

# MCG NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

NUMBER 252

APRIL 1996

## 1996 MCG RESCUE PRACTICE IN AND OUT OF GOUGH'S CAVE

*by Phil Ingold*

I was delighted to be asked if I would like to be rescued into a cave again. "Yes please! - no chance of Black Shiver I suppose?" I have since been told it is very tight so I must admit that perhaps it's not a good request.

After skilful negotiations by Joan Goddard and Tony Knibbs I was asked: "What would you think of Gough's Cave? The adventure series beyond the show cave?" "Yes please!" It sounded fun. I had only walked past looking up the gorge at the stunning cliffs, but never inside so it would be a new experience. In fact most of MCG had apparently not been into Gough's Cave either. A date was confirmed with Mr Cornwell, Cheddar Caves director, then faxes flowed to and from France, Oxfordshire, and Javelin Office Supplies in Hemel Hempstead.

A smooth drive was had to the cottage, the fire was lit, then an excellent pint of 6X at the 'Fleur-de-lis' and a nice home-made pie for dinner. We had a night-cap at the 'Castle' then a scotch back at Nordrach Cottage. Finally, I was escorted upstairs to bed (even though Helen was promised that I would sleep safely downstairs!) where Joan very kindly gave me her bottom bunk.

Everyone was woken early at 6:50am when I fell out of bed with a loud bang. My feet had got entangled in my sleeping bag stopping me from leaving the bunk normally. A bump on my head rose quickly and I impressed everyone with my pre-rescue injury. For the resulting headache I took some Co-codamol, along with my other chemical props. (An ex-ray check on Monday confirmed I had no fracture, just concussion!) After a blood test, insulin and breakfast I dressed in my Polar Bear ready for the fun.

Saturday was cold and clear. Due to conservation work Cheddar Gorge was closed to all traffic so Chris Whittle, my chauffeur, drove through Charterhouse, past Tynning's Farm and stables and up the Gorge to a coachpark just past Gough's Cave (which was as far as anyone was able to go). Chris parked the car here after first letting me out in front of Cheddar Show Caves. We had been asked to be there for 10am to pose for Bob Bowen's camera and to be interviewed by the local TV company and Emma and Caroline from The Cheddar Valley Gazette. Donning my harness, Texolex hard-hat and lamp in the very cold entrance was a nice reminder of my caving exploits in cold Yorkshire.

The journalists were surprised at the inside of the cave as it was roomy, dry and warm. The lighting raises the temperature of the cave away from the cold entrance. I had been secured into the drag sheet and stretcher then the fastenings were checked again by the Mendip Rescue Organisation (MRO). "LIFT!" I was lifted and my rescue 'in' began at 11am. The 'in' rescue team then checked to ensure that I was feeling alright and that the various bits of padding were in the correct places. I was asked if I was comfortable - "Yes"

*continued on page 5*

## 1996 MCG CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR

DATE	AREA	EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
21 Apr	South Wales	OFD 1	Geoff Beale	01734-722510
04 May-06 May	Mendip	Cottage Maintenance Weekend	Lee Hawkswell	01923-819103
18 May	Mendip	Rescue Practice - Longwood	Dave Tooke	01784-436800
19 May	South Wales	Little Neath, Genesis Inlet	Geoff Beale	01734-722510
08 Jun	Mendip	Wessex Challenge	Tim Francis	0181-876-1863
16 Jun	South Wales	OFD 1	Geoff Beale	01734-722510
06 Jul	Mendip	JP's Curry Evening	JP Burch	01737-217039
14 and/or 21 Jul	South Wales	Craig-a-Ffynnon	Geoff Beale	01743-722510
26 Jul-11 Aug	Italy	Piaggia Bella	Julie Hesketh	0181-876-1863

<b>WEEKLY MEETINGS:</b>	At the Group's Mendip headquarters on Wednesdays at 7.00 p.m. and at the Eclipse Inn, Egham, Surrey, on Thursdays from 9.00 p.m.
<b>CAVING ACCOMMODATION:</b>	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
<b>COTTAGE INFORMATION:</b>	Through the cottage warden please (address and tel. no. below).
<b>COTTAGE BOOKINGS:</b>	MCG members, members children, SWCC and NPC £1.50
<b>COTTAGE FEES per night:</b>	Guest clubs and member's guests £2.50
<b>PREPAYMENT STICKERS:</b>	(Available to members only) 12 nights accommodation £15.00 25 nights accommodation £30.00 55 nights accommodation £55.00
<b>ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:</b>	Full and Probationary Members: £25.00; Associate Members: £12.50

### THE COMMITTEE

<b>SECRETARY</b>	<b>JOAN GODDARD</b>	<b>tel: 01608-810382</b>
	10 ENSTONE ROAD, CHARLBURY, OXFORD, OX7 3QR	
<b>TREASURER</b>	<b>MARTIN ROWE</b>	<b>tel: 01252-872006</b>
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<b>MEET SECRETARY</b>	<b>GEOFF BEALE</b>	<b>tel: 01734-722510</b>
	30 CHURCHILL CRESCENT, SONNING COMMON, NEAR READING, BERKS, RG4 9RX	
<b>TACKLE MASTER</b>	<b>TIM FRANCIS</b>	<b>tel: 0181-876-1863</b>
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	3 KEWARD, GLASTONBURY ROAD, WELLS, SOMERSET, BA5 1TR	
<b>ORDINARY MEMBER</b>	<b>to be co-opted</b>	

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

**NON-COMMITTEE POSTS**  
 RESCUE WARDEN  
 CONSERVATION OFFICER  
 COTTAGE EXTENSION  
 EXAMINERS

NAME	TELEPHONE
DAVE TOOKE	01784-436800
JULIE HESKETH	0181-876-1863
WAYNE HISCOX	SEE ABOVE
HUW JONES AND DAVE TOOKE	

THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP IS A REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 270088  
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 BRISTOL BS18 6XW ORIGINAL MATERIAL © MENDIP CAVING GROUP 1996

# MCG doings

**WELCOME** to the following probationary members: **Julie Capel** and **Ginette Guerrero**.

**APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP** have been received from: **Letti Patte**, 39 Corby Drive, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, YW20 0RX Tel: 01784-436800  
Proposed by: Dave Tooke and Joe Frampton.  
**Roger Beck**, 6 Baker's Piece, Witney, Oxon, OX8 6PQ Tel: 01993-772566  
Proposed by: Geoff Beale and Joan Goddard.

**PARTY!!** On the Saturday of the July members' weekend JP Burch is going to have one of his fierce **curry evenings** - rubber rings not provided! Geoff Beale and Yvonne Rowe are going to supply a **barrel** as it is Geoff's 25th wedding anniversary (Pat has to stay at home to look after the cats) and Yvonne's 70th birthday. **Everyone is welcome** but JP will need an idea of numbers by the Saturday morning at the latest so he knows how many to cater for.

**THANKS** To Dave Tooke and Joe Frampton from the tacklemaster and MCG for the excellent condition they left the tackle store in after the rescue practice.

**WESSEX CHALLENGE** As last year's winners, it falls to MCG to arrange this year's event. Dave Tooke has booked an R&B band, and pig roast and salad for 8th June at Priddy Village Hall. MCG are also running the bar (along the lines of the bar at the half-yearly Disco) Tickets priced £7.00 will be available from Dave Tooke, Arthur Spain, Tim Francis and Bat Products. The theme of the Challenge has to be finalised, but is likely to be some kind of an armchair race combined with large quantities of a (cold) stewed liquor - as the song says, we have ourselves a name for brewing tea!

**EARWIG** in on the committee meeting held 2.3.96... **Bone Hole key:** a new key has been cut but won't work! Joan to try again...

**Cottage extension:** Pete Moseley and Gordon Woodall are continuing with the blockwork when weather allows. Next lot of materials to be ordered, cost about £3000... **Upper Flood II:** Just less than £900 spent to dig the new entrance. This cost has been cancelled out by the increase of cottage fees during this time! No more drilling until after Lee has completed a level survey. Bore hole to be sunk to determine the depth to go. Charterhouse Centre has offered the loan of their generator and Wayne his drill if more drilling is needed... **Bosch drill:** Tim is to make a watertight neoprene padded bag for the drill instead of purchasing an Ortleib bag. New batteries have been bought... **Half-yearly event:** October and November members weekends always clash with other events on Mendip, and Priddy Village hall is always booked so we have to go further afield for a hall. It has been suggested that we hold the half-yearly forum and social mid-month (probably October) like we do for the AGM and dinner. Priddy Village hall to be checked to see if we can get a booking... **BCRA conference stand:** MCG plan to have a stand at the conference in September which Tim Francis will organise. It has been suggested that we try to get the next two impending Occasional Publications, on the Upper Flood digs and Majorca, published by then so we will have five different (current) ones to sell. Joan to get dyeline copies of all the MCG surveys to sell. There is a prize for the best stand so we need a theme - any ideas?... **Wessex Challenge:** Dave Tooke is to organise the music for the evening's stomp, and a pig roast; Tim Francis is to book the field by Priddy Village hall and to look into insurance; posters to be put around all the usual places; profits from the event to go to MRO... **Wall safe:** to go in extension for cottage fees, CCC permits/money, etc., a suitable one to be purchased by Lee for about £100... **CNCC membership:** Joan discovered that MCG's membership had long ago lapsed so she is to apply for renewal membership - cost £15 - and ask CSCC to endorse our application. It was suggested that we also apply for membership to the DCA.

## OGOF FFYNNON DDU I - 25th FEBRUARY '96

by Geoff Beale

Team: Tony Bolton, Tony Townsend, Geoff Beale

With water levels from the recent rain and snow still quite high, we decided on a photographic trip into O.F.D. I

Once inside the entrance we had an entertaining climb up the left wall to reach Column Passage. It is easy to lasso a small stumpy stal with a rope for a handline to make the climb easier. Column Passage leads to a well decorated chamber with a deep pool and nice flowstone formations. Going off on the left hand side is a small wet tube (or large-ish duck) which leads to a superb column from roof to floor which you pass with great care. Further on is a small chamber with an audible connection to the main stream about 30ft below.

We returned to the main entrance passages taking photographs as we moved back to the cave entrance. Here we explored side passages including one which leads to Fault series. This series was at the top of a wet calcited boulder slope. This was left to be explored on the next trip into OFD I.

Watch the meets list in future newsletters for details.

## *More doings*

### LIBRARY ADDITIONS

**"Mendip Ways"** Audio-tape - recording of radio programme - interviews with 'Mendipers' including one from the Castle of Comfort, a mention of Charterhouse Mineries, Nordrach House etc., and has a wonderful bit of dialect from someone from Oakhill. Contact Joan Goddard if you would like to borrow this tape.

**"The Rocks of Brown's Folly"** by Ron Smith - a geological guide to Brown's Folly nature reserve. A 20pp guide produced by Bath Geological Society describing the sequence of the rocks along the path to the mine entrances, and explaining the conditions prevailing at the time of deposition (similar to the Bahama Banks of today).

### FORTHCOMING LECTURES

**"Caves Ancient and Modern"** by Dr Sims of Cheltenham College and organised by Bath Geological Society. It will be held on Thursday 11th April 1996 at 7:15pm in Abbey Church House, Westgate, Bath (near the Technical College).

**"The Romans at Charterhouse on Mendip"** by Prof. Malcolm Todd and organised by Wells Natural History and Archæological Society. It will be held on Friday 12th April 1996 at 7:30pm in Wells Museum. Admission WNHAS members free, visitors £2

**SWILDON'S** At a recent CSCC meeting it was decided to keep the Blue Pencil chain. The MCG committee agreed to pay £100 towards the cost of a new stainless steel chain as other clubs have been contributing to the costs of stabilising the entrance.

**RESCUE PRACTICE - GOUGH'S CAVE** *continued from page 1*

The view from my supine position on the stretcher enabled me to see the cave roof and note the dissolved grooves in the limestone. We progressed through the well lit, warm showcave passing some very clean stalagmite flows and paused to smile for more photographs.

We entered the 'Adventure Caving Arena' with its features known as April Fool's Squeeze, the Bottomless Pit and the Hairy Traverse - not easily identifiable as I lay back on the stretcher. They were coated with red glacial clay, and very sticky by the sound of my sherpas' boots.

My security was checked before the lowering started then I was up-ended and the straps were checked. I was then lowered slowly down - a super view. I was rested down for a blood glucose check, some insulin and some almonds. Here the red clay was sandy to the touch and was hard to wash off me and my polar suit afterwards. We changed over to the mainly female 'out' party and they negotiated the hazards efficiently and smoothly. Ascending the pothole was as much fun as the descent but a bit slower as gravity was not a helpful ally this time.

The traverse was interesting and the volume of the groans suggested it was very strenuous, as did the drops of sweat on everyone's brows. My view was limited to a close up of the wire at the top of the hazard but it was not as exposed as I had been told - at least not to me with my very limited view! It was hard to see the obstacles from the stretcher but I was told the squeeze near the end of the cave was too tight so, after much debate, the decision was made to go via the easier route. I was taken off the stretcher and re-positioned on the drag sheet to ensure I'd fit through what was also quite a tight squeeze. I slid through easily on the drag sheet and it did not feel very tight to me - but then I wasn't the one pushing and pulling!

The list was checked to ensure that all 33 people present throughout the rescue had made it to the show cave then we all exited the cave at 2:30pm.

We returned to the cottage for a shower but it was difficult for me to stand under the water so I will have to devise better hand-holds to help me to remain vertical. Afterwards I was taken to the 'Bull Terrier' at Crosscombe for dinner and an ale with Arthur and Lynn Spain, Steve Conquest and Chris, my weekend chauffeur. The drive back was subdued after the day's exertions.

Sunday morning was again cold as we drove to the Hunters Lodge to meet up with the Velvet Bottom Band members of MCG and have an excellent glass of Exmoor Ale. Roger let me send the MS collecting tins round the bar. The weekend raised a total of £28.63 which has been passed to Hemel MS club. Thanks to MCG, MRO, the Hunters, Cheddar Show Caves, Cheddar Valley Gazette, and the local TV.

**Thanks to everyone for a great day and weekend.**

**PS:** If you know anyone with a copy of the television footage of the Gough's Cave rescue practice Brian Prewer would like a copy. This will be passed onto Maurice Hewins for the Wells Museums video archive.

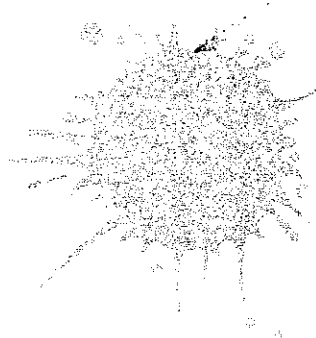
**Next year's practice?** Brian has an interesting suggestion but wouldn't give us details. Hmmm!



## ***COTTAGE WORK WEEKEND - 3, 4, 5th MAY***

Due to so many members being involved in the Upper Flood II archaeology and entrance digs not much interest was shown in last year's work weekend, although a few jobs did get done. Consequently, the cottage is beginning to look a bit jaded again and could do with a bit of attention, inside and out. It is hoped that this year more members will come along over the early May bank holiday weekend and partake in a spot of cottage maintenance. There are many jobs to do - in fact whatever time you have to spare, be it an hour or so, a day, or all weekend, there will be something you can do. A list of jobs will be put up on the notice board at the cottage and if you see anything or think of anything that needs attention then add it to the list. Below are a few suggestions of areas that could do with a bit of attention:

- \* The cooker, particularly the oven, needs cleaning.
- \* The kitchen could do with a good clean, especially around the cooker.
- \* The kitchen cutlery drawers, cupboards and storage shelves need cleaning.
- \* The paint around the wall cupboard above the fridge needs touching up.
- \* The bedroom floors need a good scrub.
- \* The understairs cupboard needs tidying (again!).
- \* All the external woodwork, in particular around the dormer windows, needs repairing/replacing.
- \* The windows need cleaning.
- \* The whole cottage needs a good spring clean.
- \* The library needs moving!!
- \* The shed and gas store need sweeping and tidying.
- \* Help will most certainly be needed with the cottage extension.
- \* The hosing-down area and silt traps need clearing.



# MCG extras

**BELATED CONGRATULATIONS** to **Mark Ward** who became a full member on 5th August 1995. How could I have forgotten to give him a well-earned and rightful mention after he had been a probationary member for so long? I have a feeling that **Gordon Woodall** also became a full member at about the same time and didn't get a 'congrats' either - so congratulations and an apology to you both.

**HALF-YEARLY FORUM** Tim Francis has booked Priddy Village hall for Saturday 12th October. This was the last weekend available. The Forum will be at Nordrach cottage as usual, with the social function at Priddy Village hall. There will be more details advertised nearer the time.

**PRIDDY GREEN SINK** Tim Francis went down Priddy Green Sink on Sunday afternoon of the March members weekend and had a small breakthrough! He managed to squeeze beyond the current limit of the downstream dig (BEC) and crawled as far as a cowshy sump. Tony Jarrat has postulated that this is the other side of the muddy sump in Cowsh Aven in Swildons. See the next issue of Descent! It's a brilliant little cave and only two feet from the road!

**MORE WESSEX CHALLENGE** Tim has written to Farmer Main regarding the field for the Wessex Challenge as he was not in when he popped round on the March members weekend. A brief article and photograph has been sent into Descent.

**NEEDED URGENTLY** Ben Cooper very kindly loaned the Group a 386 computer for the editor which is proving invaluable (now she's getting to grips with it) but she urgently needs a keyboard and monitor to go with it. At the present she is using her husband's from his own computer and this is causing some grief!! If anyone has a spare keyboard and

monitor that will work with a 386 computer, and they are prepared to donate or loan them to the editor, they could save a great deal of argument and frustration!

**CAVE KEYS** The rescue keys box is presently in the tackle store as are all the other cave keys. This is only a temporary measure until the library extension is completed. Also, the Bone Hole key has been returned. Now Reggie can go digging again.

**LIBRARY BOOKS** These are not available until the library extension is complete but some of the guide books are in the cupboard in the 6-room and can be seen via a committee member...

... and on the subject of the library extension - Pete Moseley and Gordon Woodall are putting in as many hours as they can spare to build the extension and have already done a great deal of work. Most of the materials have now been delivered and are being stored in all sorts of strange places as you have probably noticed. The roofer should have started by the time you receive this newsletter but there is still a lot of work to do. The sooner the extension is finished the sooner the library will return to normal but help is needed to do this. There will obviously be an opportunity over the May bank holiday maintenance weekend but if anyone has any spare hours before or after then, Pete and Gordon would be very grateful of some help.

**A LETTER FROM RAWTENSTALL** Joan received a letter recently from Kev West. In it he says how much he's missing Mendip (no mention of MCG, just Mendip!). Seriously though, he has not seen anyone since last summer and he asks if anyone is caving in the Yorks or Derbys areas, and they don't mind him tagging along, could they get in touch with him, especially mid-week. He's spreading the word about our great cottage and trying to drum up bookings from new clubs etc. He says 'hello' to everyone, hopes all is well, and hopes to see us soon. You can 'phone Kev on 01378-197462

# AGM doings

## MCG PUBLICATIONS

- Ron Saunders wrote a letter to the editor, to be read at the AGM, expressing his sorrow at the loss of Bob Speleo from the newsletter and asking if there was any possibility of reviving him! For those who don't know, Bob Speleo was a cartoon character created by MCG member Pete Bulling who used to give Bob (in!) appropriate captions gleaned from members' activities when he (Pete) was a more active member. Bob Speleo was a very popular newsletter inclusion enjoyed by many at the time and Ron is not the only member to comment on his demise. Not much interest was expressed at the meeting but I think that was partly due to the floor being made up of mostly newer members who didn't know him anyway. I will, however, ask Pete if he is prepared to revive Bob Speleo for the many members who would like to have him back, if not, I will seek permission to attempt to revive him myself and see how it goes.
- Ron also commented on the new front page banner of the newsletter, suggesting that it was a bit plain. It was agreed that more interesting banners could be tried until a font and/or logo is found that the majority of members are satisfied with. Members were also asked to come up with suggestions (preferably on disc or paper for copying or scanning please).
- Ron said how much he liked the new style of the AGM reports.
- Brian Pittman suggested that the Occasional Publication should be bound periodically and given issue numbers, or similar. He suggested that they should then be called Transactions of MCG, but the floor thought they should be left as they are as they are already numbered and dated. Brian's idea was to revert back to the old Journal style of publication, but by the time enough articles have been amassed to make a reasonable sized volume, the earlier submissions are history. The smaller Occasional Publications are issued while the topic is still current.

**MCG AWAY MEETS** *"Booking trips in the name of MCG must be done with the knowledge and approval of the committee."*

- There was a great deal of discussion about this statement, both at the meeting and later at the cottage. Geoff's point was that if members as individuals or private parties booked caving trips in politically sensitive caving areas using the name of MCG and something went wrong (damage, misbehaviour, trespass or accident), not only does it besmirch the good name of the Group but we don't know how our insurance would stand under such circumstances. Members said that whether they book an away trip either as a private party or as an 'official' meet they were always asked which club they belonged to anyway. There was a great deal of heated discussion about these points and it was finally agreed that the meet secretary will look into the cave situation and publish a list of caves that he or the committee should be informed of for impending trips - Ed. how this would work for spur-of-the-moment trips I don't know. The committee will also look at our insurance policy and let members know exactly what the cover is for any given situation (away meets, local meets, private trips, digging, etc.)
- Geoff also talked about a Chalk mine local to him, near Reading, and how members could get involved in it if they were interested. I will ask Geoff to write an article for a future newsletter with all the details so members other than those at the meeting know what is on offer.

## CAVING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

It was suggested that dates and venues of meetings and other events such as other clubs' dinners should be advertised in the newsletter so interested members could put their names forward to attend as MCG representatives or out of interest, or as volunteers to be the invited guests at other clubs' annual dinners. Joan said that it must be borne in mind that with meetings like CSCC continuity is essential, therefore it would be best for the same member or members to represent MCG each time. A calendar will be included in future newsletters.



## AGM doings continued

**EXAMINERS** Huw Jones and Dave Tooke have volunteered to be MCG's independent examiners and will audit the accounts for 1996. The committee would like to thank Huw for the quick and thorough audit of the 1995 accounts.

### CONSERVATION & ACCESS OFFICER

Gordon Woodall has had to resign this post due to other, more pressing commitments. The committee would like to thank Gordon for all his work, especially that done organising and chairing the useful and constructive Upper Flood access meeting held 1.1.96 (minutes to be published in a future n/l). Julie Hesketh has volunteered to fill this post and we wish her well.

**THE COMMITTEE** With the exception of the ordinary member, the officers were elected as follows:-

<u>Post</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>
Secretary	25	4
Treasurer	27	3
Cottage Warden	30	0
Tacklemaster	30	0
Editor	27	3
Meet Secretary	29	1
Recorder	27	2

**ORDINARY MEMBER** As you know, Bill Headington has had to resign this post as he is off to university shortly. Bill has done a really good job organising this year's half-yearly 60/70s disco and the annual dinner - both of which have been really enjoyable and successful. The meeting gave Bill a huge vote of thanks. The committee would also like to thank Bill for all his hard work and support. There were no nominations put forward to the AGM for this post but Pete Moseley has said he is prepared to be co-opted. The committee are in the throes of organising this. For those who don't know Pete, he is a 'local' member and as well as coming along on last year's work weekend to do cottage maintenance, and popping in from time to time, he and Gordon Woodall have done nearly all the work so far on building the library extension.

We look forward to welcoming him to the committee 'team'.

**MOTION** Joe Frampton put forward a motion that all prospective committee members should publish their aims and objectives in the AGM special issue. It was thought that although it was a good idea to let the membership know who they were voting for and why, it would put too much extra work on the editor at an already busy time with the agenda, officers reports, motions, etc. (Ed. not my words but I don't necessarily disagree with them). It was said that it was up to the nominee and his/her proposers to conduct their own election campaign (if there was more than one candidate) or to simply talk to other members and let their intentions be known. The meeting voted on the motion and the result was 6 for and 16 against, so the motion was lost.

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Rescue Practice** Dave Tooke has made a tentative date to hold another rescue practice this year. It is planned for Saturday 18th May and will take place in Longwood. This will be a 'regular' rescue practice, i.e. with a volunteer casualty other than MCG's usual and *actual* victim, Phil Ingold. Dave will co-ordinate the proceedings with the help of Marcus Ward and Brian Snell. Would all those interested in taking part in this worthwhile exercise please let Dave know so he can decide if enough people are likely to attend to make it viable.

- **Piaggia Bella 1996** Julie Hesketh is going to use MCG's empty Girobank account to hold deposits from members interested in this year's summer trip to the Marguerais region of the Alpes Maritimes. Julie would also like any suitable suggestions for a design to go on T-shirts for the trip.

- **MCG cave leaders** Tony Knibbs is now a leader again for St. Cuthbert's; Jeremy Gilson is building up the required number of trips to become a St. Cuthbert's leader; Joe Frampton is now a Dan-yr-Ogof leader.

## *AGM doings continued*

• **BCRA conference stand** Tim Francis asked for suggestions for a theme for our stand. To conform with MCG's reputation it was suggested that we serve tea. That went two steps further when Martin Rowe said we could sell Somerset cream teas (scones with jam and cream), then Yvonne Rowe said if we're going to have a Somerset theme we could also sell Cheddar cheese. (Someone has since thought of selling cider with the cheese.) This, of course, is along with all the other more relevant items that would be on offer! *What do members think?*

• **Upper Flood Occasional Publication** Yvonne Rowe asked if any of those at the meeting who had been involved with digging the second entrance to Upper Flood would be prepared to do a write-up on the events for the Special Publication. This will be the concluding (hopefully) follow-up to the report on the initial archaeology dig. Tony Knibbs offered to write a report, and there were some unintelligible mutterings from others which I presume were also offers of a similar nature! Someone asked if there was also going to be a survey of Upper Flood in the Special Publication. Malcolm was asked if he had one, which he said he had. He was then asked if the Group could have a copy for the publication but he said he was unable to give us one as it wasn't actually in his possession. The meeting then suggested that we produce our own survey and offers to do this were asked for. At least four members offered to conduct and produce a survey in time for the publication to be for sale on our stand at the BCRA conference.

• **Annual Dinner venue** Arthur Spain asked if the Group could hold its annual dinner at the Star, Wells next year. We have had excellent dinners there in the past and although the last time we were there it wasn't so good, it is under new management now so could be worth another try. It was also stated that although the Royal Clarence this year was a good venue it was a considerable distance away and the Star is much closer. The meeting

raised no objections to us trying the Star next year so the new ordinary member will be asked to look into this.

### **DATE & VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date for the next Annual General Meeting is **12th April 1997**. The meeting will commence at **2:30pm**. There was some discussion about whether the meeting could in future be held at the cottage as only a small number of members were at this year's meeting. Joan read out the numbers of members who attended the previous five meetings and they were all around the low forties mark. She suggested that if numbers were to rise to this level again then the cottage wouldn't be big enough (someone said we could use the new extended library!). A show of hands was asked for the cottage and then the Hunter's - **the Hunter's** won so will be the venue for next year's AGM.

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### **CAVING SYMPOSIUM II**

Forest of Dean Caving Symposium II will be held on June 14-16th at English Bicknor Sports and Social Club. Places are limited and will be issued on a 'first come...' basis so book early. The organisers can only accept bookings in advance and tickets will **not** be available during the weekend. Ticket price includes all activities and meals for the relevant period.

All weekend (BCRA members)	£15.00
All weekend (non-BCRA members)	£17.50
Saturday only	£10.00
Sunday only	£ 8.00

There will be talks and discussions; surface field trips; underground field trips; trade stands; displays; simple hot/cold meals on Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes; tea and coffee available all day; Saturday evening bar and entertainment; free on-site camping.

If the last symposium is anything to go by this will be an event well worth going to. For an order form and programme of events contact Tim Gilson, 188 Cheltenham Road, Longlevens, Gloucester, GL2 0JR