

Mendip Caving Group

NEWS

NUMBER 237

MAY 1994

COTTAGE WORK WEEKEND - 4/5TH JUNE

As you can see there are many jobs that need doing, and there is bound to be a job to suit you, whatever your ability. It would be nice to see some new faces helping this year as well as the regulars who turn up every year. Prospective and Probationary members should remember that the committee are required to take into account your commitment to cottage cleaning and maintenance when considering your application for full membership! If we can't maintain the cottage as it is now, how will we manage when we need help to build the library extension? If you can't spare much time or wish to go caving as well, there are plenty of smaller jobs on the list that you could do - any help will be appreciated. Please come along and support your cottage warden - he does a lot of work throughout the year on your behalf but can't be expected to do it all.

LOUNGE

- * Fix new mapboard on wall
- * Remove, wash and refit Ventair fan
- * Wash walls
- * Paint skirting boards
- * Make and install shove ha'penny table
- * Restock first aid cabinet
- * Refix destination board to wall

KITCHEN

- * Secure Expelair fan box
- * Replace broken tile on windowsill
- * Clean food box shelves
- * Wash and paint walls

HALL, TOILETS & UNDERSTAIR CUPBOARD

- * Fit lockable box over shower mixer tap
- * Replace broken glass above front door
- * General clean and tidy

TACKLE ROOM

- * Thorough clean and tidy

SHOWERROOM

- * Treat ceiling with fungicidal paint
- * Renew broken shower tap
- * Fit extra soap/shampoo trays



CHANGING ROOM

- * Wash walls and ceiling
- * Fix mirror to wall
- * Replace bolts on side door

EIGHT ROOM

- * Replace Ventair fan
- * Renew broken window stay
- * Fit new coat hooks on wall
- * Fit new shelves on bunks

FOREMAN'S LOUNGE

- * Renew broken timber on bunk 9

OUTSIDE

- * Clean out gutters
- * Make up timber boxouts for drains
- * Clean and treat window frames
- * Renew twisted slats on dormer
- * Check roof tiles for damage
- * Tidy up back patio
- * Clear out siltrap
- * Repair rope washer
- * Install spin drier in shed
- * Repair shed lock
- * Repair gas store lock and door
- * Tidy gas store
- * Lag pipe outside changing room

GENERAL

- * Spring cleaning
- * Fit security locks, downstairs windows

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

Over the next few months, we have what promises to be a very full and well subscribed meets list. Wherever possible, I have arranged for us to have two meets per month. The first is the standard Mendip meet, but with a few interesting trips organised. The second is the mid-month away trip. Please take advantage of these, as all require a certain amount of planning, and it would be a shame not to take advantage of someone else's work! Most, if not all, of these meets will have more than one "leader", ensuring that all levels of ability will be catered for. Joel Corrigan

DATE	AREA	MAIN EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
21 May-22 May	South Wales	Dan yr Ogof	Joel Corrigan	0344-873613
22 May	South Wales	Ogof Ffynnon Ddu	Geoff Beale	0734-722510
04 Jun-05 Jun	Mendip	Cottage Work	Lee Hawkswell	0923-819103
04 Jun-05 Jun	Yorkshire	Cavers Fair	Joel Corrigan	0344-873613
10 Jun-12 Jun	Forest of Dean	Caving Symposium	Yvonne Rowe	0252-872006
16 Jun	Egham	Cycle ride to Eclipse	Yvonne Rowe	0252-872006
18 Jun-19 Jun	South Wales	Agen Allwedd	Joel Corrigan	0344-873613
02 Jul	Mendip	Charterhouse Cave	Nick Gilson	0934-417697
02 Jul-03 Jul	Mendip	SRT Rig/Bolt/Survey	Joel Corrigan	0344-873613
08 Jul-10 Jul	Mendip	BCRC Rescue Conference	John Crowsley	0272-652585
16 Jul-17 Jul	Yorkshire	Nick Pot	Joel Corrigan	0344-873613
05 Aug-08 Aug	Forest of Dean	NAMHO Field Meet	Yvonne Rowe	0252-872006
14 Aug	South Wales	Ogof Craig ar Ffynnon	Geoff Beale	0734-722510
20 Aug-03 Sep	France	Alps Expedition	Joel Corrigan	0344-873613
17 Sep-18 Sep	Newport, Shrops	BCRA Conference	Tim Francis	081-878-3508
05 Nov	Mendip	Half-Yearly Forum	Joan Goddard	0608-810382
05 Nov	Mendip	Barn Dance	Arthur Spain	0749-679358
03 Dec	Mendip	Reservoir Hole	Geoff Beale	0734-722510

ACCESS UPDATE: Foxes Hole in Burrington is now gated - access is available to bona fide cavers. Access arrangements are on the door of the library... Stoke Lane is closed due to a change of ownership - new access arrangements are being negotiated.

Accommodation in Yorks & S.Wales can be booked by through the relevant cottage warden:
 Yorkshire Northern Pennine Club Pat O'Connell 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 Tel: 0761-462797 Grid Ref ST51475606 OS 1:50,000 sheet 182
COTTAGE INFORMATION:	Through the cottage warden please (address and tel. no. below)
COTTAGE BOOKINGS:	MCG members, member's children, SWCC and NPC £ 1.50
COTTAGE FEES per night:	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



SECRETARY	JOAN GODDARD	tel: 0608-810382
10 ENSTONE ROAD,	CHARLBURY,	OXFORD, OX7 3QR
TREASURER	MARTIN ROWE	tel: 0252-872006
10 GREENLEAS CLOSE,	YATELEY,	CAMBERLEY, SURREY, GU17 7SL
MEET SECRETARY	JOEL CORRIGAN	tel: 0344-873613
2 WINDLEMERE HOUSE,	WESTWOOD ROAD,	WINDLESHAM, SURREY GU20 6NB
COTTAGE WARDEN	LEE HAWKESWELL	tel: 0923-819103
4a HAZELTREE ROAD,	NORTH WATFORD,	HERTFORDSHIRE
TACKLEMASTER	TIM FRANCIS	tel: 081-878-3508
90 WOKING CLOSE,	PRIORY LANE,	ROEHAMPTON, LONDON, SW15 5LR
EDITOR	YVONNE ROWE	tel: 0252-872006
10 GREENLEAS CLOSE,	YATELEY,	CAMBERLEY, SURREY, GU17 7SL
RECORDER	WAYNE HISCOX	tel: (WORK) 0749-72081x2213
3 KEWARD,	GLASTONBURY ROAD,	WELLS, SOMERSET, BA5 1TR
ORDINARY MEMBER	ARTHUR SPAIN	tel: 0749-679358
WAITANGI,	LONG LANE,	DINDER, SOMERSET, BA5 3PQ

CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES	* NON-COMMITTEE POSTS	
JONATHAN ROBERTS	* RESCUE WARDEN	JOHN CROWSLEY 0272-652585
MALCOLM COTTER	* CONSERVATION OFFICER	TIM FRANCIS 081-878-3508
PAT WALSH	* COTTAGE EXTENSION	WAYNE HISCOX 0749-672081x2213
PETER MATHEWS	* MCG SHOP	SEE ANY COMMITTEE MEMBER
REGISTERED CHARITY No 270068	* AUDITORS	BRYAN TERRY AND DAVE TOOKE



ON THE MOVE Bob Marles has moved to: Yew Tree Farm, Kirby Bellars, Melton Mowbray, Leicester, LE14 2NB

APPLICATIONS for membership: Jeremy Gilson, 7 Fenners, Worle, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon. Tel:0934-515689 (proposed by N Gilson, J Carrigan)

Joyce Dines, Stoke House, Stoke Bottom, Oakhill, Nr Bath BA3 5HW Tel:0761-232302 (proposed Y Rowe, M Rowe)

These applications for probationary membership will be considered at the committee meeting on 2nd July.

EARWIG in on the committee meeting held 7-5-94... Cottage extension: locals have had notice of our planning request and as far as we know there are no objections... Planning permission has since been granted... New sweatshirts to be ordered with old small ladder logo on front, new large cave logo on back, possibly in dark blue, grey, or what would members like?... T-shirts: larger sizes to be ordered... 1995 MCG Dinner: Arthur to look at other venues as well as Crossways, must have a function room, any suggestions?... Lost property: all items found lying around the cottage to go under the stairs, if not claimed will eventually be auctioned or thrown out... Expedition fund: Joel has asked permission to purchase 150m bluewater rope (£150), 20 rope protectors (£50), and 2 Mole tackle sacks (£32 each)... It has been suggested that we put duckboards in changing room... CSCC are spending lots of money on pipes etc. for cave entrances and have asked clubs for donations so they don't have to put up subs - MCG to donate £20.

HOUSE TO LET House sitter on Mendip required for 7th to 17th July inc. All that's required of you is to feed the cats, cut the grass once, and pay something towards the electricity.

This is a warm, comfortable home in a quiet lane, and is close to Wells, the caving areas, beautiful walking country, and not too far from the coast. The offer is open to any MCG members so if you fancy a cheap holiday, phone Joan Goddard on 0608-810382 for more details.

(Please note, it is not Joan's house!)

OLD SWEATSHIRTS There are just two sweatshirts left with the old shield logo on. They are yellow, large, and have been knocked down to £8.00 each. They can be found in the Foreman's Lounge cupboard.

NEW T-SHIRTS Remember, there is a new stock of t-shirts with the new logo (see N/L no.235). They can be found in the Foreman's Lounge cupboard (key on back of library door). There are medium, large and extra large sizes in pale blue, white and grey (the cerise has sold out already). They are only £4.50 each and proving very popular, so hurry! Please make cheques payable to Mendip Caving Group (not MCG), and could you please note your purchase on the form provided so as to give Arthur some idea of popular sizes and colours when re-ordering - thank you. If you can only pay with cash, could you please leave it in the lecturn and state on the back of the relevant booking sheet your name, your purchase, and the amount of cash left so that the treasurer can reconcile the monies when they and the booking sheets are returned to him.

RUBBISH! The Cleanaway contract was amended earlier in the year and the wheelybin was removed at the beginning of April. In its place we now have special, large, blue Cleanaway poly bags. These bags cost about 85p each so must be used economically. Please continue to put the usual black poly bags in the kitchen waste bin and only fill it with rubbish that can't be burned on the fire. Try to crush tins before you put them in the bin and take home your empty milk and wine bottles. When the kitchen bin is full you can tie the black poly bag up and put it in a blue Cleanaway bag. Remember that each blue bag is quite large and will take several full black poly bags. When full, the blue bag goes in the concrete collection area on the outside of the wall by the gate. Cleanaway will not take away any rubbish that is not in one of their blue poly bags. Please do not use these blue Cleanaway poly bags for anything other than kitchen waste.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS There are two new books in the library: Lechuguilla - Jewel of the Underground and Caves of the Peak District.

LATE PUBLISHING I have had some articles and other items from members that have not as yet been published. This is due to all the pre-AGM bump that took up a whole issue in April and now I find that as a result of the AGM, this newsletter is mostly taken up with its proceedings!

Don't despair, I have it all in hand, and will publish any outstanding articles etc. in the June newsletter.

AGM doings

OLD AND NEW We would like to take this opportunity to thank the retiring committee members for their work and support during the past year. Also to thank Mike Lovell and Pete Spain, the retiring auditors, for all their hard work and patience in auditing the Group accounts. We would like to welcome the new officers, especially Joel Corrigan the new meet secretary and Tim Francis the new tackle master, and Dave Tooke and Brian Terry the new auditors.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS
The voting for election of officers at the 1994 MCG AGM went as follows:-

POST	CANDIDATE	YES	NO
Secretary:	Joan Goddard	41	---
	Charlie Allison	9	---
Cottage Warden:	Lee Hawkswell	48	0
Tackle master:	Tim Francis	46	1
Editor:	Yvonne Rowe	44	3
Recorder:	Wayne Hiscox	27	---
	Julie Hesketh	22	---
Treasurer:	Martin Rowe	44	3
Meet Secretary:	Geoff Beale	21	---
	Joel Corrigan	29	---
Ordinary memb:	Arthur Spain	48	0

PURCHASE OF GB It was put to the floor that Bristol Waterworks have offered 17 acres of land, below which lies Charterhouse Cave and GB Cavern. A figure of £10,000 had been mentioned. Two organisations are considering buying this land - a Conservation group and a Company limited by guarantee (formed from Mendip clubs). MCG, as well as other Mendip clubs have been asked to pledge, by May 7th, a minimum of £500 each to help purchase the land. Due to the urgency, the committee decided to pledge £500 subject to the approval of the AGM.

At the AGM there was a great deal of constructive discussion and many questions asked. The concluding discussions were about how much MCG should pledge, pledges with various ceilings, and whether MCG should simply purchase the land outright. Eventually a proposal was put for MCG to pledge at least £500 with a ceiling of £5,000 - it failed on a show of hands. Next was a proposal to buy the land outright - it failed on a show of hands. Finally it was proposed that MCG should pledge £500 now, with another £3,500 available so

that MCG would be in a position to make up any shortfall in pledges on the day of the meeting (7th May) - it passed on a show of hands.

Ron Saunders and Nick Gilson, both of whom are solicitors (and members), have spent considerable time looking into the complex issue of whether MCG, being a charity, could legally pledge money to a company limited by guarantee. Ron also wrote to the Charity Commissioners to ask for their advice on the matter in accordance with the 1992 Charities Act. Unfortunately the Commissioners were unable to give us a reply by the AGM. Because of this, Ron and Nick were still unsure how we stood legally, and some members were a bit wary about pledging money we would never see again nor get any return for (it does not even buy us guaranteed access). As a result, Ron has suggested that we pledge £500 with a ceiling of £4,000 **SUBJECT TO:**

- Approval by the Charity Commissioners.
- Our approval of the memorandum and articles of association or other form of association for the purchasing body which shall include access for all subscribers and the public.
- Our approval of the draft contract to purchase.

Note:- The words underlined in (b) are an amendment to the pledge already submitted.

EXPEDITION FUND Joel Corrigan and Ralph Diment asked the AGM if the Group would agree to an MCG expedition fund for this year's MCG expedition to the Haute Savoie area of the Alps. With a display of maps, photos and a survey of one of the caves already discovered, they put the case on behalf all interested MCG expedition members. They requested funding for caving equipment that could be used for this, and successive discovery, exploratory and surveying expeditions in the Alps (and MCG expeditions elsewhere). These items would be kept separate from general MCG tackle and would be in a locked expedition store.

It was proposed that an upper limit of £1,500 for caving equipment for expeditions be granted, and that the equipment be kept in a separate expedition tackle store. This was passed on a show of hands.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE
There was quite a bit of discussion on a possible change of committee structure. It was pointed out that some committee members had a bigger workload than others and that posts should be re-organised so that the work could be more evenly spread. One suggestion was that there could be fewer committee posts by amalgamating some of these and

re-titling them. Any extra work could be delegated to voluntary members. It was suggested, by the committee and the floor, that it would be very unwise and undemocratic to have too few committee members making decisions on behalf of the Group. It was also suggested that there would be a big problem if members volunteering to help were unreliable, or if no volunteers came forward.

It was agreed to leave the committee structure as it is, as it works well at the moment. It can be reviewed at a future AGM if it becomes necessary.

NON-COMMITTEE POSTS

It was suggested after the election of Committee posts that non-committee posts should also be elected. At the moment, these unelected posts are the Rescue Warden, Conservation and Access Officer, and Journal Editor. It was thought to be undemocratic to simply co-opt somebody without the membership having a say on who represents them in these posts. It was agreed that at the next and future AGMs, a proper election of non-committee posts would take place, along with committee posts. These non-committee members would not be expected to attend committee meetings but could do so if they wished or were asked to.

THE MCG DINNER This year's dinner was an overwhelming success, thanks to the excellent organisation and hard work of Arthur Spain. There were almost 120 members and ex-members. Guests of Honour were Malcolm and Norma Cotter, and our other guests included Mary Cox from the Stirrup Cup (next to the cottage) and representatives from the BEC, the Wessex and the Shepton (sounds like a cue for a song!). The meal was first class as usual and I think the menu satisfied all tastes - I certainly didn't hear any complaints.

Malcolm gave an interesting and informative after dinner speech with tales of the Group's beginnings and early days. There followed a brief interval where Arthur asked each table to think up reasons for not going caving and reasons for joining the MCG (see below).

Later Malcolm gave an excellent slide show. He showed pictures of many former members, early cave discoveries such as Cooper's Hole, Ubley Hill Pot, Pinetree Pot, and Upper Flood, the first MCG cottage in Netherwood with no running water or proper toilet, the motor bikes that got members to Mendip and the first car owned by an MCG member. It made us newer members realise how lucky we are today with our purpose-built cottage, modern caving equipment, and better transport. There were many more slides covering the 40 years of MCG, too many to mention here but they were enjoyed by

old and new members alike. Another amusement that had people reminiscing was Joan Goddard's photo stand. Again, it covered 40 years of MCG and there was something for (or of) everyone, old and new. There were photos of people, places, caves, unusual predicaments, special occasions, holidays, cottage building, cottage detonation! - and much more. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the evening, to everyone who came, and to Malcolm and Joan for their excellent after dinner entertainment. This year's dinner is going to be a hard act to follow! Yvonne Rowe

Reasons for not going caving:

(from Ian McKechnie's table)

- * I can't go caving, I'm too busy returning the shop's stock to the committee.
- * I can't go caving, I'm designing an extension to the extension.
- * I would like to go caving you see, But my banker would like to see me, I have mortgaged my house, And my car, and my spouse, But what's left will all go on GB.

(from Yvonne Rowe's table)

- * I can't go caving-I'm in the wrong car
- * I can't go caving, I'm on the committee.
- * I can't go caving, I've just had a shave and I'll get chin strap rash.
- * I can't go caving, it's beneath me.

Reasons for joining the MCG:

(from Ian's table)

- * Young Fiona's a banker you know, And with her your investments 'll grow Since she joined MCG Higher profits she'll see, Now that loans're required Down Below

(from Yvonne's table)

- * I joined the MCG so somebody could carry my BDH with my camera.
- * I joined MCG because... err... um...!?

AGM YV'S DROPPINGS

RS: "What does 'refreshments' refer to in your accounts?"

MR: "It's a hangover from the previous year."

RC: "As Martin said, the committee very rarely makes a decision..."

During Malcolm's slide show:

MR: "Why is everyone wearing bobble-hats?"

MC: "We wore them to keep our feet warm!"

During Malcolm's after dinner speech:

MC: "We didn't have an annual dinner in the old days..."

TK: "...we had an annual sandwich!"

YR: "I need to play around with it in the dark!"

MCG RESCUE PRACTICE, 5TH FEBRUARY 1994

by Phil Ingold

The plan to rescue me started when Joan asked if I was prepared to be a "victim" again, and what cave would I choose? "YES PLEASE - Black Shiver or Gaping Gill". I was told these would be too far away for a Mendip rescue! After some debate we agreed that Swildon's Upper Series sounded good. I said: "The ladders might be a bit hard". "No they won't, we will not be doing them!"

Chris Whittle collected me on Friday 4th February, arriving at the George, Norton St Philip, at about 6pm. After an excellent pint of 6X and a good meal we headed to the cottage and a sociable evening in front of the fire.

No problem with personal gear this year as I'd be able to wear my 6mm wetsuit and borrow my son Simon's Petzl for illumination. John Crowsley organised the routes, the teams of rescuers and the Priddy Green Patrolers to keep watch on our cars. He also posted notices to advise other cavers of the rescue and to "keep clear please", advising them to use the Wet Way.

Being a wet cave I was looking forward to the wetsuit and baby oil (see newsletter No.224!) but John Crowsley proposed that I wear my "Polar Bear" furry suit to stay warm as I would not be getting much exercise. Swildon's was very wet so the MRO advised changing the route to make the rescue less severe! (easier?) They also had several ammo boxes with chemical hot-boxes inside, should I get cold. At the cars I was given some new see-through goggles to wear.

The rescuers had been divided into two groups at the cottage. On Priddy Green, next to the cars, the first team strapped me into a drag sheet having first inserted me in a survival bag and poly-bin liner. They had to undertake some delicate surgery, cutting the bags carefully to attach a lifeline at my groin without making my voice change tone!

During the carry from Manor Farm I was unable to see but I could imagine the terrain by the sounds of our progress. Gloop-gloop-squelch, the sound pausing when the stretcher was rested on a gate or drystone wall. Two held me in balance while the rest got over the obstruction. We progressed noisily until we arrived at the entrance where I was balanced so I could get a view of the stream disappearing from the pool and vanishing into the lower hole of the blockhouse.

John Crowsley despatched one of the team to retrieve the goggles which I had left at the cars on the green. After my carriers had rested and my goggles returned, hauling ropes were attached and we prepared to enter the cave. The stream was blocked off with a board over the hole then I was guided in, down and through the now less-wet black void of the entrance. The water made a smashing splashing sound - a favourite noise that I had missed for several years. It was impossible to see the passage as we progressed, apart from the view of the roof/ceiling (I was not lying back and thinking of England!), but I could hear the stream gurgling and splashing. I could also smell the damp cave and taste the dark. What a lovely aroma and flavour!

We progressed further in, dropping down with the stream. Lots of grunting and straining (and splashing) with frequent reminders "keep him out of the water" and "are you warm?" They had succeeded in keeping me dry so far and very warm. We had arrived at the bottom of the first drop, the skill of the team improving as we progressed. I was balanced on backs to keep me out of the stream in the narrow passage and at one point I was poised on Yvonne's back with her nose 10mm from the water to hear someone say to her "can you get a bit lower?" NO!!

I was carried and dragged and I don't know how, but we were at the bottom of Jacob's Ladder in a good sized stream and I still felt warm and dry. My rescue continued and the stream had left us. The passage began to echo and became very light with lots of lamps illuminating the chamber at the Old Grotto - it was full of people! We had found the "out" team. The stream had rejoined us for the reunion as well.

Two hours IN, how long would it take to get OUT? I was propped up so I could look around and then untied so I could take a blood test (blood glucose level of 6.0 - perfect). Some insulin and pills (not lager) and some food (thanks for carrying my ammo box). When I looked around I could see the chamber full of cavers, a great sight. We had got to the Old Grotto which was very dry when I last saw it but now it was very wet with a big stream running over and through the old stal. The two parties of cavers poised there was a memorable sight. The teams changed over and I was again asked if I was warm. My Polar Bear furry suit and wetsocks were wet, I discovered when stripping off for my lunch break, but I was still very warm. Excellent! The "out" team were

joined by a few of the "in" team and we started to exit, gingerly at first, gaining confidence and skill as we progressed. As we advanced I noticed John Beauchamp talking to the surface on the Molephone, advising Arthur Spain of our progress. I'm not sure where the phone was first used but it seemed to be a very successful piece of high tech. At some point I felt damp - an accident maybe? I put my hand down to find I was sitting in the stream! I was still very warm, like the rescuers who, despite lying or sitting in the stream to keep me dry, were sweating.

The ascent of Jacob's Ladder did not seem to present a problem and I was hoisted up easily (apart from the sweat and water) but I was kept dry all the way out. The Molephone was used to request the board be put back across the stream at the entrance to reduce the volume of water entering the cave. We then continued out through the blockhouse and arrived back on the surface two hours after setting off. Well done both teams.

I was again carried over (through) the glutinous field, this time towards Priddy Church. I was met by the surface team and given warm coffee and a welcome. I was helped out of my wet clothes and into Chris's car, then taken back to a warm cottage for a shower and a chat.

A BRILLIANT DAY for me, it brought back many happy memories. Thanks to ALL who took part above and below ground, and Helen and Simon, the MRO, the MCG, and anyone else I have forgotten to mention. I can now remember and dream of Swildon's again and recall how it used to look four years ago (my last trip) - THANKS.

P.S. I suggested that my neck needed support on the last rescue practice in GB Cavern. No problems this time; too much water and tighter passages stopped the problem recurring, or me noticing it. I was offered the nice clear goggles several times when they caught up with me but I managed to convince my rescuers that I was not getting wet and liked being able to see and enjoy all the sensations. The drag sheet was very effective for manoeuvring me through the tight bits. Not as comfy as the plastic corrugated tube-like stretcher used in GB, but I think it was easier to bend in the narrow places.

P.P.S. I am looking forward to the 1995 rescue practice, how will I stand the wait?

EXPEDITION UPDATE

We now have 13 cavers who have paid the £20 deposit, and are thus assured of a place on the Alpine Expedition. I am still awaiting confirmation from another 7 (and their deposits). It seems likely that more people will join us out there for a week. If any of you would like to become involved, it is not too late. The more we have, the cheaper it becomes for the rest of us! As things stand, the finances look like this:

Assuming 13 people in 3 vehicles (minibus & 2 cars), we estimate £150 per person, excluding food and duty free. This includes hire of minibus, fuel, road tolls, ferry, and BCRA insurance. Not too bad, eh?!

Expo Members: James Allen, Charlie Allison, Andy Bellamy, Joel Corrigan, Ralph Diment, Joe Frampton, Tim Francis, Joan Goddard, Lee Hawkswell, Julie Hesketh, Martin Rowe, Yvonne Rowe, Nic Wood.

Awaiting deposits from: Richard Carey, Ben Cooper, Julian Flavell, Mike Pittman, Dave Tooke, Marcus Ward, Sue Wood - send your deposits (I'm talking about cheques!) to me ASAP, payable to the "Alpine Expedition Fund", at the following address - 2 Windlemere House, Westwood Road, Windlesham, Surrey, GU20 6NB. Joel Corrigan

EXPEDITION STORES

WANTED - Any kit that may be of use to the expedition stores. At the moment we have carbide generators, altimeter, Calor gas stove, large tent, ladders, bolting kit etc... We are purchasing rope, tackle bags, bolts etc..., but need more gear. If you have anything lying around that you no longer use or need, then why not donate/loan/sell to the Group. Things that we could do with are large (?) tents, cooking gear, jerry cans, carbide sets, rucsacks, camping mats, landrovers, helicopters etc...

Contact Joel if you have anything to get rid of.

"DIGGERS DAY OFF", DAREN CILAU

by Joel Corrigan

1994 looks as though it could be an interesting year for Llangatock Mountain exploration. The various cave-connections are now closer than ever, and in the process lots of new cave has been discovered (ie. Busman's Holiday). Things must be good, as even the MCG have been into new passage in Daren Cilau.

Fri eve 21st Jan Begin the tedious trip to the "Hard Rock Cafe", in the company of two members of "RECK" (Reading Elderly Caving Klub - ex Reading Uni.), Damian Grindley and Adrian Willimont. Have more than the usual amount of epics in the crawl, as I'm taking my monster tackle-bag with me. Several other factors combine to make this one of my worst Daren trips: PVC oversuit, lack of fitness, and worst of all, onion bhajis from the take-away in Crickhowell. Feel sick as a dog all night.

Sat 22nd Jan Look at "New Boots and Panties", just beyond the "Micron". Several people had suggested this as an interesting site, but we weren't that impressed. Maybe the lack of draughts in the cave as a whole this weekend gave us bad vibes.

Sun 23rd Jan Explore one or two leads around "Crystal Oxbow". Damian spots a high-level passage, and climbs up. Incredibly enough, this is virgin passage. We find ourselves in a fine stooping-size passage, with a dry mud/sand floor. Occasional sections of crawling lead us to a sand choke after about 50m. We spend approx. two hours digging this with a crowbar, and gain another 6m. The way on is visible, but requires enlarging. Looks promising, but we are forced to return to camp.

Mon 24th Jan Pack up camp, and head for the surface. Uneventful except for a sense of humour failure in the crawl by yours truly! (My tackle-bag is still enormous, as my Ortlieb bag had leaked on the way in, and I have to take everything back out to dry!!)

We have a vacation of one month, before deciding to continue the exploration.

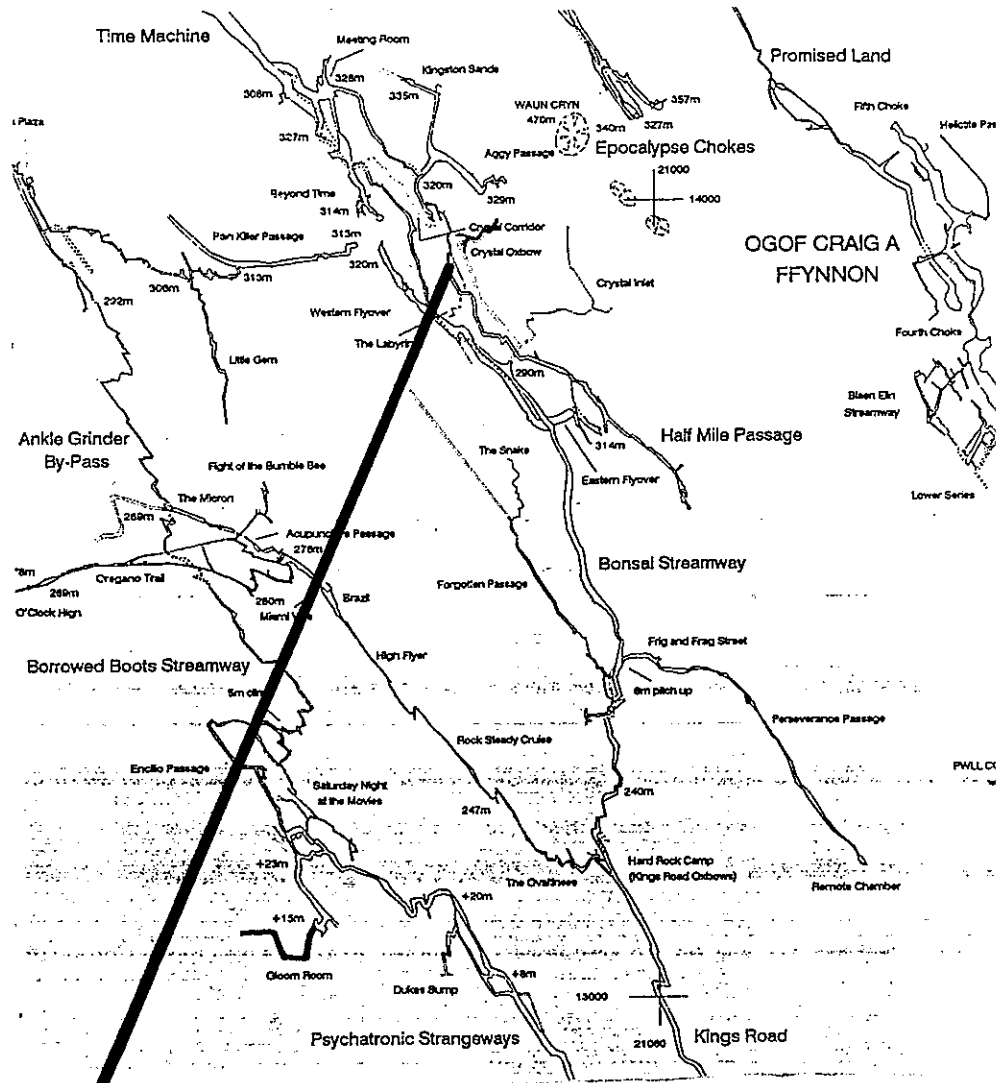
Fri 18th Feb Lee Hawkswell (MCG cottage warden) joins Chris Seal (CSS/RECK), Damian Grindley (RECK), and me on his first camp. We opt for a morning start (as we can't be bothered the night before), with much lighter loads (only two Daren-Drums per tackle-bag). Chris and I put new ropes on the climbs and the traverse (they've been there for years and years), and instead of entering "Crystal Oxbow" from the "Bonsai Streamway" (the normal route), we head up into the "Meeting Room", collect Steve Allen's digging gear, and head off down "Nameless Canyon". On the last camp, we'd spotted an old rope that drops down into "Crystal Chamber" from the beginning of "Half Mile Passage", so we knew that there was a route down. Unfortunately for me, though, this rope only went half way down. A classic abseil on a rope that is too short can cause one or two inconveniences, and this was to be no exception. I found myself having to swing onto a very loose ledge, and ponder the meaning of life (or the meaning of "life after rescue"). Salvation arrived in the form of Chris, who still carried a short length of rope with him - the remains of the re-rigging rope from the climbs. I was able to attach this to the old hawser rope, and continue on down. The others followed, and we all agreed that Daren is a silly place to take unnecessary risks!!

Stomp off down to the dig, attach the aforementioned rope to the top of the 4m climb, and dig until our stomachs tell us that it is dinner time.

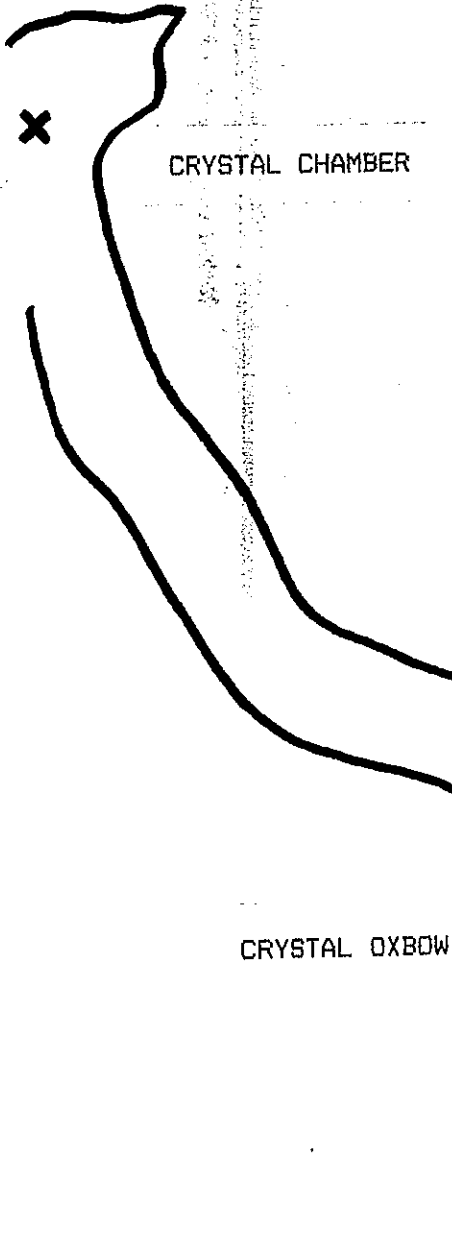
Sat 19th Feb Chris and Lee go to "Chokes Away" at the end of "Twelve O'Clock High", armed with the Bosch and numerous batteries. They drill lots and lots of shot-holes in the choke for Gonzo to blow up on his next trip down. Damian and I spend the day in the extension, digging and surveying what we find. We only proceed another few metres, as we really need three people (things are getting tight), but the area is still pushable. Lee and Chris arrive at about 17:00hrs, and we dig for an hour or two more. Spend another quiet and uneventful night camp - NOT!!

Sun 20th Feb Pack up and leave the camp in record time. Have an easy time of it in the crawl (some days are better than others), and leave the real world about mid-afternoon. Thick snow greets us outside, accompanied by the inevitable howling draught that only serves to freeze our appendages even more than usual!

Lee enjoyed himself so much (in hindsight) that he is coming back down again soon, and now wants to come on the DYO camp in May!! The passage is headed for what we assume to be the continuation of "Aggy Passage", beyond the boulder choke. This is a very interesting area, and the possibilities for big cave beyond that choke are incredible. Any other MCG members out there who would like to become involved in these projects? Volunteers always needed.



DAREN CILAU
 "DIGGERS DAY OFF"
 Surveyed by:-
 D. GRINDLEY BCRA
 J. CORRIGAN GRADE 3
 Drawn by:- D. GRINDLEY



Feb. breakthrough
 Jan. dig
 5m
 N
 1.5m climb
 4m climb (Jan. breakthrough)

A "SUPER SEVERE" ARCHAEOLOGY WALK

by Yvonne Rowe

Last November I plotted the chosen archaeological sites on the map for this year's walk on 5th March and it all fell into place quite nicely. It was to take in all the Charterhouse sites, Gorsey Bigbury Henge, some Cheddar caves, and other sites in between. Easy peasy! Then I got chatting to Phil Ingold who said that Helen and Simon would be going on the walk and would we be using any roads where he could meet us? Well, the answer was no! It would be all cross-country except Raines Batch Lane at the beginning and Cheddar Gorge at the end. I asked him how much he could do on his motorised scooter and he said most things except walls and stiles as the scooter was too heavy to lift over them.

Unable to resist a challenge, Martin and I set off in early December to walk the planned route and amend it where necessary so that Phil could join us and get all the way round on his scooter. There were a couple of muddy places that we couldn't avoid but we thought that come March they will have dried out a bit. The rest of the route presented no problems. I then wrote to the landowners for permission to cross their land and use their tracks, and in every case this was given very amicably (on the day, one even left otherwise locked gates open for us.)

After two months of extremely wet weather and a forecast of worse to come on the day of our walk, 19 people (and one dog) set off from Nordrach Cottage. Our first obstacle was on the track to Upper Flood. It was extremely rutted and boggy and Phil's scooter needed a bit of manhandling, if only to stop it pitching him sideways into the mud. The Charterhouse sites (the Iron Age enclosure, and the Roman leadmine, fort, amphitheatre and town) were reached without incident and all went well until the track beyond Raines Batch Lane. There were two long stretches of deep water that would have flooded the scooter motor, so Phil was helped over a nearby stile and along a field while his scooter was coaxed through bushes and over rocks until both could be safely reunited further on. The next obstacle was along a path at the edge of Blackmoor - it had disappeared! In its place was two hundred yards of ankle deep bog. The scooter kept sinking into the mire despite much pulling and pushing, so while Phil was helped around the bog, others manhandled the scooter again until dry(?) land was reached. This was quite tiring for Phil and the others and we weren't yet half way along the walk. Whatever would we come across next?

Actually, the rest of the walk went very well, and the scooter zipped across fields and along tracks. We stopped near Longwood and had a well earned lunch, giving everyone (and the scooter) a chance to recover before visiting the Neolithic Gorsey Bigbury Henge. Blackrock Drove gave us no problems, but Phil's scooter was never going to make the ascent to Bone Hole (Bronze Age). Phil continued easily down the Gorge, past various Palaeolithic-Roman caves and rock shelters, but the final blow (literally) came in Cheddar Gorge, by Sun Hole Palaeolithic rock shelter. Luckily, we were nearing the end of the walk and thinking of nice cool pints in the pub when there was an almighty BANG!!! from the scooter, like a backfire. "It's OK", said Phil, "I've got a puncture repair kit". "You'll need more than a puncture repair kit... you've got a ruddy great hole in the tyre", said Mike Eeles. Helen fetched their car which she had previously parked at the pub, so a final bit of effort got the scooter into the back, and Phil into the pub. Then a happy hour was spent going over the interesting and amusing aspects of the walk.

Although the route was very wet in places, the promised rain didn't arrive so, weatherwise, we were lucky. Everyone said they enjoyed the walk with its archaeology, and agreed that it was made more enjoyable with the challenge of getting Phil (and the scooter) round. Phil said that using the grades of caves he would give the walk "super severe"... and where was I taking him next year!!

My sincere thanks to everyone who came on the walk and pitched in with help when needed - it was as much of an achievement for me that Phil did the walk as it was for Phil. Next year's walk will probably be in the area to the east of Chew Valley Lake, taking in hillforts, a stone circle, a chambered long barrow, and much more. OK Phil?

BCRA/NCA CAVER'S FAIR - JUNE 4TH & 5TH 1994
 Dalesbridge Centre, Austwick, N Yorkshire... Entrance (inc. camping) for the whole weekend: £15 in advance, £20 on the door... 1 day only: £10 in advance, £12 on the door...
 Stomp: £4 in advance, £5 on the door... Bunkhouse accommodation: £5 per night...
 Cheque or P/O payable to NCA... Post to: Caver's Fair, 71 Pendle Road, Leyland, Preston, PR5 2UN... Please indicate subjects interested in:
 * COMPETITIONS * VIDEOS * HYDROLOGY * CAVE RADIO * DIVING *
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