

MCG NEWS

Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group

Number 270

July 1998

Mendip Caving Group - Practice Rescue Report 1998

Introduction :

This is a report on the recent annual rescue practice held this year in Longwood/August on Saturday 16 June.

The Stainless Steel stretcher frame and dragsheet were collected from Brian Prewer on Saturday morning. By mid morning we had enough people available and a short briefing was held to explain how each of the sections would be accomplished. Because of the finite amount of equipment which could be taken into the cave by the team the logistics of moving gear required for each section proved interesting. Six tackle sacs were filled and labels attached to identify the order in which they would be taken into the cave. Added to this was the drag sheet and two halves of the stretcher frame. At 11:30 we set off in a convoy of cars for the usual Longwood roadside carpark. We had decided to offload all the kit there then park the cars back at Charterhouse for obvious reasons. Tony Bolton had agreed to ferry the drivers back. The gear was dumped and once everyone was back from parking cars the team headed off for Longwood. After a quick reminder that the gear needed to be carried into the cave in the order indicated by the tags, we head down at about 12:15pm. Although I guessed this would probably go to rats later, at least the gear was going to arrive at the appropriate points in the cave in the right order. As a point of interest the top end of the stretcher frame only just fitted through the tie press with 5mm. to spare. Not that you could use the frame in this section anyway. I went on ahead and rigged a suitable safety line from above the Bad Step and across the traverse, using climbing nuts to anchor it at various points (large hexentrics are useful here). Everyone had cows tails so I felt confident that this should not turn into a real rescue. I continued on and rigged a ladder at the Swing pitch then started sorting out the hauling rope anchors and belays for the first phase of the rescue. It was about this time that I heard that both Tony Bolton and Matt Hardman had been unable to come in with the team but Ben Cooper had caught us up, so we were only down one person. Another casualty, Dave Tooke, had been feeling pretty sick earlier on but had now perked up and was raring to go. Everyone arrived and the stretcher was assembled and Nicki, who had volunteered to be the (victim oops) casualty, was strapped into the dragsheet. When we tried to strap her to the stretcher frame however, it was amusing to find that her feet were about a foot short of the end of the frame. This didn't really cause a problem though.

With lifelines and haul lines ready, we started the practice at 2:45pm.

Stage 1 :

Right from the start everyone worked very well together as a team and I was soon able to push on to the Swing pitch to start rigging for the haul up the pitch. Because of the length of the haul for stage one a 50m. rope was used with a single pulley attachment at the stretcher. The anchors for the haul rope were a handy stal pillar, backed up to a thread below it around a pre-placed jammed rock in a crack. At the top of the initial steep section of this stage I had also found an ideal shaped (hand sized) rock which fitted into a short horizontal crack. This provided a belay point for the lifeliner and a good jammer placement for the haul rope, which was held in position with the aid of a sling and a tackle sac full of rocks.

Continues on Page 6...

WEEKLY MEETINGS:	At The Beehive, Egham, Surrey, on Thursdays from 9.30 p.m.
CAVING ACCOMMODATION:	For up to 30 people, Available at the MCG headquarters: Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse, Blagdon, Bristol, BS40 7XW. Tel : 01761 462797
COTTAGE LOCATION:	Grid ref. ST51475606. OS 1:50,000 sheet 182
COTTAGE BOOKINGS:	Through the cottage warden please (address and phone number 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 SUBSCRIPTIONS:	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 (work) 01244 570944 (home) SWCC bookings via Ian Middleton tel:01703 736997. E.mail ian_m@tcp.co.uk

THE COMMITTEE

Secretary	Tim Francis	Flat 6, 16 Lambert Avenue, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4QR.	Tel : 0181 392 2572 t.francis@nopres.co.uk
Treasurer	Huw Jones	Coedhir, 3 Clos-yr-Arad, Nant Felin Cwrt, Castleview, Caerphilly, CF83 1NF.	Tel : 01222 862934 coedhir@enterprise.net
Caving Secretary	Julie Hesketh	23, Ashleigh House, Mortlake High Street, London, SW14 8SH.	Tel : 0802 431588 julie.hesketh@cbi.org
Tacklemaster	Dave Tooke	44, Beechtree Avenue, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0SR.	Tel : 01784 436237
Cottage Warden	Marcus Ward	56, Barn Meadow Close, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hants, GU13 0YB.	Tel : 01252 815112 m.ward@nichicon.co.uk
Editor	Letti Patte	44, Beechtree Avenue, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0SR.	Tel : 01784 436237 lpatte@3valleys.co.uk
Recorder/Librarian	Wayne Hiscox	3, Keward, Glastonbury Road, Wells, Somerset, BA5 1TR.	Tel : 01749 671282
Social Secretary	Pete Moseley	Pendle Cottage, Mearway, Westhay, Glastonbury, Somerset.	Tel : 01458 860524

RESCUE WARDEN	Brian Snell	01329 238341
CONSERVATION OFFICER	Marcus Ward	01252 815112
COTTAGE EXTENSION	Wayne Hiscox	01749 671282
EXAMINERS	James Allen & Ben Cooper	

CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES: Malcolm Cotter, Pete Matthews, Jonathon Roberts & Pat Walsh.

MCG doings :



On the move... Richard Carey to Hamleaze, Old Bristol Road, Keynsham, Bristol, BS18 2AA. Tel : 0117-986 2029

John Beauchamp to PO Box 569, Emerald, Victoria, 3782, Australia
Tel : +61 3 5968 5579
Fax : +61 3 5968 5581
E.mail : RANGER43@bigpond.com

Membership...

There was an error in last month's edition as **Yong-Shik Park** was only accepted as a prospective associate member but has been accepted as an Associate Member at this month's committee meeting.

GB CAVE CONSERVATION DAY

by **Marcus Ward (Conservation & Access Officer)**

A small group of MCG members helped out at the recent GB Cave conservation day organized by the CCC on the 20th of June.

The team - Dave Tooke, Letti Patte, Mike Pittman, Tim Francis and myself - Marcus Ward - were asked to do some cleaning in Helictite Grotto, so we took down our new water spray and got on with the job in hand.

Cleaning stal is very satisfying especially in this area which has some fine formations which were very muddied. We got through about four fills of water and it made a great difference. The only problems is that Helictite Grotto is dry so the water had to be lugged up Ladder Dig from the stream! After cleaning we went on and had a look at Main Chamber and Bat Passage before returning.

Since the weekend, I have received an e-mail from Linda Wilson (CCC) thanking everyone involved in the work in both Charterhouse and GB for all the good work and also for turning up en masse!! In total the MCG, MNRC, BEC, UBSS and WCC were involved and almost all aims were completed.

Ode to Steve Jones :

From all your friends in the MCG :

Do not despair, You will get there,
And don't worry...Third time lucky.

In Brief :if anyone hasn't as yet paid their coach fare after the AGM dinner, please send a cheque for £3.00 to **Huw Jones** (Treasurer). Thank you.

A note from our Social Secretary Pete Moseley...

"I would like to thank all the people who attended the annual dinner this year and a special thanks to Tim and Jane for their help and Joan on the night with the raffle. With only positive feedback, it looks likely that we will use the same venue next year, and with an extra few people we could have the place to ourselves.

A special thanks must go to Tony Jarratt for his amazing slide show, complete with authentic costume. The half yearly will be held at the New Inn, Priddy on the 7th of November '98 and will take the form of a skittles evening. This promises to be an excellent evening with all the benefits of the bar but the skittle alley to ourselves. Food can be purchased at the bar with an extensive menu available. It would be nice if the tide was turning and a few more people could attend, it always seems to be the same few trusty faces supporting the club these days. Please try and attend even if this will be your only trip to Mendip this year. I will send out reminders nearer the time, finalizing details and whether a coach is practicable."

Committee Snippets : Upper Flood II : Brian Prewer to arrange a drill hire after the successful radiolocation the other weekend. Madagascar '98 : we now have confirmation that we can access the Tsingy de Bemeraha Reserve & a 5th person has now joined us : Yong-Shik Park. 1st Aid Kit : £100.00 agreed for the Madagascar expedition.

Longwood August & Rhino Rift trouble :

please note that at the moment, locks for both caves are giving serious trouble. There is therefore no point in issuing keys. Ideas are also needed in order to fix those locks. If you have any, contact Tim who will pass it on.

Warning : to all MCG members. Please note that mouse traps have now been put into place in 2 strategic places : 2 on one of the shelves in the kitchen (right of the sink) & 4 in the SRT tackle store.

Tackle News : At the beginners weekend a visual inspection of one of the ropes showed some signs of ware. Members are reminded to inspect all ropes before use and to take care of all club tackle while underground. **Dave Tooke**

FORWARD MEETS PROGRAMME

<i>DATE</i>	<i>VENUE</i>	<i>EVENTS</i>	<i>CONTACT</i>
12th July	Mendip	BTCV : dry stone walling.	
1st August	Mendip	BTCV : dry stone walling.	
21st August	Mendip	BTCV : dry stone walling.	
27th Sept.	Mendip	BTCV : dry stone walling.	
October '98	South Wales	Julie is trying to organize a trip down Craig-y-Ffynnon. If interested contact her.	Tel : 0802 431588 julie.hesketh@cbi.org
Summer '98	Madagascar	A 6 weeks expedition to the Mahajunga region, in September / October but you could meet them for a few weeks only, if time is a problem.	Tim Francis Tel : 0181 392 2572 t.francis@nopres.co.uk
November '98	North Wales	Julie is trying to organize a weekend in North Wales, dates to be set. If interested, contact her	Tel : 0802 431588 julie.hesketh@cbi.org
7th Nov.	Mendip	Half-yearly. New Inn, Priddy, Skittles evening.	Pete Moseley Tel : 01458 860524

Advanced Bookings :

- 26th July until 02nd August : 32 Belorussian dancers staying, therefore the cottage will be full. Members wishing to stay please bring your carrymat & your vodka!!! Although the entertainment might be thrown in...

- 2 weeks in September : dates still to be confirmed. During the day, the cottage will be used by the police dog handlers. Please make sure that any illegal stashes are removed from the cottage.



Editors Quick Look in the Log Book : June has been a good month for Upper Flood. Conservation, tourist trips, digging, photography & radio location have been happening.

Other trips occurred mainly due to the beginners weekend on the 4th & 5th on July. Not many people turned up -6 in total- but the ones who did really enjoyed the caving as well as the evening do at Priddy Village Hall on the Saturday night.

The caves visited that weekend were : Swildons (3 times!!), Waterwheel & Tynnings. It was also nice to see familiar faces around such as Richard Carey, Pete O'Rourke and Simon Goddard. We were all sad to hear about Joan Goddard's car accident - which is why she wasn't down that weekend - and we all wish her a speedy recovery.

Beginners views on their trips : Dearbhail (friend of Julie) about Waterwheel : "the cave itself was a wonder" but "what a relief to see the top & the light at the end of it all". Alex (friend of Mike) in Tynnings : "Mike managed to get wedged a few times but even he managed to make it". John (Julie's brother) about Swildons : "the sump was a bugger but the rest of the cave beautiful".

Word gets around :

- DT to MP : "I can't wait to go to Madagascar and see those lemurs". MP "Yeah, they're great but they tend to spit at you".

- JH (brother of JH) at the top of the entrance pitch to Tynnings : "So where do we go from here then??".

Library Additions ... by Joan Goddard

Jamaica Underground by Alan G. Fincham (1997) is a new edition of the book first published in 1977. It is based on the Jamaica Cave Register database and contains an alphabetically arranged section on caves with all the usual details as well as surveys of the more important locations. Chapters on geology, geomorphology, hydrology, archaeology and biology, together with some historical perspective, make this a mine of information for anyone tempted to head west for their holidays. There is a comprehensive bibliography, a list of cave locations sorted by grid reference and some black and white and coloured photos. All in all, it is a nicely presented book. The club has a paperback copy (hardback was too expensive) so handle with care, please!

Somerset from the air by R. Croft and M. Aston (both archaeologists closely associated with Somerset). Published 1993. This book covers the whole of the county and includes some photos of Mendip - Ramspits (mediaeval village site near Deer Leap, Ebbor), Priddy Nine Barrows, Cheddar Gorge, Charterhouse, Priddy Nine Barrows and a few other familiar places.

Caves and Karst of the Brecon Beacons and National Park by Mike Simms. (BCRA Cave Studies Series No. 7, 1998) with a lovely picture of Porth yr Ogof resurgence on the cover. After a section on the geology and geomorphology of the Beacons, the remaining chapters describe six excursions to cave entrances, resurgences and cave related features. When the weather is too nice to go underground this book could suggest some alternative walking - good for oldies??

While in the Wales section of the library, why not look at the **Cambrian Caving Council Handbook**, 1998? It provides access information on Welsh caves and a useful bibliography. At only £1.60 plus 60p post & packing it is a good buy for anyone who caves regularly in Wales.

To the ends of the earth - the secret underworld - a 50 minute video of the Movile caves in Romania where sulphur-laden water supports a thriving ecosystem.

A couple of early **Craven Pothole Club Journals** have been donated to the library by Martin Rowe and during the last couple of months we have also received **International Caver No 22** (Meghalaya [India], Brazil, Laos, Thailand), **Underground Photographer No. 9** (Bats, underground video, flashguns), **Cave Radio and Electronics** and **Cerberus Journal**.



Answers to last months' word search by Cara Allison :



AA

Altitude

Antipodes

Aurora

Butte

Caldera

Canyon

Channel

Cloud

Coast

Col

Continent

Cove

Dale

Dip

Eclipse

Epicentre

Fault

Fiord

Firth

Floe

Fog

Gale

Gulch

Guyot

Hail

Haze

Inlet

Knoll

Kopje

Lagoon

Lake

Latitude

Lava

Longitude

Monsoon

Ness

Nullah

Oasis

Ocean

Orbit

Pass

Peak

Peninsula

Pool or Loop

Pot or Top

Rain

Rand

Rip

Rock

Sea

Sirocco

Sierra

Sound

Sun

Tarn

Tornado

Typhoon

Vale

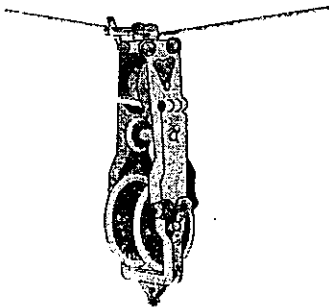
Volcano

Whirlpool

Rescue Practice from the front page...

Stage 2 :

For the Swing pitch I intended to use a doubled pulley top and bottom giving a 4:1 advantage. For this we would need the 50m. rope, which once finished with half way up the first stage, was moved on and included into the rigging. The lifeline attachment I had intended to be detached for the upper section of stage one, then re-attached for the Swing pitch. In the event though it was left attached throughout the rescue and just passed on through each stage - a better solution. The top of the Swing pitch has three bolt placements. The top two were arranged for a Y hang for the main haul rope. The third - about 18" lower was used as a pulley point for the lifeline. Adjacent to this bolt, there is a perfect natural thread which was used for belaying and attaching the jammer to for the haul rope. When the stretcher arrived it was noted that because of the spray from water a pair of goggles would have been useful for the casualty. Another comment was that a sheet of plastic would have been useful to act as a shield against water spray soaking the casualty. Both have been duly born in mind for future practices. The double pulley was attached to the stretcher with two karabiners, and the haul began. With a rope from below to keep the stretcher out of the falling water this section went very smoothly. The only problem of note, was that the double pulley had inadvertently been connected a half a turn out of position. Consequently, the ropes did not hang parallel and a slight drag from the friction on the ropes was experienced. Turning the stretcher would mean that Nicki's face would have been towards the water so we had to continue as we were. It wasn't that much of a problem though.



Stage 3 :

With the stretcher safely in the chamber next to Christmas Crawl, I pushed on with the 50m. rope and some other gear into Longwood Main Chamber to rig up a safety rope for the traverse. Whilst I was doing this the rest of the team attempted to get Nicki through Christmas Crawl still strapped to the stretcher. After a bit of a struggle it was clear that the stretcher frame in the assembled state wouldn't fit, so it was removed and she was pulled through in the dragsheet. By this time everything was ready for the lower down the slope to the point where ledges traverse across to a large block below the waterfall of the Bad Step. The safety rope had been attached to a good thread above the entrance to Christmas Crawl and ran out across the slope to be attached at the other end around the large block mentioned. This was a long span, so two secondary suspension ropes needed to be hung down from high up about 25 feet apart. For the suspension rope at the Christmas Crawl end there were good nut and thread placements. For the other a convenient stall spike backed up to a jammed rock in a crack higher up. With these attached to the main rope to give intermediate support, the tail end of the first rope was tied back tight to some stal cemented blocks in line with the main rope to stop it sagging. The lower from Christmas Crawl and across the traverse was subsequently accomplished fairly quickly with all concerned and the stretcher clipped to the safety traverse rope.

At this point the original plan was to remove Nicki from the stretcher then simulate a casualty by filling tackle sacs with rocks. The next two stages were to haul the stretcher 25 feet up to a ledge, then a dramatic arial runway rig, to finish on the sloping ledge above the Bad Step. The time was now around 6:20pm and we were all thinking about the Barbecue to come. The Chamber began to rumble to a chorus of hungry stomachs, so an end to the practice, and we all congratulated our volunteer casualty who by now was beginning to get a bit cold. Everyone had done exceptionally well and as in previous rescue practices, had every right to feel pleased with themselves.

We packed everything up and it was like a scene from a cinema queue for ice-cream as a trail of lights queued up to, and across the traverse to the Bad Step. We made slow progress but we were all out by around 7:20pm. Tony Bolton was waiting at the entrance with a carton of fruit juice for everyone. A savior, thanks Tony.

My original intention had been to get some people to volunteer to take charge of each section and rig them accordingly. Once we had started though, I soon realized that the rescue was too long and that was not enough time to get individuals involved in rigging. So in order to keep things flowing I had to do it myself. I did notice that those who were interested in the technical side did take note. The whole thing is a learning exercise and hopefully everyone learnt something. I know I did. On future rescues I hope to get people nominated for specific section and to reconnoiter them before the event.

Lastly my thanks to Nicki for volunteering to be casualty. It is major complement when someone says to you that they are happy to put their trust in you for their safety.

Those attending:

MCG :

Brian Snell, Keith Knight, Dave Tooke, Letti Patte, Tony Bolton, Marcus Ward, Michael Pittman, Nikki Robinson, Matt Hardman, Ben Cooper.

Royal Holloway :

Tim Woodhams, Paul Stadler.
and guest Yong-Shik Park.

Brian Snell (MCG Rescue Warden)



Internet News by Tim Francis :

You will find the UK Caving "Virtual Foyer" at

- [//www.caves.org.uk](http://www.caves.org.uk) :

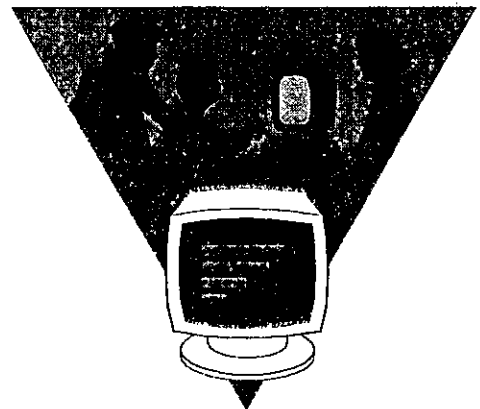
This is maintained by Dave Gibson (gibson@micosolv.demon.co.uk) and basically provides loads of links into the other sites. e.g. Regional Councils, NCA, BCRA, club lists, Underground Photographer etc.

Details of the MCG Hut can be found on the CSCC web site which is maintained by Dave Cooke, Sec. of the CSCC (dave@alchemy.co.uk). There is link to Marcus's e.mail address to help with cottage bookings. Dave is actually in the process of updating the CSCC handbook so the web site will altered in line with any amendments that this throws up. The MCG entry will change slightly e.g. showers are free not 10p!

- [//www.speleo.co.uk](http://www.speleo.co.uk) :

This is the home page of Speleo Technics and is maintained by Keith Lewis (keith@speleo.co.uk). This is a well constructed retailer site and is very easy to wander around. However I found it annoying that the whole page did not fit on my screen so I was constantly scrolling left and right to read the text.

The highlight is the press release of the new FX Headlight. For the same size battery as before you get 50% more light. No doubt it will be on sale in Bat inn the near future.





Arnside Anecdotes : May 1st - 4th 98

From Yvonne Rowe.

Friday evening saw Ben Cooper, friend Sarah, Marcus Ward, Dave Tooke and Letti Patte arrive travel-weary at the Rowe's in Arnside and grab the floor, settee or spare bed for the night. The next morning, after bacon butties all round, we set off for Blencathra - well, actually we did a few other things first like shop for packed lunch ingredients, made sandwiches, look for a camp site, and generally f**t a***d around until gone noon! Having run out of excuses we *then* set off for Blencathra.

We found a campsite at Troutbeck, very close to Blencathra, and it had the necessary criteria - a pub within walking distance. While we were setting up camp, I couldn't help noticing another family who had arrived at the same time as us. There was mum, dad and a small boy about three years old. They had the most enormous trailer tent - big enough for a family of six. As I watched, out came dining table and chairs, kitchen pots and pans, china, a huge cooker (with oven), fridge, toys, bikes, etc., etc... They seemed to have brought the entire contents of their home and I guessed from all this that they had come to the Lake District, to a particularly idyllic spot, but were going to stay on the camp site. Each to their own I suppose. They probably thought we were odd too by going to the trouble of setting up camp then disappearing off elsewhere for the day. Another family were to be seen at midday in their caravan watching television!

The sun shone for us much of the time and the walk up Blencathra was superb. The only part that spoiled it for Martin and I was while waiting to cross the dodgy bit at the end of Sharp Edge. A large group consisting of two adults, one dog and about eight children from ten years old to early teenage were coming towards us, about to cross the 'bold step'. They were all very loud and boisterous and there didn't appear to be any control or instruction whatsoever. The children were all wearing very worn-out trainers or plimsoles and were leaping about from rock to rock, bumping into each other and generally mucking around. They were literally an accident waiting to happen. Even though they knew we were waiting for them to pass so we could carry on, they continued for some time to fool around, to try to coax their dog across (who had more sense than them and was obviously very scared), then to have a photo call standing out on the edge as far as they could get. We could stand it no longer so we went back and took a different route and caught up with Sarah who had done the same. When we looked back to see if the group had got across Sharp Edge in one piece we could see some of the lads had decided it was quicker to lie down the sides of the hill rather than use the track (looked fun though). Anyway, the rest of the walk was brilliant and the route down was an interesting steep scramble over rocks, and an even steeper descent towards the bottom that tore at the calf muscles and turned my legs to jelly.

We walked back below Blencathra to the pub at Troutbeck and had a few well-earned drinks. The plan was that we could go back to the campsite, shower and change, then walk to the pub for a meal but we decided to eat straight away *then* go back to the campsite. What with the fresh air, exercise, food and drink, we were all feeling quite drowsy and on reaching our tents Ben, Sarah, Martin and I decided to have a little rest before going back to the pub. The next Martin and I knew was hearing the others return from the pub at midnight!! Ben and Sarah had slept until 11pm and were too late to join the others so showered and went back to bed again.

The next morning, we all rose at about 9.30am. Everyone except Martin and I had been disturbed at 5am by a child in a tent close by. We *all* heard her at 7am, and the rest of her family who seemed oblivious to people around them trying to sleep and clattered, shouted at their children, banged their car doors and boot, then set off for 'Beatrix Potter', Windemere at about 8am. We packed up our tents and eventually set off for Keswick for a cash dispenser and breakfast. We then found another campsite at Seatoller in Borrowdale. This one was more basic but with super views all round and no children! It had a toilet and a water tap, like-minded walkers or cyclists and a pub close by - what more do you need? Martin and I did not erect our tents as unfortunately I had to work on Bank Holiday Monday (the college where I work is residential so duty as normal for Mondays) and we had to return home that night.

The weather was hot and sunny as we set off for Great and Green Gables at about 1.30pm. It was not a particularly hard slog up to the tarn below Great Gable but the sun and heat got to me. I had not come prepared for hot weather and had become overheated and a bit dehydrated, but just as I was about to give up and go back Martin poured cold water all over me from the stream. This lowered my body temperature back to normal so I felt fit and full of energy again and was able to continue comfortably. My wet clothes kept me cool for the rest of the walk and fortunately I bought plenty of liquid to drink.

The route across from Great Gable to Green Gable was to be via an ill-defined track across very loose scree, and as Sarah, Martin and I were walking slower than the others (Martin still recovering from an unknown virus that has laid him low for 5 weeks now) we decided to miss out Great Gable and head straight for Green Gable. The views from the top were absolutely breathtaking. It was so clear and we had perfect, unspoiled views all round where we could see many popular and lesser known hills. We could even see the Isle of Man, and the Solway Firth in Scotland. We descended by going across Brandreth and down to the Youth Hostel, then along the old miners' road to the pub at Seatoller. The others had descended via the same route but had taken the main rather than the old miners' road back. As Sarah, Martin and I dropped onto the main road at the bend in Seatoller we literally ran into the others - an amazing coincidence considering we had split up and walked different routes.

Martin and I had a meal and a few drinks with everyone in the pub then reluctantly left them to another day's walking (to two picturesque waterfalls I'm told). I definitely had Bank Holiday Monday blue at work the next day but lovely memories of a couple of excellent walks and very good company - plus a few stiff muscles!!

Cottage Work Weekend by Marcus Ward (Cottage Warden)

This year, the cottage work weekend was held on the weekend of the 5th / 6th & 7th of June.

* Joan Goddard and Jean-Paul Burch arrived on the Wednesday evening to start re-decorating the lounge, followed by Julie Hesketh arriving on Thursday evening to help. So, by the time most people arrived (at closing time of the Friday!!), the lounge had already been painted primrose yellow and the ceiling had also been finished - following its replastering a week earlier which has, by the way, been really well done.

On the Saturday, one group started de-greasing, cleaning and painting the kitchen while another did the same in the changing room.

In the kitchen, Geoff Beale and myself cleaned and started painting the ceiling while Zoe Hammersly and Letti Patte stripped down and re-varnished the shelves. It was finished off with Zoe & Letti painting the walls with a little help from myself. The main colour is now blue but we were forced to keep the wall with the shelves green as we were told it is a special grease resistant paint & easier to clean - or was it simply because you like that colour Geoff...??.

Whilst this was happening, Tim Francis, Julie and Yong-Shik Park cleaned and re-painted the changing room aqua marine with a little help from Geoff who did the ceiling.

On Sunday, both the kitchen and the changing room were finished off and amongst other jobs, Huw Jones sorted out the shed, Nicky Robinson and Letti gave the bedrooms a good spring clean while Joan waxed the floors and Zoe and Mike Pittman cleaned out the gutters.

Finally, Mike cannot be forgotten as he was heard but not seen toiling away in the library building a new rope washer. He has since taken it home to finish it off and it was fitted shortly after the work weekend - well done Mike!!

All in all, the weekend was a success, a lot of work was done even though fewer people turned up, which was - as usual - disappointing.

Anyway, another work weekend is being planned for later this year (no fixed date yet), so this will be an opportunity for all those who couldn't attend in June.



DERBY NEWS :

- **New Access Restriction for Devonshire Mine & Matlock Bath :**

Until further notice *ALL* groups, clubs, centres, etc. are now required, *WITHOUT EXCEPTION*, to restrict their visits to a maximum of five in any one calendar month. This restriction on numbers of visits results from the owner's sense of being overwhelmed by the apparently ever-growing volume of caver traffic on her land, coupled with resentment at incidents of abuse of the access terms. The situation came to a head recently in a confrontation with a visiting group caught not using the authorized entrance,

The arrangement between DCA and Mrs. Purseglove for access to the site dates back over 10 years ago and, apart from this request for reduced visitor numbers, remains unchanged. Entry and exit continues to be via the steel door on the bottom entrance just off the Bonsall footpath. An adjustable spanner will open this door from the outside, and the door must be secured behind you at all times. There is *NO* permission to remove mesh or other covers from shafts on the land for the purpose of getting in and out of the mine. At Mrs. Purseglove's request, DCA is to put a more secure top on the shaft into the main chamber. Parking of vehicles should continue to be in Matlock Bath (or, by arrangement, at Ember Farm).

The restriction on visits is, for the time being, a voluntary one in the sense that it won't be enforced. However, it will be reviewed with the owner at the end of the year. If by then Mrs. Purseglove feels it is not working, the mine may be padlocked and a keyholder scheme introduced - or the mine may be closed altogether. To protect the access we have, please comply now. It is clearly relevant in this regard that group sizes are not increased to compensate for a reduction in the number of group visits. Cavers are referred to the NCA's Minimal Impact Caving Code (see CAVE CONSERVATION HANDBOOK, Section 13.3, for advice on ideal group size). Please report any problems you encounter at this site to DCA as soon as possible.

Peter Mellors - 28 June 1998.

If you have any queries, please contact either Peter Mellors on 01623.882515 or Tony Gibbs on t.gibbs@zetnet.co.uk

- **Knolow Mine - Urgent Pollution Warning :**

A group of 3 cavers on a trip on Tuesday, 30th June descended the climbing shaft and went down the 2nd pitch to the chamber where the Waterfall Pitch and Bunghole routes diverge. At this point, all 3 found themselves suffering from headaches and also feeling drowsy so they aborted the trip. All report that they began to feel much better by the time they were on their way up the first pitch.

They do not report a very strong smell (as others have recently done) but assume there is some gas present to cause the symptoms. DCA will be taking the matter up urgently with the Environment Agency.

Please warn any cavers with whom you may be in contact of the possible danger. Conditions in the mine can change rapidly with regards to pollution and cavers should be aware that they may have to abort a trip due to gas.

Jenny Potts - NCA "SPELEOScene" Editor & Derbyshire Caving Association Secretary / Treasurer.