

Mendip Caving Group

NEWS

NUMBER 231

OCTOBER 1993

OTTER HOLE TRIP - 4th SEPTEMBER

by Steve Eddy

I first became aware of Otter Hole fifteen years ago, when quite a lot of it seemed to have found its way into the bath of the flat I shared with a caver in Chepstow. His annoying method of washing off his wetsuit was my first contact with caving. Now, a caver myself, I was finally to experience that famous Otter Hole mud at first hand. What joy!

Our party, composed of Bill Headington, Pete Hollings, Julie Hesketh, Tim Francis and myself, led by Hereford CC's Ashley Dickenson, set off down the woodland path leading to the River Wye at around 11.30am. Crossing from Forestry Commission land to land owned by the reccourse, we soon came to the entrance, at the base of a cliff.

Abandoning sunlight, a lot of slithering, sliding, heaving and grovelling brought us to the "very slippery 8ft climb" so accurately described in *Caves of South Wales*. Bill found the quick way down; the rest of us climbed it. Apparently it's quite soft at the bottom!

A mixture of crouched and upright walking past very muddy formations, over very slippery rocks and through increasingly glutinous mud led to the tidal sump. Here we hung around for a long time waiting for the water level to reach an arched passage rather than swim across to the tight-looking eyehole that another wetsuited party opted for. (I'd say a wetsuit is only really worth it if you want to get the longest possible between-tides trip). Two diversions helped to pass the time: listening to the assortment of weird and ethereal noises that resonated down far passages as they emptied of river water - and mud fights!

More mud, up a fixed ladder, then some nice nearly clean stream passage and a pleasant traverse above the stream. Yes - this was more like it! Some crawling through chokes and climbing down what used to be a pitch but is now a pile of banged boulders followed, then (and the precise order gets a bit hazy here) a tight rift passage up to the Extension (?) and a tighter squeeze, where only Bill's determination (after all, he'd organised the trip) forced his 46" chest through.

Soon we were passing the entrance to Crystal Balls Passage. Owing to its vulnerable nature, no one's allowed up there anymore, and the likes of me can only fantasize about its pristine splendour. Well, musn't grumble - the formations on the main route were, as the book says, "increasingly magnificent", and the Hall of Thirty is stupendous: stalagmites like giant anthills, curtains that would grace the Albert Hall.

We made it back to the sump in good time, about four and a half hours after passing it the other way. By this time I was onto my second battery. The mud on the way out seemed even more glutinous and clinging, and I for one was well knackered by the time we reached declining daylight. We shared some cold cider and Pete celebrated by sitting on a wasp's nest and getting stung.

The walk back through the woods though gathering twilight seemed an awful lot longer than it had done that morning, despite a stop-off to wallow in a very muddy old bath full of piped streamwater. All in all, a great day's caving. Many thanks to Bill for arranging it, and to Ashley (a jolly nice chap) for leading us.

++++ MCG 1994 MEETS PROGRAMME +++++ BANK HOLIDAY WEEKENDS IN ITALICS +++++

This list is updated monthly - to add your trip, please phone the Meet Secretary

DATE	AREA	MAIN EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
05 Feb	Mendip	Rescue Practice	John Crowsley	0272-652585
05 Mar	Mendip	Archaeology walk	Yvonne Rowe	0252-872006
24 Apr	Mendip	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	Joan Goddard	0608-810382
24 Apr	Mendip	40th Anniversary Dinner	Arthur Spain	0749-679358
Summer 94	France	Alps Expedition	TBA	

1994 ANNUAL DINNER

Next year is the MCG's 40th Anniversary. Many members have come and gone since 1954. Some were with the Group for a long time but decided to let their membership lapse for many varied reasons, mainly because they moved away from the southern area or became interested in other activities.

The committee feels that it would be an interesting experience to invite those past members who can be contacted to our 1994 Dinner. Of course, if many people wish to come to help us celebrate, then a large venue will have to be sought. With that in mind, would anyone who has contact with a past member and has his/her telephone number or address please let me know (0749-679358) so that I can assess numbers ASAP to book the venue. Because of the probable numbers involved, it will not be possible to issue free tickets to past members, only the normal allocation to guests.

In addition, as it is a special Dinner celebration it would be good to have special after dinner activities or guests, if you have any preferences or sensible ideas please let one of the committee know. Arthur Spain

WEEKLY MEETINGS:	At the Group's Mendip headquarters on Wednesdays at 7.00pm. & at the Eclipse Inn, Egham, Surrey, on Thursdays from 9.00pm.		
CAVING ACCOMMODATION:	For up to 30 people, is available at the MCG headquarters:- Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XW		
COTTAGE INFORMATION:	Tel: 0761-462797	Grid Ref 51475606	OS 1:50,000 sheet 182
COTTAGE BOOKINGS:	Through the cottage warden please (address and tel. no. below)		
COTTAGE FEES per night:	MCG members, member's children, SWCC and NPC		£ 1.50
	Guest clubs and member's guests		£ 2.50
PREPAYMENT VOUCHERS:	(available to members only)	12 nights accomodation	£15.00
		25 nights accomodation	£30.00
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:	Full & Probationary Members: £20.00; Associate Members: £10.00 The subscription includes free day-time access to the cottage by the member, their children, and their accompanied guests		



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 TIM FRANCIS 081-878-3508
 JOEL CORRIGAN 0344-873613
 MALCOLM COTTER 07842-52643
 PHIL INGOLD 0442-242029



ON THE MOVE

Julie Hesketh has moved to:
8 Bottford Road, Wimbledon Chase,
London, SW20 9NP tel: 081-544-0742

Carol Ball has moved to:
47 Williams Close, Longwell Green,
Bristol, BS15 6BS tel: 0272-498171

Pat Newman is back from his
travels and is now at:
4 Cutty Sark House, Undine Road,
London, E14 9UW tel: 071-537 9321

Wayne Hiscox's work telephone
number is now: 0749-672081 ext2213

CONGRATULATIONS . .

.....to Julian Flavell, Nick
Gilson and Steve Porter on
becoming full members.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

As you will see from the cottage
bookings, New Year at the cottage
is going to be quite busy. If you
can't get booked in, remember that
8/9th January 1994 is a Members'
Weekend (and committee meeting).

HELP! HELP!

John Crowsley is organising a
rescue practice which will take
place on 5th February (Members'
weekend). Last year, we "rescued"
Phil Ingold, the Group's
professional rescue casualty, from
GB and Phil has volunteered his
services again. Having a genuine
"casualty" means that the
"practice" is quite a serious
undertaking for all involved and
the whole operation requires as
much help as possible for all
aspects of the rescue. It is in
everyones interest to take part
and to learn the many techniques
involved in a safe and successful
rescue, and it gives Phil a
blooming good days caving too! The
venue is undecided (possibly
Swildons) but watch this space for
further information.

MCG 94 EXPEDITION

At the half-yearly forum Tim
Francis described an area of the
French Alps where the snow line is
rising, revealing new limestone.
The area is controlled by a French
caving organisation but we could
obtain permission to explore the
area in the summer months.
Provided that the French do not
unreasonably restrict the party's
size, the possibility of an MCG
expedition was raised. The area is
remote, with a long slog to the
caves from the nearest road. It
was suggested that we would have a
small group of cavers supported by
"sherpas". An update will appear
in a future newsletter when we
have been able to get more
information. A good expedition is
just what this club needs. Here's
hoping!

DIRTY VIDEOS . . .

...no not that sort - the caving
sort. If anyone has the Group's
caving videos, will they please
return them to the librarian.
Also, has anyone got any caving
videos they can donate to the
Group or have copied. We want to
build up a good collection in the
library for armchair meets, etc.

GROUP BOOKS . . .

...no, not that sort either! Some
library additions:
"Beneath the Mountains" -
exploring the deep caves of
Asturias, by David Rose and
Richard Gregson, published 1987.
The story of Oxford Cave Club's
1980-1986 expeditions to the Picos
de Europa in Northern Spain. A
very readable, often light
hearted, account of the
explorations of the 6km long
Sistema del Xitu, F20, and Ridge
Cave.
"History of Cave Science" - the
exploration and study of limestone
caves, to 1900, by Trevor Shaw.
"Caves of Thunder" Ivian Jaya
Expedition 1992
"Xingwen" China Caves Project
1989-1992
"Vercors Caves", Classic French
Caving Vol.1 - in English!
"The Silent World" Cousteau (one
chapter on cave diving at
Vaucluse)

Also, Hades Caving Club Magazine
No.33, June 1993 - Account of
Hades' Berger trip in 1992 which
Tim Francis did.

—
GOUFFRE BERGER —
DONE IT, GOT THE TEE-SHIRT...

by Joel Corrigan

Over the last few years, almost every caver in the country must have read dozens of expedition reports concerning the Gouffre Berger. Within our own modest newsletter we have heard all about the "Francis Epic" of '92, and the "Knibbs Trip" of '93. Therefore I'm well aware that my experiences will offer nothing new to regular readers. That's why I'm writing this for newcomers to the caving scene!!

Out of a total of thirty eight cavers on the SWCC expedition, four were from MCG. These were Tony and Denise Knibbs, Joe Frampton, et moi. The rest of the group included two Australians, four Swedes, and a couple of Northerners!

Half the trick of getting to the bottom of a deep system is knowing who to team up with. For some strange reason, nobody wanted to go down with me! Thus, on Wednesday evening, 11th August, I started my descent, alone. My plan was to team up with Jon Riley and Graham Salmon (both from the Yorkshire Ramblers Club), who had left earlier in the day to start rigging the pitches below Camp 1. I knew these two from the occasional trip to the Dales, so realised that they were more than capable of rigging to the bottom of the cave (weather permitting, of course).

I had already been down the cave twice before (a de-rigging trip for the French expedition before us, and as a Sherpa for the entrance series rigging party), so knew as far as the camp quite well. Carrying two tackle bags, therefore, I still made it to Hall of Thirteen in one and a half hours.

My timing was perfect : Jon and Graham were just dozing off! I set up my stereo (a walkman with speakers), and prepared my dinner to the soothing tones of Laurie Anderson. My uncultured companions decided that she was an acquired taste. Nevertheless, they still insisted upon staying awake with me...

Thursday morning, and we were all feeling somewhat reserved. I'd had a bad night's sleep (damp-kit syndrome), and we all appreciated the enormity of our task. However, we began... The Yorkshire lads had rigged the two pitches beyond camp the day before (whilst I was still sunbathing), and had carried all of the bags that far. Our work began in earnest at "Vestibule Pitch".

The next few hours are a bit vague in my memory. It was certainly a bit of a shock to discover that as a Sherpa I was expected to carry all of the tackle bags (and there were a lot of them, believe me). Still, the riggers always know best, don't they?! I recall falling into the canals with three tackle bags (the guys had taken a couple of them off me for this bit!), after some of the OLD handline decided to come away; I remember the critical time when we almost turned back, as we'd used a vital rope on the wrong pitch (we had no Elliot-Guide, you see...); I went swimming again in the pool at the top of "Claudine's Cascade"; the carbide container exploded in my face (the same thing happened to Jean Cadoux forty years earlier, and to Graham the day before!); wet arse at the bottom of "Little Monkey"; wondering how good the single bolt was at the top of the 45m "Hurricane Pitch"; how impressive the "1000m Inlet" was; feeling convinced that I was bound to fall into the "Pseudo-Syphon", as I'd swam in every other part of the cave; and thinking how innocent-looking the end of the cave appeared to be. The three of us had made it. I don't think that I'll ever forget how I felt when we got our cameras out for the ten second photo shoot at the sump. Apart from being wet and cold, I was also feeling very smug! Jon brought out the celebratory balloons (and as the Sherpa I had to inflate them!), and we had a quick brew. Now all we had to do was climb back to the camp.

Eventually, sixteen hours after leaving Camp 1, we returned. Yet again it was up to the Sherpa/slave to do the cooking. I prepared another

wonderful meal (Beanfeast, Smash and chocolate sauce!), and had the best sleep that I'd had for ages. My dreams that night included herds of cattle abseiling down the ropes, just in time to wake us up at 6am with their ridiculous bells!!

Late afternoon saw us heading back towards the "Showcave", as we had started to call the entrance series, and at 6pm, Friday 13th, we were back in the land of the living. That night saw the YRC and the MCG hitting Autrans in a big way, feeling most pleased with themselves. Now all that we had to look forward to was the de-rig!

One week later, and I found myself in this squalid little hole called Pinetree Pot. In many ways, it's just like the Gouffre Berger... NOT!!!

THE OTTER HOLE MEET

by Tim Francis

For once the tides favoured an average cavers sleep pattern, and we were blessed with only having to arrive at the forestry carpark by 11am. Billy informed us that our guide was to be Ashley Dickenson (of Llanelly Quarry Pot fame). Pleasantries exchanged and it was only a twenty minute stroll through the woods to the cave entrance. This is located only 40ft above the River Wye at the base of a small cliff. With two other parties going in with us it was a very long crocodile of 18 cavers that crawled through the gate.

The entrance section consists of an undistinguished crawl for 15 minutes or so. Ubiquitous amounts of brown stuff meant that we were already covered in mud by the time we reached the sump. We arrived early so we were set for a half an hours wait before the sump would break. With liberal quantities of mud to hand it was not long before the cluster of cavers turned to other means to amuse themselves. In the midst of one skirmish Julie was heard to cry "That's not fair Billy, You've had me already", whilst attempting to deflect mud bombs coming her way.

Eventually, to the accompaniment of much gurgling, the sump opened up. Steve, a scholar of native musical arrangements, suggested making a tape recording to keep the sounds for posterity! Dumping survival bags and an ammo can of goodies near the rescue box we headed upstream. Being only a "between the tides" trip our aim was to see the Hall of Thirty and the best of the formations, reputedly some of the finest in the British Isles. We were particularly impressed by the long straws and grottos just before the Hall of Thirty. We passed several buckets and sprays, evidence of a new clean-up operation. Unfortunately in some sections there is a strong smell of oil, the source of which is unknown.

We turned back at the black and white flowstone flake to allow plenty of time to reach the sump. With gravity assisting, the boulder choke squeezes were easily passed on the return and we made good progress. We reached the sump in perfect time as the water barely lapped over our wellies. A quick pause was required for Steve to suck the mud out of the contacts on his spare FX2 cell (a dummy plug is recommended), before the crawl to daylight. Once outside we all had a slurp of some cool cans of Inche's cider which Ashley had left just inside the entrance. Pete's satisfaction was somewhat marred by painfully discovering that he'd sat on a wasp nest! As dusk fell we yomped back up through the woods, with a brief pause at the bath to rinse off.



BCRA CONFERENCE REPORT BRISTOL 10th-12th SEPTEMBER 1993

by Joan Goddard

In recent years the BCRA Conference has been held "up north", but as it was on the doorstep this year, so to speak, I went along to see what it's all about. On looking in the programme which was handed to us at the door, I was impressed by the varied selection of lectures, slides and videos. There was also an SRT race, obstacle course, ladder rolling competition, excuses not to go caving competition, photo sale, and trade stands (lots of equipment for sale, not to mention oodles of lovely books for armchair cavers).

I indulged in some karst geomorphology, the most interesting talk being by Fiona Whitaker whose research in the Blue Holes of the Bahamas has resulted in a greater understanding of cave development with respect to the mixing zone (where fresh water and saline water come into contact under the Bahaman Islands). One of the audience postulated on a similar origin for some Derbyshire caves associated with reef limestone - worth thinking about. Closer to home, Peter Smart from Bristol University spoke on the effects of sub-watertable quarrying in Eastern Mendip. Quantitative dye tracing before and after the drilling of a borehole in the floor of Tor Quarry has proved that the borehole has intercepted the conduit (water cave passage) between Heale Swallet and Seven Springs with a consequent loss of water supply.

Martyn Farr's illustrated talk on "Caves of Lowland Galway and Northern Clare" was interesting. There seems to be potential for new cave discoveries in the area; a lesson to be learned is that careful scrutiny of maps prior to a visit yields useful clues to the location of promising digging/diving sites.

"Mendip Roundup" by Tony Jarrat and friends brought me up to date on some of the Mendip digs, but could have been a bit better illustrated. Output from members of the audience was useful too, and broadened the scope of the talk - one point that emerged was the prevalence of bad air in a number of Mendip caves. White Pit is closed for that reason, and Swildon's is suffering too (partly because of the low stream flow). Also on a Mendip theme was Dave Irwin's "Mendip Cave History Through Early Surveys". I almost skipped this talk as I thought it would be a bit dry - but it was fascinating to follow the detective work involved in piecing together isolated snippets of information and plans to gain an historical view of cave exploration. The BCRA Speleo History Group produces occasional newsletters and we hope to have them in the MCG library soon.

A number of Sid Perou's videos and films were on offer, of which I saw "Mysteries Underground : Lechuguilla Cave" (first showing in Britain) and his talk "Underground Filming in the Golden Years" in which he explained the problems of filming underground, from the early days to present time, and showed excerpts from some of his films. The shots in Lechuguilla were excellent, although the logistics of getting a film crew, batteries and equipment into the cave were apparently horrendous. Sid's expertise as a caver, and his concern for the cave's conservation were often overruled by producers and the like. He has been nominated for an Emmy Award for his filming in Lechuguilla.

Pete Hann's "Swildon's to Wookey on a Bike" was as hilarious as ever. "Cave '93" video starring Kev West, Barry Parker, Richard Carey and filmed by Lee Hawkswell was as amusing as ever (J-Bat nearly brought the house down), and the "Caves of Thunder" Irian Jaya slide-sound audio visual by Gavin Newman was undoubtedly a great technical achievement but was also the best way to get a migraine headache without really trying!

My taste of foreign caving was via "China and Tibet Caves Update" (Dick Willis) and a couple of Picos de Europa expedition accounts by Paul Mann and Tim Nichols. (I'd enjoy the scenery and walking in the Picos, but would leave the long SRT pitches to the hijackers!).

With such a wide choice of attractions I inevitably missed some good ones - "No Picnic at Sleets Gill" with Discussion on Cave Rescue and the

Media by Ron Deane was apparently moving and thought provoking (see additional report by Yvonne Rowe). A 3-dimensional slide show of "Caves of South East Asia" by Andy Eavis was praised by those who saw it, and there were talks/slide shows on Caves in Norway, Northern India, Austria, Mulu, Mexico, Matienzo, Romania and ex-Soviet Union, not forgetting Wales, the Dales and Derbyshire.

Now that I have tasted this caving-in-front-of-a-video-or-slide-screen, I shall make the BCRA Conference a regular entry in my diary - lots of caving and no dirty gear to clean.

Yvonne Rowe adds: "No Picnic At Sleets Gill" was a video of a trip down Sleets Gill during which the cave flooded rapidly, trapping and nearly drowning two cavers. The reconstruction of events leading up to the rescue, and the rescue itself, was very well done - so well that I was moved to tears once or twice. It was very tense and emotive and this was partly due to the rescue victims wives talking of their ordeal at home waiting for news, not knowing if their husbands were dead or alive. Extreme bravery was shown during the rescue, not least by the victims whose only way out was through a very long, sumped passage. As the water was rising rapidly, there was only time for a brief lesson in cave diving, then they donned diving gear and "went for it".

Bravery was also shown after the video when one of the rescue victims allowed himself to be cross examined on all the whys, wherefores, and the inevitable "with hindsight...?" Some of the questions were very probing and personal, but the victim's honesty resulted in much invaluable, first hand advice and "lessons to be learned" coming out of this session - more, perhaps, than the video itself.

One point that came across was one also made by Sid Perou and that is how the media concentrate on headline-making caving accidents and rescues but rarely about the sporting, safety and pleasure aspects of caving.

UBSS ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

An extra item on the BCRA Conference programme was the opportunity to visit UBSS museum which is not normally open to the public. It was open for an hour or so on both days but unfortunately the directions on how to find it were incorrect so not many people found it. We scoured the streets of Bristol in the pouring rain for over half an hour before finding it. It turned out to be well worth the effort. The museum is in a converted stable and has a small but fascinating and well presented display of Mendip archaeology.

While I was looking around, Chris Hawkes of UBSS spotted my (soggy) MCG sweatshirt and came to inquire about Bone Hole. He asked what, if anything, had been done to protect Skull Slope. This is the area just inside the entrance where important archaeological material was found, and where some is still thought to be buried and awaits excavation. I told him of the plan to cover the site with duckboards or similar, also that the cave was rarely visited these days.

We went on to talk about various other Mendip archaeological sites and he allowed me into the "hayloft" where sorting, cleaning, listing, and pottery reconstruction takes place. There were boxes and boxes of beautiful flint implements, potsherds and various other artifacts from all over Mendip - for someone like me it was simply mindblowing!

Chris said that although the museum is not open to the public, he would be happy to show MCG members around on any Tuesday evening (arrange a date with Chris first). If anyone is interested, I will arrange a visit after the next archaeology walk in March 1994 as there is a wealth of material both on display and "upstairs" from the sites I plan to visit. If I ask very nicely, and if there are enough of us, he might agree to show us around the museum on a Saturday or Sunday?!
Yvonne Rowe

RIP-OFF AVEN, UPPER FLOOD

by Tim Francis

The Bank Holiday contingent at the cottage was a little on the low side; therefore myself, Joel and Julie opted for a rubble clearance trip at the current dig face in Upper Flood. Water levels were extremely low in both the Lavatory Trap and Streamway, hence we reached the dig in no time at all. After an hour or so we removed the remnants of Lee's SLB foray, and stacked the offending rocks up by the boulder choke. With nothing else to do I suggested a quick look upstream of Black Shale Rift. Feeling somewhat cold after the delights of the canal, Julie declined the offer and opted to wait for us.

Joel and I began rechecking every "lead", however low and miserable. At the furthest upstream point I proposed looking at the top of a small rifty aven. Previously I'd noticed a squeeze but thought it too tight. Thrashing around in the rift it can be awkward actually rotating your head to see the squeeze. However, once at the top it did not look quite as bad as I had remembered. Regretting leaving the digging tools behind, Joel selected a hand sized lump of rock as the best improvised chisel. After a few bashes the squeeze looked pushable. Removing my helmet and battery pack I wriggled through. After considerable gardening from above Joel was able to follow.

We had entered a small extension of the rift about 8 foot long by 10 foot high, bodysized in width. The roof is a slightly sloping bedding plane. The whole place is covered in black mud with rock, mostly shale. We were soon coated in liberal quantities of the stuff. Upslope the bedding was pushed for a bodylength to a choke that might repay a "little effort". Downslope we noticed a little grotto decorated with black and white stal and as a bonus, a cluster of brown cave pearls.

Realising we had left Julie for 30 minutes we slithered back out of the rift, kicking debris all over the place. Examining the state of our oversuits, and Joel's unlucky choice of manufacturer, the rift was christened "Rip-off Aven". Significantly the top must lie only 20 to 40 feet from the surface. A second entrance to Upper Flood would enable easier access to the dig face, and prevent unnecessary trips past the formations. A molephone would be useful to obtain an exact location of the aven on the surface.

Team: Joel Corrigan, Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh.

MONKTON DISNEY!

from the Norton Radstock Star

Plans have been unveiled for a huge underground heritage centre near Bath reflecting Britain's Roman past. Monumental Corporation is carrying out a feasibility study into the scheme at a 30-acre site that was formerly an MoD central ammunition store at Monkton Farleigh.

The attraction would be called Bath Catacombs and would include an underground replica of the Roman Baths. Tourists would be taken underground in mock Roman chariots where they would exchange money for Roman coins. They would then be taken along the main street of Aquae Sulis, nearly one third of a mile long, to see people at work and buy traditional crafts from stalls.

Mr Stephen Weeks, a director of Monumental Corporation, said: "The idea is to interpret Roman Britain, which has not been done anywhere in this country. Bath is very well interpreted as far as the Georgian era is concerned, but there is not really a feeling of what Bath was like as a Roman settlement. It would take several years to accomplish even if we started tomorrow. There will be nothing like it in Europe, not even EuroDisney. The Roman City theme could take almost limitless expansion. There is room for this on the site - even for a 200-room hotel underground."

1994 MCG ARCHAEOLOGY WALK

by Yvonne Rowe

This will take place on the member's weekend of Saturday 5th March, 1994. A circular walk beginning at Nordrach Cottage, it will take in mostly the Charterhouse area. Depending on time and distance, it could also take in a few rarely visited caves and rock shelters along Cheddar Gorge. If we get as far as Cheddar, then we could have a pub lunch, otherwise bring a picnic!

The itinerary that follows is only a draft at the moment as the route has yet to be walked and the sites checked:

01. Enclosure	Nether Wood	Period unknown
02. Roman Fort	Charterhouse	Roman
03. Enclosure	Charterhouse	Roman
04. Iscalis Roman Settlement	Charterhouse	Roman
05. Roman Road	Charterhouse	Roman
06. Raines Batch Earthwork	Charterhouse	Medieval
07. Ampitheatre	Charterhouse	Roman
08. Gorsey Bigbury Henge	Longwood	Neolithic/Bronze Age
09. Rhino Rift	Longwood	Very, very old
10. Black Rock Drove	Black Rock	Very old
11. Bone Hole (Mr Long's Cave)	Cheddar Gorge	Bronze Age

Return to Nordrach Cottage or...

12. Drunkard's Other Hole, alias *THE PUB!* and more archaeology...

13. Flint Jack's Cave	Cheddar Gorge	Palaeolithic
14. Long Hole/Old Gough's Cave	Cheddar Gorge	Roman
15. Gough's Cave	Cheddar Gorge	Palaeolithic
16. Sun Hole	Cheddar Gorge	Palaeo/Neolithic
17. Soldier's Hole	Cheddar Gorge	Palaeo/Neolithic
18. Pig's Hole (Sow Hole)	Cheddar Gorge	Iron Age

Further details will be published in the New Year

SOPHIE THE CAVE DOG

from *The Mail* on Sunday, 2-8-93

She carries chocolate instead of brandy and relies on her sense of direction rather than smell. But Sophie the Labrador is the underground equivalent of the St Bernard - she is Britain's first cave rescue dog.

Two-year-old Sophie will help find trapped potholers in the labyrinth of caverns below the Brecon Beacons in South Wales. She is being put through her paces by the South Wales Cave Rescue team to work at Dan-yr-Ogof - Britain's largest complex of caves with its miles of tunnels and caverns.

Dan-yr-Ogof manager Ian Gwilym said: "Sophie began walking underground as a puppy and clearly loves it. She became very competent at finding her way round and has been as far as three miles into the system. She is familiar with the layout underground and just needs some training in carrying essential supplies to trapped cavers."

Sophie carries a pouch containing chocolate bars, a blanket and a light. The lamp strapped to her head ensures she can negotiate her way through the pitch black tunnels of Dan-yr-Ogof in safety. Mr Gwilym said: "She can squeeze into passages that rescuers find it hard to get into. She will be a sort of underground St Bernard, although we have not made up our mind about the brandy yet."

(Ed: I think this is a practical, if not amusing idea, but my other half is convinced that it is a spoof - does anyone know?)

MORE MCG DOINGS**EARWIG . . .**

...in on the Committee meeting held 02.10.93... New access system for cottage purchased - Arthur Spain, Don Vosper and Wayne Hiscox installing... Cottage extension - Roger Wallington speaking to the planning authority about possibility of building on garden side of cottage... 15 mattress covers have been purchased, 15 to follow later... Alan Mellon recovering tax on three years covenants... Ron Saunders has indicated that he will step down as Custodian Trustee, committee to find replacement... Rescue keys are missing - replacement keys will be put in "in emergency break glass" box.

FORUM DOINGS . . .

Some of the subjects discussed at the meeting on 2nd October... Committee to consider provision of an effective drying room, also upgrading the electric supply... Privileges of membership - motion to be put to AGM... Mendip Carwatch Scheme launched by police, the idea being to let car thieves know Mendip is patrolled by wardens with radio link to police - hopefully thieves will go elsewhere instead... Pinetree Pot dig to be tidied up (lots of mud below the pitch)... Alternative to barn dance considered, possibly a Nordrach Dinner Party... Committee want ideas on how to celebrate MCG's 40th Anniversary in '94... Committee waiting to see draft of 1994 Journal before committing group funds.

YV'S DRIPPINGS

FW: "All I could hear was wee, wee, wee, and I thought Hello! - that's Roy Kempston."

YR: "... books, photographs, videos, special clothing and all sorts of other gear."

IM: "Are you talking about an Anne Summers party?"

YR: "No, the BCRA Conference!"

MERRY XMAS

Following on from the success of last year's event, Bryan Pittman is organising another informal Xmas dinner at the Eclipse, Egham, on Thurs 9th December. Cost will be £13.50 and there is a wide choice from the menu including traditional turkey dinner and vegetarian meals. Contact Bryan on 0784-437540

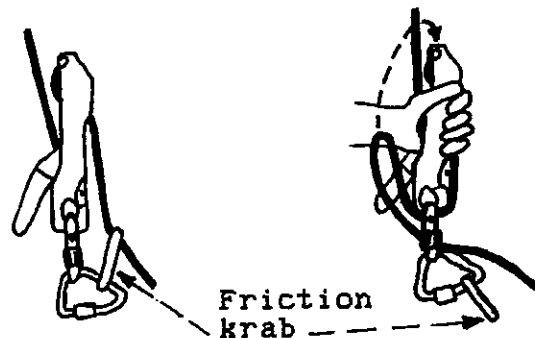
COTTAGE BOOKINGS

22 Oct - 23 Oct	Caswell O.P. (15)
29 Oct - 30 Oct	Airedale CC (10)
05 Nov - 06 Nov	Members' Weekend
05 Nov - 06 Nov	Phil Ingold (14)
19 Nov - 20 Nov	EDSS (12)
21 Nov	John Crowslev (30)
26 Nov - 27 Nov	Joel Corrigan (10)
03 Dec - 04 Dec	Members' Weekend
New Years Eve	(filling fast)

Note: The cottage is fully booked on Sunday 21st November. However, the group booked in have been advised that they must give up bunks in the "six room" if any members turn up at the cottage on this night. It is not the committee's policy to accept group bookings in excess of 12 people, but an exception has been made for this night only.

RUB POINTS - 2**LOCKING OFF THE PETZL STOP**

The Petzl Stop will creep when you try to remain stationary, eg. when at a rebelay. It is essential therefore to "lock off" the Stop to prevent further downwards travel. In order to do this, first grip the rope together with the Stop above the handle and remove the free rope from the friction krab with the right hand. Then, with the left hand still gripping the Stop and rope together, pass a loop through the attachment krab and hook this over the Stop.



ABSEILING
MODE

LOCKING
OFF