

North Wales 25/26/27 of June 1999

By Pete Bennett

After the enticing plug for a North Wales trip 'Now that the sun has finally come out ...' how could I resist. I wanted to find out if there really was a sun in Wales. So after scrounging a lift with Tim and Julie we headed to North Wales via Oxford to pick up Andy Shann. Reaching the vicinity of Rhosesmor we circled round in ever decreasing circles on narrowing roads. Finally there it was the Rhosesmor Arms our camp site for the weekend. This was definitely the right place since we found Richard, Martin and Yvonne already tucked up in their sleeping bags (well it was one in the morning). Julie not wanting to hang around putting up tents dived into Richard's while the rest of us erected ours. Martin at this point appeared to see what all the noise was (or was it to empty his bladder?).

The next morning we awoke to a crystal blue sky (Julie hadn't been wrong about the weather) and after a hearty breakfast we made our way over to the entrance of The Milwr Tunnel at Hendre. Here we were met by our guides for the trip Jerry Dobby and Paul Wybrough of the Grosvenor Caving Club.

To understand how the Milwr Tunnel came into being we need to know a little about the history of mining in the area. Lead mining has occurred here since Roman times and as the surface deposits started to be exhausted in the 17th century this led to deeper workings and the age old problem of flooding. By the 1890's mines had been worked out to a depth that water levels after pumping would allow. An ambitious scheme of driving a drainage canal tunnel was therefore started in 1897 following the amalgamation of the local mine companies. The result of this was the Milwyr Tunnel which eventually ran from sea level at Bagillt to Cadole near Mold.

Entrance to The Milwyr Tunnel is via the Olwyn Goch Shaft which was capped in 1997 following closure of the mine workings. Access now is gained by a 50 yard long adit that intercepts the main shaft 70 ft below the surface. Upon reaching the shaft we were able to look down at its bottom 400 ft below with the help of Paul's hand held lamp. Here lies the twisted wreck of metal and cable caused when the cage guidewires were cut at the top of the shaft following its closure. Luckily this caused little damage to the forty 20 ft length fixed ladders that we were about to descend. Just to make sure of their safety the Grosvenor CC has fitted a large RSJ across the top of the shaft from which two 400 ft lift cables are suspended. Each platform is secured to the cables and cargo netting has been put in to replace the rotten planks that used to separate the ladderway from the shaft.

The base of the shaft comes out next to the onsetters cabin where a forgotten tea urn still rests upon a table till this day where miners would wait before being dispatched to the surface. Across on the other side of the shaft was the charging area and work shop where locos were charged and repaired. Our way on though was a left at the base of the shaft to the Milwyr Tunnel. Crossing over the double rails we made our precarious way downstream. I say precarious as one misplaced foot onto a rotten sleeper could result in a soaking. Luckily the water levels were quite a bit lower than the last time we had been here so we could actually see the rails. After negotiating our way round a loco with its rolling stock the way on got a little easier with a single track on the right of the tunnel a grip on the other (a grip being a water channel).

More on North Wales Page 5...

News in Brief

➤ **Accepted as Full Member :**

Andrew Shann

➤ **On the Move :**

Domini Knight to : 15b Bury Hill,
Winterbourne Drive, South Gloucestershire, BS36
1AB.

Dave Tooke & Letti Patte to : 218 Stanwell
Road, Ashford, Middx, TW15 3QU.

➤ **Change of Email Address :**

Jean-Paul Burch : jean-paul@cwcom.net

Committee Snippets 05/09/99

Longwood / August & Rhino Rift keys : make sure you insert the keys all the way before turning it to avoid bending them.

New Upper Flood Leader : Ben Cooper

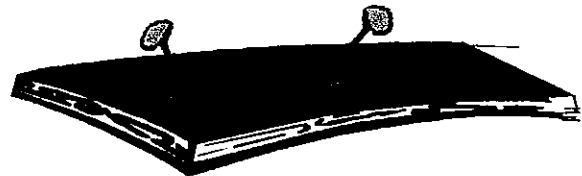


Annual Gas Safety Check

Under current legislation, an annual gas safety check must be carried out at the cottage by a Corgi registered plumber. If any members know of such a plumber who could do this for us, please contact the cottage warden.

Invitation to Tender

The committee would like to invite members and others to tender for the decoration of the exterior woodwork at the cottage. All window frames, door frames, doors, weather boards, etc. are to be decorated. The work is to include removing old flaking paint, preparing the woodwork and staining or painting. The committee have not decided to proceed with the work yet, but estimates of the cost are required to help in the decision process. Please contact the Cottage Warden to register your interest and for further information



Council of Southern Caving Club – Training Event

13th & 14th November 1999 at the Blue School Caver Training Facility.

Half Day Sessions available :

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| ➤ Beginners Ropework | ➤ Improvers SRT |
| ➤ Ladder & Lifeline | ➤ SRT Rigging |
| ➤ Beginners SRT | ➤ SRT Rescue |

Open to all members of CSCC Affiliated Clubs. There is a £5.00 charge per session to cover the cost of the venue.

To book, or for further information contact : CSCC Training Officer Andy Sparrow : 01749 677192 or Andy@mendipnet.co.uk

Forward Meets Programme :



**MARK
THIS
DATE**

<i>DATE</i>	<i>VENUE</i>	<i>EVENTS</i>	<i>CONTACT</i>
1 st 3 weeks in October	Madagascar	Return to the Bemaraha. Tim & Ben have expressed an interest in a three week trip.	Tim Francis TimF@bjm.co.uk 0181 392 3572 (eves)
6 th - 7 th November	Nordrach Cottage	Half-yearly meeting. Contact Tim Francis for details of the forum. Skittles evening in the New Inn. For more information contact →	Tim Francis TimF@bjm.co.uk 0181 392 3572 (eves) Pete Moseley 01458 860524
13 th & 14 th Nov.	Mendip	CSCC training event.	



Cottage Bookings by Ben Cooper :

Date	Nights	Numbers	Who
Fri 17/09/99	2	8	Lost World CC
Fri 24/09/99	2	12	Caswell Outdoor Pursuits
Sat 30/10/99	1	12	OUCG
Sat 13/11/99	1	10	CUCC
Fri 09/06/00	2	??	Gloucester Guides

Lost & Found by Ben Cooper:

Date	Lost/Found	Location	Item
04-Jun-99	Found	Cottage	Metal torch
05-Jun-99	Found	Cottage	Drill key
22-Aug-99	Found	Cottage	Yellow tee shirt
22-Aug-99	Found	Cottage	Yellow towel
05-Sep-99	Found	Cottage	Two small batteries

Continues from front page..

Continuing down stream for about 1.5 km we then turned right into Powells Lode via the Rhosesmor Branch Tunnel. Here the passages' nature changed as it only contained a single track which was supported above the streamway by iron girders with the surrounding walls clad by a steel frame spanned by planks or corrugated metal. Progress therefore slowed as a tarzan action was called for swinging from one beam to the next. After 1.5 km we reached Powells Lode Cavern a natural cavern situated below Rhosesmor village. This natural chamber measures 40 m by 70 m and contains a deep lake thought to be 60 m in depth. From this flows 5000 gallons of water per minute into the passage we had just left. Just before entering the cavern Jerry pointed out to us a pump shaft. He explained that it was driven to a depth of 128 ft where pumps were installed capable of pumping 14000 gallons per minute. From this pump chamber a passage was cautiously driven to within a few feet of the lake. Charges were then laid for holing through. This proved successful allowing the depth of the lake to be lowered by 120 ft which allowed Powell's Lode to be exploited to the south to 110 ft below the tunnel level.

In true Grosvenor CC we had tea break at the edge of the lake before carrying on. This allowed us time to inspect the old rolling stock and a tippler used for emptying wagons full of waste rock into the lake. At this point we then split into two parties. Martin, Yvonne and Andy made their way back along the Rhosesmor Branch with Jerry to be given a tourist trip of the limestone quarry. While, Tim, Julie, Paul and I ventured into Barclay's Lode which had recently been opened up.

Entrance into Barclay's Lode was gained by climbing up 15 m into a mined passage with the aid of a scaffolding bar that had steps welded to either side. This led to a small platform from which a metal ladder then led to the top of the collapse that had previously blocked the way. Climbing down this collapse we then came to two short pitches that led to the base of Barclay's Lode. From here we were then free to explore the intricate net work of passages that made up Barclay's Lode. Points of interest were ore chutes and ladders that led up to the sublevels above. These levels were broken up with jack hammers and allowed to fall down the chutes into waiting cars in the drift below. After an hour exploring we then made our way back out at breakneck speed, to emerge in sunshine.

After a rather heavy night at the Rhosesmor Arms (due to Tim's parents rather imbibing nature) we awoke to a down pour. Fed and packed we waited for the key holder of Ogof Dydd Byraf to arrive. When he finally did we then followed in convoy to Minera quarry. Here Martin and Yvonne declined the prospect of a rather wet change and looked on before bidding us farewell and heading for home. Changed and ready the rest of us followed Paul (don't know his surname) our leader down the road past a lime kiln and then up a scree slope on the left hand wall of the quarry. Just tucked into the cliff was the gated entrance to Ogof Dydd Byraf. At this point we discovered that the key had been left back in a van so the guilty party was sent off back to get it. Upon finally entering, the entrance series proved to be a rather muddy crawl over planks. This led to a short climb down into lead workings. Turning left at this junction we then carried on another 15 m before turning right to reach a shaft that used to be the original entrance to the lead workings. Taking a right at this shaft we then reached natural cave passage and the upper cave of OGD. Julie, Tim and I then went for a quick look down an interesting looking passage that led to the lower cave (this was to prove more interesting on the way up). Here we found crystal clear white formations in the shape of blobs stuck to walls of the phreatic passages. After finally extricating ourselves back up the previous passage we then joined the others in the upper cave.

Back in the upper cave we were treated to some fine calcite formations. The stalactites here were quite unusual as many were tinted a delicate green by copper salts and on some of the flow stone were small coat hook helictites and heligmities. We then followed the 8 by 8 m passage until it finally lowered and ended at a North Wales Caving Club dig. Obviously with Tim in the party we had to have a quick look before exiting.

After a quick change we then wended our way home dreaming of green stalactites.

THE END.....

The weekend proved to be a great success and I would like to thank Julie for organising the trip.
Lil Peat Productions © 1999

What ever happened to Pinetree?

By Tim Francis

On a regular basis members ask me how the dig in Pinetree is going, and to be fair unless you are an avid reader of the log book then you would think we'd given up. Fortunately, or unfortunately depending upon your experience of the dig, it's still going. The seventh anniversary of the start of the dig will be on the 27th September so now seemed like a good time to write up an update. The last report was way back in Newsletter 265 when Joe Frampton described Pinetree as:

"Possibly this is one of the most muddy uninviting holes in the Mendips, which only gets dug due to its proximity to the cottage".

The focus of attention in the last few years has rather varied somewhat. The main way from the small chamber is not obvious and the extensions have really lived up to their name: "A Pock Hole Lips Way".

Option One - originally we dug on the left following a small crack of air but that kept filling up with water. I remember a rather amusing trip when Bellez was to be found waste deep in water scooping handfuls of mud from the floor. This was abandoned in favour of digging straight ahead. The old hole was used to bail water into and then eventually back filled.

Option Two- we followed the wall down and then under and arch and up into air space. During 1994 we followed a decent sized phreatic tube for 20ft but abandoned this as it appeared to be heading up towards a small shakehole in a neighbouring field. A very small tube on the left was dug out for a body length but this was extremely desperate stuff. Even after a sniff of rain, water would pour off a flowstone ledge and straight on to the hapless digger. This was also abandoned.

Option Three - a radical rethink was required so we decided to dig out the whole floor of the chamber to find a way on at a lower level. During 1995 a massive amount of mud was heaved out with hauling getting harder and harder as the hole got deeper. After a slight detour under an arch to the right, the way on was found. The floor seemed to be made up of lots of boulders which were broken up with Hilti caps. For some reason on one session I was on the dig side of a boulder when swinging the hammer. Seemed like a good idea at the time. A nice passage seemed to be heading off to the East although the sediment was hard work to dig. We were soon plagued by water again with the whole passage filling to the roof. In dry weather this may still be a viable option for the future.

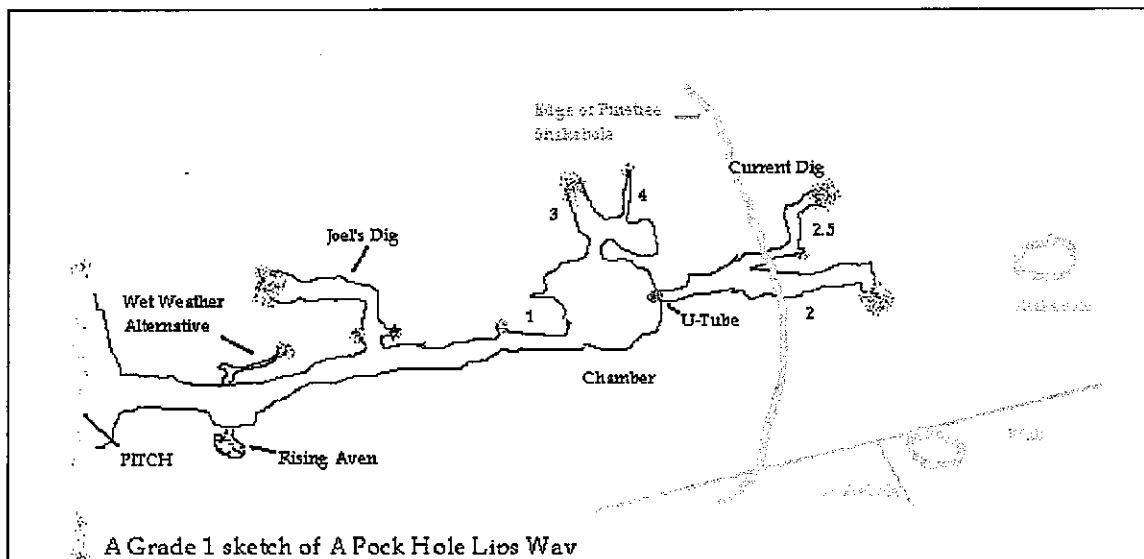
Option Four - We noticed that water seemed to drain away off to the right from the new dig. So the focus of attention switched to following where the water went. This became known as 'going for the gurgle'. A dam was built around the old face and water back filled into it. Some serious digging followed and we were rewarded with a small rift with a smidgeon of air. The floor was never found and it became increasingly difficult to extricate oneself from the dig. Things were becoming too tight. Eventually this was abandoned when during the winter the floor of the chamber and everything below it was flooded. Even the 'u-tube' to the dig straight ahead was impassable.

Not a lot happened during the following year. An attempt was made to get back through the 'u-tube' straight ahead but invariably the chamber was flooded. A few trips were done right near the entrance of the dig where a small high level tube, dubbed the 'Wet Weather Alternative', was excavated. Eventually we decided to remove the back fill from Joel's dig and see where that went. Spirits rose as we were able to shift 50 - 60 skips in a session and hence interest in the dig rekindled.

What ever happened to Pinetree, the end...

Option Two and a half - Spring 1999 and water levels dropped again. We began digging out the small tube on the left just through the 'u-tube'. The problem here is the slight lack of air. You can generally dig 4 skips of spoil before the air goes. About 20ft of 'thrutchy' sized stuff has been excavated but hauling out spoil is as difficult as ever. To get to the dig you need to bail the duck in the u-tube, and then bail the dig back into the duck. Unless you're Andy who just likes to get wet! The dig can't be that bad though as I managed the luxury of turning round at the dig face last time.

This tube is still the main focus of attention but as a reward from all the bad air we are digging Joel's dig in conjunction. Here the digging is easy although the passage is probably trending back towards the pitch.



So when's the breakthrough?

Anyway as I have five minutes I thought perhaps a quick check on progress was required. Not too hot on imperial numbers so I'll have to do a few conversions but it looks like:

Number of trips: 107 + the few I've missed = 110

Length of dig approx. 80ft x 0.3048 = 24.384m

5 miles to Cheddar is 8.045km

Therefore we have: $24.384/110 = 0.2217\text{m per trip}$

Projected number of trips to Cheddar = $8045/0.2217 = 36292$ trips

Of course some of this will be sumped so unless we take up diving that will reduce things a bit. Next, say they push upstream Gough's for 1.5km to the water table. That still leaves 29526 trips. Now lets assume an average of 20 trips a year. The projected breakthrough is $29526/20 = 1476$ years time. Hence the MCG will have the greatest system on the Mendips by Christmas in the year 3475. Should be a good party.

The following is a breakdown of digging trips done to the "A Pock Hole Lips Way" so far. (Members may remember a similar table Jonathan Roberts did for Upper Flood.) I apologise for any omissions but sorry, tourist trips or visits to other digs have not been counted! I've broken down trips for those having done two or more i.e. those having a modicum of interest.

More on Pinetree on the next page...

Pinetree, the end...

Who digged / is digging down Pintree??

Digger	Involvement	Trips
Tim Francis	1992 - 1999	107
Julie Hesketh	1992 - 1999	67
Joe Frampton	1993 - 1997	26
Reggie Pain	1994 - 1997	14
Dave Tooke	1996 - 1998	9
Letti Patte	1995 - 1998	8
Joel Corrigan	1992 - 1993	7
James Allen	1992 - 1995	7
Ralph Diment	1993 - 1996	7
Duncan Horne	1994 - 1999	6
Ben Cooper	1998 - 1999	5
Andrew Shann	1997 - 1999	5
Andy Bellamy	1993 - 1994	4
Pete Bennett	1997 - 1999	4
Malcolm Cotter	1993 - 1995	4
Simon Goddard	1999 - 1999	3
Mike Pittman	1993 - 1994	3
Marcus Ward	1994 - 1999	3
Charlie Alison	1994 - 1994	2
Richard Carey	1993 - 1995	2
Julian Flavell	1992 - 1993	2
Joan Goddard	1992 - 1994	2
Mike Gould	1996 - 1997	2
Lee Hawkswell	1994 - 1996	2
Rupert Knowles	1993 - 1995	2
Martin Rowe	1994 - 1999	2
Kirsty Stroud	1993 - 1994	2
Richard Thornton	1993 - 1993	2
Others (19 people)	1993 - 1999	19
<u>TOTAL MAN TRIPS</u>	<u>1992 - 1999</u>	<u>328</u>

The vast majority of the diggers (48 in total) are, or have been, MCG members although many were Moles (RHBNC CC) for some of the time. As you can see this represents an incredible cave time investment by the club so let's hope we actually find something! See you down the dig sometime or alternatively I'll see you in AD 3475.

Shatter Cave – 14th August 1999

By Geoff Beale

Trip led by Martin Grass (B.E.C), Geoff Beale, Doug Harris & Mick Norton.

When I read the last newsletter and saw that a trip had been arranged into this recently re-opened cave after being shut for so many years, I quickly had my name on the trip list.

This cave had been on my "must do" list of Mendip caves for over 20 years and I hoped that I would not be disappointed.

Our leader, Martin Grass, gave us a quick tour around FAIRY QUARRY pointing out the entrances to FAIRY CAVE, HILL WITHY CAVE, WITHYHILL CAVE and CONNING TOWER CAVE and finally SHATTER CAVE.

He had a shovel and strong bags with him but would not go into detail what they were for.

The tight entrance shaft drops 4' to a 90 degree bend and then into the cave. Within 40' of the entrance is CANOPY CHAMBER. This is superbly decorated and sets the standard for the rest of the cave. Across the guide tapes on the left is a connection to W.L. CAVE. To enter this series would mean crossing glistening calcite floors. To the left is DIESEL CHAMBER with some dry gour pools at the far end. Going on the obvious passage brought us to HELECTITE RIFT where several large white curtain formations are seen amid the rest of the stal attractions. Here we ran out of adjectives to describe what we were seeing. Superlatives rolled off our tongues.

Keeping on through taped paths we entered TOR CHAMBER, an ascending chamber with a large stal boss on the top of a calcited boulder pile. The large stal boss is similar to that named QUEEN VICTORIA in nearby STOKE LANE SLOCKER cave.

The next area reached was PIZA PASSAGE. On the right is the magnificent PIZA stalagmite column leaning towards the left. The result of some long time ago movement within the cave.

After this section a 10' climb brought us into the ring road to a tight squeeze where it was touch and go for me to get through. A crawling passage brought us to the superb PILLAR CHAMBER. A large white stal pillar and tapes barred further progress. In front was a fine crystal gour floor. FIVEWAYS CHAMBER was beyond this which we did not enter or the rest of the cave beyond to its termination.

A feature here and also seen in other sections of the cave showed that rapid calcite deposition is taking place at the ends of the original laid marker tapes were being calcited over since they were laid 25+ years ago.

By following the ring road from PILLAR CHAMBER through several other squeezes then via Z SQUEEZE the bottom of the 10' climb (ascended earlier) could be gained on a circular route. I found the constrictions onwards in the ring road too tight so opted to go backwards to the top of the 10' climb via the tight squeeze encountered earlier. This was a good rib bruising squeeze.

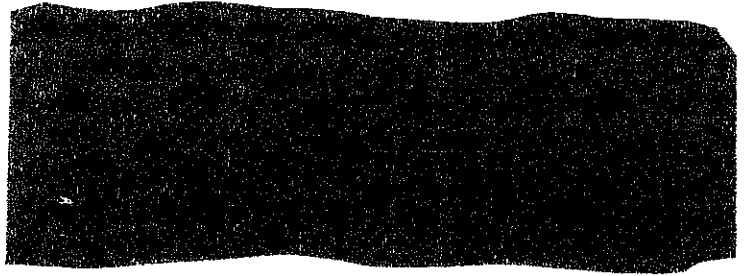
Both Doug and myself took cameras into the cave. The result should (hopefully) be good. This was the furthest point reached in the cave so we were taking photos on the return.

When we regained the entrance and daylight, the true purpose of the shovel and the bags were revealed. We were helping to fill the driveway at Martin Grass' house.

On reflection, this trip was thoroughly enjoyed and the range of formations incredible. The small cost of £1.00 went to a conservation fund that should in time see further work in the abandoned quarry to properly gate and conserve the other caves there, and allow access to club cavers via a leader system.

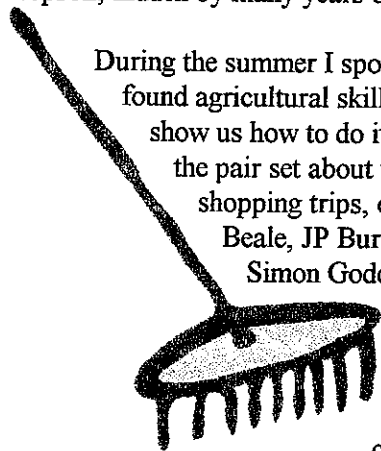
The Side Lawn *by the Cottage Warden*

Do you remember the lawn we used to have at the side of the cottage? The one where people used to camp, before it became a general tip for the building works, before it became a stone mason's yard for the wall builders?



Well, during the spring of this year, a number of different people decided enough was enough, and a steady campaign of reclamation has been in progress. The work was started by Tim Francis, who single handedly piled up several tonnes of rock that had been spread over the entire area. It took him five hours of back breaking work, but he managed to clear the front half of the lawn. Work continued at the June work weekend, when a team of volunteers started to turn over the earth and remove the stones. Myself and others have followed this up with the odd hour here and there, working systematically from the front wall. The ground was unbelievably stoney, but as we want to see this piece of ground returned to use as a campsite, it was important to get the stones out to a depth of as much as six inches. The ground was therefore dug to the depth of a fork, and slowly over the summer, a new pile of rocks and rubble has been stacked in front of the library extension.

Digging down, the abuse this piece of land has received is clear. Below new grass and last year's fallen leaves were layer of stones, presumably debris from the dry stone wall building. Under that sat a two-inch thick layer of clay - apparently dumped when the library foundations and soakaway were dug. Beneath that lay a fertile compost, which between the trees is presumably formed by the decay of many fallen leaves, cementing an eight inch layer of stone, fallen over the years off the front wall. And eventually below that lay the topsoil, hidden by many years of neglect.



During the summer I spoke with Linda Milne for advice on the project. She agreed to put her new found agricultural skills to work, and on the weekend of 4th September came to the cottage to show us how to do it. Tempting Jane Baldwin along with the promise of a spot of gardening, the pair set about the daunting task of completing the first section of lawn - in between shopping trips, of course. Numerous diggers helped out in between caving trips: Geoff Beale, JP Burch, Peat Bennett, Richard Carey, Tim Francis, Joan Goddard, Simon Goddard, Letti Patte, Tim Woodhams, and prospective guests Paul Craddy and Paul Tempany. One rake, one fork and numerous lower backs were sacrificed to the god of buried rocks.

I am thrilled to report that the first section of ground has now been completed: de-stoned, turned over, composted, sand turned in, levelled, raked, tenderly loved, cared for, and finally seeded. The area has been fenced to protect it - please keep off the grass, for the time being at least.

Other Cottage Work

I would like to thank Simon Goddard for spending his day off repairing the cottage. He completed the rendering of the library extension, and then rebuilt the dry stone wall near the front gate. What had decayed into a pile of rubble is now an attractive, square-edged wall. On the following day, with the help of his mum (ahhh), he rebuilt the stile.

Cottage Safety, by the Cottage Warden

You may have heard rumours back in June of electric shocks in the shower. I certainly received a complaint from one guest group, which was followed up by a general complaint of inadequate electrical and fire safety standards at the cottage. Our earth cross bonding was inadequate, our fire extinguishers were out of date, and to add insult to injury, the kettle plug in the kitchen burnt out while the same guest group were still in residence. Fortunately, Roy Kempston was on hand to speedily fix the latter, and I responded as quickly as I could, carrying out a general safety survey the following weekend.

My findings were not good. The electric shocks were no longer occurring (perhaps attributable to the now fixed kettle plug), but I found a list of other problems. In the kitchen, many of the plugs were old, dirty and badly wired, and the electrical cables were damaged by cuts or melting on hot surfaces.. These have now all been replaced, and one of the sockets has been moved to stop the cables trailing over the hot gas ring.

Similar problems existed in the charging room. The charger plugs were old and damaged - one so badly that it was a miracle that the fuse was able to conduct electricity. The plugs were replaced. The fuses in the plugs were all too high for the size of cable and have been replaced by 3A fuses (the purpose of the fuse is to protect the cable from overheating and causing fire, and so must be matched to the cable). The Oldham battery charger was a menace. The output cables are all very damaged, and are all terminated with crocodile clips, so that if the unit were ever turned on, there would be an instant short circuit across the clips. Although the current output is not high, it is sufficient to cause heating with potential fire hazard. A lot of work would have been needed to improve the Oldham charger, and since it appears that no one uses it at the moment, I have decommissioned it. The unit is no longer to be used. If you feel there is still a need to retain this charger, please let me know.

There was no supplementary cross bonding in the shower room, changing room, kitchen or bedrooms. Although I still think the regulations are vague on this point, it is usual to see supplementary bonding in such locations. I will arrange for this to be done over time, but so far, I have, at least, bonded the showers! No more shocks here, I hope.

I then looked at the consumer unit. What a bird's nest that was. On closer inspection, one of the earth cables had fallen out of its connector. The residual current circuit breaker was wired up incorrectly, and would not consequently have worked. The problem was spotted previously by Wayne Hiscox and was already scheduled for replacement, but the work had not yet been done. I am pleased to be able to report that a new consumer unit has now been obtained. Wayne gave up a whole Saturday to fit it, and was also able to fit a RCCB to the overnight circuit. This work ensures that in the event of any subsequent faults occurring, the power will be shut off and we will be safe from electric shocks. Thus, if the power does ever cut off, please let me know, so that I can investigate the cause.

None of the fire extinguishers had been checked since 1996. They are supposed to be inspected annually, with further tests every few years. After an abortive attempt to get them serviced by Chubb, I eventually found a supplier in Bristol, and Richard Carey kindly took them in. Two of the extinguishers were condemned on sight and were replaced, the third was pressure tested and refurbished. Interestingly, the pressure test date is actually stamped in the metal of the extinguisher, and this particular unit had not been previously tested since 1966. Yes, that's 33 years ago!

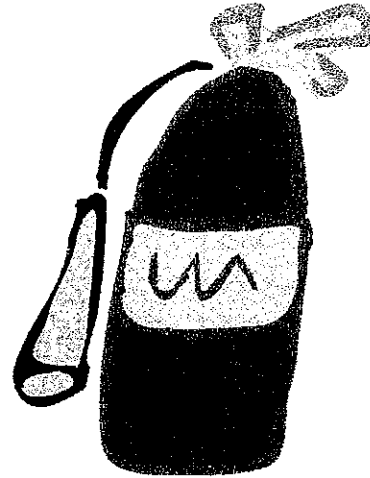
The smoke detector was also tested and found not to be working. Not only was the battery old and corroded, but it had also been disconnected. The battery was replaced and the unit tested. Please - do not disconnect the battery. The smoke detector is there for a reason, and may one day save somebody's life - but only if the battery is in place!

Safety at the cottage finishes overleaf...

Carries on from Page 11...

There are still a few items of work to be completed, but I am now satisfied that the cottage is again safe. The remaining work is to continue to assess the cottage against prevailing regulations, and to that end, I am in correspondence with the Fire Brigade, with a view to getting an inspection. This may take a few months to complete, and I will keep you posted on developments.

Finally, I have produced a report of my findings and the work carried out to date. Do contact me if you are interested in receiving a copy.



Mendip Cave Registry, by Ben Cooper

This is a short article to report on a piece of work that JR Roberts has undertaken on behalf of the cave registry. The registry is in the process of being updated, and JR has been asked to verify the grid references of a number of cave locations.

On Sunday 5th September, JR, Tim Francis, and myself, set off to survey the entrance to Pinetree Pot. It proved an adventurous and fun afternoon. Our method was to triangulate using a compass from recognisable features on the current 1:25,000 series map. Our first problem was that the shake hole is actually too deep to be able to see any of the stone walls from which we wanted to survey. We therefore chose conveniently located telegraph poles as reference points, and surveyed to these. Our next problem was that stone walls, which have blatantly existed for more than fifty years, are not actually shown on the map! Fortunately, the ancient boundary detail that is shown on the map can still be traced sufficiently on the ground. Thirdly, field corners - the obvious features from which to survey - seem to be contaminated with large amounts of iron (gates, etc) which affected the compass by as much as 10 degrees. Fourthly, the field was full of frisky, inquisitive, cheeky, heifers. They came galloping over (do cows gallop?), stopping within four feet of the steadfast JR. And then, when our backs were turned, one cheeky animal stepped forward, and grabbed a map off the ground. The whole herd turned and fled, the thief with its booty clenched between its teeth, and JR in hot pursuit. It soon dropped the map, which JR retrieved, slobber and all. It was drenched.

Overall it was a successful afternoon. It seems that tackling a field at a time is the correct approach, and all cave features within the field will be surveyed for the record. The results from this trip have not yet been processed, but I am sure that we will publish these in due course.

Meanwhile, please do consider helping out. This is surveying at its easiest, mostly just compass work without tape or clino. It is not time consuming - two hours should be enough for a typical field. But JR has many fields to survey (in the vicinity of the MCG), so help will be gratefully received. If you are new to surveying, this is an ideal opportunity to learn. Contact JR if you are interested.