

# Mendip Caving Group

# NEWS

NUMBER 236

MARCH 1994

## MALLORQUIN CAVERS

by Tim Francis

This year's MCG trip to Mallorca was taken in the first week of February. The aim was to consolidate upon our previous visit and hopefully visit a few new sites. Arriving at the villa near Puerto Cristo in the early afternoon we were soon off cave spotting. We were interested in checking out a few small sites that lie in a dry valley to the south of Cuevas de Pirata. These turned out to be a couple of small entrances which were heavily choked. Unfortunately whilst wandering through the scrub Ralph sustained a nasty injury to the eye and the evening was spent doing a spot of first aid.

Our first major trip was a return to Covota de sa Penja Rotja. Due to lack of time we had not previously completed the cave which makes a brilliant introduction to caving on Mallorca.

A more detailed investigation of the prettily decorated upper levels was made, including a delightful grotto just inside the entrance. Our objective was to further explore the lower series, and with the assistance of a couple of handlines everyone was able to make it to the bottom where we spent a few hours wandering through several large chambers filled with columns and flowstone. Ralph took some excellent slide shots which are well worth a look at.

After a day of rambling and indulgence we returned to the north east of the island. We easily located the entrance of Cueva de Ca'l Pessu behind the town of Puerto de Pollensa. This appears to be a very popular beginners cave and so the entrance sections are somewhat damaged. Once in the further reaches there are some fine formations. Most of the entrance series consists of dry, dusty crawls but opens out to large chambers above a series of tight pitches. To the back of the upper level we met three local youths with one candle and a bicycle helmet! Concerned about our rucsacs Ralph returned to the entrance to hide the gear. The rest of us had to help the local "cavers" back across a slippery traverse with the aid of some improvised cowstails.

Back outside Ralph was confronted with a bunch of locals apparently rifling through our gear. He returned to the car to find two more youths loitering around the boot. After an hour we exited the cave and discovered Ralph sitting up a telegraph pole cuddling a severely depleted bottle of brandy!

The following day was spent rambling around the hills to the north east of Arta, taking in the impressive show cave which was well worth the visit. In the afternoon we wandered over to Cala Mesquida and spotted a small abandoned sea cave. On returning to the car Tim and Julie interrupted two thieves attempting to crowbar open the windows, Mendip style. Their excuse: "We're car mechanics"! We were able to give a good description of the thieves and their car to the local police, and hence the two were apprehended within the hour.

Our next trip was a visit to Cova de Can Sion primarily to see the MCG extensions. Can Sion is a well decorated cave with the lower levels containing some fine green gour pools with floating calcite crystals. The walk from Can Sion Farm (ask permission) takes about one hour with the entrance easy to find. Once in the cave we searched around the base of the sloping chamber, and were able to extend several leads. The largest discovery required an hours bashing at a draughting hole. Once through this revealed a descending rift, 80ft deep with 100ft of passage. The extension contained some fine helectites, straws and gour crystals. The rift draughted but the way on was too tight to follow.

On the final day we were to attempt Cueva Campana, but were summoned to the Justice Courts in Manacor to identify the car thieves in an identity parade. We were eventually not required but half our day was already wasted. A heavy night at the Castle restaurant meant that we badly overslept in the morning. We checked in at Palma airport just as the desk was being closed.

Team: Malcolm Cotter, Norman Cotter, Ralph Diment, Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh.

## ++++ MENDIP CAVING GROUP 1994 MEETS PROGRAMME +++++

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

DATE	AREA	MAIN EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
23 Apr	Mendip	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	Joan Goddard	0608-810382
23 Apr	Mendip	40th Anniversary Dinner	Arthur Spain	0749-679358
14 May	Mendip	BCRA Regional Meeting		
04 Jun-05 Jun	Mendip	Cottage Work	Lee Hawkswell	0923-819103
16 Jun	Egham	Cycle ride to Eclipse	Yvonne Rowe	0252-872006
08 Jul-10 Jul	Mendip	BCRC Rescue Conference	Joan Goddard	0608-810382
05 Aug-08 Aug	Forest of Dean	NAMHO Field Meet	Yvonne Rowe	0252-872006
20 Aug-03 Sep	France	Alps Expedition	Ralph Diment	0672-516382

## MENDIP CAVING GROUP - CAVE LEADERS

DAN-YR-OGDF.....	Geoff Beale	0734-722510	John Beauchamp	0761-463143
" " .....	Pete Collings-Wells	0462-76651	Joel Corrigan	0344-842083
" " .....	Ian McKechnie	0932-228292	John Miriam	081-393-3955
" " .....	Roger Wallington	0753-433841		
OFD I.....	Geoff Barton	0932-849241	Geoff Beale	0734-722510
" .....	Pete Collings-Wells	0462-76651	John Miriam	081-393-3955
ST. CUTHBERT'S.....	John Beauchamp	0761-463143	Malcolm Cotter	07842-52643
CHARTERHOUSE CAVE..	Charlie Allison	081-393-5910	Nick Gilson	0934-417697
RESERVOIR HOLE.....	Geoff Beale	0734-722510		

Accommodation in Yorks & S.Wales can be booked by through the relevant cottage warden:

Yorkshire	Northern Pennine Club	Pat O'Connel	0729-822014
South Wales	South Wales Caving Club	Janice Richards	0985 219111

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 ST51475606 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 accommodation £15.00  
25 nights accommodation £30.00

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: Full & Probationary Members: £25.00; Associate Members: £15.00  
The subscription includes free day-time access to the cottage by the member, their children, and their accompanied guests



<b>SECRETARY</b> JOAN GODDARD	tel: 0608-810382
10 ENSTONE ROAD, CHARLBURY, OXFORD, OX7 3DR	
<b>TREASURER</b> MARTIN ROWE	tel: 0252-872006
10 GREENLEAS CLOSE, YATELEY, CAMBERLEY, SURREY, GU17 7SL	
<b>MEET SECRETARY</b> BILL HEADINGTON	tel: 0761-419766
43 WHEELER'S ROAD, MIDSOMER NORTON, nr BATH, BA3 2BT	
<b>COTTAGE WARDEN</b> LEE HAWKESWELL	tel: 0923-819103
4a HAZELTREE ROAD, NORTH WATFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE	
<b>TACKLEMASTER</b> KEV WEST	tel: 081-570-6624
21 WESLEY AVENUE, HOUNSLOW, MIDDLESEX, TW3 4LY	
<b>EDITOR</b> YVONNE ROWE	tel: 0252-872006
10 GREENLEAS CLOSE, YATELEY, CAMBERLEY, SURREY, GU17 7SL	
<b>RECORDER</b> WAYNE HISCOX	tel: (WORK) 0749-72081x2213
3 KEWARD, GLASTONBURY ROAD, WELLS, SOMERSET, BA5 1TR	
<b>ORDINARY MEMBER</b> ARTHUR SPAIN	tel: 0749-679358
WAITANGI, LONG LANE, DINDER, SOMERSET, BA5 3PQ	

CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES  
RON SAUNDERS  
MALCOLM COTTER  
PAT WALSH  
PETER MATHEWS  
REGISTERED CHARITY No 270088

\* NON-COMMITTEE POSTS  
\* RESCUE WARDEN JOHN CROWSLEY 0272-652585  
\* CONSERVATION OFFICER TIM FRANCIS 081-878-3508  
\* MCG SHOP MALCOLM COTTER 07842-52643  
\* MCG SHOP PHIL INGOLD 0442-242029



## ON THE MOVE

Kev West is now at No.1 Dakenhead Wood,  
Haslington Old Road, Rawtenstall,  
Rossendale, Lancs., BB4 8RR  
Tel: 0706-2228822

Steve Marshall is now at Bad Kineton,  
Temple Herdewyke, Leamington Spa, Warks,  
CV33 0UL

## THE GOOD NEWS

Please note that the price of the new t-shirts is now £4.50 each, not £5.00 as advertised last month. On working out all the costs involved in producing them we realised that we could actually sell them for 50p cheaper than at first thought. See advert below for more details.

## THE BAD NEWS

It has come to our notice that members are taking sweatshirts and leaving an I.O.U. If you don't have your chequebook then please wait until you have (don't leave cash either). If members continue to take advantage of the trust given to them then sweatshirts and t-shirts will be available by post only which will just create more work and inconvenience for Arthur and members alike.

## NEW T-SHIRTS

The new t-shirts are now in stock and are in the cupboard in the Foremans Lounge along with the sweatshirts (the key is on the back of the library door). The price is £4.50 each - please write out receipts and cheques as you did when buying sweatshirts (payable to Mendip Caving Group please)

COLOURS: WHITE, LIGHT BLUE, CERISE, GREY

SIZES: MEDIUM, LARGE, EXTRA LARGE.

## OUT OF ORDER

Please note that at present the phone at the cottage is only taking incoming calls. YOU CAN STILL MAKE EMERGENCY CALLS ON 999 but all other calls will have to wait until you get to the pub! As yet we don't know the reason for this fault but it will be repaired as soon as possible.

## ON YER BIKE

As the week 12-19th June is National Heart Week (or something like that), Ian McKechnie and I agreed that it would be a good idea to do something towards helping our own hearts by cycling to the Eclipse at Egham on the Thursday of that week (16th June). How about the rest of you regulars? Get on your bikes that evening and cycle to the pub too - but remember, you can actually be booked for being drunk in charge of a bicycle! (I'm going to catch the train back.)

## ACCOMMODATION

As reported in the last newsletter all the beds are booked at the Crossways, North Wooton for the night of the MCG dinner, but if you contact them they can give you a list of bed and breakfast accommodation in that area.

## STICKERS

The committee has had a request for car stickers using the new MCG logo (as on the new t-shirts). We think this is a good idea but need to know how many members are likely to buy them before we commit time and money to getting them produced. So, if you are interested, let the committee know then we will make the necessary enquiries and hopefully order some in the near future.

## STILL MISSING

Last month there was a request for the return of missing wetsocks, lost after the rescue practice on 5th Feb. Two of these pairs have since been returned to their rightful owners but one pair still remains elusive. These belong to Phil Ingold (0442-242029) and are size 9, black inside and out. If you were at the cottage the weekend of the rescue practice could you please make a quick check of your gear to see if you have picked them up by mistake. Thanks.

## MCG AGM 1994

Just a reminder that this year's AGM will be on Saturday 23rd April at 1pm. Nominations for office and proposals to change the Constitution & Rules must be submitted in writing (proposed and seconded) by first class post to the Secretary's home address at least 25 days before the meeting (29th March). For details of postal votes and the Charities Act see newsletter no.235.

## YV'S DROPPINGS

SW: "I'm not winging, I'm just explaining"

YR: "Pull your trousers down and I'll take a look"

## AN IMPROMPTU TRIP TO OGOF FFYNNON DDU

by Yvonne Rowe

We met on Saturday 19th February at 8am near J11 on the M4, piled into Geoff's car and set off for a day's caving in South Wales. When we arrived at the SWCC cottage we bumped into another MCG member, Peter Harvey (discoverer of OFD), who joined us for the trip.

We entered OFD 1 and detoured down a side passage for a quick look through a hole in the floor at Skeleton Chamber and were told by Peter of the Bronze Age skelton that had been found there. We then re-traced our steps and went on upstream as far as the fixed chain that assists the climb (in my case very ungracefully!) up to Lowe's Passage (the escape route). We then climbed up through boulders to Rawl Series from where we took another detour along a long, low, and (for some) tight bedding plane, the roof of which was beautifully decorated with clusters of straws. This led to Starlight Chamber which looked just like a beautiful starry night sky in our lights. It was so quiet and peaceful after the rat-race of the outside world that I could have happily sat there for hours. After this we went to look at Fillar Chamber which I found a little odd because there were all these lovely white, quite large pillars, but not a drop of water. Everywhere was dry and dusty so they looked completely out of place, and there were no other types of decoration.

We took a route down through boulders to a high traverse above the Main Streamway. This was quite a long, dog-legged traverse with fixed wire handlines. Geoff had advised us to take our cowstails to use on this traverse and I'm glad I did because even with the wire handline it's quite narrow, slippery and exposed (but exciting!). We then made our way back to the stream and on out of the cave. It was an extremely enjoyable trip, ably led by Geoff and made even more interesting by Peter's extensive knowledge and history of the cave, in particular the tales he told of the digs and discoveries of the route we did that day. He also showed us some tucked away niches which were beautifully decorated with straws, small curtains and helectites.

Team: Geoff Beale, Peter Harvey, Martin and Yvonne Rowe.

## MOVEMENTS IN PINETREE

by Tim Francis

Yawn, Yawn - yes it's that regular Pinetree update again. Operations have recently focussed upon bagging up the waste pile of spoil at the bottom of Pine Pitch. A satisfactory clean-up was done in two trips with Joe Frampton's back the main victim of our efforts. Our next plan was to clear out the dig passage where our backfilling efforts were a little over-enthusiastic. Digging at the actual face was a tad awkward following all that rain. Furry-clad victims such as Andy Bellez were quickly seen exiting the dig none too happy!

However the cave seems determined to halt progress. On the 15th January a mini-sized boulder, which had conveniently assisted the traverse around the pitch head, decided to join its muddy brethren at the bottom. A combination of heavy rainfall and the passing of cavers must have undermined it. The rest of the choke above the pitch looks a little dodgy so please be careful. Access to the dig was then only possible by penduluming off the SRT route. As a result we have now installed a traverse line to protect the route where the boulder used to be. I wouldn't recommend attempting the traverse without cowstails as the footholds are extremely muddy. It may be worth using a short length of ladder, as well, to help the return.  
Any volunteers!?

## MCG EXPEDITION TO BELIZE

by Tim Francis

On the 20th March 1994 Julian Flavell, Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh and Pete Hollings will be caving on the Northern Vaca Plateau, Belize. We have received £700.00 from the Sports Council, administered by the Ghar Parau Foundation, and will be back in time for the AGM. Expect tales of massive cave discoveries and even larger snakes!

## EMMER GREEN CHALK MINE

by Yvonne Rowe

A couple of Sundays ago Jean-Paul Burch, Graham Old, Martin and myself went along to meet Geoff Beale at Emmer Green chalk mine. The idea was for us to get a bit of SRT practice on the 70ft entrance pitch and to have a look around this fascinating mine. J-P had abseiled before but had never prussiked so it was a useful exercise for him, and not complicated as there were no re-belays or deviations. The first third or so of the circular entrance shaft is brick lined and some of it is covered in "calcite flow" where the calcite has leached from the mortar over the years.

Once we had all arrived at the bottom, Geoff gave us a guided tour of the mine which holds an interesting "secret". First he showed us the many mining implements and personal items that had been left behind when the mine was abandoned, including candle-holders and candles, various pieces of mining metalwork, bottles, shoes, tobacco tins, and much more. There was also some very old and interesting grafitti dating back to the 1820's, consisting mostly of miners signatures with dates and the villages they came from. Some miners put the date by their name every year they worked there; one had fourteen consecutive dates, and at least two had twelve. There was also a very clear and unmistakable portrait of Hitler carved into the soft chalk!

Geological features of the mine includes large faults with impressive, shiny slickensides, and beautiful regimented bands of chalk and flint. Some of the flint nodules in the banding are massive, others have fallen out of the wall as almost perfectly round, chalk-covered balls. In one chamber there was a huge spread of peat that was once used as a sideline to grow mushrooms, the mushroom grower's name and (probably illicit) trade being part of the aforementioned grafitti. There is another brick-lined shaft up to the surface but this one has been capped so a through trip is not possible!

And the secret? Well, all I will tell you is that the mine contains a piece of very interesting history with some strange artefacts... so you will have to arrange a trip and find out for yourself!

This mine (and another "next door") is well worth a visit. Emmer Green is just beyond Caversham, Reading, and you can arrange a trip by contacting Geoff Beale on 0734-722510. He will be happy to take you down almost any time.

## BCRA MEETING

The BCRA will be holding a Mendip Regional Meeting on Saturday 14th May 1994 at: Priddy Village Hall  
Time: 9:30am - 5:30pm  
(including lunch break)  
Admission £1.00 (50p UB40s)

Lectures include:

- \* Digging
- \* Cave Diving
- \* Wigmore System
- \* Mendip Rescue Organisation
- \* Mendip Cave Registry
- \* Mendip Cavers Reports from the Phillipines, India & much more
- \* Historic Films of Mendip Caving
- \* Club Stands with publications on sale
- \* MRO - Latest News

## COTTAGE WORK 4/5 JUN

- \* Clear & repair gutters
- \* Fix lock on shed
- \* Repair slats on dormer & check rooftiles for damage
- \* Fit downstairs windows locks
- \* Repair broken window stay
- \* Treat window frames
- \* Install bunk shelves
- \* Fit cabin hooks on bunks
- \* Clean and/or paint kitchen
- \* Clean food box shelves
- \* Paint shower ceiling
- \* Make shove ha'penny table
- \* Spring clean cottage & tidy garden
- \* Fix new map board in lounge

## DAREN CILAU RESCUE

by Sean O'Neill, Daily Telegraph

A potholer trapped for almost 24 hours was freed by rescuers who used their bare hands to dig through rocks and rubble to reach him in one of Britain's most complex cave systems.

Mr Matthew Ward, 30, of Chepstow, Gwent, an experienced caver, had his route barred by a rockfall 400ft underground, three miles into the Daren Cilau complex on Sunday 30th January. He and two colleagues from the Hades Caving Club were exploring the little known Busman's Holiday section in the Antler Passage stretch of the cave when the rock slide dislodged a huge boulder blocking Mr Ward's path and pinning his legs. Unable to free him, his companions made the three hour journey back to the cave entrance and raised the alarm. Volunteers from the Gwent and West Breconshire cave rescue teams worked through the night until they were able to free Mr Ward at around 4pm the next day. They cleared much of the rubble around him by hand and were able to pass him hot drinks and a thermal blanket. Working in shifts they carried a hydraulic jack to the accident site and were able to lift the boulder and create a 12-inch gap through which Mr Ward squeezed.

Mr Steve Pedrazzoli, one of the rescue controllers, said: "It was a difficult and unusual operation. Matthew was trapped a very long way down and it was very cold. The cave was also water-logged in some parts so the route was tricky to negotiate with the heavy jack. Matthew's a cheerful chap and his attitude helped keep his spirits up. That kind of character matters when you're stuck on your own for such a long time. He is also an experienced caver so he kept calm and knew what was going on".

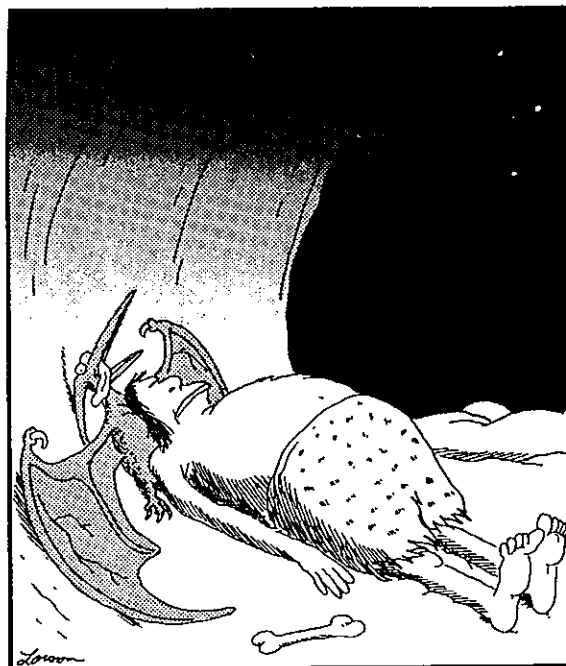
The Daren Cilau complex is known among cavers as one of the toughest in Britain. It begins with a 2000ft passage which is often no more than 2 ft high and through which runs a stream. The guide book, The Caves of South Wales, by Tim Stratford, notes that "a small stream flows along the passage at most times of the year and progress is made by crawling, squeezing and wriggling for most of its length". It should "only be attempted by experienced, and very fit, cavers". The eight miles of craggy passageways include sections named Friday the 13th, The Worlds End, Pain Killer Passage and Big Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance.

Mr John Hutchinson, of the Hades club, said: "It's a lengthy cave and you need a lot of energy to go down there. Geographically, it is also very difficult and it's easy to get lost. To get to the end and back is probably the most difficult caving trip in Britain." Mr Ward made the difficult journey back to the cave opening and was taken to the Nevill Hall hospital, Abergavenny, for a check-up.

# Cottage doings

## COTTAGE BOOKINGS

18 Mar-19 Mar	Nic Wood (member)	(11)
18 Mar-19 Mar	Chris Whittle (member)	(15)
25 Mar-26 Mar	Steve Conquest (memb.)	(6)
01 Apr-03 Apr	Members' Weekend (Easter)	
08 Apr-09 Apr	Committee Meeting	
08 Apr-09 Apr	Egham Youth Club	(8)
15 Apr-16 Apr	EDSS	(8)
22 Apr-23 Apr	AGM/Dinner	(full)
06 May-07 May	Members' Weekend	
03 Jun-04 Jun	Members' Weekend	
06 Jun-07 Jun	Chipin School	(30)
24 Jun-25 Jun	Ian McKechnie (member)	(12)
01 Jul-02 Jul	Members' Weekend	
08 Jul-09 Jul	BCRC Rescue Conference	(12)
05 Aug-06 Aug	Members' Weekend	



In the days before feathers

## BRITISH CAVE RESCUE COUNCIL CONFERENCE

You should already have seen the adverts in the newsletter and elsewhere about the forthcoming British Cave Rescue Council Conference to be held at Eastwater Farm, Priddy on 8th-10th July. Joan Goddard has received this letter from the MRO with the latest details:-

"MRO is well advanced with detailed programme arrangements, and the purpose of this letter is to find out how many of your members are likely to attend and participate. All involved in cave rescue work in any way are welcome, of course. The conference is, however, not open to the general public, nor really suitable for those with little caving experience. Its main purpose, of course, is to bring together delegates from all parts of the country, and to meet representatives from the Police, Fire, Ambulance and other emergency services involved in or associated with cave rescue.

A field at Eastwater Farm, Priddy, has been kindly provided by Mr and Mrs Gibbons so that the Conference can be held close to the major caves of the area and the huts of key Mendip clubs. Marquees and pavillion tents will be used to stage the events, including the provision of meals and drinks. The former are being organised by John Godfrey, who owns the well known Burrington Combe Cafe, and the latter is being arranged through Roger Dors of the Hunter's Lodge Inn. Information will be provided in due course about the availability of local accommodation to suit all tastes.

A full and varied programme of activities will take place throughout the weekend. Please note that the formal Opening with VIPs will be held on Friday 8th July at 7:30pm prompt. This arrangement enables all of Saturday to be devoted to underground workshops and practical demonstrations in nearby caves such as Eastwater, St Cuthberts and GB. Debriefs and talks will be held afterwards. Social events in the evening will include the now infamous Wessex Challenge, a BBQ and late night stomp. Surface demonstrations nearby on the Sunday morning will deal with special interest techniques such as: Cave Diving and Sump Rescue, Hymac digging and Shoring, and the Uses of Explosives. The proceedings will close after an informal lunch on Sunday 10th July. Once again, your replies will be used to gauge the likely take-up for the particular activities outlined.

The BCRC Conference Secretary, Dany Bradshaw, would appreciate you letting him have provisional details of how many delegates are likely to attend from your organisation or club. Also, their particular interests. Costs per delegate will reflect the response to this survey, and MRO will ensure that they are kept to a minimum; within "single figures", excluding meals, drinks and stomp. Further details and sufficient final programmes will be sent to all respondents following the BCRC's AGM in mid-April."

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ANY OF THE ITEMS MENTIONED BELOW, GIVE DETAILS AND YOUR NAME TO JOAN GODDARD, JOHN CROWSLEY, OR ANY COMMITTEE MEMBER BY THE END OF MARCH PLEASE.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <u>UNDERGROUND WORKSHOPS</u> (Saturday)        | 3. <u>CONFERENCE</u>                            |
| (a) GB (First aid & medical help)                 | State 8th, 9th, 10th or all                     |
| (b) Eastwater (Stretchers & communications)       |   |
| (c) Cuthberts (Pitch rigging & hauling)           | 4. <u>SATURDAY NIGHT SOCIALS</u>                |
|   | (a) Wessex Challenge - team required            |
| 2. <u>SURFACE DEMONSTRATIONS</u> (Sunday morning) | (b) BBQ/Pig Roast (tickets required)            |
| (a) Cave diving & Sump rescue)                    | (c) Stomp and Bar (tickets required)            |
| (b) Hymac digging & shaft shoring)                |   |
| (c) Uses of explosives                            | 5. <u>BREAKFAST ON SITE</u> (Saturday & Sunday) |
|   | <u>PACKED LUNCH</u> (Saturday)                  |

## MCG COMMITTEE: JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Have you ever wondered what your committee gets up to? Do you realise what is involved in running a caving club which is also a charity? Are you thinking of standing for a committee post but would like to know what you are letting yourself in for? To answer these questions, the present committee have tried to outline what each post entails, and the rest of this newsletter is given over to job descriptions of some committee posts. Obviously, they are not definitive as committee members often get involved with work which is not within their job description (eg. the cottage extension). Committee members are also trustees of the charity and have a legal duty to manage the Group's affairs prudently, not to derive any benefit or gain, and to take professional advice on matters on which they are not themselves competent. Serious stuff, eh!

## JOB DESCRIPTION: HON. SECRETARY

Administration of the Group: includes making arrangements for the Annual General Meeting and any other general meetings which may be called. Constitutional matters (in conjunction with the committee).

Administrative and secretarial support to the committee: Correspondence between the committee and Group members, and between the committee and outside organisations.

Liaison with other caving bodies and clubs: Attendance at meetings (although other Group members can and do attend on the secretary's behalf). Council of Southern Caving Clubs, Charterhouse Caving Committee, and Cambrian Caving Committee are most relevant to our activities. (Mendip Rescue Organisation matters are principally dealt with by our rescue warden, John Crowsley).

Membership correspondence and records.

Liaison with statutory bodies: (eg. contact with English Heritage/English Nature/Somerset County Council regarding permission to dig in the Blackmoor valley).

Legal matters, Charity Commissioners.

Liaison with custodian trustees.

With other committee members, help to maintain the overall wellbeing of the Group: and to encourage and enable members to meet the Group's objectives with respect to caving and its charitable status.

Listen to people's views and problems - try to sort them out, or find a man/woman who can - wash teatowels - chase up lost keys/books/people/wetsuit socks - make coffee - pass on information of meetings, conferences, workshops etc. - keep cool (difficult!).

## JOB DESCRIPTION: HON. EDITOR

The Editor is required to type and produce a monthly publication to carry articles and all the Group's news, information, and dates (events, meets, etc.) acquired from such sources as the cottage noticeboard, log book, members, cottage booking records, committee meetings, and the pub! When enough material has been gathered for a newsletter, it requires about 10 hours typing, another 10 hours to edit, paste-up and proof read, and 2 hours enveloping, etc. In all, a newsletter requires about 25-30 hours work. When there are insufficient items to produce a full newsletter then a Bulletin of 1 or 2 sheets can take its place to keep members up to date with current information and events.

The master copies of the newsletter are taken or sent to Mike Lovell (with prior notice) who prints them (cheaply). Mike takes the printed copies to the Eclipse at Egham where the Editor collects them and issues them to those members present (to save postage). The remainder are enveloped, addressed, stamped, and posted; complimentary newsletters are sent to Mr Brown of Hazel Warren Farm and the Frys at the Stirrup Cup.

Occasionally, a loose leaf will be included with each newsletter (eg. subs request forms, CCC permits, membership cards, dinner booking forms, MRD callout list). Every quarter the Editor posts the previous three newsletters (not Bulletins, as they are MCG interest only) to other clubs for the newsletter exchange.

The pre-AGM newsletter is for AGM business only, eg. the agenda, officers reports, minutes of last AGM, motions, and the current Constitution and Rules.

It is necessary for the Editor to keep an up-to-date Membership and Newsletter Exchange address list (which needs amending surprisingly frequently). This is used to produce address labels for posting the newsletter and is published twice a year for members' information. A copy of the Membership list must also be regularly passed to the Secretary for his/her records and information.

Finally, as a committee member and trustee you are expected to attend all the monthly committee meetings and take an overall interest in the running of the Group. You might also be expected to take on extra tasks to help other committee members. As well as discussing and actioning Group business, you may also be required to speak on behalf of or pass on requests from members.



## JOB DESCRIPTION: HON. TACKLE MASTER

The role of Tackle Master includes amongst the 100+1 other things:-

Care and maintenance of the Group's equipment, keeping records of tackle usage, inventory of tackle, relegation of dangerous or unservicable items and stock replenishment. You should have a good knowledge of equipment on the market and be able to identify the best for the Group's needs.

As a member of the committee you will be required to attend monthly committee meetings. This is often overlooked but is a very important part of any committee position as it is the committee who are responsible for the day to day running of the Group. You will not only be responsible to the Group but also the Charity Commissioners. As the MCG is a registered charity you by law will become a committee trustee which also carries with it a degree of responsibility.

Finally, you will be required to have a skin as thick as a rhino to deal with everything said about you but never to you by certain individuals.

So to summarise:-

If you are interested in caving equipment, can spare a weekend every month plus other days or evenings, and have the willingness to be involved in Group politics, then give it a go. You will find the committee are very helpful and it won't take long before you find your feet. Good luck.

## JOB DESCRIPTION: HON. COTTAGE WARDEN

The post of cottage warden is split into two main tasks:

- 1) As the Cottage Warden
- 2) As a Committee Member

The Cottage Warden is responsible for the following:

### 1. Cottage Bookings

Responsible for member and guest group bookings and the issuing of keys to all using the cottage (and getting the guest keys back). Taking, banking and chasing cottage fees from guest groups and informing the treasurer of all monies collected.

### 2. New Key System

Inputting and deleting the electronic keys. Issuing keys to new probationary members and upgrading probationary to full membership keys.

### 3. General Running of Cottage

Checking and purchasing of gas, coal, toilet rolls and cleaning stuff. Organising the emptying of the cess pit.

### 4. Telephone

Emptying phone and banking cash collected and passing on this information to the treasurer. Plus the general maintenance and repair of the phone.

### 5. Care of the Cottage and Land

Maintaining the upkeep of the cottage/land by organising Cottage Maintenance Weekend once a year and any other repairs/replacements which occur throughout the year.

Duties as a Committee Member

To attend committee meetings once a month to report on, and discuss, the wellbeing of the Group, its activities, finance, Group assets and membership; and act upon in the best interest of the Group.

## JOB DESCRIPTION: HON. TREASURER

In 1993, the Group (excluding the MCG Shop) had an income of £11,445 (approx 1500 transactions) and spent £8768 (approx 350 transactions) as well as having £19,273 in liquid assets. The main function of the MCG Treasurer is to keep proper accounts and receipts of all these transactions. This usually involves about 5 hours per week of work (mostly book-keeping). At busy times (eg annual subs, audit) it means working full-time and holidays have to be sacrificed, especially at Xmas! This is some of what the Treasurer does:

Receive details of all MCG receipts and payments from various sources (members, booking sheets, committee members, Trustees, outside bodies, banks, etc). Record all receipts and payments on a daily basis in such a way that the Group's financial position on any day can be shown with accuracy.

In December each year, request annual subs from current members, and at the same time issue an annual CCC permit to each member for the following year. Also give each member a copy of their database entry and invite them to correct any errors. On receipt of subs, and copy of CCC permit, issue membership card. In January and February, chase unpaid subs. In March, advise the committee of unpaid members who may then be deemed to have resigned. Collate information required to enable tax to be reclaimed on covenanted subs.

During the year, on receipt of subs from new members, issue keys and CCC permits. Maintain a list of key holders from whom £10 deposits have been received.

Receive information from secretary, editor, members, etc and use this to keep a database of membership details, showing: name, address, membership category, whether or not subs paid, etc. Produce monthly updates of the membership list for the secretary and the cottage notice board. Produce address labels for the editor.

Issue prepayment vouchers to members and maintain a record of their use. Display a copy at the cottage.

Ensure that there is a supply of numbered s.a.e.'s at the cottage for booking sheets and cottage fees. Monitor the envelopes received to see if any have gone astray.

Reconcile booking sheets and cottage fees; resolve any discrepancies and chase unpaid cottage fees. Liaise with cottage warden for group bookings and ensure fees are received.

Maintain a supply of numbered 14-day CCC permits in the Library. Compare CCC receipts to number of permits issued, identify any shortfall in income.

Collect sweatshirt and t-shirt receipts. Compare receipts to numbers sold, identify any shortfall in income.

Budget for social events (annual dinner, barn dance) to ensure that they at least break even.

Keep records of, and account for, floats issued to committee members.

On a monthly basis, check the payphone meter against amount banked to ensure that phone is at least breaking even. Check electric meter readings and ensure that estimated bills are in line with consumption.

Ensure subs to BCRA, CSCC, CCC and other organisations are paid. Renew annual subscriptions to magazines (Descent, Caves and Caving, etc)

Reconcile monthly bank statements. Ensure that funds are available to meet direct debits, then transfer monies between deposit and current accounts to maximise interest receivable.

Produce monthly accounts of receipts and payments. Combine monthly accounts into quarterly, then annual, accounts for auditors. Pass audited accounts to secretary in time for publication 1 month prior to AGM.

Send audited accounts of receipts and payments, together with statement of assets and liabilities, to Charity Commissioners within 10 months of the end of the Group's financial year. Provide details of annual receipts and payments to Custodian Trustees for Inland Revenue purposes. Provide copies of accounts to any member of the public requesting them, within 8 weeks of the request.

As a committee member, be prepared to take on additional work outside the Treasurer's job description.

Attend monthly committee meetings, as well as the Forum and AGM. As a Trustee, take an active role in the day to day business of the Group. Feed back requests from the membership to the committee. Be prepared for occasional criticism when you are doing a difficult job, unpaid, to the best of your ability.

