

MCG NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

NUMBER 258

HAPPY NEW YEAR

DECEMBER 1996

NETTLEBED - South Oxon NGR 704868

by Geoff Beale

Team: Dan Miles, Tony Bolton, Geoff Beale Date: Saturday 7th September '96

I was told by a work friend that his son David had found a hole which had just appeared in woodland near to the village of Nettlebed in South Oxon. I visited the site and found a fenced-off compound containing a hole approx. 4ft x 3ft which had appeared through the roots of a fallen tree. By holding onto the tree and peering down I was able to see by torch-light a pitch that appeared to be 40-50ft through clay/soil and into a large dug chalk chamber.

Dan, Tony and myself visited the site on Saturday evening 7.9.96 and rigged the pitch for ladder and SRT to a convenient tree nearby. After an abseil of only 25ft I landed on the side of a huge clay/sand spoil cone about 20ft high off the bottom of a chalk passage. The spoil cone showed that this entrance was a collapsed roof. Dan and Tony soon joined me and we set off to explore.

From our survey we had found chalk workings that used to supply chalk to what was once a thriving brick and tile manufacturing works on the land above. The chalk removed would have been used in the brick-making process (mixed with local red clay and fired to make a lighter brick), and also for making lime mortar for building. The flint dug out would have been used for house building and garden walls.

The presumed original entrance shaft can be seen at the other side of the main passage. The shaft appears to be backfilled from the top as there are broken bricks and tiles at the bottom. If this was the original shaft, there might be a continuation of old workings on the other side of this fill. We found no evidence of dates or miners graffiti on the walls but other 'finds' were a leather hob-nailed left boot, a large iron kettle and several rusted food tins. The skull and large bones of a carnivore (fox?) were found by this filled shaft. On the other side of the main passage was the skeleton of a rodent (rat?). Smoke trails on the walls and evidence of candle grease showed that the mine was dug in candle-light with steel picks, as spikes and flat cuts were seen. Everything found was left *in situ* in case they were to be examined closely at a later date.

A roof collapse at the start of another heading could also lead to a further series of workings, but with only about 15ft of clay/soil roof this would make a dig decidedly dodgy. It might be best to let nature take its course and show us another way in (if any further passage exists), although how the skeletons found their respective ways in cannot be explained as they were too old to have fallen through our entrance. It is possible, from looking at the old bricks and tiles at the bottom of what we presume is the original entrance shaft, to date them to late Victorian or early Edwardian patterns which could date the mine closure at late 19th or early 20th century.

continued on page 4

MCG CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR

DATE	AREA	EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
1997				
10 Jan-11 Jan	Mendip	40th birthday barrel	Martin Rowe	01252-872006
28 Mar-31 Mar	South Wales	Apple/Draconen/Carso etc	Marcus Ward	01252-815112
12 Apr	Mendip	Annual General Meeting	Jean Goddard	01608-810382
12 Apr	Mendip	Annual Dinner Woolley Hole	Pete Moseley	01458-860524
13 Apr	Mendip	Archaeology Walk (new date!)	Yvonne Rowe	01252-872006
16 May-18 May	Mendip	BCRA CRG/CSG Field Meet	Martin Rowe	01252-872006
23 Aug-07 Sep	Spain	MOB de Europa	Martin Rowe	01252-872006
12 Sep-14 Sep	Devon	BCRA Rabbits Earth Conference	Martin Rowe	01252-872006
1998				
Summer '98	Management	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

COTTAGE INFORMATION:

Tel: 01761-462797 Grid Ref ST51475606 OS 1:50,000 sheet 182

COTTAGE BOOKINGS:

Through the cottage warden please (address and tel. no. below).

COTTAGE FEES per night:

MCG members, members children, SWCC and NPC £1.50
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

RECIPROCAL RIGHTS:

MCG (members only) have reciprocal booking rights with SWCC and NPC; NPC bookings via Andy Goddard tel: 01978-812100 (wk) 01244-570944 (hm) SWCC bookings via Ian Middleton tel: 01703-736997 email ian_m@tcp.co.uk

THE COMMITTEE

SECRETARY	JOAN GODDARD 10 ENSTONE ROAD, CHARLBURY, OXFORD, OX7 3QR	tel: 01608-810382
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PETE MATHEWS	CONSERVATION OFFICER	JULIE HESKETH	0181-876-1863
JONATHAN ROBERTS	COTTAGE EXTENSION	WAYNE HISCOX	SEE ABOVE
PAT WALSH	EXAMINERS	HUW JONES AND DAVE TOOKE	

THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP IS A REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 210818
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MCG doings

ON THE MOVE Tony Bolton to 1 The Apiary, Woodmancote, Cirencester, GL7 7EJ ☎ 01285-831419

Adrian Duckett to 195 Jersey Road, Osterley, Middlesex. TW7 4QJ ☎ 0181-568-6211

Sean Tinsdale to 5 Hawley Way, Burnham-on-Sea, TA8 2TA ☎ 01278-780097

Tim Haynes to Garden Flat, 5 Jubilee Road, Bristol, BS4 2LR ☎ 0117-971-9931

Sonya Cotter and Lee Hawkswell to 36 St Andrews Road, Warminster, Wilts, BA12 8ER ☎ 01985-212690

Marcus Ward to 56 Barn Meadow Close, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hants, GU13 0YB ☎ 01252-815112

WELCOME BACK to Bob Wanstead who has rejoined the Group.

CONGRATULATIONS to Bill Headington on his recent engagement to Kim Cooper.

AN APPLICATION for membership has been received from Stephen Jones, 14 Benville Avenue, Coombe Dingle, Bristol BS9 2RX ☎ 01179-684528 (proposed by T Francis, J Goddard) and will be considered at the February committee meeting.

EARWIG in on the committee meeting held 7.12.96... Cottage extension: Tiling to be completed, also window sill and flashings to make weatherproof... **DYO:** MCG now has permission for an underground camp... **Covenants:** Alan Mellon claiming back tax and will then contact any members not yet covenanting subs... **Rescue kit:** Agreed in principle to acquire hardware for rescue practices, Dave Tooke to price, and provide storage... **New ladders:** As old 10m ladders wear out, we will replace some with shorter ladders more suited to Mendip pitches... **Tethers:** to be marked with length... **Cottage landscaping:** on hold until better plans for carparking are drawn up.

JOB ADVERTISEMENTS for MCG posts. We require a Covenants administrator to take over from Alan Mellon. The post involves collating covenant forms from new members, gathering information from the treasurer about the precise date subs are paid and then filling in a form to claim back a refund from the Inland Revenue. Also, several committee members would like to retire at the next AGM. If you are interested in being Treasurer, Editor, Secretary or Cottage Warden please contact the current post holder or any other committee member. Incidentally, all committee posts and non-committee posts are re-elected annually, so if there is any post you would like to stand for, again

contact any committee member for more information.

CHARTERHOUSE SYMPOSIUM There have been several "single topic" meetings in recent years including Forest of Dean and Ogof Draenen. With the publication of *Upper Flood Explorations* to 1996 a lot of information about the caves of Blackmoor Valley (UF, Waterwheel, Grebe, Blackmoor Shaft, etc.) is now available. Archaeologists and others have also studied the surface features and published their findings. All this information is scattered in various different journals, but much else exists as "local knowledge". For example, during the UF II dig many local people approached us with reminiscences of the valley as it was 50 or more years ago. Is it now the time to try and bring together all this information before it is lost? If anyone can help organise a "symposium" please contact the committee.

SOUTH WALES MEET 28-31st March '97 (Easter). The Group has booked Pwll Du Adventure Centre adjacent to Ogof Draenen. Trips planned include Draenen, Carno Adit, Agen Allwedd, Craig a Ffynnon and Daren Cilau. Pwll Du cottage accommodates 28 people and costs £70.50 per night (or £2.50 per person if fully booked). Places are on a first-come, first-served basis. If you wish to book please send £7.50 payable to 'Mendip Caving Group' to Martin Rowe by 10-1-97. After this date, depending on interest, the booking will be offered to other clubs such as the Wessex.

PICOS DE EUROPA, SPAIN 22nd August - 7th September '97. Following the successful 1996 meet we are returning to the Picos to explore the area around Bejes and continue the exploration of Cueva del Agua. There are twelve places available using Yvonne Rowe's leased N-reg Land Rover, and more if we take cars. The Land Rover is travelling Portsmouth - Le Havre, then overland to Spain. Cost is diesel plus ferry. To this must be added 2 weeks leasing (£236) of the Land Rover. The Group needs commitment now as the date set at the Forum for departure is a Bank Holiday weekend and ferries will be heavily booked. Non returnable deposits of £50 payable to 'Mendip Caving Group' to Martin Rowe by 1-2-97 please.

MADAGASCAR '98 There will be a "show of hands" at the AGM to decide whether or not this will go ahead.

AGM 12th April '97 followed by the Dinner at the Wookey Hole Restaurant, with (hopefully) a guest speaker from Cave Diving Group. On Sunday sober up on Yvonne's archaeology walk.

PARTY TIME at the cottage on 10/11 Jan '97 to celebrate Martin Rowe's 40th birthday. Subsidised barrel, all welcome, bring your own food.

NETTLEBED - South Oxon *Continued from page 1*

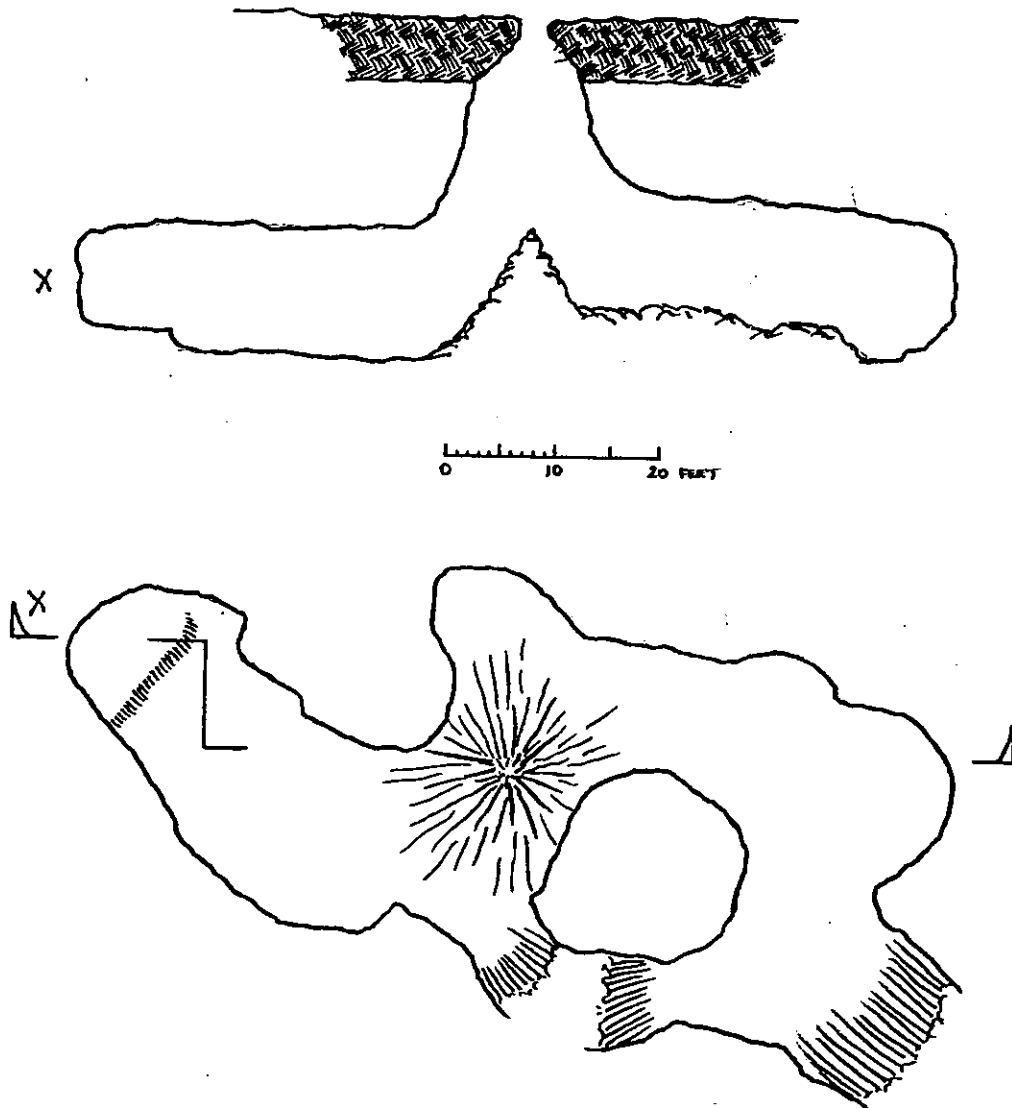
Nettlebed is situated some 700ft up in the Chiltern beechwoods at the junction of four main roads:- to Reading, Oxford, Henley and Thame, on the old Roman road between Henley and Wallingford. Nettlebed was renowned as a brick making centre : tiles and bricks have been made here since the middle ages. It is recorded that 35,000 tiles were made for Wallingford Castle in 1365, and in 1416/17 Thomas Stoner paid Michael Warwick £40-60 for making 200,000 "brykes" at his kiln at Crocker End, near to Nettlebed. These were conveyed at a cost of £15-00 to Stonor House, 3 miles away.

By the middle of the 19th century Nettlebed would have presented a flourishing industrial scene of clay pits, waterpools and brickyards. But by the early 20th century the scale and nature of the business had changed so much that the modest brickworks and kilns had become defunct. The only surviving kiln, last used in 1938, now stands somewhat incongruously among modern houses at the entrance to the village. This preserved kiln is about 200m away from the mine site.

Refs: • 'Around Henley on Thames' by Siân Ellis. • Visitor information board by preserved kiln in Kiln Close, Nettlebed.

As an aside there was another small brick works in the small village of Stoke Row, about 4 miles away. A large house nearby used to be owned by musician/pop star Joe Brown and during his tenure of ownership (some 25-30 years ago) a large collapse occured in what was his garden. Local villagers have told me that it was quietly filled in, but it was a series of ancient chalk workings that supplied chalk for brickmaking etc. at Stoke Row. The site of the old brickworks is now a small industrial site. I am working nearby and so I am keeping my eyes open for any signs of subsidence in the nearby woodland and the land where the hole appeared.

CHALK MINE Nettlebed Oxon NGR 704868 surveyed 7/9/96 by D. Miles, T. Bolton, G. Beale.




ROCK OF AGES

A large boulder which formed after an earthquake hit the Chipping Sodbury area some 200 million years ago is now on display in a new £12 million exhibition at The Natural History Museum in London. Weighing about 1 tonne, the boulder was unearthed at ARC Southern's Hampstead Farm Quarry during routine blasting. It has been cut and polished to reveal highly coloured layers of rock which, before the earthquake, were believed to have lined the floor and ceiling of an ancient cave. As the ceiling collapsed, it shattered into the fragments which are now clearly visible in the rock.

Richard Webb, quarry manager at Chipping Sodbury, explained how the boulder was found: "We were looking for pink-coloured bands in the rock at the request of Natural History Museum's scientists who knew the importance of the site. When the boulder was uncovered among stone being excavated for the Second Severn Crossing, we contacted the museum immediately and within a few days it was on a lorry heading for London." Chris Stanley, a mineralogist at the museum, said the rock would give visitors a better understanding of the powerful forces of nature. "Here, crystalized in stone, is an event that happened millions of years ago, yet one which is completely relevant to the earthquakes being experienced on earth today," he said.

Visitors to The Natural History Museum will find the boulder on display in the 'Restless Surface' exhibition, part of the recently opened Earth Galleries. *(Quarry Management, Sept'96)*



ACCESS TO OFD

Access to OFD is strictly controlled by SWCC on behalf of the land owner. Bona fide cavers may have access but a permit is required from SWCC. Mendip Caving Group is issued with an annual permit by SWCC which enables MCG parties to visit the cave.

OFD II (top entrance) and Cwm Dwr (quarry entrance). Parties of not more than 7 Mendip Caving Group members may obtain the key from the duty officer at SWCC, who holds a list of MCG members. Our annual permit is for MCG members only, and does not include members of other clubs, so strictly speaking if your name is not on the list you won't be allowed on the trip. Don't try to cheat by giving the name of an MCG member instead of your own as the list has additional information which will be known only to the genuine member! In practice, provided that most of the party are MCG members and the rest are associated in some way with the Group, such as prospective members, the duty officer will issue you with a key. SWCC receive MCG newsletters so will always know who is and who is not from MCG.

OFD I (bottom entrance). The same rules apply, but in addition, one of those on the trip must be an OFD I leader. Currently our leaders are Geoff Barton, Geoff Beale, Pete Harvey, Denise Knibbs, Tony Knibbs, John Miriam and Pete Moseley.

Access conditions. These are available from Joan Goddard or Geoff Beale, but include the following:-

- Only electric lighting to be used. Carbide must not be taken into the cave.
- A key ticket must be completed and hung on the destination board at SWCC's hut.
- Leader is responsible for conduct, safety, and equipment necessary for the trip and must draw attention to the conditions relating to the use of any fixed equipment in the cave, as displayed on the board at SWCC.

Members are reminded that they will jeopardise MCG's annual permit to use the cave if they don't follow the conditions of access. There have been two recent incidents where the rules were broken, resulting in SWCC contacting Joan Goddard, so make sure that you are who you say you are!

PEAK CAVERN - *or a Six Sump Tour*

by Joan Goddard

The access agreement requires that all parties entering the cave must do so at the same time, and hence there was quite a signing-in session in the impressive (30m wide by 10m high) entrance chamber, the Vestibule, at 11.30am, Sunday 24th November '96. Smoke-blackened areas of walls and roof are all that remain of cottages which were associated with the rope making industry which used to be carried on terraces cut from the silt floor within the portal. The stream seen at the bottom left of the Vestibule flows out from Buxton Water Sump, which we were able to see later at the upstream section where the main Peak Streamway flows into it.

The show cave section involved some stooping, a few muddy puddles (which dry up or are pumped dry when the cave is open to tourists in the summer) and a marked lack of speleothems. The current show section ends at Pluto's Dining Room at the top of a flight of steps, although previously it extended further - before concerns about the possible effect of radon on tour guides.

A little further along the still-roomy passage, we met the main stream where it flows down to the left towards Halfway House and **Swine Hole Sump** (not visited). Shortly afterwards we passed a small passage on the right from which water from Speedwell Mine previously entered the cave, but only in extreme flood conditions. There is now a concrete plug to prevent this, although some water apparently still leaks through.

A short section of crawling lead to the Mucky Ducks which were first passed in 1949 by members of Sheffield University Mountaineering Club and the British Speleological Association. These are a series of pools, with the roof "dipping" downwards at intervals resulting in a waist-high wetting (a bit higher for Louise!). We continued along Upper Gallery to Treasury Chamber from where we descended a 5m pitch (short knotted rope to the top of a fixed ladder) to the steep, sandy slope down to **Treasury Sump**. Retracing our steps we returned to Upper Gallery (phreatic passage with an incised 2m vadose trench cut into its floor) and down Surprise View Pitch to the main streamway and thence via Squaw Junction to Lake Passage. Here Geoff elected to continue through **Lake Sump** - which had a few inches of airspace - while the rest of us bypassed it via a low, wriggly crawl which was full of very high quality mud!. Shortly after this we saw **Ink Sump** ahead, to the left of which a short low section ended at **Quink Sump**.

We returned along Lake Passage to the main stream which we followed upstream past a 12m fixed ladder to Maypole Inlet (which we did not ascend) and on to Boulder Chamber. After continuing along a dry bouldery passage for what seemed like quite a long way we reached the sandy beach at **Far Sump**, the furthest point in the cave for non divers. Retracing our steps to just below Maypole Inlet we climbed up to the left (helped by a knotted rope) and along a 50m long muddy crawl to Main Stream Inlet where water issuing from a bedding plane has been engineered and cemented to give a series of water spouts from the left wall. These are controlled by a tap and their purpose was to flush out various digs when required - but we used them to wash the mud from our wetsuits.

We found ourselves back at Surprise View where we again descended the fixed ladder (with chain handrails) and set off down the main Peak Streamway through some knee-deep pools to **Buxton Water Sump** which unfortunately was affected by diesel pollution allegedly from a surface source. Shortly upstream of the sump the passage is a superb, almost cylindrical, phreatic tube - up to 7m in diameter but with only a small "misfit" stream derived mainly from percolation water from the limestone surface above. Here we stopped for a photo session, until people started getting cold and set off at a brisk pace for 'out'. As we approached the entrance I was intrigued by an eerie silver light on the walls of the Vestibule. Its source was revealed when we emerged to a 'winter wonderland' as two or three inches of snow had fallen while we were underground.

Our thanks to Neil, Geoff and Georgina (from TSG) who made our trip so interesting by regaling us with facts and figures about the cave and its exploration.

Team: Geoff Beale, Louise Curley, Adrian Duckett, Joan Goddard, Alan Mellon, Martin Rowe, Yvonne Rowe.

PS. My worries about melting snows and flooding were unfounded - the snow didn't melt, and anyway there are large emergency food dumps in Treasury Chamber and Picnic Dig for just such an eventuality.

PPS. To complete the weekend, we made an exciting exit from Castleton. The main road out to the east, via Hope, was blocked by cars which couldn't cope with the snowy conditions so Geoff and I put our trust in Martin and Yvonne's new Land Rover and the Winnat's Pass route. We made it - but only after a dodgy few minutes at the steepest part when we were forced to stop due to a stranded car in front.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

The BCRA Conference was an ideal opportunity to browse through a wide selection of caving books, and the following were obtained for the library:- • BCRA Cave Studies Series Nos. 1, 3, and 4, entitled 'Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales' (Waltham and Davies), 'Caves and Karst of the Peak District' (Ford and Gunn) and 'An Introduction to Cave Photography' (Stoddard). These are nicely presented, very readable, A5 sized booklets. • NCA publications - 'Radon Underground... a set of guidelines for caving and mine exploration' and 'Guidelines for University and College Caving Clubs / Caving Notes for Beginners' (which has information of use to non college cavers too). • 'Cornish Explosives' by Bryan Earl, 1978 • 'The Peak Cavern System - a caver's guide' by John Cordingly, dated 1986. • 'Index to the Transactions of the BCRA (1974-1994) and CRG (1948-1973)'.

Also acquired recently are : • 'Caves and Cave Diving' by Guy de Lavour - 1956 translation from the French original. • 'The Caves of the Isle of Portland' by Mike O'Connor and Nigel Graham. This is the latest Wessex Cave Club Occasional Publication. It is a well produced, A4 sized, 104pp book listing the caves alphabetically, with chapters on geology, history of Portland caving, the stone trade, and even poetry! (in the style of Alfie's odes). 23 surveys and 7pp of references make this a useful reference for anyone wanting to mix sea and caves, although most of the caves are less than 100 metres long and some of them are situated halfway down cliffs and are difficult to access. The longest caves are Sandy Hole (1676m) and Blacknor Hole (810m). • The Group now subscribes to a quarterly magazine, 'Underground Photographer' (Nos. 1-3 published so far). As well as articles on subjects related to underground photography, video and art it includes a letters page, problem solving, and plenty of photos (by beginners as well as experienced cave photographers) with constructive criticism and advice. It caters for all levels of competence and should appeal to quite a number of MCG members. • As a result of the Group's 1996 expedition to Picos de Europa we now hold four Lancaster University Caving Club publications, and one by SWCC, relating to Cueva del Agua and its environs. These proved very useful and will be kept in the library for future use. Thanks to Tim for tracking them down.

While the library extension is in progress most books and publications are stored away and unavailable for borrowing. Descent and regional guide books are in the cupboard in the Six Room and can be consulted when a committee member is there to open the cupboard. Recent acquisitions (since February) can be borrowed via Joan, who is looking after them until they can go into the library.

FROGMAN BLOWS RECORD BUBBLES AT PADIRAC

In an exploit which lasted a little over 48 hours, Bernard Gauche, a 42 year-old cave diver from Libourne (Gironde 33) added another paragraph to French caving history. Helped by some 25 other cavers, of whom 12 were divers, he carried out a solo through-trip from l'Emergence de la Finou to le Gouffre de Padirac, the celebrated show-cave situated near Gramat (Lot 46).

The points of entry and exit are 12km apart on the map and the trip actually covered 20km of passages involving an ascent of about 250m and including diving 22 sumps, the longest of which is 320m and reaches a depth of -40m. A member of the Federation Francaise d'Etudes et de Sports Sous-Marins (FFESSM), Bernard admitted to having had moments of concern - mainly fears concerning the consequences of sustaining an injury beyond the point of no return. He was constantly aware of the need to concentrate on the task in hand and, as a result, he confessed to having experienced a certain amount of mental fatigue. During the course of his through-trip, Bernard collected water samples from several different sumps for subsequent laboratory analysis. Although he had insufficient time to study his surroundings in detail, he did note the presence of numerous fish, particularly albino trout.

The resurgence for the Padirac stream is usually quoted as being the Fontaine de St. Georges in the commune of Montvalent. In fact there are three resurgences grouped at the same location: St. Georges (alt. 104m), Fontaine du Lombard (alt. 103m) and l'Emergence de la Finou (alt. 100m).

From a report in the "Depeche du Midi" 9 September 1996

VOYAGE 21st-24th JANUARY 1996 ON THE STS LORD NELSON

by Phil Ingold

My voyage to the Canaries started at about 4am. Hemel is dark and quiet. I put on a Lord Nelson t-shirt to make it easier to identify me at Grand Canarie. It is almost silent at Luton Airport as we arrived to try and find the appropriate check-in desk to 'lose' my luggage and was pleased that Simon and Helen had decided to see me off rather than have an extra two hours in bed. The giant breakfast might have been a temptation!

My aisle seat was fine next to an Essex couple with a small, quiet child. Breakfast and coffee appeared and the flight was uneventful but lengthy - a good time for a nap perhaps, but no success! I was met at the hot airport by our taxi driver. I chatted to Simon, a Watch Leader, while we waited for a third passenger who was missing. The taxi decided to leave and we enjoyed a view of the dormant volcano. The scenic 45 minute drive, with holiday homes like little white boxes on the hillsides, was fun.

The STS Lord Nelson came into view. I was met and welcomed and later given my watch details (aft starboard). There seemed to be very few people but they arrived on later flights having come by very varied routes from Switzerland, Scotland, England and Germany. The crews enjoyed a dockside barbecue where my Buddy, Simon (the voyage doctor), and my Watch Leader, Robin, were introduced. While waiting, my colleague from the aeroplane and I had a glass of beer in the local bar, and one of the girls in the bar - what a welcoming smile she gave us! She was a 'professional girl', but what a lovely smile.

Having left port, the sea was somewhat lumpy! The mast swayed +20's and as I was being pushed around the swaying deck my wheelchair kept folding up!! Very hard work for the pusher but no problem for me. When I first had a wheelchair I had requested eye-bolts on the handrails but this was not forthcoming, even when I explained that it would be safer when potholing. Instead they lashed the wheelchair to the deck with rope and clamps, but this was less secure than eye-bolts would have been.

So many memories of that day, and of that week - the hilarious Essex girls teasing the voyage doctor unmercifully; Simon having to cope with being my Buddy (a delightful man). Vicky and Andrew had said that they would get me to a beach for a paddle in the sea. They succeeded - a memorable splash. They also helped me to buy cards with nice views to post home. I now get strange grinding noises when I'm wheeled along, perhaps the sand was too fine? When we landed in Tenerife it was a bank holiday for Epiphany and the shops were shut. Simon negotiated with one vendor and obtained a stamp to let me post home the card donated by the airline.

Each night was a warm 20°C and clear, with a bright moon which helped us to negotiate the deck. The daytime temperatures of 25°C were delightful. One evening Sue called out for help. The sea was lumpy and Angie had her head in a bag. We all thought she needed a seasickness pill and Simon rushed to supply some but she just sat out of sight, laughing noisily, with her head in a paper bag! One afternoon there was a call "there's a dolphin". I was weary so did not go straight away to look, but when I did there was a whole 'crowd' of dolphins. They were diving, playing and calling. Dozens of cavorting creatures - a beautiful sight and experience.

Our penultimate night was very special. I was pushed into town in the warm drizzle with Dorte and Sue where we enjoyed a Paella in the cafe near the Nelson. We met some of the permanent crew in a bar and helped consume some wine and lager. A special treat was then introduced - Ron Meil Canario, a spirit made from rum and honey. It's an unusual and delicious concoction which slips down very easily. A good nightcap, perfect for an insulin dependent diabetic perhaps? I had checked my blood glucose level before and after to ensure I was OK.

The last night was also special with a bar selected for the whole ship's company. The evening started innocently with dinner and wine. The Essex girls trapped the First Mate, George, in the gents. All his clothes appeared individually!! He also appeared occasionally, somewhat dishevelled! I tried to stand on a stool to take a photo of the mayhem but I was not stable enough to remain vertical. Fortunately there were hands to help me get off my perilous perch. It was George's birthday celebrations as well as goodbyes.

The farewells and the departure of the taxi's minibus were very wet on the dry and sunny dockside. It was painful and hard to see the now close friends departing, but what super memories. Robin was a great Watch Leader and Simon Williams a delightful Buddy. Simon Wordley helped me to get my duty free items at the airport before helping me join the flight home. It was a sad moment but also a delight to be going home to Helen and Simon. The flight home was an anticlimax, no events or thrills or sleep.

It would be a delight to sail with this crew again. Perhaps in 1998, or at the new boat's construction site in Southampton, or one of the reunions. After one fantastic week I was now looking forward to being met by Helen and Simon at Luton Airport and hope that I have some successful photos.

MENDIP CAVING GROUP MEMBERSHIP LIST AT 16/12/96

CAK	Steve Albino		177 Degraw St, Brooklyn, NY 11231, New York, USA
CFK	Charlie Allison	0181-224-7591	69 Cheam Road, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 3EG
CAX	Victoria Arbizu	0034-5-4409519	Residencial FERIA de Meustras, Bloque 4, 4A, Seville 41020, Spain
CFK	Geoff Barton	01932-849241	The Lodge, The Heath, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0UB
CFK	Dave Baxter	01923-467072	123 Princes Avenue, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD1 8LP
CFK	<u>Geoff Beale</u>	0118-972-2510	30 Churchill Crescent, Sonning Common, South Oxon, RG4 9RX
CFK	John Beauchamp		226 Monbulk Road, Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia
CPX	Roger Beck	01993-772566	6 Baker's Piece, Witney, Oxon, OX8 6PQ
CFK	Steve Bedford	0181-783-1265	5 Myrtle Road, Hampton Hill, Hampton, Middlesex
CFK	Andy Bellamy		2 Ashburton Villas, Lower Chase Road, Swanmore, Southampton, Hampshire, SO3 2PB
CPX	Tony Bolton	01285-831419	1 The Apiary, Woodmancote, Cirencester, GL7 7EJ
CFK	Dave Briggs	01624-623429	51 Wybourn Grove, Orchan, Isle of Man, IM3 4AU
CFK	Pete Bulling	01903-235431	22 Canterbury Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 1AE
CFK	JP Burch	01737-217039	10 Ranelagh Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 6BJ
CPX	Jan Burt	01278-793056	14 Heal Close, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset
CFK	Fred Burton	01952-810143	17 Bayley Hills, Edgmond, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8JG
CPX	Julie Capel	01273-832153	4 Highcross, Henfield Road, Albourne, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9DS
CFK	Richard Carey		Chambre 353 Groppe 1, Cite Universitaire, 2 Rue de Alsace, Rennes Cedex 35000, France
CFK	Mike Carson	01753-655143	41 The Poynings, Richings Park, Iwer, Buckinghamshire, SL0 9DS
CFK	Peter Catternull	01252-873421	12 Harvest Close, Yateley, Hampshire, GU46 7YS
CAX	Robbie Charnock	0181-570-4116	30 Bassett Gardens, Osterley, Middlesex, TW7 4QY
CPX	Chris Clipsam	0973-172288	5 Azile Everitt House, Blendon Terrace, London, SE18 7SR
CFK	Steve Conquest	0181-372-2938	10 McAdam Drive, Enfield, Middlesex, EN2 8PS
CFK	Ben Cooper	01256-64199	10 Coronation Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4HA
CPX	David Cory	01749-676044	89 Balch Road, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2BX
CFX	Lorna Cotter	0181-890-8390	21 Brainton Avenue, Feltham, Middlesex
CHK	<u>Malcolm Cotter</u>	01784-252643	249 Feltham Hill Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 1LU
CFX	Norma Cotter	01784-252643	249 Feltham Hill Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 1LU
CFX	Sonya Cotter	01985-212690	36 St Andrews Road, Warminster, Wilts, BA12 8ER
CFK	John Crowsley	0117-965-2585	11 Rose Walk, Fishponds, Bristol, Avon, BS16 4JN
CFK	Louise Curley	0181-979-2587	10 Sonning Gardens, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 3PL
CFK	Gof Daine	01934-744389	16 St Andrew's Road, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3NE
CAX	Geoff Davies	01923-227154	72 Aldenham Road, Bushey, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD2 2ND
CFK	Ralph Diment	01249-813785	57 The Pippin, Calne, Wiltshire, SN8 1JJG
CAK	Joyce Dines	01761-232302	Stoke House, Stoke St Michael, Nr Bath, Somerset, BA3 5HW
CFX	Eric Dowley		1 The Hillway, Portchester, Fareham, Hampshire, PO16 8BN
CFK	Adrian Duckett	0181-568-6211	195 Jersey Road, Osterley, Middlesex, TW7 4QJ
CFK	Steve Eddy	0117-966-5222	33 Somerset Terrace, Windmill Hill, Bristol, Avon, BS3 4LJ
CPK	Mike Eeles	01784-431098	20 Larchwood Drive, Englefield Green, Surrey, TW20 0SH
CAK	Phil Eliot	01736-787648	No.2 Little Kelynack Cottages, Kelynack, Nr St Just, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 7RF
CFK	Geoff Fisher	01273-493755	Old Mill House, Sandy Lane, Nep Town Road, Henfield, Sussex, BN5 9UX
U FK	Jules Flavell		Lista de Correos 1a Norte e 2a Oriente, El Sentro, Gutierrez, Chiapas 29003, Mexico
CFK	Joe Frampton	0118-940-2356	52 High Field Park, Wargrave, Berkshire
CFK	<u>Tim Francis</u>	0181-876-1863	Flat 5, 2 The Crescent, Barnes, London, SW13 0NN
CFK	Linda Gates	01344-774589	40 Harts Leap Close, Sandhurst, Berkshire, GU47 8PB
CFK	Jeremy Gilson	01934-515689	2 Purdue Close, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS22 0QQ
CFK	Nick Gilson	01934-417697	24 Coombe Road, Weston-super-Mare, Avon
CFK	<u>Joan Goddard</u>	01608-810382	10 Enstone Road, Charlbury, Oxford, OX7 3QR
CFX	Pete Goddard	01608-810382	10 Enstone Road, Charlbury, Oxford, OX7 3QR
CPX	Michael Gould	01202-891217	Archers Lodge, Newmans Lane, West Moors, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 0LW
CPK	Ginette Guerrero	01273-834030	3 Oakvale Cottages, Henfield Road, Albourne, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9DP
CFK	Pete Harvey	01597-810831	Brynawel, Castle Road, Rhayader, Powys, LD6 5BA
CFK	Mike Haselden	01703-464491	3 The Close, Thornhill Park, Southampton, Hampshire, SO18 5RB
CFK	Digger Hastilow	01271-870961	The Bay Surf Shop, Barton Road, Woolacombe, Devon, EX31 7BA
CFK	<u>Lee Hawkswell</u>	01985-212690	36 St Andrews Road, Warminster, Wilts, BA12 8ER
CFK	Tim Haynes	01934-832234	8 The Eagles, Yatton, Bristol, BS19 4QR
CFK	Bill Headington	01225-872928	Room 5 Neville, Newton Park, Newton St Loe, Bath, BA29 3ZU
CFK	Julie Hesketh	0181-876-1863	Flat 5, 2 The Crescent, Barnes, London, SW13 0NN
CFK	Wayne Hiscox	01749-671282	3 Keward, Glastonbury Road, Wells, Somerset, BA5 1TR
CAX	Pete Hollings		Department of Geological Sciences, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, S7N 5E2
CAK	Neil Hutchinson		7 Glade Road, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 1DZ
CAX	Helen Ingold	01442-242029	31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 3QJ
CHK	Phil Ingold	01442-242029	31 Spring Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 3QJ
CFK	Huw Jones	01222-862934	Coedhir, 3 Clos-yr-Arad, Nant Felin Cwrt, Castleview, Caerphilly, CF83 1NF
CPK	Julie Kavanagh	01252-516444	28 Avon Close, Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 9LN
CFK	Nick Kelly	01275-858401	10 Vale End, Nailsea, Bristol, Avon
CFK	<u>Roy Kempston</u>	01252-837888	85 Pevensey Way, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey, GU16 5UU

CFK	Denise Knibbs	0033-561858232	Las Claourios, Thil, 31530 Levignac, France
CFK	Tony Knibbs	0033-561858232	Las Claourios, Thil, 31530 Levignac, France
CFK	Domini Knight	01275-852485	Claypool Cottage, 28 High Street, Nailsea, Bristol, BS19 1AV
CFK	Keith Knight	01329-280386	7 Highmead, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 6BL
CFK	Rupert Knowles	01784-436800	39 Corby Drive, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0RX
CFK	Pete Lingwood	0181-805-2538	39 Holmbridge Gardens, Enfield, Middlesex, EN3 7EY
CFK	Mike Lovell	0118-966-3747	4 Settrington Close Loddon Park, Earley, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 3XJ
CFK	John MacMillan	01753-886029	4 Hill Farm Road, Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire, SL9 0DE
CFX	Bob Marles	01664-812209	Yew Tree Farm, Kirby Bellars, Melton Mowbray, Leicesters, LE14 2NB
CFK	<i>Pete Mathews</i>	01707-321018	15 Dellcott Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 7BB
CFK	Clive Maybury	01275-851597	2 Woodford Close, Nailsea, Bristol, Avon, BS19 2UH
CFK	Ian McKechnie	01932-854959	41 Daneswood Close, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 9AY
CFK	Alan Mellon	0181-751-0137	15 Chichester Way, Feltham, Middlesex, TW14 0DF
CPX	Dan Miles	0118-972-4074	Mill Farm, Mapledurham, South Oxon, RG4 7TX
CFK	John Miriam	0181-393-3955	44 Chesterfield Road, West Ewell, Surrey, KT19 9QP
CFK	<i>Pete Moseley</i>	01458-860524	Pendle Cottage, 82 Meareway, Westhay, Somerset, BA6 9TZ
CPX	Paul Newey	01784-436800	3 Corby Drive, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0RX
CFX	Pat Newman	0171-537-9321	4 Cutty Sark House, Undine Road, London, E14 9UW
CPK	Pete O'Rourke	0171-627-3199	61 Killyon Road, Clapham, London, SW8 2XS
CFK	Graham Old	01491-628596	1 Upper House Farm Cottage, Harpsden, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 4JF
CFX	Reggie Pain	01892-545547	21 Fernhurst Crescent, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 0TB
CFK	Barry Parker	0181-890-8390	21 Brinton Avenue, Feltham, Middlesex
CAK	Ian Parry	01296-715245	Melody Cottage, 1 Orchard Way, Botolph Claydon, Buckinghamshire, MK18 2NG
CPK	Letti Patte	01784-436237	44 Beechtree Avenue, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0RS
CPX	Jason Picken		
CA X	Ann Pittman	01784-437540	36 Manor Way, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9NG
CFK	Bryan Pittman	01784-437540	36 Manor Way, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9NG
CFK	Michael Pittman	01784-437540	36 Manor Way, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9NG
CFX	Bill Platt	01202-301127	3 Alder Close Burton, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 7PF
CFK	Stephen Porter	01934-515686	79 Becket Avenue, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, BS22 0TY
CFK	John Pudduck	01749-870383	1 Manor Farm Cottages, The Green, Easton, Somerset, BA5 1ED
CFK	Bernard Reeves	0181-864-3559	16a Newbury Way, Northolt, Middlesex, UB5 4JD
CFK	<i>Jonathan Roberts</i>	0171-735-9423	1 Vauxhall Walk, London, SE11 5JT
CFX	Nikki Robinson	01222-862934	Coedhir, 3 Clos-yr-Arad, Nant Felin Cwrt, Castleview, Caerphilly, CF83 1NF
CFK	<i>Martin Rowe</i>	01252-872006	10 Greenleas Close, Yateley, Hampshire, GU46 7SL
CFK	<i>Yvonne Rowe</i>	01252-872006	10 Greenleas Close, Yateley, Hampshire, GU46 7SL
CFX	Charlie Ruddock	01753-577676	9 August End Slough, Berkshire
CHX	Ron Saunders	01494-813487	21 Rushmore Avenue, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP15 7NT
CFK	Don Searle	01689-819919	14 Hilda Vale Road, Farnborough, Orpington, Kent, BR6 7AN
CPX	Andrew Shann	01865-750085	1 The Link, Headington, Oxford
CFK	Brian Snell	01329-238341	38 Serpentine Road, Fareham, Hampshire, PO16 7EB
CPX	Tim Souch		83 Oxford Hill, Witney, Oxon, OX8 6JU
CFK	Arthur Spain	01749-679358	Waitangi, Long Lane, Dinder, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3PQ
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CFK	Bryan Terry	01162-432533	12 Weir Lane, Houghton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire, LE7 9GR
CFK	Tom Thomas	01275-851286	36 Ash Hayes Road, Nailsea, Bristol, Avon, BS19 2LW
CPK	Sean Tinsdale	01278-780097	5 Hawley Way, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, TA8 2TA
CFK	Dave Tooke	01784-436237	44 Beechtree Avenue, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0RS
CPX	Tony Townsend		39 Strathmore Close, Carterton, Oxon, OX18 1FB
CPX	Graham Treliving	01784-438690	2 Manorcrosss Road, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9LU
CFX	Don Vosper	01761-453214	5 Franklyn Terrace, Farrington Gurney, Bristol, BS18 5UD
CFK	Roger Wallington	01753-543384	125 Langley Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL3 7DZ
CFK	<i>Pat Walsh</i>	0181-977-8414	58 Munster Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 9LL
	Bob Wanstead		
CFK	Marcus Ward	01252-815112	56 Barn Meadow Close, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire, GU13 0YB
CFK	Mark Ward	01749-675693	Fircrest, Wells Road, Priddy, Somerset, BA5 3AZ
CFK	Kev West	01706-222822	1 Oakenhead Wood, Haslingden Old Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 8RR
CFK	Rob Whalley	01923-461596	55 Pinner Road, Oxhey, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD1 4EG
CFK	Richard Whittington	01934-862286	Meadow End, 12, Orchard Close, Wrington, Bristol, BS18 7ND
CFK	Chris Whittle	01442-832994	17 Apple Cottages, Old Dean, Bovington, Hertfordshire, HP3 0EZ
CFK	Allan Wicks	0118-947-5628	39 Sheridan Avenue, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7QB
CPK	Fiona Wills	01252-837888	85 Penvensey Way, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey, GU16 5UU
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CFX	Alan Wright	01278-444135	Trellis Cottage, 50 Devonshire Street, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 5ES
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