

# Mendip Caving Group

## NEWS

NUMBER 241

NOVEMBER 1994

### PINETREE POT SURVEY

Timothy Francis

After nearly two years digging above the pitch in Pinetree we came to the conclusion that our squalid bit of passage might actually be heading off somewhere significant. Obviously a survey was called for, if only to prove that we have actually been doing something down there all this time.

The length of passage now means that the optimum amount of digging is done by a team of five people. So with only three of us available at the weekend it was an ideal opportunity to knock off the survey. We surveyed the whole of the upper series starting at the entrance pipes. This was so that the dig could be more accurately placed on the old survey. Furthermore we had realised that the original survey of the pitch head had not placed the ledge, opposite the raw bolt, where the dig started from.

The copious amounts of mud made surveying conditions a little awkward. A lack of clean water meant that the compasses and clinometer were not easily read, and Pinetree mud is not that tasty. After the surveying we had little enthusiasm for any digging, so retired to the cottage to draw up a rough survey in the log book.

There has been much speculation as to the relationship between the chamber at the end of the dig and the Fourth Aven in Easy Street. The top of the aven actually lies 23m below the chamber so it is unlikely that there has ever been a hydrological link between the two. The current end of "A Pockhole Lips Way", 19m long, is beyond the extremes of Easy Street. It is heading off at a bearing of 040 deg which is much more to the north than we had presumed. Fifty metres more of passage should see us past the wall, and under the shallow dry valley in the next valley!

The passage at the dig face drops fairly steeply but is heavily choked. It is becoming more rocky than before so hopefully less spoil will need to be removed. We have had some problems with co2 build up so are restricted to only one days digging each weekend. Fortunately the air replenishes itself during the week. The recent wet weather is also making things a little awkward, as a steady torrent pours out of a crack in the roof when it rains. Luckily we have been able to divert most of the water down a 'soakaway' in the terminal chamber. This is the point where we initially dug in the chamber, and had to abandon because it was too wet. All the water drains away in under a week after the rainfall. Digging continues.

Diggers : Joe Frampton, Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh, Reggie Paine.

*See page 6 for survey*

## NORDRACH COTTAGE BOOKINGS

NIGHTS	GROUP	SIZE	NIGHTS	GROUP	SIZE
30 Dec-01 Jan	MEMBERS'	NEW YEAR PARTY	03 Feb-04 Feb	MEMBERS'	WEEKEND
06 Jan-07 Jan	MEMBERS'	WEEKEND	03 Mar-04 Mar	MEMBERS'	WEEKEND
27 Jan-28 Jan	WESTMINSTER SCHOOL	(12)	31 Mar-01 Apr	MEMBERS'	WEEKEND AGM

## 1995 MEETS PROGRAMME

DATE	AREA	EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
04 Feb	Mendip	Rescue Practice	John Crowsley	01179-652585
04 Mar	Mendip	Archaeology Walk	Yvonne Rowe	01252-872006
05 Mar	Mendip	Longwood Clean-up	Martin Rowe	01252-872006
01 Apr	Mendip	Annual General Meeting	Joan Goddard	01608-810382
01 Apr	Mendip	Annual Dinner	Arthur Spain	01749-679358

## MCG - CAVE LEADERS

<u>DAN-YR-OGOF</u>		<u>OGOF FFYNNON DDU I</u>	
Geoff Beale	01734-722510	Geoff Barton	01932-849241
John Beauchamp	01761-463143	Geoff Beale	01734-722510
Ian McKechnie	01932-228292	John Miriam	0181-393-3955
John Miriam	0181-393-3955	<u>ST. CUTHBERT'S</u>	
Roger Wallington	01753-433841	John Beauchamp	01761-463143
<u>CHARTERHOUSE CAVE</u>		Malcolm Cotter	017842-52643
Charlie Allison	0181-393-5910	<u>RESERVOIR HOLE</u>	
Nick Gilson	01934-417697	Geoff Beale	01734-722510

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

Yorkshire	Northern Pennine Club	Pat O'Connell	01729-822014
South Wales	South Wales Caving Club	Gary Vaughan	01202-679602

**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: 01761-462797 Grid Ref ST51475606 US 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



**SECRETARY** JOAN GODDARD tel: 01608-810382  
10 ENSTONE ROAD, CHARLBURY, OXFORD, OX7 3QR

**TREASURER** MARTIN ROWE tel: 01252-872006  
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**MEET SECRETARY** GEOFF BEALE tel: 01734-722510  
30 CHURCHILL CRESCENT, SONNING COMMON, NEAR READING, RG4 9RX

**COTTAGE WARDEN** LEE HAWKSWELL tel: 01923-819103  
4a HAZELTREE ROAD, NORTH WATFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

**TACKLEMASTER** TIM FRANCIS tel: 0181-876-1863  
FLAT 5, 2 THE CRESCENT, BARNES, LONDON, SW13 ONW

**EDITOR** YVONNE ROWE tel: 01252-872006  
10 GREENLEAS CLOSE, YATELEY, CAMBERLEY, SURREY, GU17 7SL

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3 KEWARD, GLASTONBURY ROAD, WELLS, SOMERSET, BA5 1TR

**ORDINARY MEMBER** ARTHUR SPAIN tel: 01749-679358  
WAITANGI, LONG LANE, DINDER, SOMERSET, BA5 3PQ

\* CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES  
\* JONATHAN ROBERTS  
\* MALCOLM COTTER  
\* PAT WALSH  
\* PETER MATHEWS  
\* REGISTERED CHARITY No 270068

\* NON-COMMITTEE POSTS  
\* RESCUE WARDEN  
\* CONSERVATION OFFICER  
\* COTTAGE EXTENSION  
\* MCG SHOP  
\* AUDITORS

NAME	TELEPHONE
JOHN CROWSLEY	01179-652585
TIM FRANCIS	0181-876-1863
WAYNE HISCOX	01749-672081x2213
SEE ANY COMMITTEE MEMBER	
BRYAN TERRY AND DAVE TOOKE	



**ON THE MOVE** Joel Corrigan is back in England, presumably at his previous Windlesham address. Joyce Dines to: Chaffeigh Farm Bungalow, Laymore, Winsham, Chard, Somerset, TA20 4NX. Tel: 0460-30197  
Rupert Knowles tel. no. is 01784-432833

**EARWIG** in on the committee meeting held 8.10.94... New tackle: the committee has agreed to the tacklemaster buying a further 5 new pulleys (to replace the 9 still missing), 700ft/215m lifeline for Mendip, and more spreaders. Two tacklebags to be repaired by Dragon Supplies... SRT training: a course will now be held in 1995 as not enough interest was shown for December booking... Light bulbs: it was agreed to buy more low energy types for the cottage (Ed: these have now been installed)... Key deposits: are at present in a low return account. To be transferred to a long term account with a better return... Earth bonding: cottage earthing is in need of improvement. To be done ASAP... Trustee: a letter from Ron Saunders has been received by Joan Goddard confirming the instatement of Jonathan Roberts... 1st aid equipment: left over from the expedition to be kept with expedition tackle. Short life items to be put into cottage 1st aid box.

**MCG SHOP** We are pleased to say that the shop stock is selling quite well, as are the new sweatshirts. Please pay by cheque (not cash) and please name the items you buy on the back of your cheque. It helps the treasurer when he receives all the cheques and is entering them in the accounts. Committee members - please ensure that this procedure is followed, and that items sold are entered in the stock book in the shop cupboard. Thanks.

**EXPEDITION JOURNAL?** Sadly I have had no more articles other than the one I received from an ex-member. If you really want this publication, and many of you said you did, then you will have to get your fingers (and pens and paper) out if you want it by the AGM.

**XMAS DINNER** Tim Francis is organising an MCG dinner at the Eclipse, Egham on Thursday 15th Dec. at 8pm. Cost is £14.50, and Tim would like a £5 non-returnable deposit by 8th Dec.

**BOOKING SHEETS** The treasurer has been having quite a bit of trouble over the past year deciphering some of the names on the cottage booking sheets. The booking sheets are a new(ish) layout and can work really well. The problem is he doesn't know who "f\*\*\*ing bastard" is (though he could guess!), or "Gizmaster", or "the Cowboy", or "the Thief", so please, no nick-names. Also, could you please use surnames - there are quite a few of you now with the same Christian names (Tim, Andy, Geoff, Steve, Peter, Mike, Dave...) Surnames especially apply when getting your guests to sign in - a recent example is simply "Dod" - who the hell is he? (and he left without paying!!). Another regular at the cottage is A. Guest, he (or she) even occupies several bunks on a single night! Full names please! There are far too many people, members as well as their guests, who are staying one or two nights at the cottage and leaving without paying. You know you are coming to stay at the cottage so it is up to you to make sure you have the appropriate money, or better still leave a cheque (made payable to Mendip Caving Group). If you genuinely forget then you should send the Treasurer a cheque as soon as possible. One October weekend alone we were £15.50 short of what the booking sheet suggests we should have had in cottage fees, and that was for guests (with no surnames!) and members alike. It is not part of Martin's job to chase up every case of non-payment, nor does he have the time, so come on, play fair to the Group, the Treasurer and the majority who do pay their cottage fees - you are costing us all a lot of money. One person each weekend should take responsibility for collecting all the cottage fees and forwarding them to the Treasurer - but remember that guest groups who have pre-booked through the cottage warden pay their cottage fees directly to Lee Hawkswell.

**CONTRIBUTIONS** to the newsletter can be submitted on DSDD floppy discs, providing they are compatible with our computers. We have an IBM 286 with MS-DOS v1.03, Windows v1.02, with Windows Write and 5.25" discdrive. Articles should preferably be sent as ANSI files, although we can convert files that have been produced in formats such as Word for Windows etc. Please send a hard copy of your article in case we have difficulty reading your disc, and a note of the file name. Articles can also be submitted for BBC Computers (we have a BBC B+) on 5.25" or 3.5" DSDD discs, either 40 or 80 track drives. ASCII files are best, or formatted for Wordwise. Please include a hard copy of your article, and a note of the file name. If you are unsure about compatibility, send a disc anyway and we will try it!

**AND  
YET  
MORE**



**THE MCG FORUM** held at Nord-rach Cottage on 5th November 1994 was a bit of a damp squib. For the majority of the proceedings there were eight members on the floor (not quite literally!) plus the committee. Of those eight, one read a newspaper, two read Mendip Underground, one fell asleep, and one read an MCG newsletter. One or two members appeared towards the end and a few were caving. The topics covered were as follows:

**The Forum** It was said that the lack of interest was either due to a) everyone being happy with the way the committee is running MCG's affairs, or b) there was nothing controversial or interesting enough to make it worth attending.

**1995 Expedition** Albania was suggested but thought to be too far away and possibly politically sensitive. This Yv'sdropping sums it up quite well:

TK: "Ask Tony Oldham about caving in Albania."

RK: "Does that mean people have been caving in Albania before?"

TK: "No, it means you just get 6 months remission on your sentence there!"

Seriously though, the possibility is being investigated and the information will appear in a future newsletter. Another expedition suggestion was Italy, but if all else fails some members are thinking about two weeks in Yorkshire! (Ed. Personally, I fancy going back to County Clare in Ireland.) Are there any other suggestions?

**MCG Tackle** A suggestion was made for an MCG away meets tackle store. There have been occasions in the past where two or three groups of members have taken tackle for different away meets that fell on the same weekend, usually taking it at least a week before the meet and returning it a week or more after, leaving little or no useful tackle for Mendip caving. It was decided that as we already have an expedition tackle store as well as the regular tackle store at the cottage, we didn't need yet another tackle store. All that is required is for members to PLEASE CHECK WITH THE TACKLEMASTER before taking tackle for away meets. The cottage tackle is meant basically for Mendip caving but with careful management it should be possible to take it for away meets also.

**The Cottage** The meeting talked about the visual aspect of the external cottage walls. Apparently neighbours have commented on their dowdy appearance. The walls were designed to need no treatment - painting means work every couple of years and pressure hosing forces water into minute cracks which open up with frost! The general opinion was to leave the walls as they are. Also, the wood on the dormer windows is in dire need of

repair or replacement before water gets in causing more serious problems. This brought the meeting on to the subject of cottage maintenance. Although MCG's cottage maintenance weekends are fairly well attended and much is achieved, not alot is done by the membership the rest of the year. Arthur Spain and Lee Hawkswell do as much of the urgent work as they can but it shouldn't always be left to them (they want to go caving too!). It was suggested that MCG pay contractors to do the more difficult jobs, leaving members to just do running repairs... which leads me to another Forum Yv'sdropping:

AS: "Has anyone had a shock in the showers recently?"

The committee would like to hear your views on paying contractors to do difficult or urgent cottage maintenance.

**Retirements!** It was announced at the Forum that three committee members intend to retire from their posts at the AGM. These are Yvonne Rowe - Editor, Arthur Spain - Ordinary Member, and Martin Rowe - Treasurer. Yvonne and Martin have future commitments coming up in 1995 that will sadly leave them with little time for committee work. Arthur feels that it's time for "fresh blood" to take on the post of ordinary member - the same can probably be said for the other two posts as well. Is anyone interested in these posts? Let the committee know so there's time for candidates to "learn the ropes" before taking over rather than jumping in at the deep end after the AGM! This applies especially to the future treasurer where it is useful (if not necessary) to see what goes on before you take over, a) to learn what is involved in keeping MCG's accounts, and b) to give yourself time to work out a different system of accounting if necessary, eg. double entry book keeping, a different computer programme, changing the present programme, etc. Have a good think about the posts - they are all very interesting, dare I say enjoyable, and they don't stop you from caving (unless of course you want them to!).

**BARN DANCE** Thankyou to Arthur for organising another successful Barn Dance. Fortunately, the Velvet Bottom Band continue to supply the music and caller for a nominal fee (beer plus expenses) and we kept down the cost of food this year. The total cost of the event was £308.53 and we sold £314.00 of tickets (62 x £5 and 2 x £2), so we had a surplus of £6.47. Thanks to all who helped with the running of this event.

Do we want a Barn Dance again next year? With only 60-odd people, it is a big effort to keep costs down so that we break even. Would say, 100 people come to another kind of event? Eg. disco, or a barbeque, or a fireworks party. Would more people attend if we avoided November 5th? Answers on a postcard please to any committee member.

**YV'S DROPPING**

YR: "I do not like sleeping with strange women - I would rather sleep with strange men!"

## SOUTH WALES MEET, 19TH/20TH NOVEMBER

by Joan Goddard

Geoff Barton, Linda Gates, Joan Goddard, Pete Harvey, Mike and Sue Hazelden, Keith Knight, Ian McKechnie, Brian Snell, Dave Snell and Andrew arrived on Friday evening (some of us having toured the quarry in thick fog before finally finding the SWCC cottage). We were joined on Saturday morning by Geoff Beale, Graham Old, and Yvonne and Martin Rowe.

Saturday Unfortunately the planned through trip from OFD II to I was abandoned due to high water levels and the prospect of more rain to come. After some discussion G. Barton, IM, BS, KK, DS, and Andy set off for Top Entrance and Smith's Armoury.

Meanwhile a second and third party (G. Beale, GO, MH, LG, JG, YR, MR and PH) also went in Top Entrance but made their way to the beginning of Gnome Passage where the way on was to the left down a twisty route through boulders to Salubrious Passage. A small stream flowing over white calcite deposits makes this a pleasant way down to a dry tributary passage which enters from the left. We went along it, past the Trident and Judge formations, through a muddy pool and then further dry passage to a 'cross roads' over Swamp Creek which flows down towards the Main Stream Passage. We continued straight on, through a symmetrical tunnel-shaped walking size passage with quite a few formations, to a pitch of about 30 feet. MH rigged it for SRT; Yvonne and Peter decided to go out, and the rest of us donned our kit (When will I ever get to know the correct order for attaching all the bits and pieces?!). Geoff Beale had a bit of a problem, having left his sit harness behind, but Graham graciously shared his which was hauled up and down pitches as required.

Mike encouraged Linda and Joan at the top of the pitch and we all made it down through the Knave to pitch No. 2 which was about 20 feet long. We scrambled down a steepish passage to a boulder slope leading to a T-junction. To the right there was a narrow deep rift and the main streamway could be heard thundering down below. We heard the sound of voices and wondered if it could be the other party. To the left, past a side grotto with helictites and straws, a hole in the floor looked inviting. It sported a fixed belay, but unfortunately we had no more rope with us so had to turn back. We retraced our route to the entrance, MR and MH derigging the pitches. Both Linda and I felt we had benefitted from the SRT practice (and patience of the experienced members), and vowed to try and do more SRT trips in future.

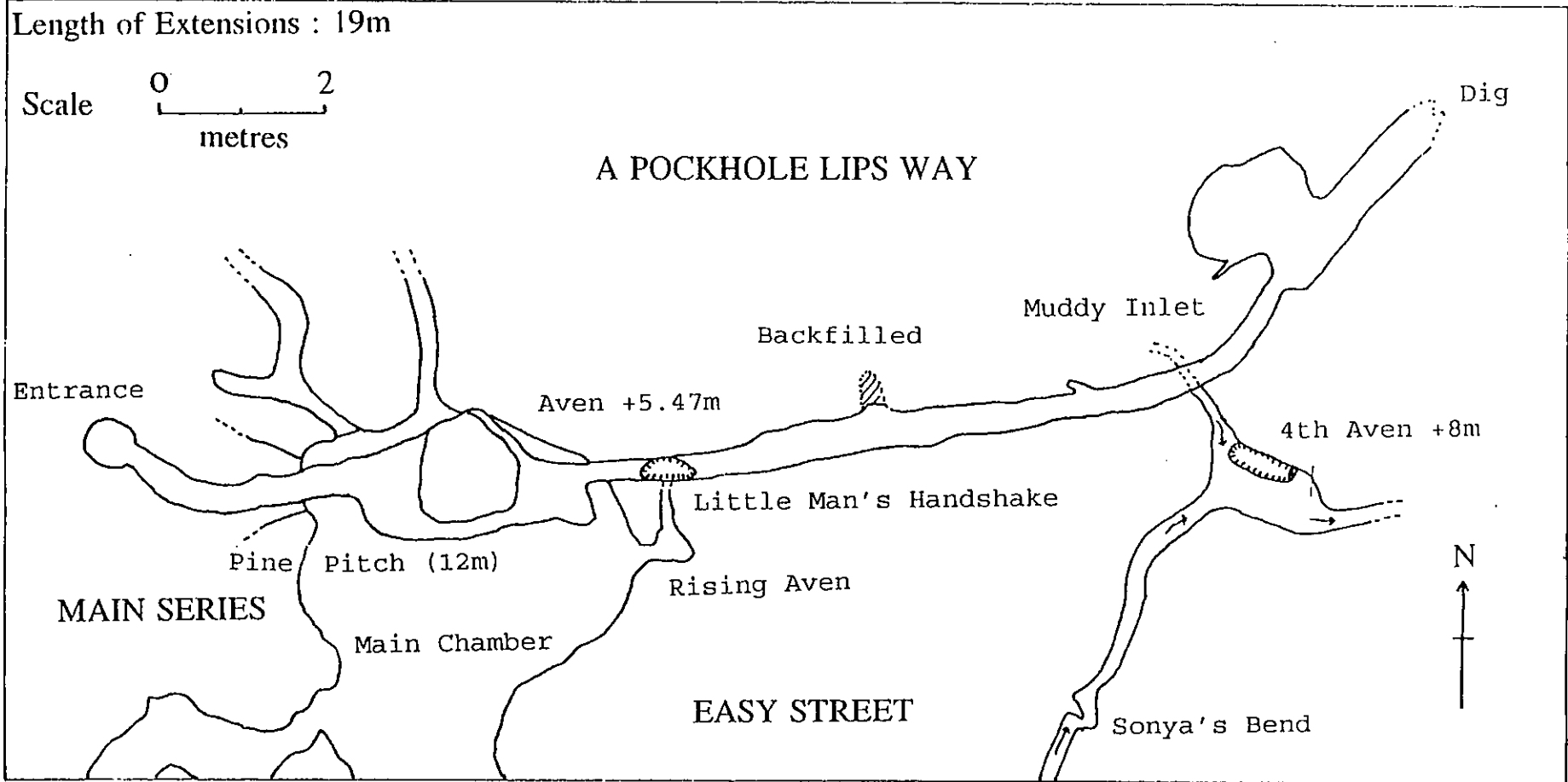
Sunday Ian had somehow contracted a bad foot since yesterday's trip so he, Linda and Geoff Barton left for home, as did the Hazeldens and Rowes. Andy wanted to leave early so a short trip was called for. We managed a fairly early start and set off to Cwm Dwr Quarry Cave, which I recalled as being a dry trip. Those present were BS, KK, DS, Andy, JG and Clare (SWCC). Within minutes we were flat on our stomachs in a stream. I thought this was the tight crawl, but no! an even nastier passage followed where the roof nearly came down to meet the floor, and we had to garden our way through the gravel, pushing it to the sides as we moved forward. Dave, who was larger than the rest of us, discovered the best way to progress was with a series of wave-like undulations along his body (like a caterpillar!). This way he didn't push the pebbles into a ridge in front of him.

This trip was a route finding exercise using a photocopy of part of the survey which I had fortunately packed at the last minute. We made our way through the Boulder Choke to some larger, dry passages, one with a taped area containing a group of very pretty crystal pools, the crystals being an attractive amber colour. Unfortunately at this point we ran out of time and had to return. The entrance tube, which I had not been looking forward to, was easier to negotiate than I expected, although Andrew said I stood on his head at one point. Shucks! I thought I'd done it all on my own.

All in all, a lovely weekend.

# PINETREE POT EXTENSIONS

Surveyed by Joe Frampton, Timothy Francis, and Julie Hesketh



BCRA Grade 5d

Drawn by Timothy Francis