVE

Laurence Conisbee has moved to:  
Petterills, Ellenhill, Cromer,  
Norfolk NR27 0DC tel: 0263-513615

## CONGRATULATIONS . .

..to Michael Pittman on becoming a Full Member.

## WELCOME . . .

...to Tom (Joe) Frampton, 75a Highfield Park, Wargrave, Berks RG10 8LB tel: 0734-404861  
...and to Mike Eeles, 20 Larchwood Drive, Englefield Green, Surrey TW20 0SH tel: 0784-431098  
...who have both been accepted as Probationary Members

## APPLICATION . .

..for Probationary Membership:  
David Gwillim, 55 Wellington Court, Mayfield Road, London W12 9LT tel: 081-740-4470  
(Proposed by M Cotter, C Allison.)  
This will be considered at the committee meeting on 4th September

## MEMBERS' PERKS

The AGM instructed the committee to reconsider the Privileges of Membership and bring a proposal to the EGM in October. Trouble is, the committee have looked at the Constitution and can't see what is wrong with the existing clause. If anyone feels strongly that the clause should be re-written will they please write to the secretary by 31st August. Otherwise, the EGM will be replaced by an informal forum.

## WHERE ARE THEY?

We will be celebrating 40 years of the MCG in 1994 and the committee would like to contact as many members from the early days as possible, with a view to inviting them to the annual dinner. If you know the current, or recent, address of any old ex-members then please contact Joan Goddard or Arthur Spain.

## TACKLE AMNESTY

Recently, members arrived at the cottage on a Saturday morning to find all the ladder (other than expedition ladder) and all the wire tethers signed out to places like Wales and Derbyshire. Most of the ladder has now been returned but some is still missing. Several ropes are also absent without leave, and we have very few tethers. If you have any Group tackle please return it now so that Key West can take stock to find out what is missing. For future reference, if you arrive and find all the ladder booked out, phone any committee member who will give you the combination to the padlock on the expedition ladder.

## EARWIG . . .

...in on the Committee meetings held 5.6.93 and 3.7.93... Charlie Allison and Lee Hawkeswell are MCG's licenced SLB users... Volunteers are required to shore up Bone Hole... Old ex members are to be invited to the 1994 Annual Dinner to help celebrate MCG's 40th anniversary... MCG is now banking with Giro as it offers free banking (with 2-signature mandate)... Y Rowe is retiring as Charterhouse leader... Charlie Allison will take over from 1.8.93... Cottage extension: drawings to be produced; planning permission to be obtained; Wayne Hiscox has agreed to co-ordinate the building effort... £15 deposit required on cave keys loaned out... Lee organising storage space in bedrooms...

## COTTAGE BOOKINGS

18 Jul	-	22 Jul	Navy
26 Jul			Ealing Scouts (6)
30 Jul	-	31 Jul	Phil Ingold (14)
06 Aug	-	07 Aug	Members' Weekend
03 Sep	-	04 Sep	Members' Weekend
01 Oct	-	02 Oct	Members' Weekend
10 Sep	-	11 Sep	Mem W/e BCRA Conf
05 Nov	-	06 Nov	Members' Weekend
19 Nov	-	20 Nov	EDSS (12)
03 Dec	-	04 Dec	Members' Weekend

## IN THE LIBRARY . . .

...are a few articles about Derbyshire geology (in Reprints Box), including:- "The evolution of the Castleton cave systems and related features" (1986)

...also a paperback book "A Glossary of Mining Terms" by W G Orchard.

**... AND YET MORE****STOP THIEF!**

Unfortunately, cars continue to be broken into at GB. Joan Goddard and Nick Gilson are the latest casualties, despite four Police vehicles patrolling Mendip at the time. **DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT LEAVING YOUR CAR UNATTENDED AT ANY CAVE, ESPECIALLY IN THE CHARTERHOUSE OR BURRINGTON AREAS.** For the Charterhouse area, walk from the cottage, or leave someone with the cars, or park at Charterhouse Centre (ask wardens permission first), or arrange lifts from and to the cottage. For Burrington, only park close to the Cafe or make similar arrangements to those for Charterhouse.

**BCRA UPDATE**

The date for the BCRA conference has been re-arranged. It will now take place in Bristol on 10-12th September. Many of you thought it would be a week later and booked yourselves into the cottage on 17-19th September. These bookings have been transferred to the new dates, although you may not be in the bunk you originally booked.

**1994 EXPEDITION**

There are rumours of an MCG trip to France or Spain, summer 1994. Watch this space, or speak to Joel Corrigan.

**GOT A LIGHT MATE?**

Joe Frampton wants to buy a cheap second-hand lamp, anything better than a Petzl Zoom. If anyone can help, contact him at the Eclipse on Thursdays or phone him on 0734-404861

**CAVING WITH KEV...**

..in the June edition of Trailwalker (in the cottage) there is a three page spread on "Going Underground", featuring our very own Kev West (with Nigel Atkins) ..and starring in Equinox on Channel 4, probably 12th September, Kev West again, on the subject of caving and climbing equipment. The programme shows how caving gear has evolved from ex-army equipment to products designed and manufactured by cavers for cavers. Kev's supporting cast includes Nigel Atkins, Dave Elliot and Ben Lyon.

**YV DROPPING...**

AS: "You wriggle and I'll push"

TF: "It's a Jamaican Hot Bonnet"  
(Ed. a type of chilli)

JP: "A hot vomit?"

TF: "No, a Hot Bonnet!"

JP: "When Martin stayed at the Orpheus he went through all their errr..."

JG: "... women?"

GB: "I found my right one tight"

YR: "It's alright if you don't get one against the wall."

...on a discussion about nicad versus lead acid...

?: "I had a lead-acid battery. It was perfect until it blew up."

**WHITE PIT**

Following the report in n/1 228: the BEC advise that there is currently no digging in, or access to, White Pit due to dangerously high levels of CO2

**WIGMORE SWALLET**

The BEC report that the downstream boulder choke in Wigmore Swallet has been passed but the water disappears down an inches wide crack. The end of Wigmore has been reached without leaving the conglomerate.

DERBYSHIRE "MINES" MEET, *continued from page 1*

By Sunday morning Nettle had reduced the ranks to two, and one "walking wounded". The rest went to Castleton for an ice-cream, or a ramble down P8. With the usual umming and arring we decided upon the Giants round trip. With Richard declining to sample the delights of the Giant's Windpipe it was left to Joel, Tim and Joe to potter around Giants. At Garlands, Joel got in a spot rigging practice and successfully hung the rope away from the clutter of two ladders and two SRT ropes on the DMM route. A quick yomp down the Crabwalk, a crawl past the Eating House and a traverse took us to Geology Pot. Climbing around the back of Geology we found the alternative Carnival Aven route. The take-off is from a large muddy boulder wedged in the shaft. On the way out Joe elected to return via the Crabwalk, whilst Joel and Tim decided to try and find the round trip. Route finding turned out to be dead easy, with only one mistake made at Handshake Crawl.

The passages beyond Maggins Rift (NE Swallet, Ghost Rift) are much bigger and easier going than the Crabwalk. The only nasty section is the Giant's Windpipe which consists of a 20ft flat out duck. Whizzing back up the ropes at Garlands we were briefly delayed by another party. We de-rigged their ropes and made some adjustments to their leader's kit (at his request). Unusually, they only had one hand jammer and one fig. of 8 between six people!

## MCG'S DERBY AND JOAN MEET!

*by Joan Goddard*

Ten of us arrived at the Orpheus Caving Club's excellent cottage on Friday evening and were joined on Saturday by Kevin West. Six set off for Nettle Pot with lots of SRT gear (Ed: see article above) while Kev, Richard Carey, Charlie Allison, and Bill Headington kept me company on a gentler trip into Jug Holes - which is part mine, part cave, and lies on the northern slope of Masson Hill northwest of Matlock Bath.

Geologically Masson Hill is an anticline of partly dolomitised limestone pierced by a plug of dolerite. Associated with this igneous activity are thin ash beds, two thicker basalt lava beds and a volcanic clay horizon known locally as "Toadstone" which has considerably influenced the initial cave development. In turn, these cavities were mineralised during a complex history of several phases to give rise to an irregular linear ore body known as a pipe-vein. The minerals were fluorspar, quartz, calcite, barytes, and gelena.

We entered Jug Holes via a metal "trap door" into a near horizontal adit in which rail lines and an old truck still remained. Soon afterwards a shaft from the surface entered the roof (beware of dropped stones!). Both Kev and Richard had been down before so route finding was pretty efficient in spite of a number of dead-end old workings. The system was somewhat muddy with much scrambling over blocks, but a noteworthy feature was Third Water Cavern which was very large and was approached up a long mud slope. Then, just as I was getting into the swing of things, we climbed a draughty bouldery slope to daylight in a large natural cave portal. Thus ended the Lower Series of Jug Holes.

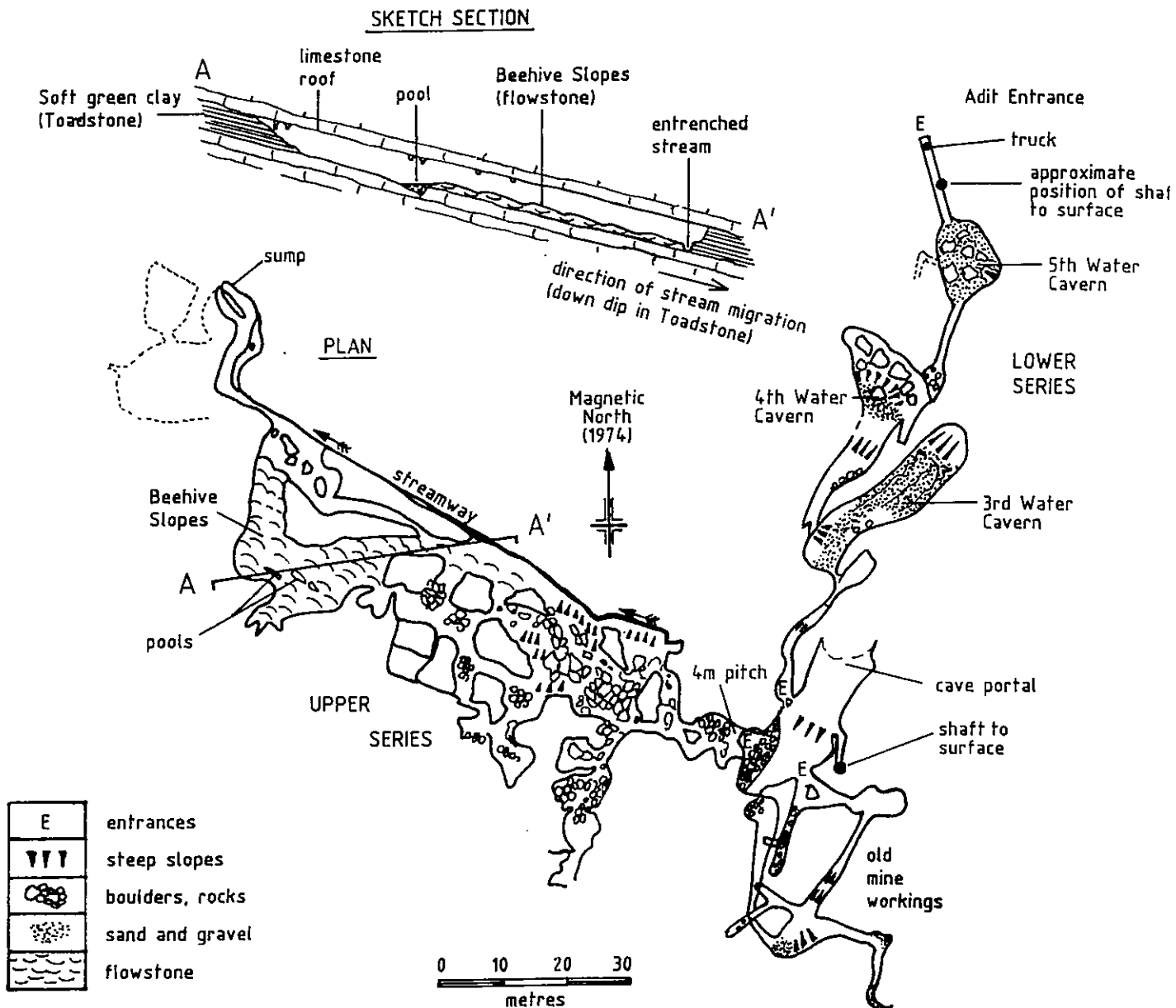
Straight ahead of us were numerous openings leading to a daylighting shaft and to mined passages with old wooden beams shoring up blocks of limestone. Disappointingly I saw no minerals - the miners had efficiently removed them all. On the right (western) side of the cave a crawl soon led to a 4m easily climbable pitch down into the Upper Series. This comprised a series of chambers roofed with limestone and with walls and floor of toadstone (which had decomposed to pale green clay). Initially we progressed down dip but soon arrived at a small strike oriented stream which had cut a meandering trench in the clay. After a little while, on the left (up dip) of the stream could be seen impressive quantities of flowstone, known as the Beehive Slopes.

At this point the stream passage became very constricted (perhaps it sumped, but I didn't investigate), and the way on was up the flowstone to a couple of clear pools with some stumpy stalactites on the roof. Here Richard and Charlie disappeared at a rate of knots down the slope and ended up back at the stream beyond the constriction. Key and I slithered after them, but the stream soon sumped, just after a small chamber with calcite crystals lining its wall. We retraced our steps back to the entrance, but with a short detour into some muddy worked out passages near the base of the short pitch.

Sunday dawned bright and dry again (the view from the Orpheus cottage is superb). Lee set off home, five went down Giants Hole and the rest had a short trip into P8 (Jackpot). All in all, a very pleasant weekend - my first trip to Derbyshire won't be my last, I hope!

### SURVEY OF JUG HOLES

(after T D Ford, Limestone and Caves of the Peak District)



## THE QUEST FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

A revue of rechargeable lighting systems currently available in the UK.

by Richard Carey

There are 3 types currently available: Wet Cells (Oldhams), Sealed NiCads (Speleo Technics), and Sealed Lead Acid (Underground Technology).

**OLDHAMS** These are miners lamps and were not designed for caving although they have been successfully borrowed. At 17ah 4.5v they produce an excellent source of light. With a 1a halogen bulb, 17 hours endurance can be obtained. This deteriorates with age however and they do require some maintenance. The electrolyte levels must be kept at the correct level and must not be left discharged. They can leak and this will cause havoc with your equipment and favourite personal parts.

**SEALED NICADS** All NiCads develop memory. If you regularly do 2 hour trips for example and only top-up charge, do not be surprised if your lamp dims after 2 hours on a longer trip. Once a memory is established you must cycle the cell. This means a period of discharge followed by a full charge until capacity is restored. To avoid memory problems run your lamp down; leave it running occasionally and give it a full charge.

**SPELEO TECHNICS** Speleo Technics make 3 lamps, FX2, FX3 and FX5. These being 2 cell, 3 cell and 5 cell NiCads connected in series, giving approximately 2.5v, 3.8v and 6+v respectively. They are all sealed NiCads and require no maintenance.

**FX2** The FX2 was introduced about 10 years ago and took the caving world by storm. With a 2.5v 0.8a bulb it provides an adequate source of light (about half an Oldhams) for 10 hours. It is, however, much smaller and lighter and very comfortable to use. Once they get a little older problems can develop with the leads and contacts. All Speleo Technics lamps charge by detaching the headset at the cell. New FX2s have a peg which solves the problem of the wires pulling out of the plug. At £75.75 plus £23 for a charger, it is a nice light and is relatively cheap and cheerful.

**FX3** With the introduction of sealed lead acid caving lamps, Speleo Technics have tried to catch up with the introduction of the FX3. This is a 3 cell version of the FX2. With an output of 3.8v through an 0.85a bulb it gives a very bright light but only endures for 9 hours. It is wider than an FX2 but incorporates the same belt loops. I have found it to be uncomfortable as the belt loops tend to dig in and can be rather painful. Overall a disappointing lamp as the beam is narrow. It is possible to extend the endurance by changing the headset to incorporate a screw-in bulb but at £93.75 plus £39.50 for the charger, I feel that Speleo Technics have missed the boat.

**FX5** This is a 5 cell sealed NiCad that comes with a standard main beam bulb of 10w which gives an incredible blaze of light but will only last 4 hours. I cannot comment on how comfortable they are to wear but have spoken to people use them and there do not seem to be any problems. It seems that they cave on sidelight, and only use main beam for inspecting avens etc. At £134.15 plus £39.50 for the charger it seems expensive.

Of course it does not matter what condition of charge you have NiCads in as they will not deteriorate.

**SEALED LEAD ACIDS** It is important with all lead acids that they are fully charged when not in use or the cell will die.

**UNDERGROUND TECHNOLOGY** I believe I have saved the best till last with Apex 10 and 17 lamps. Both are 6v sealed lead acids and with the standard 2.4w bulb, will endure for 10 hours and 17 hours respectively.

**APEX 10** The Apex 10 is slightly bulkier than an FX2 but incorporates a single belt loop. This makes the cell sit slightly proud when worn and this allows it to rock which can be rather annoying.

**APEX 17** The Apex 17 is thinner and taller than the 10 but uses 2 belt loops. This makes it very comfortable to wear. By swapping bulbs and

reflector it is possible to put in a 10w bulb which is very bright but reduces endurance to 4 hours. If you want to be silly or wish to use it for photography, a 20w bulb with a diffuse reflector provides an incredible light for 2 hours. Careful or you might melt the reflector. At £86.50 for the Apex 10 and £96.50 for the 17 plus £20.93 for the charger, I think this represents very good value for money.

The charger for the Apex lamps, whilst still being direct to cell, has three lights. One is to tell you the unit is on (red), another red one to tell you that it is charging, and a green one to tell you when it is fully charged. A nice touch.

**EX-BRITISH COAL LAMPS** Since the demise of the British coal mining industry there are many second hand lights available costing as little as £20. These might seem good value and undoubtedly the cheapest but beware, they might be very old and may not have much life left.

**REPLACEMENT CELLS** If you have any old lamps that are on their last legs, it is possible to restore them either by obtaining replacement cells, though these will be getting rare, or by replacing them with sealed NiCads. It is possible to put 5 "F" cells in an Oldhams so if you want a cheap FX5 the opportunity is there. Remember to change the bulbs. Ex MOD cells are a good replacement but bulbs are limited in availability at 2.5v. At 6v there are now 2.4w, 6w, 10w and 20w bulbs available.

**CONCLUSION** I believe that lead acid has regained the lead from NiCads but it is your money so you must draw your own conclusions and if you have a 30 year old NiFe cell please ignore everything previously mentioned and cherish and love it.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON SURVIVAL BAGS

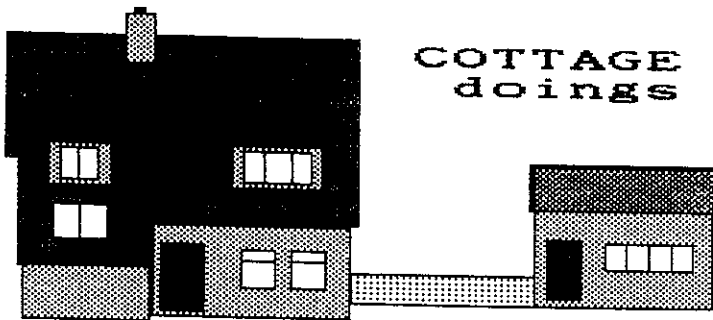
by Tim Francis

Like most cavers, any inclusion in my caving kit of anything vaguely like a survival bag is normally an afterthought. That is unless a stupid Daren epic is to be undertaken. However, I was forced to make a rapid rethink after an enforced ten hour pause on a pile of rubble in the Berger (blatent namedrop). Four types of bag were produced - a space blanket; a clear polythene bag; an orange polythene bag, single size; and a heavy duty orange bag, double size. Of these only the last gives adequate protection against heat loss. In severe cases this could be the difference between life and death.

It is vital that heat loss is minimised by use of a bag. Most body heat is lost by conduction (transmission through a solid object) and convection (removal of warm air around the body due to air currents). Space blankets, made of a metallised plastic sheeting are quite unsuitable for the cave environment. Very little heat is lost by radiation so the shiny surface is irrelevant. Furthermore they they rip very easily and therefore cannot prevent heat loss by convection.

Polythene bags are much more robust, but care should be taken in your choice. Do not compromise safety for the sake of bulk and weight. Do not bother with anything that looks like a freezer bag. The clear polythene bag found in many caving shops are only of the 120 guage type. Those on our party who had brought these bags were soon cold. Secondly, the size of the bag is all important. To keep warm it is much better to have two people per bag. Therefore a double size of 250cm x 120cm, guage 400 is perfect - a snip at £2.45. Combined with wearing a balaclava and helmet, one can keep relatively warm for a considerable period of time. If possible rope and tackle bags should be placed under the bag to reduce heat loss further.

There has been much talk about items stored between the cradle and shell of a helmet. This could compromise the structural integrity of a helmet in the event of an accident. It is much better to carry Mars bars, balaclavas, survival bags, etc., in the pocket of your oversuit. Alternatively use a small bolt bag which can easily be clipped to your belay belt, and is lightweight. And finally, I have found that a survival bag is a handy way of blocking abrasion holes in an SRT bag!



## COTTAGE doings

This consists of a proximity sensing device and an electronically identified key fob. The cost of the system is as follows:

Cotag proximity system	£ 493
Power supply	£ 84
Battery back-up	£ 18
Electronic mortise lock	£ 32
Electronic release	£ 27
Sub total	£ 654

170 key fobs	<u>£1020</u>
(1 per Member + 30 spare)	
Total	£1674

## NEW KEY SYSTEM

Entry in MCG Committee Meeting Minutes for 03.02.91: "Cottage keys - Phil Ingold to investigate the cost of a computerised magnetic key access system for cottage".

Since then, we have had 3 AGMs and 3 new committees. There have been 25 committee meetings at which this subject has been discussed. Malcolm Cotter, the then Secretary, mentioned the proposed system in his report to the 1991 AGM. Joan Goddard, the present Secretary, said in her report to the 1993 AGM that quotes were being sought for a preferred system. Yvonne Rowe, as Editor, reported on the new system in newsletter no.214 and Charlie Allison published a short article in newsletter no.221 (including estimated cost £2000). In newsletter no.226 Yvonne reported on the latest situation (including details of a £10 key deposit).

The committee have now ordered the new system, which is manufactured by Cotag, and it will be installed shortly. The committee would like to thank Phil Ingold for all his work, researching different systems and suppliers, obtaining quotes, and for being patient when the committee have had to make difficult decisions. He is the only person who has seen this through from the beginning in January 1991 to hopefully a satisfactory conclusion.

Here then are the (almost) final details of the new access system to Nordrach Cottage.

The existing probationary / guest / full member keys will continue to be used. However, many members have failed to return their keys when resigning from the Group. To prevent these "rogue" keys being used a secondary electronic lock will be added to the front door.

Each member will be issued with an electronically coded key fob. Each fob is unique. The system can recognise up to 899 fobs which can be readily added to or deleted from the system. Fobs are very robust and durable being resin encapsulated with a minimum life of 8 years. The reader will be mounted inside the cottage and is operated when the fob comes within 76cm, releasing the electric lock set in the door. There is an override key which will be held by committee members for emergencies. The present full member key will continue to be used to gain access to the library and tackle store.

Members will be asked for a returnable £10 key deposit. We currently have some 130 members and assuming each member requires a key, deposits will total some £1300. The Group will bear the additional costs of some £300.

The great advantage of the new system is that it allows keys to be added or deleted readily. For example, all keys could be deleted on 1st January each year and added again when subs are paid - effectively a free, annual lock change. Keys for guest groups can be programmed so that they only have access on the days for which they have booked. A member who resigns but retains a key will be deleted from the system and forfeit the £10 deposit. The system is expandable, and in future years could be upgraded to include access to the library and tackle store, all controlled by the same key fob.

The system will be installed by 1st January 1994. However, when you arrive at the cottage and find that the system won't let you in, don't blame Phil as the decision to go for a sophisticated access system rests with the committee.



## MORE MCG ADVENTURES IN DAN-YR-OGOF

17th APRIL Geoff Beale, Captain Goddard, Graham Old, Sonia Cotter, Dave Tooke, Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh.

We all met eventually at the car park at "danny" and entered via the show cave, trying to ignore all the stares from the paying visitors who must have thought we were all quite mad. At the end of the show cave with its lights we climbed the safety rail and over the bridge and then on into the darkness.

At the start of Lake 1 we left our tackle bag containing ropes, etc. in case we were late returning and found the show cave shut and would have had to exit via the river cave, below the show cave route. As we waded through the entrance Lakes the smug wet-suited members of the party (Geoff, Captain, Graham and Julie) listened to those in furry/dry suits cursing the cold water as it rose up to shoulder level. It had been raining the previous day/night in South Wales and the roof above the Lakes was covered in grey foam, showing that the passage through the Lakes had been flooded recently.

At the Long Crawl the party split, Dave taking the remainder through to visit Flabbergasm, Oxbow and Cloud Chamber, whilst I searched for a small decorated grotto, seen on a previous trip, to take some photographs. This grotto was not re-located so it was left to be found on another trip. We all met up again by the Long Crawl and proceeded out, where photographs were taken of the good formations at the end of the Lakes, above the first climb. We reached the end of the show cave just as the management were about to lock the entrance doors, saving us the bother of coming out via the river entrance. Trip time - 5hr 30 min. Tackle: 40' rope and tapes for river entrance (not used) Geoff Beale

29th-31st MAY THE FAR NORTH PROJECT There has not been a serious camping/digging project down DYO for the last two years. The last series of trips uncovered the "High and Mighty" section of avens and passages. As soon as I heard that there was due to be another camp, I made certain that the MCG were involved.

The weekend of the May Bank Holiday saw six of us hauling loads of gear to the Far North, with the intention of spending the next three days underground. Things were complicated early on in the proceedings, as a kindly porter decided to fall off from the climb into Boulder Chamber. The loose rock that he had grabbed onto landed on his foot. We had to assist him out before we could carry on to the camp. A suspected broken foot was later discovered to be badly bruised - his steel toe-cap had saved him!

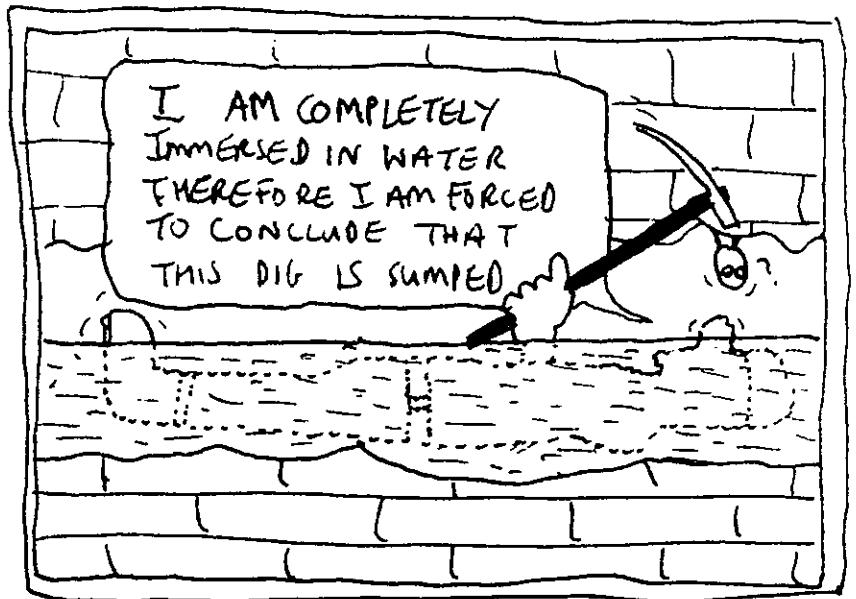
Liam Kealy, Dudley Thorpe, Steve Thomas, Pete Munn, Philip Short, and myself all had various projects that we wished to do. My own silly climbing techniques almost came to a horrible end when I was returning down a particularly nasty, unprotected section of muddy, loose rock. Some fifteen to twenty feet up, my only hand-hold decided to separate itself from the rest of the cave. I landed with cat-like grace on my backside, and very nearly broke my ankle. I decided that from then on I would only climb with some form of protection.

Whilst Liam and Pete were bolting across the roof in Grand Hall, Phil and myself were becoming rather intimate with the Far North Choke. This very pleasant section of cave has frustrated dozens of diggers over the years, and I was to be no different. However, we managed to proceed about twenty feet further than anyone else, before we were halted by a very tight little rift. With our hats off, we were able to see at least ten feet ahead, with a distinct lack of boulders barring the way. What we need to proceed is a load of scaffold bars (it is rather loose here), and an air-chisel, as the boulders that we need to remove just happen to be supporting the ceiling; we now need to remove little a bit of solid wall to get past. Over the weekend, we managed to check out many areas that needed investigation, either dismissing them completely as no-hopers, or keeping a note for future investigation. There really is a great deal of potential here, and I for one have every intention of paying regular visits to the cave.

Joel Corrigan

## PINETREE DIG

Things are on the move in Pinetree again, with the passage length now standing at about 40feet. A healthy draught is coming out of the face suggesting caverns measureless to man beyond. Recent trips have encountered layers of calcite and pockets of air in the roof. The nature of passage does appear to be changing from its smooth phreatic shape. We've also passed a diggable inlet on the left hand side which has only been briefly looked at. There also appears to be an ox-bow like passage, which when we're bored we'll probably connect both ends.



As you might have guessed, digging has been hampered, somewhat, by the wet weather. On several occasions the dig has been filled by a 15ft long and 2ft deep "puddle". This is not surprising considering how close to the surface the passage is. However, with the aid of a large hosepipe it can normally be syphoned off in a couple of hours. Unfortunately on the wettest trip we lost a whole days digging waiting for the water level to drop. On the whole digging has been fairly comfortable despite the odd influx of cowsh and copious amounts of mud.

We are currently concentrating on the main passage with the aim being to excavate the whole cross-section rather than creating something that would be more at home in East Twin! The slope is still downhill with the face well below the level of the pitch head. Give or take five feet we are now directly above the bitter end of Easy Street, and heading off the survey. Watch this space!

Diggers: James Allen, Joel Corrigan, Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh, Mike Pittman, and other less enthusiastic "volunteers".  
Tim Francis

## BOWLINE ON THE BITE !



Most people who frequent the cottage and regularly cave with the club eventually become full members, and dogs are no exception. To prove it here, at the top of Ubley Hill Pot, is JP's dog Ted practicing some lifelining during her (yes, her!) training trip. Behind Ted is Joan, showing her the ropes (urgh!) and checking that she does things properly. Next month Ted takes her SRT proving trip and is looking forward to leading the MCG Berger trip in 1994.