

MCG NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

NUMBER 256

SEPTEMBER 1996

PICOS DE EUROPA 1996 - the other bits!

by Yvonne Rowe

Team: Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh, Joe Frampton, Joan Goddard, Martin and Yvonne Rowe.

The two cars (Martin's and Joe's) met at Dover on the evening of Friday 26th July ready for the 10:30pm ferry to Calais and the long drive to Tresviso in the Asturia region of the Cantabrian mountains, Picos de Europa, Northern Spain. We booked in and were directed towards the ferry but Martin's car (Martin, Yvonne and Joan) was then re-directed for a security check. Fortunately, they only asked a lot of questions rather than making us unload the car (apart from taking an age to pack everything in, we had a rocket tube of carbide!!!). We spent most of our journey to Calais searching the ferry for Joe, Tim and Julie - we even got the ferry staff to phone the dock to see if they knew of their whereabouts. We arrived in Calais to find them waiting for us (much to our relief) - they had managed to catch an earlier, faster ferry.

We set off on the long drive arriving at Arenas de Cabrales in the Picos at about midnight on the Saturday (about one and a half hours drive from Tresviso). Jim, an English caver friend of Tim and Julie's, has an 'Adventure' business and apartment in Arenas and had invited us to call in for a chat about Cueva del Agua and to sleep on his floor overnight. The next morning we awoke refreshed and did a big food shop - well, as much as we could cram into already overloaded cars. As this is the nearest town with any shops we would not want to do the trip back to Arenas more than necessary. We set off on the picturesque trip to Tresviso. The road took us to the spectacular Cares Gorge (more of that later) where the 21 kilometre, very windy, barely two-way road starts its steep climb up the mountain to Tresviso at the top.

In the (only) bar/restaurant in Tresviso we were introduced to the owners by Tim and Julie who met them there in February this year. One of them, Miguel (what else!) showed us to a small plateau (if you could call it that) on top of the mountain where we could pitch our tents. It was a bit rough, with no toilets or water, but it was free! The only hazards here were the moles which insisted on coming up under the tents even though they had a whole mountain to tunnel in; the pseudo bees which took a fancy to (only) Julie's tent which she found quite disturbing (we dragged her tent to three different places and still they came); and the electric wire around two sides of our site which Julie discovered was live (but with baling twine on the other sides it kept the cows out). Joe and Joan bloused out and stayed in the almost completed new bunkhouse under the bar. The rest of us negotiated a price with Miguel to enable us to use the bunkhouse showers and toilets for the fortnight. We were all set, the weather was fine and we were eager to go to Cueva del Agua the next morning, even though it meant a 2000ft steep and winding descent on foot into the Urdon Gorge to reach the entrance. (Tim's article on the caving activities will follow in a future newsletter.)

Joan and I didn't do as much caving as the others - we did Crustie things instead like walking, 'mining', and flora and fauna spotting. There are supposed to be bears, mountain cat-like animals called Genets (related to the Civet), golden eagles and wolves in the area but we didn't see any (although Joe was sure he saw a Genet chasing a goat one day). We often saw what I was convinced were golden eagles but they turned out to be more common vultures. On misty evenings we would see yellow and black striped salamanders plodding about (9 were seen one very wet evening). There were also many beautiful butterflies and bugs, lizards, and the not so beautiful 6-8ins long, fat, black slugs - ugh!

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MCG CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR

| DATE | AREA | EVENT | CONTACT | TELEPHONE |
|------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 12 Oct | Mendip | Half-yearly Forum & EGM | Joan Goddard | 01608-810382 |
| 12 Oct | Mendip | Barn Dance | Pete Moseley | 01458-860524 |
| 19 Oct(?) | Devon | TBA | Marcus Ward | 01252-876783 |
| 24 Nov | Derbyshire | Peak Cavern | Geoff Beale | 0118-972-2510 |
| 07 Dec | Mendip | Reservoir Hole | Geoff Beale | 0118-972-2510 |
| 08 Mar '97 | Mendip | Archaeology Walk | Yvonne Rowe | 01252-872006 |
| 12 Apr '97 | Mendip | Annual General Meeting | Joan Goddard | 01608-810382 |
| Summer '98 | Madagascar | MCG Expedition | Tim Francis | 0181-876-1863 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| WEEKLY MEETINGS: | 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. |
| 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, members children, SWCC and NPC £1.50 |
| COTTAGE FEES per night: | Guest clubs and member's guests £2.50 |
| PREPAYMENT STICKERS: | (Available to members only) 12 nights accommodation £15.00 25 nights accommodation £30.00 55 nights accommodation £55.00 |
| ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: | Full and Probationary Members: £25.00; Associate Members: £12.50 |

THE COMMITTEE

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| SECRETARY | JOAN GODDARD 10 ENSTONE ROAD, CHARLBURY, OXFORD, OX7 3QR | tel: 01608-810382 |
| TREASURER | MARTIN ROWE 10 GREENLEAS CLOSE, YATELEY, HAMPSHIRE, GU46 7SL | tel: 01252-872006 |
| MEET SECRETARY | GEOFF BEALE 30 CHURCHILL CRESCENT, SONNING COMMON, NEAR READING, BERKS, RG4 9RX | tel: 0118-972-2510 |
| TACKLE MASTER | TIM FRANCIS FLAT 5, 2 THE CRESCENT, BARNES, LONDON, SW13 ONW email t.francis@nopres.co.uk | tel: 0181-876-1863 |
| COTTAGE WARDEN | LEE HAWKSWELL 4a HAZELTREE ROAD, NORTH WATFORD, HERTS, WD2 5RQ | tel: 01923-819103 |
| EDITOR | YVONNE ROWE 10 GREENLEAS CLOSE, YATELEY, HAMPSHIRE, GU46 7SL | tel: 01252-872006 |
| RECORDER | WAYNE HISCOX 3 KEWARD, GLASTONBURY ROAD, WELLS, SOMERSET, BA5 1TR | tel: 01749-671282 |
| ORDINARY MEMBER | PETE MOSELEY PENDLE COTTAGE, MEARWAY, WESTHAY, GLASTONBURY, SOMERSET | tel: 01458-860524 |

CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES
 JONATHAN ROBERTS
 MALCOLM COTTER
 PAT WALSH
 PETE MATHEWS

NON-COMMITTEE POSTS
 RESCUE WARDEN
 CONSERVATION OFFICER
 COTTAGE EXTENSION
 EXAMINERS

NAME
 DAVE TOOKE
 JULIE HESKETH
 WAYNE HISCOX
 HUW JONES AND DAVE TOOKE

TELEPHONE
 01784-436237
 0181-876-1863
 SEE ABOVE

MCG doings

ON THE MOVE Joe Frampton to 52 High Field Park, Wargrave, Berks. Tel: 0118-940-2356

Richard Whittington to Meadow End, 2 Orchard Close, Wrington, Bristol, North Somerset, BS18 7ND
Tel: 01934-862286

Bill Platt to 3 Alder Close, Burton, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 7PF

Bill Headington to Bath College of Higher Education, Room 5, Neville, Newton Park, Newton St Loe, Bath, BA29 3ZU
Tel: 01225-872928

Martin and Yvonne Rowe have a change to their present address which is now 10 Greenleas Close, Yateley, Hampshire, GU46 7SL (same telephone no.)

Stephen Porter also has some changes and his address is now 79 Becket Road, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, BS22 0TY

Wayne Hiscox now has a phone no. - 01749-671282

Tim Francis email address: t.francis@nopres.co.uk

PICOS YV'SDROPPINGS

TF: "I've always wanted to pop something out so that I can pop it back in again!"

TF: "That's another pair of trousers sticky for a week!"

EXCHANGE PUBLICATION We have received a Journal from Croatia called 'Speleo'zin' (sounds a bit like our Spleleoscene). There is obviously a great deal of caving and exploration going on in Croatia and the Journal reflects this with lots of articles and surveys (plus a large, folded loose-leaf survey). At the end of each article is a summary written in English. There are articles on cave dives, expeditions, ice caves, new discoveries, the flora and fauna in their caves, and rusting karibiners. This article tells how rusting karibiners were tested in the mechanical laboratory of the Railway Vehicle Factory in Zagreb by stretching with increasing static force, and about a chemical analysis made at the chemical laboratory of the same factory. We don't know how they got our (Nordrach Cottage) address but we will add them to the exchange list.

EARWIG in on the committee meeting held 2-9-96...
Cottage extension: Don Vosper, Arthur Spain and Wayne Hiscox to finish blockwork weekend of 7/8th Oct. It is hoped to complete the felt and battens before the half-yearly so tiles can be fitted over the half-yearly weekend...
Computer: Joan Goddard to get 386 repaired then it will go in the 'new' library...
Building and contents insurance: Ron Saunders to write to another insurer for a quote.

RESERVOIR HOLE On 7th December 1996 (members weekend) Geoff Beale has booked Reservoir Hole. It will be an evening trip which usually starts about 8pm and finishes about midnight. It's an interesting trip into a cave which is not typical of Mendip's usual offerings. There are a limited number of places so it will be first come, first served. If you are interested contact Geoff on 0118-972-2510

PEAK CAVERN This trip on 24th November is now fully booked but Geoff will put names on a reserve list in case anyone drops out so it's still worth giving him a ring if you're interested. He is going to try to book the bunkhouse near Buxton that Cadley Hill Caving Club uses but if not he will try to book bunks at the TSG hut. More details will follow.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------|
| 20th Sept - 21 Sept | Caswell Outdoor | (12) |
| 09th Nov - 10th Nov | Cadley Hill C.C. | (08) |
| 22nd Nov - 23rd Nov | Lost World | (08) |

Lots of fliers advertising our cottage facilities were taken at the BCRA conference so there may be more bookings than appear here. Check with Lee Hawkswell before you take a party to the cottage.

Diary dates

27th - 29th Sep NAMHO Field Meet, the Plume of Feathers, Princetown, Devon.
27th - 29th Sep British Cave Rescue Council Conference, SWCC, Penwyllt, South Wales.
25th - 27th Oct CREG/CSG Field Meet, Yorks Dales
25th - 28th Oct Speleological Union of Ireland CRO Conference, Falls Hotel, Ennistymon, County Clare.
23rd - 24th Nov DCA/NCA Cavers' Workshop, Whitehall Centre, Derbyshire.
22nd Mar '97 NCA AGM
14th - 17th July '97 NAMHO Conference, Matlock.

PICOS DE EUROPA 1996 - the other bits!

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The flora interested Joan and I a great deal with many species peculiar to northern Spain. We saw (to name but a few) large yellow Soft Antirrhinums, along with other, smaller yellow and purple varieties, something called *Digitalis Parviflora* which is a small, yellow/brown Foxglove, many varieties of *Campanula*, Broomrape, various *Dianthus* (Pinks), Maidenhair Ferns, *Gypsophila*, various wild *Geraniums*, pink and blue *Flax*, *Hypericum*, an unusual, large-flowered Bell Heather, various *Saxifrages* and *Stonecrops* (one yellow with an orange centre), a low-cover plant with pretty deep blue flowers called *Anagallis Monelli*, lots of Mints, Herbs and wild Onions, a red Helleborine, lots of *Eryngium* (like Sea Holly), carpets of *Merendera Montana* (like a small Autumn Crocus), *Aquilegia* (Columbine), Wolfsbane, Nottingham Catchfly (a wispy type of *Campion*), a 'local' Candytuft, and a strange maroon thistle that we have not yet identified. The strangest plant was tall-ish with the innocent-sounding name of Swallow-wort which had tiny white flowers followed by huge pods, and it was extremely poisonous! There were many, many more flowers but these were the more interesting and unusual ones.

On a tourist/shopping day to Arenas de Cabrales we all went to see an old donkey bridge that spanned the Cares Gorge. It was unbearably hot and as we walked along the bottom of the gorge the water looked cool and inviting. Well, Joe was the first one in closely followed by Julie, both of whom had the sense to wear swimming things under their clothes. Although their screams and blue skin told us it was extremely cold, the rest of us stripped down to our grundies and joined them. It was too cold for all but Joe to stay in long and when he did finally come out he had small leaches on various parts of his body! It was lovely to cool down and the gorge was very picturesque, especially as if on cue a donkey passed over the bridge.

Joan and I did quite a few walks - a couple to do a zig-zag donkey path that was the original route to the village before the road was built, several down to the cave and back, and a couple to look at old mines. The first attempt at the 'zig-zags' was to see if Joan's lack of a head for heights could cope with it as it looked quite exposed in places. On the second, and actual attempt we started too late and ran out of time only a third of the way and one hour down (it took 3hrs to walk back up) - we never got a third chance due to low cloud and drizzle. On the way to the zig-zags we had seen spoil from old mines higher up so we went to investigate one day with Martin. Here we found one mine with a locked door not very far in and another which Martin managed a through trip in. This mine contained some old wooden benches that local goats cheeses had been fermenting (festering!) on but they had long since been abandoned. The locals produce goats cheese in the summer months which is allowed to mature slowly in caves and old mines (it has to be smelled to be believed!). Cheeses produced by one of the bar owners came first in a world cheese competition. The purpose of the mines was to extract zinc-blende and in the spoil, as well as this, we found calamine, galena and traces of copper (a translated copy of a booklet on the mines, cheese and other aspects of Tresviso will be put in the library eventually).

Another abandoned mine Joan and I went to explore was at Andara, 8km from Tresviso. Here, one of the old mine buildings has been turned into a refuge called Caseton de Andara at 1730m (LUSS call it the White House but I'm not sure why as it isn't white!). It is very well kept (by wardens), has an outside shower rigged up next to the building and a toilet quite a distance away. The toilet pongs a bit as you approach it but once inside it smells of roses - literally, as it has one of those smelly things stuck up on the wall! Joan and I explored the area a bit and came across two old mines which we went in a little way, and in the spoil heaps around we found some good 'samples' to take as souvenirs.

We had all attempted a walk to this mine earlier in the holiday but Martin, Joan and I set off before the others, took the wrong path and ended up heading towards a village called Beges - pronounced gutturally 'Beckes'. We ended up having a delightful walk along a mountain track on the opposite side of the Urdon Gorge where at one point we could see our orange tent high on the other side. We came across a couple of caves which Joan and Martin explored with zooms while I watched our rucsacs outside. This side of the gorge was very different to the other with sharper, more fluted limestone, and a different fauna. Beges might possibly be next year's destination as the surrounding area has not been so well explored. There is still plenty to do in Cueva del Agua too and with the bunkhouse completed, the warm hospitality in the bar and the excellent food in the restaurant, I for one can't wait to go back.

We drove back to Dover for the 3:30pm ferry, allowing a good 24+hrs for the journey, but driving non-stop enabled us to get a much earlier ferry at 8:15am! We said our goodbyes at Dover and agreed that it had been an enjoyable and successful two weeks. I arrived home to find Marcus and Zoe fast asleep and the house in a tip. "We were going to blitz it before you came home, Mum, honest!!!" but it's as well he didn't as we trashed it anyway with all our mucky gear.

YORKSHIRE - AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Tony Bolton, Geoff Beale

We left Oxford on the Friday morning in sunshine and arrived in Yorkshire in the late afternoon in heavy rain. Why does it always rain in Yorkshire on Bank Holidays?

Saturday 24th August - Gaping Gill

Got up early for the long walk to Gaping Gill. Arrived there about 08:45, booked in with the Craven Pothole Club and onto the winch without any delay. From arriving at Gaping Gill, booking in, kitting up, to the shaft bottom was only 14 minutes. Last year with Captain Goddard we had to wait about 2+ hours. (Ed: Are you suggesting something?)

We set off to explore *Sand Caverns* and then on to *Stream Passage* where horrible, light grey, claggy mud is the main feature of this area of cave, Tony nearly losing a wellie at one point. Route finding was no problem - just follow deep foot marks in the grey slime. At the far reaches of this area we turned around as the mud seemed to be getting worse and retraced our muddy footsteps back to Gaping Gill *Main Chamber*, briefly looking at the connecting crawl to *Bar Pot*. We had a welcome wash off in a 200ft cold shower which brought the colour back to our oversuits from the previous grey mud colour. (Ed: standing under the waterfall is not recommended - cavers have been injured by falling debris)

A short wait for our turn on the winch took us out to a wet, windy day and the trudge back to the car park at Clapham. Later we met up with lapsed member Ronnie Arkless, now living near Halifax, and had a meal and drinks at the Craven Heiffer where a punch-up started during the Saturday night live entertainment.

Sunday 25th August - Kingsdale Master Cave

Sunday's trip was to Kingsdale Master Cave via *Valley Entrance*. After changing at the roadside it started to rain (what's new?). We spoke to a party from Derbyshire who went in 15 minutes before us. We were taking photos on the way in when we met them again escorting a party of adults and small kids out, some without working lamps. We later found out that this party had just been rescued from the bottom of the 30ft pitch area. They had been doing a pull-through trip from *Simpson's Pot* to *Valley Entrance* and had entered the cave the day before. They had been caught out by rising floodwater in the main drain and had to sit it out, evidently unable to continue downstream to the pitch, which apparently they had not laddered beforehand.

We hung our ladder at an alternative hang and found the main stream at mid thigh level and flowing strongly to the upstream section of *Keld Head Sump*, which is just below the ladder. Foam marks at chest level gave testament to the high water levels the previous night. At the top of the *Main Stream Section* we turned around unsure of weather conditions outside and then out, taking more photos. Outside, the rain had briefly stopped. We spoke again to the Derbyshire cavers who told us the full story of the assisted rescue and also that they had not informed anyone of their trip from the previous day. This was why the CRO were not called out when they were overdue. We should all learn from this.

In the afternoon we went sightseeing up Kingsdale to Dent village, then drove over the fells to Hawes and looked at what is claimed to be the highest single drop waterfall in England at Hardraw Force.

Geoff Beale

OGOF CARNO, SOUTH WALES 26th Aug 96

Team: Marcus Ward, Joe Frampton, Julie Hesketh, Tim Francis, Martin Rowe, Duncan Horne, Steve Jones, (with Zoe Hammersley and Yvonne Rowe car watching!)

OGOF CARNO - 26-8-96 We all met at 10am at the Gilwern Little Chef for breakfast then, having no more excuses, we set off for Ogof Carno. As none of us had ever previously been in Carno we relied on the maps drawn by Chris Brady of Brynmawr Caving Club which got us to the tunnel entrance. We all then got kitted up and headed off on the 1 mile walk down the Carno adit (1750 meters) passing a couple of blind entrances on the way.

Once in, the descent starts immediately with a 3m rope climb followed by a 8m fixed ladder pitch. Then the part we had all been dreading, *Desperate Duck*, wasn't as bad as we had expected, at worst it was only 3-4 ft deep and didn't warrant a wet suit as the rest of the cave is dry (although in wet conditions a wet suit would be essential). Once through, we all carried on down *Chocolate Passage* and *Spongework*, an interesting scalloped passageway which terminates at the *Rift Bypass* and *Greasy Pot* which is a 3m drop. We then followed *Wormcrawl* which as it sounds is a flat out crawl with a couple of avens (where you can catch your breath) which then opens out into *Dune Chamber* by way of a 8m fixed ladder pitch. We carried on via a very dodgy muddy traverse and started arguing about whether this was the correct way on. After climbing a rift and coming across a ladder pitch that wasn't on the survey we realised this was the 8m pitch we had only just climbed down! Beyond *Dune Chamber* we carried on crawling/stooping along the sandy passage until we came out in a large-ish boulder strewn chamber called *The Brickyard*. At this junction we headed towards *Pandora's Pot* and the emergency dump via some tight flat out crawls for the majority of the way. Once at the emergency dump we went on past *Cough and Drop* and arrived at the junction with *Over the Moon* which was to be our return route. We then carried on towards the junction with *Southern Discomfort* where Joe and I went to have a look at the sump. Then after a short rest we carried on through *Knob Alley*, an interesting chamber which contains the only formation we saw on this trip - can you guess what it looks like? The next obstacle was a 3m climb which was made difficult by slippery mud. Once up we came out into *Selenite Rift* another aptly named chamber. We were now at the pitch which joins *Car Crusher* but we'd left the ladder in the entrance and we were running out of time. Tim free-climbed the pitch to have a look and the rest of us decided to turn around and head back out. The first challenge on our return was the tricky exposed 3m climb down, which Duncan tackled in a novel way by descending head first. We all then carried on out via *Over the Moon* which is just as tight, if not tighter than the route in via the emergency dump, but much shorter and quicker. This route rejoins via a 30ft rope assisted descent which bells out at the bottom into *The Brickyard*.

We exited the cave quickly through *Dune Chamber*, *Spongework* and *Desperate Duck*. Then a quick shimmy up the ladder and we were back in the tunnel where our hearts sank as we realised we still had 1 mile to walk before we reached the surface. This was made even worse because the adit is dead straight so we saw the pin prick of light a mile away and it seemed to take forever to get larger. Once back on the surface we met Zoe and Mummy only to find that they had been in three caves (cheeky sods) - then found out they were show caves! In conclusion this was a superb trip with an nice mixture of sporting squeezes and climbs combined with the sandy chambers and avens We all look forward to the next time as we have only just scratched the surface.

Marcus Ward

A PLEA TO THE OLDER MEMBERS OF MCG

Old (as in long-standing) MCG member, Robert Charnock, wrote asking if any of the older members could help him with a bit of genealogy. He says that he appreciates that it does not relate to caving as such but several members will, he's sure, have recollections of the New Inn in the very early days of the club. It would be a valuable record of an era which has now passed and one which we had a unique opportunity of witnessing. His plea is as follows:-

Dear Members,

This is a request to all the older members of MCG who remember "The New Inn" when Sylvester, Oliver and Emily Speed were the landlords.

Since I retired in 1993 I have developed an interest in genealogy, and this has led me to research into both my own family and into Pamela's. Some of her relatives came from the Somerset/Dorset area and as a result of that I have joined the Somerset and Dorset Family History Group. Recently there was a short article in their journal from a Mr Peter Speed requesting any information about his ancestors in the Chewton Mendip and Priddy areas as well as some other places in Somerset.

I wrote to him telling him about my own memories of the New Inn at Priddy, when Sylvester, Owen and Emily Speed were there in the late fifties/early sixties. He has written back to me giving me some details of this branch of his family. Apparently Sylvester was the 15th child out of sixteen and Oliver was his younger brother. Sylvester followed his father as landlord and was 80 when he died. Oliver who was 78 when he died in 1959 had married Emily Mary Voke and they had a daughter Phyllis, who married a Mr Pike.

I would like reminiscences, memories, any photographic record of the New Inn, photos of Sylvester, Oliver or Mrs Speed etc. All photos will be carefully looked after and copied and the originals returned. Please if anyone has any details, however small, I would be very grateful in receiving them.

Thank you for your help

Robert Charnock

If you think you are able to help Robert with any of the above requests you can write to him at 30 Bassett Gardens, Osterley, Middlesex, TW7 4QY, or phone him on 0181-570-4116

AND A THANKYOU ...

Dear MCG,

On behalf of the Priddy Green Sink digging team I would like to thank you for the very generous donation towards the "Bang Fund". Be assured that it will be put to good use as the next chemical project is already in operation - White Pit to Swildon's "??".

Thanks again

Tony Jarratt

MCG BARN DANCE - 12-10-96

Pete Moseley, our new Ordinary member, has the task of organising this year's half-yearly social function which as you will know by now is to be a Barn Dance. Priddy village hall is booked and the Velvet Bottom Band is booked. Roger Dors is doing the bar - licenced untill 11:30pm. A coach has also been booked which will leave the cottage at 7:30pm, then Priddy village hall at midnight - cost £3 per person single or return.

THE HALL Volunteers will be needed to help get the hall ready, i.e. arranging tables and chairs round the hall, preparing tables, plates and cutlery for the layout and collection of food, food preparation, and to clean the hall up afterwards. We have the hall from noon Sat until noon Sun.

THE BUFFET Pete is co-ordinating the food preparation so to avoid mountains of lettuce or millions of sausage rolls could you please contact him and let him know what you intend to do. The type of thing we would like is salads, vegetable curry, rice, bread, butter, pickle, cheese (nothing fancy), and maybe a few nibblies like sausage rolls, crisps, etc. (see p2 for tel. no.)

RAFFLE To keep the general costs down we thought this year we would ask members to donate something for the raffle. It can be anything within reason but , for example, it could be a book, a bottle of wine, confectionary, stationery, anything to do with caving (usable!), video, etc. We're sure you can think of something - that Christmas present you never really liked. Yvonne Rowe is co-ordinating the raffle so could you contact her about your donation so we don't have lots of the same, or even too many prizes. (see p2 for tel. no.)

TICKETS These will be available from Martin Rowe at the Eclipse on the 3rd and 10th October, or by writing to Pete Moseley stating the number of tickets required, enclosing a cheque made out to 'Mendip Caving Group' (not MCG) and a stamped addressed envelope please.

MCG HALF-YEARLY FORUM

The 1996 MCG half-yearly forum will be held on 12th October in Nordrach Cottage at 3:00pm. It will not now be an EGM but an EGM can be called at a later date if it becomes necessary.

As stated in newsletter 255, a group of members submitted a suggestion for a new committee structure (see opposite) with the aim of spreading the workload a bit more fairly, and, with the way the Group and caving in general is going, to introduce two new committee posts (at the expense of others) - a Librarian, and an Access and Conservation Officer. I was asked to publish it in the newsletter for discussion at the half-yearly but sent copies to the committee first. The committee discussed this suggestion at a committee meeting on 6-7-96 but a concensus could not be reached. It was agreed that at the next meeting we each identify our own 'core tasks' and comment on the members' suggestion again. At the meeting on 1-9-96 a concensus was still not reached but the following suggestion was agreed on by the committee:-

- The title of Meet Secretary to become Caving Secretary
- The title of Recorder to become Recorder/Librarian
- The title of Ordinary Member to become Social Secretary

There has been talk and suggestions on committee restructuring for many years now so we hope as many of you as possible will come along to give your views (and suggestions) on this subject. You can of course bring up any subject you like for discussion as this is an informal meeting - anything that needs formalising or put to a vote can be taken to an EGM or this year's AGM.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

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| <p>SECRETARY</p> <p> </p> <p>AGM & Forum (agenda, minutes, postal, votes, voting slips etc.)</p> <p> </p> <p>Membership admin.</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate social functions (incl. invites to other clubs)</p> <p> </p> <p>Public relations (eg. other clubs and caving bodies)</p> <p> </p> <p>Public liability insurance</p> <p> </p> <p>Charities Commission (incl. annual report)</p> <p> </p> <p>Subs to other clubs</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate BCRA stand</p> <p> </p> <p>Ordering & monitoring MCG regalia</p> | <p>TREASURER</p> <p> </p> <p>Group finances</p> <p> </p> <p>Day-to-day book keeping</p> <p> </p> <p>Committee floats</p> <p> </p> <p>Produce annual report for examiners</p> <p> </p> <p>MCG subs, subs renewal forms & membership cards</p> <p> </p> <p>Supply new members with keys (+ Cotags on request) & keep records</p> <p> </p> <p>Cottage fees</p> <p> </p> <p>Empty 'phone box & donation box</p> | <p>EDITOR</p> <p> </p> <p>Publish newsletters or Bulletins (incl. envelopes, address labels & postage)</p> <p> </p> <p>Update membership data base & send disc to committee members</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate Occasional Publications (& post with newsletter)</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate inclusions & forms for newsletter (eg. subs renewal, dinner requests, AGM minutes)</p> <p> </p> <p>Spare newsletters to librarian for exchange & archive</p> <p> </p> <p>Organise printing of newsletter, bulletins & Occasional Publications</p> | <p>TACKLEMASTER</p> <p> </p> <p>Monitor Mendip tackle</p> <p> </p> <p>Monitor SRT tackle</p> <p> </p> <p>Monitor Expedit. tackle</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate expedit. 1st aid</p> <p> </p> <p>Monitor digging equipit.</p> <p> </p> <p>Monitor special equipit. eg. Bosch drill, bolting platform etc.</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate rescue equipit. with rescue warden</p> <p> </p> <p>Monitor lamp chargers</p> |
| <p>COTTAGE WARDEN</p> <p> </p> <p>Cottage running (eg. cesspit emptying, gas bottle replacing, coal ordering, refuse collecting, toilet rolls etc)</p> <p> </p> <p>Cottage bookings & guest keys</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate cottage maintenance (incl. maintenance weekends)</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate special projects (eg. extensions)</p> <p> </p> <p>Building & contents insurance (incl. inventory for insurance & Charity Commissioners)</p> <p> </p> <p>Monitor cottage 1st aid cabinet</p> | <p>CAVING SEC</p> <p> </p> <p>Arrange permits & accommodation for away meets</p> <p> </p> <p>Monitor & update MCG leader list</p> <p> </p> <p>Arrange guest leaders</p> <p> </p> <p>Arrange home & away meets on request</p> <p> </p> <p>Contact point for new members</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate training (SRT & general)</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate expeditions</p> <p> </p> <p>Inform editor of venues & dates of forthcoming meets etc</p> | <p>CONS & ACCESS</p> <p> </p> <p>Attend CSCC, CCC etc meetings</p> <p> </p> <p>Issue & monitor availability of CCC permits</p> <p> </p> <p>Obtain & agree access for digging</p> <p> </p> <p>Update cave keys</p> <p> </p> <p>Local farmers (goodwill)</p> <p> </p> <p>Collate information from MCG digs</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate surveying of MCG digs</p> <p> </p> <p>Co-ordinate fixed point photography</p> <p> </p> <p>Updates to editor</p> | <p>LIBRARIAN</p> <p> </p> <p>General library work (incl. chasing up borrowed books)</p> <p> </p> <p>Buy new books & surveys co-ordinate reviews, send summary to editor</p> <p> </p> <p>Catalogue books, publications & surveys</p> <p> </p> <p>File AGM, committee & Custodian trustee minutes</p> <p> </p> <p>Exchange MCG publications with other clubs & caving bodies (eg. Descent, Bristol Library, BEC etc)</p> <p> </p> <p>Keep archives (incl. old surveys, photos, MCG publications etc.)</p> <p> </p> <p>Renewal of subs to Descent, International Caver, SIGS etc.)</p> <p> </p> <p>Sale of MCG publications</p> |

More MCG doings

BREAK-IN AT THE COTTAGE It was only a matter of time before they got round to us and unfortunately it happened on Monday 2nd September. Some complete b*****d tried to break through the security system on the front door but couldn't defeat it so went round the back and broke a window!! 'It' then helped itself to three noughts-worth of camera equipment belonging to Bernard Reeves. He had only popped out of the cottage for a short while so one can't help thinking that 'it' had been watching Bernard's movements and waiting for an opportunity to strike. Nothing else was taken.

What is it all coming to? You can't leave things in your car, and now you can't leave things in the cottage either! The only advice can be to simply leave anything of value at home (and have it stolen from there instead). **The Group's contents insurance does not cover personal items stolen from the cottage.** If you too are unlucky enough to have property stolen from the cottage you would have to look at your own house contents insurance (if you have any) for recompense, or have your valuables separately and adequately insured. Alternatively, you could buy a huge rocket tube and cart everything around with you - sight-seeing, climbing, walking, shopping, pubs, socials... and even caving! Seriously though, you need to **think very carefully about what you bring with you to Mendip, and what you leave unattended at the cottage or in your car.**

SURVEYS The following surveys are available, from Joan Goddard initially but eventually via any committee member:

Longwood/August

Pinetree Pot

Goatchurch Cavern

DEVON MEET We have heard unofficially that on Saturday 19th October (date to be confirmed) there is a one day caving workshop being held in Devon (venue to be confirmed). Marcus Ward is trying to find out more about it so he can organise a weekend meet to take in this workshop on the Saturday and some Devon caves on the Sunday. The workshop will include some SRT 'stuff', tips on underground photography, and surveying. If Marcus can get the necessary information in time he will also try to book some accommodation. If you think you might be interested then contact Marcus on 01252-876783 to give him an idea of numbers and so he knows how much accommodation to book and who to contact with the details and arrangements.

AN APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP has been received from **Andrew Shann**, 1 The Link, Headington, Oxford. Tel: 01865-750085 (Proposed by Tim Francis and Joan Goddard) This application will be considered at the committee meeting on 2nd November '96.

HIDDEN EARTH '96 - SHEFFIELD MCG had a stand at Hidden Earth (BCRA Conference) this year for the first time and for a first attempt it was very successful. Eighteen MCG members turned up over the weekend, many of whom did a stint on the stand at some time or another, giving everyone the chance to have a good look round, go to lectures, have something to eat, go to the loo, etc.

Much thought and effort was put in by Charlie Alison who brought lots of signs, labels, prices tags, publication price lists, hand-outs advertising the cottage and its facilities, and some lovely old black and white and recent colour photographs to display. Also displayed were Julie Hesketh's and Tim Francis's surveys from their Belize expedition, and Pinetree Pot with their dig extensions included on it. Joan Goddard brought some Goatchurch Cavern, Longwood/August and (larger) Pinetree Pot surveys for sale from the stand.

Martin Rowe took his computer and monitor which showed a 'Powerpoint' rolling "History of the MCG", which included expeditions, breakthroughs, digs past and present, membership past and present - in fact everything about the Group from the beginning (and almost its end when the cottage blew up!) to the present time. He also took a portable TV and video recorder and had the video of the Upper Flood II archaeological excavation and new entrance dig running, which attracted a surprising amount of interest and questions.

One of the best things was the appearance, hot off the press, of MCG Occasional Publication No.4 entitled "Upper Flood - Exploration to 1966". Thanks go mainly to Malcolm Cotter and Charlie Alison who worked hard and long to get this excellent publication ready in time for the MCG stand. Also on the stand were Occasional Publications 1, 2 and 3, as well as the three previous MCG Journals and a selection of recent MCG Newsletters.

In all we sold 11 Upper Flood publications, 1 Chartreuse publication, 4 Belize publications, 3 Longwood/August surveys, 1 large and 1 small Pinetree Pot surveys, 1 Upper Flood survey (pack of 2), 3 Peak District Geology Explained, and a box of the same on sale or return. In all we took £54.60 which wasn't bad - we were really there to promote the MCG so this was a bonus.