

MCG News

Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group

Number 273

November 98

Madagascar '98 - Tim Francis

As I'm sure you are all aware, five of us undertook a six-week, lightweight expedition to Madagascar in September and October. The team were Ben Cooper, Tim Francis, Yong Shik Park, Lettie Patte and Dave Tooke. Obviously we'll be doing a journal (expect something in the New Year) but just to whet the appetite here's an extract from the log book written by Ben describing the last day in the field at Vazimba Canyon. Apologies for any typing errors.

Friday 23rd October - The Last Day in The Field

Well, what a day we knew Olivier wanted to go home, but had thought we would be able to cave without him. But he explained that he was responsible to accompany us, and if he did not, after we had gone he would have to answer to ANGAP. After much 'umming' and 'aahing', he suggested a compromise, a 'sacrifice'. If we could be out of the cave by 12, Olivier would take us caving — but we would have to walk out. Well, there seemed little option. Olivier had made a pretty generous offer, and it was really up to us to act. It was still only 7am, so, all hands to the deck to pack camp. Tim and I had to shoulder the bulk of the weight, which fortunately was much reduced after few nights eating. But personally I was at my limit for a two hour hike. Amazingly, everything packed down very quickly and after a leg-knacking slog, we actually made it to the cave at 8am. Yong Shik bowed out on account of his shoulder, so it was a lightweight survey team of Ben + Tim. We had few hours.

There was just loads to do. Five leads to explore and survey 200m of attractive, large and spectacular passage to photograph, and also some surface photos of flora, etc, to take. In other words, a good 8 hours work. So we decided to explore passage, taking only a grade 3 survey to save time. We agreed to review where we were at after 2 hours. The passage looked unlikely, and seemed to close down after a couple of survey legs but then Tim climbed up a little, and so on and on it went. There was some tantalising large stal after 50m or so, which we hoped was a connection back with the main entrance leg, but we realised it was not. Then there was a major passage on the right but this closed down almost immediately. An awkward climb up, and a long 'argument' over the forward and back bearings, led into some different low level passage with crawls. And that led into hang on. There's another junction here. Major left-right T-junction. We decided to go right in order to try and get back to passage we knew. However, almost immediately, we spotted daylight — a new entrance. Tim had a look around but was unable to exit. We continued down the passage, which gets more difficult and loose with climbs, up, down, up.

I spotted a most unusual phenomenon. It was like a snail shell buried in sand with a lid, pushed to one side. I wanted to take a photo but realised I needed Tim's help to hold the flash — but Tim was the other side of an energetic and loose 5m hole. I left the camera and started to take a bearing, while Tim took in the tape measure which, whoops vanished down the 5m hole. Oh well, climbed down for it, but then when I got to the near station, realised I had left the compass. Fortunately Tim has a spare so we did not have to waste more time going back (it was now 11 am).

Very quickly we were at another entrance. Tim managed to climb out, but found himself 50' up a doline — but interesting with another entrance to the left and right, and tantalising black holes opposite. Unfortunately, no way down and it was now 12pm — time to go. Leads in the ceiling, several leads back in the cave, and one huge gaping lead forward this morning. We took the photo of the buried shell, found on the way up; then down back to the junction and with sweat dripping from my nose took some photos (through steamed up glasses and camera viewfinder) of the little stal grotto. Up and down the difficult climb, down Bloody Hell 2 (still very tricky, but not nerve wracking now) up Bloody Hell 1 (now almost easy) and out at 12:30. Sorry Olivier

More on this final day in the field Page 7

News in Brief:

Accepted as Prospective Member :

Marc Watkins, Christopher Jones & Doug Harris.

Accepted as Probationary Member :

Tim Woodhams.

Email Address update :

Richard Carey can now be contacted on :
ykb28@dial.pipex.com

Change of address :

Pete Hollings can now be contacted at :
Department of Geology, University of
Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
S7N 5E2. Tel : 306 966 2457 - Fax : 306
966 8593 - Email :
hollings@duke.usask.ca.

Web Site Update :

The Royal Holloway Caving Club in
Egham, Surrey - also known as 'The
Moles' - have now got a web site :

<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~rup/home.htm>

Committee Snippets :

Library... The cottage library has finally been plastered and will be painted shortly.

Shares... The committee will be taking independent financial advice before making a decision on reinvesting the proceeds from the Wessex Water Shares.

Accommodation News from Up North...

The Northern Pennine Club has a new Hut warden. All bookings should be made to Nic Blundell on Tel : 01203 713849 (home) or 01203 838940 (work) or on email : nic.blundell@bigfoot.com. Bookings on his answer phone are welcome. The MCG has reciprocal cottage fees rights with the NPC so it is the cheapest night's sleep MCG members will find in Yorkshire (the Rowe's excluded!!).

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A note from our Social Secretary Pete Moseley about the Half-Yearly : To all of you who attended the Half-Yearly, I would like to say a big thank you, especially to those who travelled from farafield.

It was certainly my best attended to date with 40+ present. The venue suited us skittlers, probably because of the alley! My thanks to Julie for for the idea. Feedback has been very positive so we may do this again, probably blindfolded to to improve the scores.

I didn't realise so many members were blind (Dave T) no offence Wayne!

The annual dinner next year will be at the same place as this year "Seymour Arms", Blagdon, with luck enough people will attend (70) to keep the venue to ourselves.

In the meantime, there will be a beer and curry night in January at greatly reduced prices as reward for a final 'push' on the library extension. Make it a date.

Pete Moseley.

A note from our Cottage Warden : An additional work weekend will be held next year on 16/01/99. The main idea this time will be to work on the outside of the cottage. The main job that will require help from a number of people is the drainage pipes. The trenches were dug earlier this year, these need completing and the pipes need laying. It is important that this is completed once and for all so the car park can be used to its full potential. So far, many weekends have been spent working on this but with only a small number of people working on it, the progress has been slow. Another job that is now overdue is the front door needs painting and protecting, also the usual jobs of clearing out the gutters and the silt traps in the hosing down area. For those that feel the cold there are numbers of jobs that can be done in the library such as painting the window & door frame, skirting boards. There are also shelves to be put up and the door needs renovating and much more within the library and cottage. As always, there will be a barrel and possibly a curry evening to go with it, to make the weekend go with a swing. See you all then.

Marcus Ward.

(A big thank you to Joan & Pete Goddard, Wayne and Artur who have done stacks of work over the last week - a new earth spike, new light fitted in the porch, lounge lights made safe, library loft hatch fitted and library ceiling and walls painted.)

FORWARD MEETS PROGRAMME

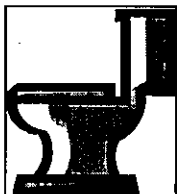
DATE	VENUE	EVENTS	CONTACT
15 th to 28 th November 1998	Wells Museum	A brush with Darkness, ISSA cave art exhibition.	
20 th — 22 nd November 1998	North Wales	The Milyr Tunnel trip has places left but you will need to let me know if you want a place ASAP for insurance purposes. For more information on accommodation see below.	Julie Hesketh 0171 395 8053 (day) 0802 431588 (eves) Julie.hesketh@cbi.org
21 st November 1998	Priddy Village Hall	BCRA Regional Meeting. The subjects of the meeting are Swildon's Hole and St. Cuthberts Swallet and there will also be, trade stands, fieldwork and possibly some videos <i>etc</i> ,	
4 th , 5 th & 6 th December 1998	Nordrach Cottage	At the next members' weekend, it has been decided to buy & hopefully put up some shelves for the library. Everyone welcome.	
16 th — 17 th January 1999	Nordrach Cottage	More cottage work that weekend to hopefully finish the drainage outside the cottage. Beer and curry to reward workers afterwards. More information on Page 3	Marcus Ward Tel : 01252 815112 Email : m.ward@nichicon.co.uk
30 th - 31 st January 1999	Mendip	Julie is currently trying to organise another beginners' weekend. If interested please contact ---->	Julie on 0171 395 8053 (day) 0802 431 1588 (eves) julie.hesketh@cbi.org
1 st - 5 th February 1999	Nordrach Cottage	BTCV : 12 people will be staying at the cottage to finish our dry stone wall.	
17 th April 1999	Hunters Lodge	Annual General Meeting.	
31 st July — 21 st August 1999	Madagascar	Return to the Bemaraha. Tim & Ben have expressed an interest in a three week trip.	Tim Francis t.francis@nopres.co.uk
6 th — 7 th November 1999	Nordrach Cottage	Half-yearly meeting.	

Advanced Bookings : Please note that the cottage will be fully booked on the weekend of the **22nd of January 1999** by the 1st Bookham Scouts — well, 25 to 30 of them!!!

North Wales — 20th — 22nd November : J. Hesketh.

Accommodation is at the Colemenny Outdoors Activity Centre — set in 100 acres of land, they have fittingly let us have use of their "special needs" centre complete with showers, electric beds (!) and enclosed play area! Cost is a mere £13 per night included a full cooked breakfast.

If you want to come, let me know ASAP so I can book accommodation. I have tried my best to find cheaper accommodation but the Youth Hostel is closed over the winter and there are no caving huts in the area. Camping may be available in the garden of a local pub for hardier souls but there will be no facilities at all and you'll have to cook breakfast.



A bit of a cock-up on the "papier" front. The stores are currently running low although plans are afoot to remedy the situation. Fortunately only one Madagascan refugee had the sh*t's so relatively little was used at the Half Yearly.

Carno Adit – 5th Time Lucky?

By Julie Hesketh

OK, so perhaps the day after the BEC dinner wasn't particularly the most ideal time to choose to try to finally bottom Ogof Carno but it seemed like a good idea at the time. A horribly early start on Sunday morning saw me, Mike Pittman and Marcus Ward trundle bridge-wards to South Wales. Getting up at 7am for a trip only adds to the psychological fear of what is to come — it has to be a big trip if it means getting up in the dark to get a head-start. Marcus and Mike were persuaded out of bed, not by the lure of the excitement of the cave but the BEC's minestrone soup which was playing havoc with their digestive systems. It was something they ate of course and nothing at all to do in any way with the beer you see. Absolutely not. Chucking up 3 hours before a Carno trip is bad, very bad.

Marcus, myself and others first visited this cave in August 1996 and took a trip towards Car Crusher. Carno has a pretty bad reputation for being a tough cave and a long slog to the end. Having said that, there is nothing particularly horrendous about the cave but after the long walk in, long duck, flat-out crawl and muddy traverses, it can feel a wee bit remote down there. Determined to make it to the end on what was now his fifth trip into the cave, Marcus was hell-bent on reaching the end (C Sump). Did we hell.

Armed with a bag-full of Mars bars we set off into the long Welsh Water owned adit. The entrance is an amazing Victorian brick built adit which was originally built (I think) to drain water from the reservoir on top of it to the valley where I was needed. A mile of walking through the adit took us to the cave entrance — a small opening in the side of the adit. A small handline takes you out to a flat out, drippy crawl to the head of a loose pitch with a fixed ladder — always fun for the people below who are showered with water and pebbles. On to "Spongework", a knobby section of stooping and crawling, punctuated with some cold, deep ducks just deep enough to completely soak you and cold enough to ensure not only that your voice goes up 2 octaves but also enough to keep you thoroughly chilled for the rest of the trip. A small greasy pot follows through to a muddy stooping section which leads to a muddy chamber — Dune Chamber. Down Silo pitch with its fixed ladder and into the Brickyard where the emergency dump is sited. This bit of the cave opens out slightly and is refreshing after the rotten crawly stuff before. It doesn't last for long however as you soon reach Full Moon Crawl — a flat out section which takes about 10 minutes to negotiate. It has only one tight squeeze in it but it is here that you really start to feel a long way from the entrance! The flat-out crawl ends abruptly in a small chamber, just big enough for 3 people to have a swig of coke and some chocolate. We were now at the end of the entrance series!

And on we travelled towards Southern Discomfort (the Dreaded Traverses). I had heard much about these and was not particularly looking forward to them. Having got there though, they were not particularly as deep as I had thought but they were ten times as slippery as I had imagined. Negotiating the traverses was basically a pain in the neck and it was extremely slow going — not helped by the tackle bag Marcus was carrying and the fact that they went on and on and on. Many expletives later we hauled the tackle bag off the last traverse into a high level passage and had a rethink about the trip. We had covered only just over half of the distance we had intended in the time we expected and so we decided to head out. We did however decide to press on just to "Two-Ways" — the key junction with routes to C Sump or the Littoral Zone before turning back. A 5 hour trip in all — we estimate that with no routefinding problems (as we had at the end of Southern Discomfort) it is probably a 9 hour trip in all.

Carno is a long, hard trip but full of variety — thorough soakings in chest deep water, flat out crawls, daunting traverses and "interesting" fixed ladders. With the unusual entrance via the adit, this cave is a real mixture of obstacles. The only thing it really lacks is formations — don't bother doing Carno if you want to be awed by stal!

So it'll be back for Marcus' sixth trip soon. So stay off the minestrone soup for a bit and I'm sure you'll crack this cave soon!



EXPEDITION : Team for Turkey to explore underground mystery.

Cave divers are set for plunge into unknown.

Alan Smith (Western Mail, 24.08.98)

A CRACK TEAM of cave divers will launch a daring expedition of what could turn out to be the world's largest cave.

The six-man team will spend a pitch-black week underground in southern Turkey challenging the uncharted limits of the limestone cavern at Altenbesik.

They are confident that their two years of preparation and their state-of-the-art diving equipment will enable them to travel further than previous expeditions — and more than two miles underground.

From a survey trip last year they already know that the cave complex is among the most impressive in the world with its underground lakes and vast caverns.

They think it could prove the largest, if not the deepest.

The party is due to leave on Wednesday for Dalaman, southern Turkey where an overland trek will take it to a 4,000ft deep gorge leading to the cave complex.

Donkeys will aid their gorge descent with their half-tonne of equipment which includes 10 dinghies.

These will ferry the dive team and equipment initially over the lake leading to the 40-metre wide entrance.

Once inside the pitch-black cave they will scale a sheer 50-metre cliff for dinghy-crossings of the three more lakes. At one mile in, the divers will face their first dive through a 120-metre of water-filled "sump."

A further mile-long trek over rough terrain will bring them to another sump — the unknown exploration limit.

Team leader Martin Farr will then take the solo dive into the unknown to search the expected dry caverns beyond.

The adventure trip was timed for the early autumn when the underground river levels are at their lowest and the water at its clearest.

Martin is confident that the British team and their high-tech equipment will be able to press on into uncharted regions.

The divers will use "normal" steel gas cylinders and state-of-the-art rebreathing apparatus. They will also carry much of their food and equipment in special watertight cylinders.

Martin said, "We just do not know what lies beyond. It could be the world's deepest cave, but it is more likely to be among the longest and certainly the most impressive.

"It is very challenging and exciting and we have been preparing for this trip for more than two years."

The team members are Martin Farr, from Llangattock, Wales; Pat Cronin, of Bristol; Peter Fowler, from Cwmbran, South Wales; Martin Bishop, of Radstock, near Bath; Alan Steans, from Nottingham; and Eric Hoole from Hay-on-Wye, Powys.

Calling all local members

It has been suggested that in order to improve the social aspects of local membership that an official meet will take place on the first Wednesday of every month.

Any members wishing to participate on the evening of the 2nd of December can either meet at the Cottage at 7pm for caving or merely turn up at The Hunters Lodge around 10pm for the post caving pint.


Suggestions for trips, contact Arthur Spain on 01749 679358

Follows from Page 1

No one outside so yomped back through Long Cave to where we left the gear. Absolutely dripping now — even Tim. No one there, so Tim went back to the Archway to find them. Quick lunch of chocolate and biscuit crumbs (à la Ben's great idea to take the food caving), and then at 1:10, shouldered the gear for the slog out. After 45 minutes we stopped for water, we were all struggling — particularly after a wrong turn, where we had to reverse, and my legs were feeling the strain uphill. Olivier seemed to suggest that we still had 2 hours to go, which put a downer on our spirits, but we were confused because he also said we would arrive by 3pm. The GPS indicated we were still heading south, but very soon we turned west, clambered through a narrow gorge, passed some 'ancient' Vazimba pots (duly photographed) and onto flat ground. Great, no more hills, just blasting heat. Fortunately the GPS came into its own, showing us to be on a direct bearing for Bekopaka, only 2.5km away. Three hours was now not only possible, but also we realised that we would be at the river (and refreshment) in ½ hour. Luckily the ferry was just waiting, so after an amusing time watching an Isuzu 4 WD ground itself on the ferry, and blow exhaust bubbles under water, we made it across. Friendly greetings from the bar lady, who shook our hands. Unfortunately, the rum bottle that we had promised to return had got lost, but she let us off as the 'Camarades' gave her a welcomed bottle of cooking oil instead. All OK back at ANGAP, who seem to have let us off costs for tent and pirogue, and all OK at the hotel. Everyone seems very friendly and happy to see us now. Dinner of Zebu + Chips. Quite a day!

Ben Cooper

At this stage it seems almost certain that some of us will be returning to the same area next year (well I'm definitely going). Details are sketchy but the trip should be in August and last for 3 weeks. This means I don't need to take any more unpaid leave and we'll be back in time for the BCRA Conference. Expect to have to come up with £1500. It will be worth it.



A bit of poetry

A Ditty based on the rhyme : "Oh dear what could matter be", on the misfortune of two chums Joan and Geoff who were locked out of the cottage one rainy members w/end Friday night.

Oh dear what could matter be Joan and Geoff couldn't get into the cottage with their Cotag key.

They were locked out from Friday to Saturday co's they couldn't get through the door.

Their chums at the Wessex gave them a bed for the night

When it came to paying they got such a fright
It was double our members rate for a nights kip there
We should have smashed our way into the cottage earlier.

The next morning they went back and tried to get in again
But had to measure up a nominated window pane.

Then off to Wells to collect Wayne and go to the glass shop
Then back to the cottage to give the window a wallop

Once they were in they cleaned up the debris and bits
Joan wouldn't climb through in case she got stuck on her _T's

Wayne meantime turned on the power again
So we could get the shower working once more

Now all is resolved and the cotag is working
No one can accuse the chums of cottage work shirking

Were glad it's all over
We played the glass rover
So now we can all go caving again (allegedly).

Anon.

A Wet Weekend in South Wales (24th — 25th October)

Julie Hesketh

After the heaviest rainfall was seen in South Wales for over 20 years and the high profile national news coverage, I was wondering if going caving there that weekend was entirely sensible. Out of curiosity and the fact that Aggy had been booked in advance, the MCG trip went ahead as planned. The journey over to Wales was a bit moist but nothing out of the ordinary. The Chelsea Cottage on Llangattock always seems to have terrible weather and so the wind and rain there was not unusual. It did however rain all night on Friday.

Jeremy Gilson, Simon Fryer, Steve Green, Myself and Cookie (Wessex CC) went in to Aggy with the intention of "taking a look" at Northern Stream Passage to see just how much rain had really fallen. It was still raining when we entered the cave and a small trickle was running through the entrance. We headed straight for the Main Streamway which was dark brown with peat and flowing quickly but was perfectly passable. Bastard inlet was pumping a torrent of brown water out into the main stream but we carried on to the slippery climb into the streamway (by the wedged ammo can) and made a note of the water level by a boulder in the streamway which was 6 inches above the water. We continued through to the 2nd Boulder choke where our luck ran out — it was sumped with only a few bubbles by way of airspace. Turning back we noticed that the water had risen considerably and our boulder was now 3 or 4 inches under water and rising! We then turned to drier sections of the cave and wandered through main passage and back out to the entrance where a healthy shower-bath was entering from an aven around 50m from daylight and the 2 ducks near the entrance were much more sporting on the way out than we had remembered from the way in! The entire entrance section had a reasonable sized streamway flowing through its length. Never having been in Aggy before I was unsure of the "normal" water levels but was assured that this was far from normal. We scurried back to Whitewalls in a howling wind, and admired the waterfalls which were thundering off Llangattock towards Crickhowell.

Later that day, the residents of Crickhowell who had thought the worst of the flooding was over were drying their possessions and carpets outside in the wind, only to be disappointed once more as the river level rose again, flooding the surrounding fields and road. The Bridge looked as if it might be in danger of failing as whole trees wedged themselves against it and the force of the river built up behind. For one happy moment we thought we might just get stranded in the Bear Inn but we were not that fortunate.

Over in Porth, the swim out of the cave was, unsurprisingly sumped and the resurgence pool was a whirlpool of dark brown extremely dangerous fast flowing water. In Abercraf, the road past the Copper Beech was completely impassable as the bank had collapsed leaving between 1 and 5 foot of rubble, boulders and mud across the width of the road. Fortunately the electric supply to the village was saved — being only feet away from the collapse.

Back to Mendip on Sunday where we heard in Swildons, the climb down to the bottom of the Forty was impassable and water had reached the top of the 2nd inlet pipe at the surface. I just can't wait to get back down Pinetree to start bailing out our dig__

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LIBRARY NOTES : Thanks to various people (Tim F, Tony K, Andy S and others) for donating a number of books, journals and magazine articles to the library.

Books recently added to the library:

The Secret World of Porth yr Ogof by Martyn Farr, 1998 - 24pp glossy paperback aimed primarily at the outdoor pursuit centre market. It presents its information clearly and concisely with sections on geology, cave formation, cave decorations, history, exploration, legend and folklore, and concludes with safety rules and (to drive the message home!) an appendix listing the ten deaths in the cave since 1957. A nice little publication.

Lechuguilla, Jewel of the Underground by Speleoprojects, Revised Second Edition.

Potholing and Caving by Don Robinson, 1967 - one of the Know the Game Series of paperbacks.

Caves of the Bristol Region by D.P.Mockford and A.J.Male, 1974, published by the Bristol Cave Register.

The Spur Book of Caving by Jim Ballard, 1978

Les Grottes des Pyrenees by Rene Gailli, 1991 - 60pp of text and excellent colour photographs of show caves, together with a useful location map at the back to help you plan your grand tour of the Pyrenees.

Grands Causses, Annee 1981 by l'Amicale Speleologique des Grands Causses - a series of articles/papers by a variety of authors, including some cave surveys and bibliographies.



Minutes of the Mendip Caving Group AGM Held on the 25th of April 1998 at the Hunters Lodge, Priddy.

The Mendip Caving Group is a registered charity No. 270088.

Chairman : Keith Knight.

Present : 28 full members, 1 probationary member and 1 associate member.
Of those present 2 were custodian trustees.

1 - Apologies for Absence : A. Spain, D. Vosper, C. Allison, P. Ingold, B. Pittamn, M. Cotter, S. Cotter, L. Hawkswell, P. Goddard.

2- Minutes of AGM held on 12/04/97 : These minutes had been circulated to all members.

3- Agreement that the Minutes are a True Record : the minutes were proposed for acceptance. Proposed : T. Francis - Seconded : D. Tooke
Accepted unanimously.

4- Matters Arising : There were none.

5- Officers Report :

Chairman : Reports have been circulated.

5.1- Matters Arising from the Secretary's Report :

R. Kempston : How many members do we have?

T. Francis : 135. Fred Burton is the only long standing member to resign, other than that membership is stable.

5.2- Matters Arising from the Tackle Master's Report :

There were none.

5.3- Matters Arising from the Editor's Report :

J. Goddard : I would like to thank Jane on behalf of the Group for standing in at such short notice and doing such a good job.

J. Goddard : Can I ask who does the exchange publication list?

J. Baldwin : Wayne does the exchanges.

J. Goddard : Please make sure that Surrey Scouts are included on the list.

5.4- Matters Arising from the Social Secretary's Report :

D. Tooke : What would members like at the Half-Yearly meeting?

P. Moseley : I have organised a skittles evening at the New Inn, meals can be bought from the bar. General agreement that this is o.k.

5.5- Matters Arising from the Recorder/Librarian's Report :

J. Goddard : Can we get the library shelving put up as soon as possible?

J. Hesketh : We agreed at the Half-Yearly what was to be done.

W. Hiscox : Agreed to get cost information for library shelving.

J. Roberts : Do we have all the caving log books?

J. Goddard : I have all but 2, one is with Malcolm Cotter but I don't know where the other one is, number 3 I think. We will need to advertise it in the newsletter to retrieve the missing book.

J. Roberts : It would be a good idea to get the log books copied.

5.6- Matters Arising from the Cottage Warden's Report :

M. Rowe : Who is responsible for replacing cottage sundries?

M. Ward : I am but members must tell me when things need to be replaced but any member can buy things like toilet rolls for the cottage as long as they get a receipt.

J. Goddard : One of the toilets is leaking, can it be repaired please?

Keith Knight : I will try to do this but I'm not sure if the new connector supplied is correct.

R. Kempston : Is the committee planning to arrange for the car park to be levelled?

T. Francis : Yes when the rain water drainage has been sorted out.

M. Lovell : Has there been any progress on purchasing the land behind the cottage?

T. Francis : Not being pursued at present but the Frys know that we would like to buy the land.

T. Knibbs : Should we make a written offer?

J. Goddard : No they are aware that we would like the land. Eventually they will probably sell to us.

M. Rowe : What about renting the land?

J. Goddard : I have never considered this. We would need to improve the land to make it useable. Could the committee consider this option?

T. Francis : Yes.

5.7- Matters Arising from the Conservation and Access Officer's Report :

R. Kempston : What is happening with Upper Flood II?

D. Tooke : It's full of water at the moment! We have been considering enlarging the base of the shaft to enable a drill with a long bit to be used to search for connection to Upper Flood. A member of the Forest of Dean Caving Club, who is a mining engineer is willing to help us and can provide the drill.

T. Francis : There has been a meeting with representatives of the various bodies involved and some have visited the cave. A second meeting was planned but has not happened yet.

J. Goddard : The original digging agreement banned the use of explosives.

T. Francis : The Forest of Dean Caving Club member is willing to act as our representative in any negotiations with English Nature.

5.8- Matters Arising from the Treasurer's Report :

H. Jones : I would like to thank Martin on behalf of the group for all the hard work he put in over the years on the accounts.

The treasurer then answered questions from the floor mainly concerning the level of Guest bookings and the effects of this on the group finances.

The conclusion was that unless income can be increased then subscriptions or cottage fees will need to be increased next year.

M. Rowe : I would like to congratulate Huw on doing such a good job at such short notice.

5.9- Matters Arising from the Caving Secretary's Report :

J. Hesketh : A beginners weekend has been suggested , which I think is a good idea, and will be arranged.

I am still trying to get a Draenen key, I have written many times and have received no reply. The cheque that we sent has never been cashed.

B. Cooper : Should we mention this at the next Cambrian Caving Committee meeting?

T. Francis : Yes that's probably worthwhile.

5.10- Matters Arising from the Custodian Trustees Report :

T. Knibbs : Could a statement of the group's finances be added to this report so that simple folk

could understand it more easily?

J. Roberts : Presentation could be improved.

M. Rowe : I would like to propose a vote of thanks for the committee, it has been a difficult year for them due to mine and Yvonne's resignations. Thanks to all of them.

6-Election of Honorary Officer for 1998/99 :

Chairman : Marcus Ward has been nominated by Julie Hesketh and seconded by Tim Francis for the post of Conservation and Access Officer.

Brian Snell has been nominated by Dave Tooke and seconded by Joan Goddard for the post of Rescue Warden.

Could we have two tellers please.

Tellers were Fiona Kempston and James Allen.

Nominations for committee posts are as follows :

Secretary : Tim Francis. Proposed by Reggie Pain, seconded by Rupert Knowles.

Treasurer : Huw Jones. Proposed by Malcolm Cotter, seconded by Martin Rowe.

Caving Secretary : Julie Hesketh. Proposed by Rupert Knowles, seconded by Reggie Pain.

Cottage Warden : Marcus Ward. Proposed by Dave Tooke, seconded by Letti Patte.

Tacklemaster : Dave Tooke. Proposed by Keith Knight, seconded by Brian Snell.

Editor : Letti Patte. Proposed by Marcus Ward, seconded by Tim Francis.

Recorder/Librarian : Wayne Hiscox. Proposed by John Pudduck, seconded by Joan Goddard.

Social Secretary : Pete Moseley. Proposed by Wayne Hiscox, seconded by Huw Jones.

Chairman : The results are as follows :

Secretary : Tim Francis. 27 for, 4 against.

Treasurer : Huw Jones. 31 for.

Caving Secretary : Julie Hesketh. 27 for, 3 against.

Cottage Warden : Marcus Ward. 30 for, 1 against.

Tacklemaster : Dave Tooke. 27 for, 3 against.

Editor : Letti Patte. 27 for, 3 against.

Recorder/Librarian : Wayne Hiscox. 29 for.

Social Secretary : Pete Moseley. 30 for.

Conservation and Access Officer : Marcus Ward. 23 for, 2 against.

Rescue Warden : Brian Snell. 29 for, 1 against.

7- Election of Examiners :

Chairman : James Allen has been proposed by Tim Francis and seconded by Julie Hesketh. Ben Cooper has been proposed by Joan Goddard and seconded by Dave Tooke.

James Allen and Ben Cooper were elected unanimously.

8- Any Other Business :

B. Snell : Gave details of the forthcoming rescue practice in Longwood/August.

The meeting agreed to buy some flowers for Jackie Dors as a thank you for the free use of the Hunters long room.

9- Date and Venue of the next Annual General Meeting :

It was agreed by a vote that the 1999 Annual General Meeting will be held in the Hunters Lodge long room on Saturday the 17th of April 1999 at 2.30p.m.

BCRA REGIONAL ONE DAY MEETING - All are welcome

SWILDON'S HOLE & ST. CUTHBERT'S SWALLET



Provisional Programme :

MORNING SESSION	Videos and computer slide shows compiled by <i>Maurice Hewins and Dave Irwin</i>
09.30 Coffee and biscuits	
09.45 Photographic portrait of Swildon's Hole - <i>Peter Glanvill</i>	AFTERNOON SESSION
10.15 Coffee break	14.00 Early exploration of Swildon's Hole - <i>Dave Irwin</i>
10.20 Early ideas on the geomorphology of Swildon's Hole - <i>Les Williams</i>	14.30 Photographic portrait of St. Cuthbert's Swallet - <i>Peter Glanvill</i>
10.45 Diving the Swildon's Sumps in the 1950s - <i>Fred Davies</i>	15.00 Coffee break
11.10 Coffee break	15.15 The Hydrology of the Wookey Catchment - <i>Roger Stenner</i>
11.15 Exploring Swildon's Sumps since 1965 - <i>Mike (Trebtor) McDonald</i>	16.00 Early attempts at digging in the St. Cuthbert's Swallet catchment - <i>Dave Irwin</i>
11.35 The Geomorphology of the Wookey Catchment - <i>Andy Farrant</i>	16.30 Coffee break
12.30 - 14.00 Lunch break - food and beer available on the premises plus	16.45 General discussion
	17.15-17.30 - clear up !

Bar, refreshments, displays and club stands

NOVEMBER 21st, 1998
PRIDDY VILLAGE HALL,
9.30AM - 5.30PM

Admission £1.00 at the door.

Further details from Dave Irwin, Townsend Cottage, Priddy, Somerset. BA5 3BP (tel: 01749 870369 e-Mail dji2@compuserve.com)
Clubs wishing to set a sales or display stand should contact Dave Irwin