



Treasurers Report

Well, it's been quite a year ! I think most people would agree that the most important event in the MCG's financial calendar came last May when Martin decided to step down as treasurer. I cannot begin to quantify the work that he put in to the club and I am not even going to try to explain why I believe the club owes him a considerable degree of gratitude for his efforts. Suffice to say that I would like to take this opportunity to thank him on behalf of the MCG for his work over many years, and that I greatly appreciate the support he has given me in taking over the role of treasurer.

Having been co - opted on to the committee rather than being voted in, it has inevitably been at the back of my mind to stand down at the AGM. However I have learned that there is still a considerable amount of work that can be done to put us in an even stronger financial position, and for that reason I would very much like the opportunity to stand for "proper" election. I have to say therefore, that if any member has the urge to take on the Treasurership, please do so, however if there are no applicants then I will certainly be prepared to stand.

1997 was a fairly quiet year. Cottage fees fell again, but whereas in the past they've been supported by sales of the remaining shop stock, they were not to nearly the same extent in 1997. Expenses rose slightly, but once again the library extension was much less of a drain in 1997 than it has been in previous years. In short, there has been enough cash to keep us going. On the assets side, there has been very little change, the main one being that given it's small value and the fact that it is moving very slowly, the value of the shop stock has been written off in it's entirety.

Unlike previous years, I am not going to publish a full set of accounts in the newsletter, but a summarised result is set out below. Please note that the figures have not as yet been audited, and as such may change. Naturally a full set will be made available at the AGM and to any member who specifically requests them.

The quiet period (!) towards the end of 1997 gave the committee time to put together a projection of the financial needs of the MCG for the 1998 year. The result was that we could afford the running costs of the cottage, and we could afford to replace the tackle that the tacklemaster felt needed replacing. There will also be sufficient cash in reserve to make minor repairs to the cottage should the need arise. At the time of writing we are within our budgeted spend and are hitting our projected income figures. However we are very dependant, as we have been in the past, on our cottage fees from both members and guests. Moves are afoot to maintain both at a reasonable level.

Putting together a budget has given the committee the opportunity to focus on the aspects of the MCG that they feel money could justifiably be spent on. In addition to the normal running costs therefore, in 1998 the spending has been and will be largely on Cottage Improvements (hence the four tonnes of stone in the car park !), replacing tackle, and for the first time there has been a figure set for spending on the library contents.

1998 has also seen the investment of a large quantity of the surplus cash in the Coif Savings Account, with a view to providing income. The income, as well as attracting tax relief, is being re - invested, and whilst I very much hope that that will continue to be the case, it will give us the scope for finding additional cash in the future, should the need arise. There is an argument that the income is taken completely at the expense of capital growth, however that is incorrect.

And that's about it ! I've no doubt that the year has given us much to discuss, and to that end I'll look forward to seeing you at the AGM !

Handwritten signature

Mendip Caving Group
Abbreviated Receipts and Payments Account
For the Period Ended
31 December 1997

	£	1997 £	1996 £
Receipts			
Member Subscriptions		2,550	2,706
Cottage Fees		2,000	2,440
Shop Sales		265	734
Interest Received		899	766
Tax Refunds		1,979	-
Other Income		243	(421)
		<u>7,936</u>	<u>6,225</u>
Payments			
Rates	354		342
Light and Heat	669		776
Cleaning and Sanitation	142		176
Telephone	79		16
Insurance	1,104		1,082
Newsletter and Publication Costs	449		2,019
Library Costs	458		653
Cottage Maintenance	1,262		708
Cottage Improvements	1,002		4,484
Sundries	81		164
Administration Costs	168		274
Caving Costs	698		736
		<u>6,466</u>	<u>11,430</u>
Surplus / (Deficit)		<u><u>1,470</u></u>	<u><u>(5,205)</u></u>

Statement of Assets

As At 31 December 1997

£

Tangible Assets

Land and Buildings	157,000
Cottage Contents	21,800
Tackle and Equipment	5,613
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	184,413
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Investments

Ordinary and Preference Shares	1,320
Unit Trusts	2,515
Investment Accounts	6,072
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	9,907
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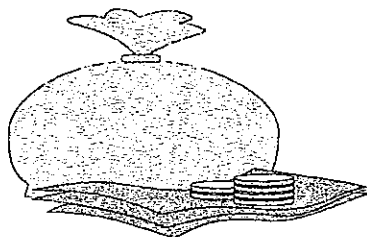
Cash

Deposit Account	9,418
Savings Account	1,003
Current Account	451
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	10,872
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Other assets

Library books, journals etc	11,000
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Total	216,192
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CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES TRANSACTIONS: REPORT TO THE 1998 AGM

The custodian trustees are required to hold the groups real property (land and buildings), shares, unit trusts and such bank accounts and other investments as the committee shall decide...

INVESTMENTS 1997

M & G Charifund

171 Income Units bought 19.07.1990 for £1,000 converted to 47 Accumulation Units 04.02.1991. Sell value per share quoted by Financial Times for 31.12.1997 £53.514 (1996 £41.788). Total Value £2,515 (1996 £1,964). Gain on year 28%.
Gain; purchase date to end 1997 151% or about 15% compound, same period RPI 126.8 to 160.0 increase 26%, thus better than RPI by 125%.
Proportion of Custodian Trustees funds 26% (1996 23%).

National Savings Investment Account

31.12.1996	£5,763.56
Interest to 31.12.1997	£ 308.38
Total End 1997	£6,071.94

Proportion of Custodian Trustees funds 61% (1995 66%).

On 17.02.1998 £875 was paid into the account as a balance to a pending wide range investment.

Wessex Water Ordinary Shares

Direct investment of group funds to 31.12.1996, £321.60.
The investment has been part accumulation, where shares have been received in lieu of dividend (scrip dividend shares) and part income from dividends.
During 1997 9 new scrip dividend shares were received in lieu of dividends totalling £38.72 (1996 £31.65) plus non recoverable tax of £8.31 (1996 £7.91), together with a preference dividend of £6.84 (1996 £7.50) plus recoverable tax of £1.71 (1996 £1.87). Total £55.58, includes non recoverable tax element, notional income 17.3%. (1996 £48.93 15.2%).
Income excluding non returnable tax 15.2% (1996 12.8%).
31.12.1997 Listing in the Financial Times;
233 Ordinary Shares at £5.12 value £1,192 (1996 £842)
258 Floating Rate Preference Shares at £0.50 value £128 (1996 £132)
Total value £1,320 (1996 £974). Gain on year 35.5%.
Gain since held 310% or about 21% compound. In addition, not included above, gross dividends of £92.44 have been received.
Proportion of Custodian Trustees funds 13% (1996 11%).

Realisation value of custodian trustees investments at 31.12.1997 £9,907 (1996 £8,699). Increase 14%.

Other Matters

Title deeds, share certificates and licences continue to be held, through the good offices of Ron Saunders, at the premises of Reynolds Parry-Jones and Crawford. Custodian trustees minutes and certain reports are to be kept in the library.

The Custodian Trustees are, Peter Matthews, Jonathan Roberts, Patrick Walsh and Malcolm Cotter.

Malcolm Cotter
2nd March 1998



Secretary's Report, 1997 – 1998

M.C.G. Expedition to the Moon, August 2050

"...this is why lunar lava tubes are important. These are natural caves, or tunnels, which are thought to have been formed millions of years ago by volcanic activity. Some space geologists believe that one such tube on the Aris Tarchus Plateau runs half a mile deep and spans an area 65 miles long by 3 miles across. Typical lava tubes are several hundred metres wide. Protected from the solar winds and safe from the ever-present lunar danger of flying astral debris, the temperature inside these underground valleys is a cosy -20c". (Independent on Sunday, 8 March 1998)

If the MCG wants to stay in the forefront of caving then we really need to start planning now. Initial deposits payable at the AGM, 25th April, 2.30pm at the Hunters Lodge.

Caving Report

Back on earth over the last year things have been a little quieter than 2050 but members have still done a fair amount of caving. Up on the hill members have been digging at Ubley Warren, Upper Flood, Pinetree, Battery Swallet and Bone Hole. Only Ubley Warren has seen any significant progress with 17m of small muddy passage entered after only a few digging trips. The terminal dig has not yielded so easily. Pinetree has turned into a nasty tight rift that suffers badly from surplus water and CO₂, although digging has resumed in the upper passage. Work in Upper Flood has been focused upon several sites in the Red Room boulder choke as well as a considerable amount of conservation trips. Bone Hole is still muddy and draffing, and Battery Swallet has benefited from the attentions of a Kango.

Elsewhere members have visited all the major caving regions in the British Isles (Yorkshire, Derbyshire, South Wales, Devon, The Forest of Dean, Scotland, Fermanagh, Clare, Morecombe Bay!). Lee Hawkswell and Sonya Cotter have been digging/camping at the Hard Rock Cafe in Daren, whilst Joe Frampton and Tim Francis at least managed to get the camping kit to the end of Dan-yr-Ogof. Other digging trips have been made to Ogof Draenen but with little success. Other notable trips done were Top Sink to Lancaster, Otter Hole and an overnight trip into Carno. This year's summer trip finally ended up in Clare and Fermanagh. The weather was horrendous but alternative fluid refreshments were available. Some success was had at Springwell Rising next to the Agnahoo Hut, Fermanagh with 30m of desperate passage opened up. We were just in time for the new Fermanagh Guide, which was published a few weeks later. The only casualty of the trip was Joe's car with parts dropping off at whim as we limped back to London. Other foreign excursions have been made to Mallorca, where we helped out on the Tramuntana Mountains Cave Diving Expedition, the Matienzo and Mexico.

Armchair Caving

MCG members put in a great deal of effort in helping to organise this year's BCRA Conference at Bristol. Tim Francis acted as Lecture Secretary (domestic lectures), Dave Tooke as Stomp Manager and Charlie Allison co-ordinated the internal signing and posters. Other members - Pete Bennett, Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh and Jonathan Roberts - chaired lecture sessions. The cottage was absolutely packed that weekend with a large number of members supporting the conference which was right on our doorstep. The Mendip Cave Registry has been reformed with the Mendip Cave Bibliography and Newspaper Catalogue published in July. Jonathan Roberts is the Registrar for North Mendip. Please pass him anything that may be of interest. JR is also the Treasurer of the CSCC.

Although the MCG did not enter this year's Wessex Challenge members were regularly seen at all the caving events both on the Mendips and elsewhere. This year's half yearly was held at the cottage with Pete Moseley setting up the barbecue and Charlie Allison providing a slide show. In June the BCRA held its second Mendip Caving Scene in Priddy Village hall which was followed by a site visit to Five Buddies Swallet. Also in June the club undertook a rescue practice in Tynings Barrow Swallet organised by Brian Snell. Steve Jones volunteered a French student on a placement at the Ve's College to act as the casualty. In November members took part in the Cavers Quiz in Priddy, and over the New Year a group of us helped out on the BEC team at the Wessex/BEC skittles match at the New Inn. Unfortunately the Wessex won but Jonathan Roberts got the only strike for the BEC team! This was followed by the Axbridge Stomp with its rather unusual band - you had to be there. Another notable evening was spent at Lower Pitls where we were introduced to the delights of the Wessex thrust, an unusual dance routine best enjoyed in the dusty confines of the Wessex library. Members attended the annual dinners of the BEC, Wessex, Shepton, CDG and SWCC. Finally your Secretary was spotted paddling around in a yellow dinghy in Wookey 9 modelling for the new show cave brochure!

Pubs

Of paramount importance to the club both the Castle of Comfort and The Eclipse have changed hands this year. Members are still meeting at the Castle on Fridays and Saturdays as the new landlord seems to be caver friendly. Keith and Julie still live locally so I assume we'll still see them from time to time. The Thursday night meet in London has now moved quarter of a mile up

Egham Hill to the Beehive. The Eclipse is to reopen as a Caffe Uno. If you're in the area why not come along and sample the delights of the new venue.

Administration

This has been something of a turbulent year for the Committee with only three members of last years Committee lasting a full term. Martin and Yvonne Rowe moved up to their new house in Arnside, and Joe Frampton felt unable to dedicate sufficient time (became love-struck!) to carry on. Therefore I would particularly like to thank Jane Baldwin, Huw Jones and Marcus Ward who admirably stepped in to fill the breach. Despite this all Committee meetings were well attended and we managed to work our way through most of the outstanding issues. The library extension has been moving closer to completion primarily due to the sterling work undertaken by Wayne Hiscox and co. Behind the scenes Joan Goddard has been keeping our library additions up to date. Please pass on any purchase suggestions you may have. Members may also have noticed the developing dry stone wall at the cottage courtesy of the BCTV.

I have attended all the Council of Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC), Charterhouse Caving Committee (CCC) and Cambrian Caving Council meetings and AGMs, except when Ben Cooper stepped in at one of the Cambrian meetings which I was unable to attend. Membership levels have remained relatively stable and I believe that the MCG has a healthy future ahead of it in 1998. See you underground!

Timothy Francis



COTTAGE WARDENS REPORT 1998

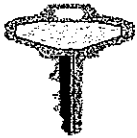
As most people know I have only been in the post of Cottage Warden since February this year.

Even though I did attend the cottage maintenance weekend last year, which was deemed successful. Along with other jobs Brian & Dave Snell moved the front door to its new location and the large spoil heap at the front of the cottage was removed to create a new flower bed leaving a couple of parking spaces.

So far this year a new post box has been made and fitted to the front door and arrangements have been made for the ceiling in the lounge to be plastered, this will be done when the library is ready for plastering.

A cottage maintenance weekend has been arranged for the June members weekend, a barrel will be laid on along with a barbecue, I'll see you then I hope!

Marcus Ward



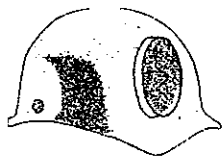
CONSERVATION & ACCESS OFFICER

It has been a reasonably busy year as conservation and access officer starting off with a successful Longwood cleanup which had a good turnout.

During the summer Wayne made a new sturdy lid for Upper Flood II which was fitted on a wet Sunday afternoon.

Finally a conservation plan is now underway in Upper Flood with the help of Letti, Dave, Tim, Ben and Charlie has agreed to create a fixed point photographic survey of the cave. We have made a good start to the conservation plan, a full copy will be available later this year

Marcus Ward



TACKLEMASTER'S REPORT 1998

This year has seen a few changes in the tackle store:-

- Firstly Phil Elliott has donated a quantity of metal ladders from the Cornwall Cliff Rescue Team – many thanks to him.
- Hopefully by the time you read this the replacement of all 1992 ropes will be complete – some 150m of SRT and 120m of dynamic
- This year has seen the Bosch rock drill serviced – although we are currently down to just one battery. With regard to the Hilti drill tried out by Tim and myself the committee has decided that, despite its superior performance, the club cannot warrant the extra expenditure until and unless some members obtain bang licences.
- On a more serious note, in a recent stock take, two ropes appeared to be missing from the tackle store and were not booked out. While one of these is an old 1992 rope and due to be replaced anyway the other rope is a relatively new one and will have to be replaced prematurely at the club's expense. Should any member know of its whereabouts I would be grateful for its return.
- With regard to conservation the club has recently purchased a cleaning spray, which is for general use – so if anyone wishes to indulge in a spot of stal cleaning please feel free.
- Finally some of you may have noticed that the rope washer is now defunct. This courtesy of the Hon. Sec and Hon. Cottage Warden. Plans are afoot to rebuild a new one on the work weekend in June. In the meantime, I hope to purchase a cheap and cheerful one for use until then.

Breakdown of trips 08.02.1997 – 07.02.1998.

Swildons Hole	20
Ubley Warren	10
Pinetree Pot	9
GB	7
Longwood/August	4
Others	24

In closing I would just like to thank all those members who continue to look after and maintain the equipment they use – you have certainly made my life easier!

Dave Tooke
Hon. Tacklemaster

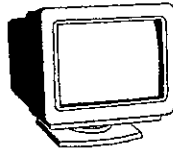


LIBRARIAN/RECORDER'S REPORT 1998

I have continued to produce minutes for all official meetings of the Group. Joan Goddard has done a good job on obtaining publications for the Group and on writing reviews for the newsletter. The cottage extension has progressed very much as expected, things have slowed down recently due to me having to work away from home. I am now back to normal and it is hoped that the extension and the lounge will be plastered before the AGM.

Thanks to Arthur Spain for his regular support on the extension and on cottage repairs. Thanks too, to the other committee members who have done their best to help with the extension.

Wayne Hiscox



EDITOR'S REPORT 1998.

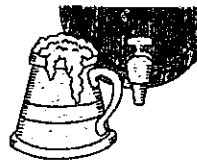
I am not sure whether to thank or curse my dear friend Linda Milne for putting my name forward for co-option when she was approached (among several others) about the editor's job following Yvonne's resignation. To my surprise I found myself appointed and in at the deep end (Yvonne being a hard act to follow).

After a rocky start due to a couple of objections to my co-option closely followed by a lengthy and rather unpleasant dialogue with one of the said objectors over the way in which her article was edited things began to get better. Everyone else I have come into contact with regarding the newsletter has been extremely supportive and helpful.

There are several people I need to thank, Mike Lovell being the first for printing the newsletter, Linda Milne for enveloping and mailing it. Joan Goddard for her brilliant snippets and library additions. Huw Jones for his unfailing patience and many hours in setting up my new system (which would have gone out of the window if left to me). Rupert Knowles for his time and expertise. Martin and Yvonne for their help during the hand over. All authors of published articles. And finally those of you who took the time to write, e-mail, or telephone me with positive comments about the newsletter, those comments kept me going during the rocky period.

I will not be standing at the 1998 AGM and wish the new editor every success. The newsletter would not exist without articles from the members and at times these are very thin on the ground so please support your newsletter and the new editor.

Jane Baldwin



SOCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT 1998.

Following the AGM last year the Annual Dinner was held at the Wookey Hole restaurant. On the whole feedback was very positive although there were minor shortcomings.

This year the club is taking over the Seymour Arms in Blagdon which hopefully will create a cosy atmosphere! I look forward to your valued feedback.

The half-yearly for those who came along was a real success. Not content with one, two barrels were emptied, which along with Charlie's masterpiece made for an excellent evening. Although I'm not sure about the fireworks.

There's loads coming up this year with the possibility of a barrel at the cottage working weekend and at other Mendip meets.

The half Yearly will be held at the New Inn, Priddy in the form of a skiffles evening. Thank you all for your support at the meets over the last year and I look forward to seeing even more of you during the next year.

Pete Moseley



Mendip Caving Group 1998 AGM Caving Secretary's Report - by Julie Hesketh

This is of course the first year that the Club has had a "Caving Secretary" and it has been one of my jobs over the year to try to define a role for myself. There is general agreement that organised "away trips" are useful for some members but there isn't generally a stampede for places. Arranging meets is of course still a function of the Caving Secretary as it was for the Meets Secretary but I think that this year the focus has been on getting MCG leaders and keys for caves so that members can have access to them at any time. This hasn't precluded a number of organised meets taking place including a trip to Yorkshire in March.

The club now has a new St. Cuthberts leader (in addition to Malcolm Cotter) - Tony Knibbs has handed leadership over to Jeremy Gilson who went through the lengthy process of qualifying. There has been a decline in the number of Cuthberts and Charterhouse trips this year - lack of demand being the main reason but Jeremy and Nick Gilson will be leading trips in Cuthberts and Charterhouse respectively on 23 May.

There has been the usual number of Welsh trips (to Dan-yr-Ogof and OFD) thanks to the MCG leaders. I have been trying to obtain an Aggy key for the club to keep permanently. We need to undertake 3 trips under the name of the MCG in a year to qualify for a key and so I would be grateful to individuals who are going on Aggy trips to provide me with details so we can use these trips to count towards the total. I have also in contact with the Pwl Du Cave Management Group over obtaining a permanent Draenen key.

On the Mendip front, whilst there has been no specific project underway as there was last year with Upper Flood II, there has been a steady level of caving and digging (even resulting in a few feet of passage found in Ubley Warren and Pinetree!) maintained over the year. Already covered in the Secretary's report. Rumours are circulating over a new Wookey dig next year....?

Trips further afield have also yielded some new passage with the Springwell Rising dig in County Fermanagh last summer. A return trip is planned for March. Watch this space for discoveries in Madagascar....!

You will have noticed that keys to caves have been moved to the tackle store whilst work is done on the library extension. A number of members have asked that we keep them there indefinitely and the committee are inclined to agree that it is less easy to forget a key if its in the tackle store. It should also stop cavers in dirty gear going into the library to get keys.

The lid to Upper Flood II has now been secured after it was vandalised - thanks to Wayne for fixing it. Cavers going to the Blackmoor area are reminded that it is essential to fill in the Blackmoor logbook (which covers Upper Flood, Waterwheel and Blackmoor shaft).

On an entirely non-caving issue but one which has taken up some of my time on the committee, the new dry stone wall around the cottage is gradually getting there! I contacted the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers in Glastonbury for assistance when Wayne donated a few tonne of stone to the club last year. The BTCV are using our land as a training ground for amateur wallers and have hosted 2 training days with 5 more planned. The BTCV are providing their assistance entirely for free and we are getting a rather nice dry stone wall out of the deal! In return, we have offered them free accommodation for their residential break in June. The BTCV are happy for MCG members to participate in any of the training days (see newsletter diary for dates) if you contact me first to ensure there are sufficient spaces.

All in all, an interesting first year on the committee and I am looking forward to another busy year as Caving Secretary.