

Mendip Caving Group

NEWS

NUMBER 248

NOVEMBER 1995

Dallimore's - The Oxford Extensions

Timothy Francis

"Speaking as a rescue warden, I can honestly say that if someone were injured here, we just wouldn't bother"

Tony Jarratt

Discovered in 1990 by OUCC The Oxford Extensions to Dallimore's Cave must be the most exclusive section of cave passage on Mendip. "Balaclavas and Petzl Zooms recommended" hints at the constricted nature of the squeezes that you need to push to get into the passage beyond. Its worth the effort as the formations have hardly been touched with some fine caving to be had.

On a previous trip into Dallimores a few years ago we had stumbled across the Broken Nose squeeze but were not exactly sure that it was the correct way on. On this occasion I forced the squeeze rather than perform the necessary two point turn which is a lot easier. A few bruised ribs and plenty of profanities accompanied my reversal of the manoeuvre (ask Ralph!). A quick perusal of the Oxford journal and I was keen to have another go.

Julie was the only other person who showed any enthusiasm to have a crack at the extensions so it was down to only the two of us. The start of the extensions begins just beyond the base of the main rift. Crawl upslope, and to the left, into a sloping rift. (Continuing downslope from the rift only takes you to a large, muddy dig). At the end of the rift take the small hole on the right. A body sized tube descends to a small puddle and then turns to the left. The passage becomes 'rifty' and rather awkward for about ten feet. At this point one reaches the rather optimistically named "Turning Chamber". Rather than a chamber it is a slightly wider point in the rift where it is possible to turn round. This is a useful spot on the return journey as it means that you do not have to thrutch back up the rift feet first all the way.

The next obstacle is the "Broken Nose" squeeze which marks the point of the original breakthrough in 1990. Thrutch along on your side as far as you can go, keeping high, and shove your head into the small crack at the end of the rift. This should allow you to pull your legs underneath you and drop into the rift below. Remember to reverse the manoeuvre on the way out or you won't get out. The way on is to continue on down the rift which can be descended either headfirst or feet first. A small muddy tube and crawl lead to the final obstacle: "Tim's Testacle Tug". This is a rather claustrophobic bedding plane which drops into a large rift.

(cont. on p4)

NORDRACH COTTAGE BOOKINGS

| NIGHTS | GROUP | SIZE | NIGHTS | GROUP | SIZE |
|---------------|----------------------|------|---------------|---------------------|------|
| 03 Nov-04 Nov | MEMBERS' WEEKEND | | 20 Dec | Gordon Woodall | (30) |
| 10 Nov-11 Nov | Lost World Cave Club | (??) | 05 Jan-06 Jan | MEMBERS' WEEKEND | |
| 17 Nov-18 Nov | Ralph Diment | (10) | 17 Jan-18 Jan | Gordon Woodall | (30) |
| 24 Nov-25 Nov | Clive Strickland | (16) | 26 Jan-27 Jan | Kingston University | (16) |
| 01 Dec-02 Dec | MEMBERS' WEEKEND | | 02 Feb-03 Feb | MEMBERS' WEEKEND | |
| 08 Dec-09 Dec | Steve Taylor | (8) | 23 Feb-24 Feb | Kingston University | (16) |

1995/6 MEETS PROGRAMME

| DATE | AREA | EVENT | CONTACT | TELEPHONE |
|-----------|--------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 04 Nov 95 | Mendip | St. Cuthberts | Geoff Beale | 01734-722510 |
| 04 Nov 95 | Mendip | Forum | Joan Goddard | 01608-810382 |
| 04 Nov 95 | Mendip | Disco | Bill Headington | (no phone) |
| 02 Dec 95 | Mendip | Reservoir Hole | Geoff Beale | 01734-722510 |
| 31 Dec 95 | Mendip | New Year Party | Martin Rowe | 01252-872006 |
| 08 Jun 96 | Mendip | Wessex Challenge | MCG!! | |

MCG - CAVE LEADERS

DAN-YR-OGOF

Geoff Beale 01734-722510
 John Beauchamp 01761-463143
 Ian McKechnie 01932-228292
 John Miriam 0181-393-3955
 Roger Wallington 01753-433841
 CHARTERHOUSE CAVE
 Charlie Allison 0181-224-7591
 Nick Gilson 01934-417697

OGOF FFYNNON DDU I

Geoff Barton 01932-849241
 Geoff Beale 01734-722510
 John Miriam 0181-393-3955
 ST. CUTHBERT'S
 John Beauchamp 01761-463143
 Malcolm Cotter 017842-52643
 RESERVOIR HOLE
 Geoff Beale 01734-722510

Accommodation in Yorks & Sth. Wales can be booked through the relevant cottage warden:
 Yorkshire Northern Pennine Club Andy Goddard 01244-570944
 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
 Tel: 01761-462797 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
 Guest clubs and member's guests £ 2.50

COTTAGE FEES per night: (available to members only) 12 nights accommodation £15.00
 25 nights accommodation £30.00

PREPAYMENT VOUCHERS:

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: Full & Probationary Members: £25.00; Associate Members: £12.50
 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
 10 GREENLEAS CLOSE, YATELEY, CAMBERLEY, SURREY, GU17 7SL

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

RECORDER WAYNE HISCOX tel: (WORK) 01749-672081x2213
 3 KEWARD, GLASTONBURY ROAD, WELLS, SOMERSET, BA5 1TR

ORDINARY MEMBER BILL HEADINGTON (not on phone)
 32 COMBEND, RADSTOCK, BATH, AVON BA3 3AN

* CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES *
 * JONATHAN ROBERTS *
 * MALCOLM COTTER *
 * PAT WALSH *
 * PETER MATHEWS *

NON-COMMITTEE POSTS

RESCUE WARDEN JOHN CROWSLEY 01179-652585
 CONSERVATION OFFICER GORDON WOODALL 01278-421802
 COTTAGE EXTENSION WAYNE HISCOX 01749-672081x2213
 MCG SHOP SEE ANY COMMITTEE MEMBER

THE MCG IS A REGISTERED CHARITY No 270088; THE EXAMINERS ARE BRYAN TERRY AND HUW JONES



ON THE MOVE: Chris Clipsham to 5 Azile Everitt House, Blendon Terrace, London, SE18 7SR
Tel: (mobile) 0973-172288

APPLICATIONS for membership:
Jason Picken Flat 4, 63 The Esplanade, Burnham - on - Sea, Somerset

Tel: 01278-785926

Jan Burt 14 Heal Close, Burnham - on - Sea, Somerset. Tel: 01278-793056

Sean Tinsdale Flat 2, 3 Regent Street, Burnham - on - Sea, Somerset, TA8 1AX

Tony Bolton 6 Farm Mill Lane, Church Green, Witney, Oxon, OX8 6BJ

Tel: 01993-776166

These applications for probationary membership will be considered at the committee meeting on 2-12-95

MCG LOG BOOK is a record of the Group's activities and achievements and must not be abused. Please limit entries in the log book to records of your caving trips and other MCG activities. We do not want to know your personal views on other members, or to know about your particular fetishes. If you wish to make personal comments of this nature, keep them out of the log book. If you cannot resist putting pen to paper, please use the separate "Comments Book" which is to be provided in the near future.

EARWIG in on the committee meeting held 7.10.95... Cottage extension: DPM laid, building inspector to OK, then ready for oversite concrete. Hope to lay concrete 21-10-95. Blockwork will then start in following week... Outside light: Infra red sensor to be fitted. Switch is upside down, this may explain why this light is left on...

Registration of Outdoor Activity Centres: Joan Goddard has had some information on this from Alan Butcher of CSCC. It appears that Clubs such as ours are not affected. Joan and Julie Hesketh are looking into it... Upper Flood leaders: Suggestion that there should be an annual meeting of leaders to discuss conservation and any other relevant details... Annual Dinner: Royal Clarence Hotel in Burnham booked for AGM dinner and deposit paid. Suggestions for entertainment required... Payment of cottage fees: Collecting cottage fees continues to be a problem. Other clubs have envelopes for members to put cottage fees in, and then the envelopes are posted into a wall safe. We are thinking about the possibility of building a safe into the wall between the new porch and library... Cave Conservation Plans: UBSS are interested in doing the plan for Longwood/August. Joan Goddard volunteered the MCG to do the plan for Upper Flood at the last CSCC meeting. Should we consider doing the plan for Longwood/August because of our historical interest in the system? This may be brought up for discussion at the Forum to judge the level of interest.

UPPER FLOOD LEADERS

It has not been possible to arrange an Upper Flood conservation meeting for the half-yearly weekend as was hoped. It is quite difficult to get all the leaders together at the same time so it might take a while to organise. All we can say at the moment is: "Watch this space!".

WESSEX CHALLENGE As mentioned in September's newsletter, the MCG team won the 1995 Wessex Challenge. The shield has been engraved and Keith, landlord of the Castle of Comfort, has put it on the wall above the shove ha'penny board. We now need a sub-committee to organise next year's challenge. The sub-committee will report to the Group committee as MCG money will be involved. As a Caving Charity we are not allowed to make a loss on a social function, so the event must break even. There are many things to organise and book so we need to get started. We will let you know who is on the sub-committee as soon as we can so you can contact them with ideas or offers of help.

From here you are finally into the big stuff! A short muddy puddle leads to a climb and some fine walking passage. This is well decorated in several places and has been well taped off. The final few hundred feet of cave are split up by a tricky 3m drop and "The Ant-Lion" a tight calcite squeeze. A small section of ladder helps the return which is much difficult when gravity is against you. The end of the cave is "Curious Love" which is a typical Mendip grovel. The diggers are currently banging a wet puddle with a hint of an airspace. I would have thought it would also be worth following the fossil roof line which can be seen 15ft back from the dig face.

And thats it! Well worth the visit if you are small, thin and enjoy that claustrophobic feeling.

Tackle: 15ft ladder and tether for the entrance pitch.

MCG REGALIA Several people recently ordered sweatshirts, then collected them without paying Bill. Will the people who have not yet paid cough up now, and send the money to him.

ACCESS UPDATE for climbers: Goblin Combe Quarry The Parish Council requests that all groups seek permission before using the area. This is to reduce overcrowding and parking pressure. Contact Mrs Cranfield, Parish Clerk, Tel: 01934-838912.

PHOTO CALL for Upper Flood II archaeology report. Yvonne has nearly finished the report, which must be submitted to the Somerset County Archaeologist by the beginning of December. To complete the report, she needs photos of the dig, especially of the following: photos of the paved area found just below the surface; the battery cells found at the southwest corner; the wall or leat near the bottom of the shaft. If you took photos of any of these features, please contact her now on 01252-872006.

FOR SALE Warmbac wetsuit (top half only). Hardly worn, £20.00 Contact Andy Goddard (c/o Joan Goddard)

YV'S SDROPPINGS

AD: "Waistlength? My waistlength's too short now... I bought it when I was sixteen!"

JG: "Ding Dong Dell, Geoff's fallen down The Well!"



"Too late- I've already ordered a pizza!"



NEW YEAR PARTY at Nordrach Cottage. We would like everyone to prepare a food dish and bring it to the cottage for about 10.00pm. You can also bring steak/sausages/vegiburgers and MCG will provide the B-B-Q. (There may even be a barrel). If you are interested, contact Yvonne and Martin Rowe, who are coordinating the menu! If you can, bring a few fireworks to let the New Year in with a traditional MCG bang!

MARS RESCUE MISSION

by Phil Ingold

"Four British climbers survived after getting lost on the 19,500ft Mount Elbrus in the Caucasus range. They told how they trekked 70 miles over peaks and glaciers in atrocious weather, living on four Mars bars each and melted snow." (The Guardian)

(The true story, above, was later used in an advert for Mars bars - Ed)

Dear Sir,

Having just seen your advert quoting the fact "Man survives 4 days on Mars!" prompts me to tell you my Mars story. I don't know whether you have heard of the Tall Ship, the S.T.S. Lord Nelson? It is a sailing ship of the Jubilee Trust and is for physically handicapped and able bodied crew to "share the challenge of crewing a Tall Ship at sea".

I suffer from Multiple Sclerosis and was included in one of their voyages last year. One night, when I was on deck, the sea was very "lumpy" (severe swell). A squall washed over us - horizontal rain and force 6-7 near gale winds - causing my clothes to be saturated. My buddy put the said clothes in the tumble drier which already contained other clothes to be dried (including our smashing cook's nightdress). Later I was met by the medical officer, who asked if I had left anything in my pockets. I answered "no" but was then asked "what about this?" A liquid Mars bar was produced - still complete in its wrapper! I froze the Mars bar and ate it later! No clothes were spoiled and the cook remained my friend.

I used to be a very active, insulin dependant diabetic and before MS, I found Mars bars a great asset when potholing, wind surfing, taking 20 mile walks, etc. They are great in raising blood sugar levels when needed.

Yours Faithfully,

Phil Ingold

Dear Yvonne,

I hope you had a good summer. Thanks for the MCG postcard from France. I hope to be on the 1996 rescue practice (has it been planned yet?). It would be nice to smell some calcite and feel the adrenalin flow again, under the Mendip Hills.

I'm due on a voyage on the S.T.S Lord Nelson in January 1996. Not as exciting as a trip with the MCG/MRO underground but I hope to be able to climb the mast again and perhaps be able to do a write-up for the newsletter. I wrote to Mars Ltd in spring 1995 (see above) and they were kind enough to send a box of Mars bars to the Jubilee Trust who operate the Lord Nelson.

Very best wishes and kind regards

Footnote: Mars bars have long been a popular food item in a cavers emergency kit but it would appear they have an interesting history in other areas too:

- * The first Mars bar was produced in 1932 in Slough, Berks and cost tuppence.
- * The advertising jingle "A Mars a day helps you work rest and play" was launched in 1959.
- * Energy filled Mars bars have 294 calories.
- * Britons munch 2.7 million Mars a day.
- * Mars cost an average 28p in Britain, the French pay 44p, and Icelanders 57p. They are almost impossible to buy in Russia.
- * One billion Mars are made a year, enough to stretch around London's M25 one-and-a-half times.
- * During the Second World War, Mars were sent to troops.

- * Mars were the official snack for the Olympics in Barcelona.
- * A pet dog saved his diabetic master by fetching a Mars bar. The high sugar content revived him.
- * A heart-lung transplant patient from West Yorks recovered on a diet including Mars bars.
- * A racehorse was disqualified for eating a Mars before winning at Ascot in 1987. The bars contained banned Theobromine, from cocoa.
- * It would take 574 years for Britons to eat enough Mars bars to reach 40 million miles to the planet Mars.

- * It must be true, it was in *The Sun*

FRAGMENTS FROM FRANCE - 14

by Tony Knibbs

Although now having little religious significance for the population at large, Ascension is a Bank Holiday in France. This year it provided a four-day weekend 25-28th May during which we visited the Ardèche (07) region, camping at Bidon which is a tiny village between Bourg-St-Andéol and St.Remèze.

The first of the caving trips was to the AVEN DE NOEL, only a few minutes walk from "Camping Mazet" and close to the northern side of the Ardèche Gorge. Noël is about 150m deep and some 3km in total length, its far end corresponding to two blocked openings visible in the gorge wall.

Light rain was falling as our party of nine descended the lidded entrance shaft of 30m, which was just roomy enough for comfort. A 3m pitch followed immediately and led to the take-off for a spectacular 90m pitch in a rift which belled-out rapidly to about 7m wide and 30m long. Each of four rope sections hung close to the wall: 20m, 8m, 27m, 35m. Descenders became notably hot by the time the bottom was reached.

Typically French, first thoughts were of the midday meal for which at least one person produced a bottle of "rouge", a baguette and some saucisson sec. Leaving the shaft by a passage of ample cross-section, say 20m x 20m, and very well decorated, we reached a T-junction after 500m. Lunch was ceremonially consumed.

Duly fortified, we set off along one of the T-junction alternatives, Galerie Blanche. This offered some spectacular formations throughout its 1km length, terminating in a massive brown coloured stalagmite flow beyond which lies a connection with the 40+km long system of St.Marcel.

Back at the T-junction, the second alternative proved equally roomy and had no lack of formations to admire, plus a couple of rope-assisted ascents of a few metres each to reach the end of another kilometre of passage. Stunning stuff.

Remarkably, the ascent of the big pitch proved easy in both effort expended and technical difficulty. Those whose gear was badly adjusted, or just plain inefficient due to its age, found considerably more difficulty than the rest. It must be said that SRT shows its advantage over such a long pitch; the same climb on ladders would have been an epic.

For the first time Denise tried a new technique which uses a jammer, similar to a croll, strapped to the left foot. It was found to be extremely helpful; it obviated the need to trap loose rope between the feet when setting off, it made the ascent physically easier and it also helped when passing rebelayes, giving an extra purchase when swapping ropes in the croll and hand-jammer. Being more lightly spring-loaded than a normal jammer it was easy to release and replace at each changeover. Forget the Petzl "pump" jammer arrangement - this (from TSA) is cheaper and more effective.

Back on the surface the rain had stopped and the sun was setting over the gorge - a fitting end to great trip.

The following day saw us in another part of the 50km - long RESEAU SAINT MARCEL, this time acting as Sherpas to diver Philippe Brunet, current president of the Fédération Française de Spéléologie.

Six Sherpas plus the diver entered the system via the Grotte St. Marcel show cave, each carrying a bottle or some other diving delicacy in a kitbag. We passed through the impressive show cave before the first visitors, hopping over a barrier in La Cathédrale and continuing down a flowstone slope with steps and an ancient handrail; visitors entered from a lower level when the cave was first opened to the public.

We left the old show-cave via a hole in the stalagmite formations, passing through a steel trapdoor and into a hands-and-knees crawl. The only obstacles between here and the sump were a couple of short crawls and a brief stretch of flat-out, sand-floored bedding cave.

Once the diver was "launched" the six of us set off on a tour of the area: walking-size passage, stooping-size passage and enough interesting formations to please the eye. A rare event in French caves, we met a party coming in from another entrance, Aven d'Eyspesse, bent on making an unauthorised through-trip to exit via the show-cave. The manager was not amused, apparently.

Phillipe the diver emerged after 90 minutes with vague comments about a 30m underwater pitch and finding someone else's line; no great discoveries today, therefore. The return trip was uneventful and we emerged amongst a party of tourists which we couldn't avoid encountering.

CHARTREUSE EXPEDITION — THE OTHER BITS

by Yvonne Rowe

Expedition members: Julie Hesketh, Tim Francis, Joan Goddard, Martin Rowe, Lee Hawkswell, Yvonne Rowe, Charlie Alison, Marcus Ward, Zoe Hammersley, James Allen, Reggie Pain.

On the evening of Friday August 18th, ten of us met up at the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College to load the minibus with tackle and personal gear. Charlie and Martin had earlier picked up the minibus and found the roofrack had been vandalised. There was no way we could get all the gear plus 11 people inside the bus so they lashed the roofrack to a ski rack that they had fitted to the roof and hoped it would survive the journey!

We set off for Dover, picking Reggie up at "Royal" (as he insists) Tunbridge Wells on the way (plus Chinese and Indian takeaways). The journey to the Alps was quicker than last year due to us having more drivers which meant we didn't need to stop so often, or for as long, for rest breaks. The only thing that caused a bit of concern now and then was the roofrack which would shift from side to side and hang over the edge of the roof when the minibus took a bend a bit sharpish, but it and its contents survived the journey.

When we arrived in Chartreuse we set off in search of a campsite in or near St Pierre de Chartreuse. Three were marked on the map and the road we needed was up the beautiful Gorge Guiers Mort which in one place was a single track road hanging off the side of a cliff, with blind bends, low rock overhangs to go under, and the river below. There were no traffic lights and little in the way of passing places — certainly not for minibuses or lorries! Two of the three campsites had long since closed but the third, Camp Martiniere above St Pierre de Chartreuse, was able to take us even though it was pretty full. There were large parties of Paragliders camping near us and it was quite impressive watching them descend from the mountains around us and landing in the field opposite with such accuracy and grace.

At the end of the weekend the campsite almost cleared and we had much of it to ourselves — was it the end of the French holidays or the arrival of the MCG that did

it?!! We all managed to pitch our tents together and were fairly close to water and toilets (useful for the females at least!) The roofrack was upended on the ground and became our washing line as we weren't allowed to tie washing lines to the trees.

Most mornings there was a bread run into St Pierre de Chartreuse where there was also a useful little food shop. Occasionally we went to St Laurent, 11km away, to do a bigger, 2 or 3-day shop. We cooked on site most nights but had four or five trips out to eat in local restaurants, trying a different place each time. The local food was very good and reasonably priced for France. One of my favourites was a traditional Chartreuse salad starter which was just French-dressed lettuce with small triangles of (local) cheese on toast on top - far nicer than it sounds. One way and another we all ate very well but, surprisingly, we drank very little in the way of alcohol compared to usual MCG expeditions!

Days were mostly spent either caving or walking. The caving is described thoroughly in the Special Publication due shortly - suffice to say it was both successful and enjoyable. The walking was also enjoyable and was mostly spent looking for other cave entrances up in the mountains. So steep were some of the paths that handrails or chains were provided to help you up the more exposed routes. Needless to say the scenery was breathtaking. One route to find two cave entrances (Grottes Annette and Chevalier) involved a long wire traverse along the edge of a sheer drop - Joan and I decided that this was too exposed for us so we turned back at this point!

We had one truly tourist day where we went to the famous Chartreuse distillery (well, you have to don't you?). Chartreuse has been made in the mountains for hundreds of years by monks who have taken the vow of silence. Only three monks at any one time know the secret recipe, and only they are allowed to talk. The liqueur is made from 150 different plants and flowers and was originally medicinal, believed to cure all ills and guarantee long life (although one of the three monks who held the secret recipe died in his early 70s after a long illness!). The liqueur is kept in enormous oak barrels in a vast cellar for at least ten years. At the end of the tour around this underground distillery you are given a free glass of Chartreuse or a choice of another of their liqueurs - and the only way out is through the shop!

A walking day was spent by some of us looking for Guiers Vif - a river cave with a huge entrance arch. It was high in a huge curved cliff near the village of St Pierre d'Entremont and could in fact be seen from quite a distance away. The route up took us past some beautiful waterfalls and we managed to persuade Lee and Reggie to make the treacherous crossing over the river to go behind one for a photo - trouble was you couldn't see them once they were there! As we neared the cave there were handrails and chains along the route with steep drops all around and a narrow, unguarded bridge to cross by the entrance. The climb wasn't nearly as bad as it first appeared and was well worth the effort as we were rewarded with lovely views and what turned out to be more than one spectacular arch before we even reached the cave entrance. On the return to the campsite we drove up Gorge Vif which was quite spectacular - bigger and more open than Cheddar Gorge. It had an old section of road like at Gorge Guiers Mort that went round the edge of a cliff, but this is now a footpath and photo/view point with the new, safer road going through a mined tunnel next to it.

The weather was quite hot at the start of the two weeks but got steadily colder as time went by. It was particularly cold at night causing a problem with dripping condensation inside some of the nylon tents. No such problem on the last couple of nights as it was so cold that the drips froze into icicles! Sometimes there was thunder with torrential rain and we'd end up eating (on one occasion cooking!) and sheltering inside the minibus - more sociable than retreating to our own tents. There was one rest day when we were all a bit tired, with no plans to do anything exciting and just sitting around the camp trying hard not to give in to domesticities like washing etc. Good old Reggie, after quite a bit of a persuasion, managed to get us all up (except Julie) to play rounders. We used Lee's fold-up camping stool for a bat and found a rather deflated ball. We found a large grassy area with four conveniently placed trees and a bin for the bases. I'm sure you can imagine the antics that followed but it did the trick - it was great fun and it warmed us up as well.

All too soon it was time to pack up and head for home. We went via the Vercors and some of us visited the Choranche show cave which was very good with live Proteus in tanks to see and amazing straws and other formations. The others went for a walk to look in a nearby cave entrance. We arrived back in Calaise after another quick and trouble-free journey across France, caught an earlier ferry back to England, dropped Reggie off in Royal Tunbridge Wells, got onto the M25 and - STOPPED!