



## THE 3-PEAKS CHALLENGE - 24th / 25th JUNE 2000

*Team:- Marcus Ward, Mike Pittman, Dave Tooke and Letti Patte (the weekend before their wedding), with Yvonne and Martin Rowe as support.*

The team, along with many others, chose this particular weekend to do the 3-Peaks challenge as it was close to the summer solstice and the weekend with the most daylight hours. The Intrepid Four arrived at the Rowe's in Arnside on the Friday night so they could make an early and fresh start for Scotland the next morning. Unfortunately, Mike made the mistake of setting his sleeping bag across the door that leads to the cat-flap and he became a stepping stone for three cats trying get to in to the rest of the house, or out, all night!

Martin had prepared the Land Rover for the (almost) non-stop journey to Scotland, the Lakes, North Wales and back to Arnside and tried to make it as comfortable as you can make a Land Rover for five people to sleep (including Martin or I when not driving). I had prepared a chicken curry and a spaghetti bolognese in advance. The idea was that we would be in contact by mobile 'phones and the Intrepid Four would 'phone us when they were about an hour from completing a peak so we could have hot food ready and waiting, thus saving precious time. Washing up etc. would be done while they were completing the next stage of the challenge. So, one way or another we were all physically and mentally prepared.

We set off at 9:30 the next morning and enjoyed the drive through south and north Lakes, the Borders and the beautiful route to Glencoe where the mountains still had patches of snow on top. Rain was threatening all the time but the journey was dry and occasionally sunny. We planned to hit Fort William by 2:30pm and arrived on the dot. We bought a snack then set off for Ben Nevis. We arrived at the carpark at the foot of Ben Nevis where the Intrepid Four got themselves ready for the first part of their challenge. They'd planned to set off at 4pm and at 4pm they set off (not bad for this lot!). About 10 minutes after they set off the cloud rolled in thick and fast and it began to rain. Until we heard from them on their way down the mountain, Martin and I had little to do at this stage but to relax, bird-spot, watch others preparing for their challenge, read newspapers, do crosswords, doze, and think of the Intrepid Four trudging ever upwards through cloud and rain. Oh, the guilt!

They had planned to 'do' the mountain in no more than 5 hours and were down in 4½, damp but happy. *One down, two to go!* We all ate a hot meal and set off in good time. The Four settled down to try and sleep in the back of the Land Rover. They managed fits and bursts of sleep but it was not just the discomfort that made their sleep fitful - it was Mike's feet! Martin and I didn't notice the smell in the front but I gather it was pretty high in the back. On the journey back through Scotland we saw many red deer and buzzards, and the views in reverse seemed more stunning than before.

The next leg of the journey was Scafell Pike in the Lake District. We arrived at Seathwaite just before 2:30am and the Intrepid Four were kitted up and on their way by 2:40am just as the sun was showing itself (well, daybreak anyway), but by now tiredness was setting in and the low cloud, cold and drizzle was a little disheartening. Martin and I decided to try and get a bit of sleep here so settled down comfortably in the back of the Land Rover. With the seats folded down there is almost 6ft so with sleep-mats, sleeping bags and pillows it can be very cosy. (We're allowed pillows 'cos we're crusties!) At about 4am, we were rudely awakened when the Land Rover was hit by a huge camper van trying to parallel park in front of us, and instead of stopping in his tracks or reversing back, he simply kept going until he'd parked! We lept out in bare feet onto wet gravel and mud to inspect the damage. There was only a bit of beige paint on our bumper but a long crease down the side of his camper van. To add insult to injury *he* and his mates ranted and raved at *us*, trying to make out it was all our fault! *More on the camper van later.*

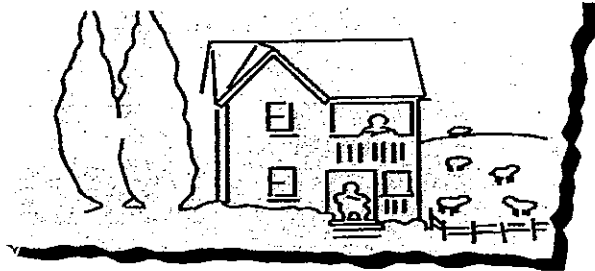
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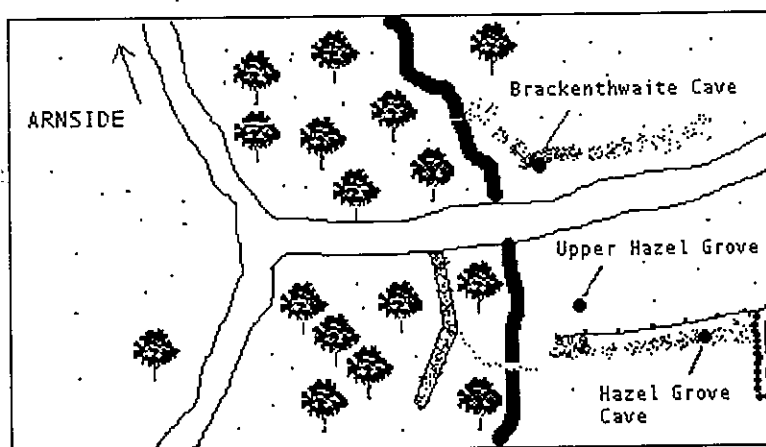
## More Arnside Anecdotes

Tim Francis

To break up our 14 hour journey on the way back from Assynt, myself, Julie Hesketh and Andy Shann decided to stop over in Arnside. The original plan was to merely crash over at Martin and Yvonne's for the night before heading off the following morning. However, as usual, the lure of limestone nearby was much too great to ignore. My only previous experience of the caving to be had in Morecombe Bay was to Hale Moss Cave: a rather grim 100m crawl to a gloopy sump.

We arrived at Arnside in the early evening of Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April. So whilst supper was warming in the oven we went for a pleasant stroll along the estuary, keeping an eye open for the bore after our ears were blasted by the warning sirens. Plans were hatched for a visit to Hazel Grove Cave the following day, where, after a period of rain a sump had previously thwarted Martin and Yvonne. Sunday dawned hot and sunny.

The cave is less than ten minutes drive from Arnside. Parking is on the verge next to Brackenthwaite Cave at Leighton Beck. Note that the location of this cave on the map in Northern Caves, Volume 3, is incorrect although the description is accurate. To Hazel Grove it is merely a short walk through the woods to the South of the road, and back over Leighton Beck via a footbridge. The cave entrance is situated in an extremely small scar close to a caravan, and literally no more than a couple of metres above the water table. Do despite the excellent weather Hazel Grove was found to be sumped yet again.



The entrance is a wriggle through rocks followed by a 30ft crawl to the first chamber. There is normally (not sure on the definition of normal here) a sump on the western end of the chamber but on our visit it was sumped on both sides. I'm sure with a few buckets we could have quite easily broken

the sump. Ah well, at least we made it out of daylight.

With our trip cut short we had a little bit of time to spare. So typically I started to rummage in a small shakehole I had spotted near to the stream. There was a rope swing nearby to keep the onlookers amused. After about ten minutes of effort I was able to widen one of the grykes sufficiently to gain access to the cave. Wiggling in feet first, helmet and battery off, I forced my way in to an area of low bedding. By digging away at the mud floor a few more squeezes were passed before I could turn around. Although the way on was obvious no further progress could be made without digging tools. Not bad for Arnside: a new cave!

Suitably muddled it was back to the cars for the remainder of the journey home. For us four or five hours of bank holiday traffic lay ahead and for Martin and Yvonne, five minutes in the Landy. No doubt we'll be back to Hazel Grove the next time we're passing through to finish things off.

*Team: Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh, Martin Rowe, Yvonne Rowe, Andy Shann.*

MALARGÜE 2000  
 1ST NATIONAL ARGENTINE CAVING CONFERENCE  
 MENDOZA PROVINCE, ARGENTINA  
 Larva tubes, gypsum and limestone caves.

I was reading the Caver's Digest (available on email) and I noticed an article on this conference. I pursued its web links and decided that it would be interesting to go caving in South America. I mentioned it to other members of the club and an initial large interest was expressed. However due to the expense and the enormous distance involved it was Tim Francis and myself who arrived at Gatwick Airport on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2000 ready to embark on what was to become a very satisfying adventure indeed. We arrived three hours early on the basis that we would get a choice of seats only to discover that we were the last to arrive took the last two seats on the plane. The seats we occupied were next to a bulkhead and would scarcely recline so 13 hours later when we arrived in Buenos Aires we were fairly tired and our journey was only halfway over. We still had a 1,000 miles to go. Internal flights in Argentina do not go from the international airport at Ezeira and we had to get a taxi to travel the 30k to Jorge Newbery Airport. On our return we found that there is a link bus between the airports which represented a saving of some \$20. We had travelled by British Airways (the only direct flight from the UK) and they demand a 3-hour gap between international flights so we had a 3-hour wait to take our onward flight to Mendoza. We just hung around at the airport. 2½ hours later we were standing in Mendoza Airport. We took a taxi to the bus station and things began to fall into place. The only information I had managed to glean from the Internet was that there was one bus a day to Malargüe and we would have another 3-hour wait. Mendoza has the biggest bus station I have ever seen with over 60 stands. We made enquiries and found that a bus was leaving in 5 minutes if we would care to hurry. 6 hours later we were in Malargüe. I had thought we would arrive at midnight so we had booked a hotel for the first night and the coach dropped us right outside the door. So, 26 hours after our departure we had finally arrived. We had dinner at the hotel and then went for a walk. We noticed the Tourist Information Office still had people inside at 11pm so we tried the door. Apparently they don't close until midnight. They told us where the conference was being held to my immense relief, as we had had no reply either from my emails or the faxes we had sent to register at the conference.

We woke up to a beautiful morning, had breakfast and packed our stuff. We paid our bill, which was rather expensive, since a misunderstanding had caused us to order fillet steak rather than chorizo sausage. We then set out to find the conference, which was being held in a local school. I need to say that at this point the only conference I have been to before was at Bristol some 5 or 6 years ago and I was amazed when we found that there were only about 40 people there. We were met by Aída Galán, conference secretary and member of the INAE. (The Argentine National Institute of Argentine Speleology) and then by Carlos Benedetto. (President) who asked if we had come especially to be at the conference to which we naturally replied yes. They had not received our faxes and had not expected us. Despite this grandiose title it turns out that there are more members in the MCG than there are cavers in the whole of Argentina. We were immediately bombarded with offers of accommodation: we could stay in the school; we could stay in the local police station, the police had been recruited along with the local army to participate in the conference (under orders from the local provincial governor) or we could stay with Aída at her house which we accepted. We paid our \$70 inscription and started with a lecture on surveying. All Hi-Tec stuff although the laser sighted compass seemed quite interesting. There were also lectures about their access problems and it seems that contrary to what has happened over here the interest in caving has coincided with the explosion of adventure tourism. They had been banned from a cave that they had discovered mapped etc because it had been designated as a National Park and controlled by the Park Rangers who charge \$25 for entry.

Two days of the conference had been set aside for visits to caves and for rescue practices, hence the involvement of the police and army as they had the communication equipment. We all chipped in for fuel and the entire conference climbed onto the back of trucks and pickups and we headed off into the back of beyond. Once outside of the towns and off the main routes the roads are not metalled and we were treated to a roller coaster of a ride. The Argentinians were a little offended by my description of being in the middle of nowhere but once I had explained our situation on the Mendips they understood. Our 1<sup>st</sup> visit was to a larva tube called Doña Otilla. We had no idea as to what to expect. We appeared to be on a pretty barren plain when all of a sudden there was a small depression with an entrance. They find these tubes by guesswork and explosives. A short crawl and we were in a large horizontal walking passage with a sandy floor. This passage led on for some 800m before ending in a collapse. There were some formations which considering these caves are in basalt it is quite unusual. Tim as usual wasn't going to let a mere choke stop him and pushed on all the leads but this time to no avail.

This would be a long-term dig although much cleaner than Pinetree Pot. Next to come was the rescue practice. André Slagmollen, rescue expert of the UIE had come all the way from Belgium to help out with their rescue practice, so this was now a truly international affair. Unfortunately some of the participants refused to take part in the rescue until they had visited the entire cave so they were obviously not taking the rescue very seriously. Whilst the "Indians" were very willing the "Chiefs" didn't really have a clue of what they were doing. Tim assisted inside the cave whilst I remained outside to watch what was going on. This turned out to be a bad mistake because despite the apparent cold from the wind I got quite badly sunburnt. They did not even have a list of who was in the cave until I suggested it and the Surface Controller got bored and decided to go into the cave to see what was going on. Even so I think a valuable lesson was learnt by all. Next we went to La Cueva del Tigre, another larva tube. This one was a bit deeper and had a fixed steel ladder to enable entry, which had been installed by some adventure tourism company. The local cavers are somewhat-offended by this fixed aid since people are being taken underground without lights or helmets. They have the permission of the landowner to remove the ladder although it will need a tow truck to remove it. The passage is large and walking size and despite one end of the cave being used as a toilet offers 200m of large passageway ending in the traditional collapse. However this time there was a howling gale and Tim pointed out that this was an obvious digging site. One of them stayed all night and pushed-on a further 5m.

The second field trip took two forms, the first to a limestone area, to the Caverna de las Brujas, this is the one controlled by the National Park. As this was a National Conference we had been given permission to enter without paying although we had to stick to the tourist route. There are no lights but some metal walkways have been provided and the little of the cave we saw was impressively decorated. Next we got back into the trucks and headed off to near the border with Chile to visit La Cueva de San Agustín. This cave is formed in gypsum and consists of a steep scree entrance slope with a huge chamber and a steep slope on the other side. Time for rescue practice number 2. Whilst this was going on some of the non participants went for a wander and found another new cave. It was also in gypsum and after an initial crawl encountered a large chamber. The Argentinians appear not to like bending down and it was assumed that there were no further leads. Enter Tim: Tim immediately discovered a way on although it did involve some crawling much to the discomfort of the Argentinian lads who were with him, who everytime it looked like it was closing down wanted to give up. A further 80m was discovered and is still going. As this conference was to discuss the formation of a national caving body it was unimaginatively called La Cueva de la Federación. Well, it's their country so they can call it what they like.

The lectures followed a format of holiday snaps and there were some quite impressive videos although I don't believe Sid Peru need worry just yet. As for the people they are the friendliest I have ever met. We had our evening meal with them at the conference most evenings and we believe was included in the price of the subscription. Beef was the order of the day. This is no place for vegetarians although fruit is very plentiful. There was no animosity whatsoever over the Falklands and they are positively embarrassed by Maradona's "Hand of God". This is caving in its infancy, there are no hard trips and there are caves just waiting to be discovered. Argentina is a long way away but really is worth the visit and with a few refinements to the travel arrangements (hindsight and experience are wonderful and will take 4 hours less). We propose a return next year for a bit more winter sun and plan to take in Buenos Aires as well. Estimated cost of flights will be about £650.

Agradecimientos especiales a (Special thanks to) Aída Galán (por su hospitalidad) for her tremendous hospitality, to Carlos Benedetto, INAE, for the marvellous welcome (por su gran bienvenido) and to the Grupo Espeleológica de Rincón de los Sauces for the rollercoaster ride (las montañas rusas), the Grupo Espeleológico de Neuquen, Centro Espeleológico Córdoba, Organización de Investigaciones Espeleológicas not forgetting Luis Carabelli of the Cuerpo de Espeleología, Rescate y Montañismo de Argentina and Gabriel Redonte of the Grupo Espeleológica de Argentina of course to the local police and army.

¡Volveremos!

by *Richard Carey*

♥ CONGRATULATIONS ♥ to Dave and Letti Tooke who got married on Saturday 1st July. They were brave enough to invite a few MCG members, one was even a best man(!), but everyone said that it was a super day. I'm sure MCG members will join me in wishing them both lots of love and happiness for their future together.

*Ed: I was on an educational trip in the South of France with my college students (tough!) so missed the wedding, but I did see the wedding photos and Letti looked stunning. Dave looked pretty dashing too - well, perhaps not pretty! Marcus was one of the two best men and I thought he looked great - but then I would think that, wouldn't I? (Sorry Marcus)*

## ***MENDIP CAVING 2000 WEEKEND***

Billed as a weekend of events and entertainments for Mendip cavers, it certainly lived up to its billing.

### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June – Priddy Village Hall**

#### Lecture 1 - Redcliffe Caves, Bristol

A fascinating talk by Alan Gray of A.C.C. on the mining and subsequent use of man-made caverns in the Redcliffe area of Bristol. The caves/mines were originally excavated in sand stone to be used in the glass making industry. Several old bottles were shown that had been made locally from this mineral. A good slide show included overviews of the current buildings overlaying the mine site including a peculiar building used for the making of round lead shot and utilising the lower passages of the mine. A meeting with Ian Mildon of A.C.G. has given us the promise of an evening trip into Redcliffe Caves on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September. This is the Friday night before the Annual BCRA Hidden Earth Conference in Bristol over the weekend of 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2000.

See Martin's cave diary for further information or contact me for a confirmed place on the trip. There might be no numbers limit on this particular trip, but book early to avoid disappointment.

#### Swildons Sump 12

An enthralling lecture by Mike (TREBOR) McDonald (BEC and CDG) on the problems facing him that he and his diving partner have encountered whilst pushing the remote sump 12 in Swildons. A truly horrible sounding place. It makes it worthwhile not being a cave diver.

#### Mendip Rescue Organisation

This lecture given by Brian Prewer (BEC) took us from the early days of formation of the MRO to its present day strengths, including the structure of organisation, how to initiate a rescue call out and hopefully rescues not in quality pub time!

During a break for lunch caving videos and photographs were shown to keep the caving topic on-going.

The afternoon session began with Mike (TREBOR) McDonald (BEC and CDG) giving an enjoyable lecture on the long hard dig to break into the extensive WIGMORE SWALLET. Years of hard digging to reach a major streamway and then pushing through many hard sumps to reach its present terminus. He talked on the postulated flow of the cave water to CHEDDAR over five miles away from the present cave end. He finished by saying that if anybody else wants to take up the

challenge and carry on where the present end is, then you are more than welcome to take the project on.

#### Lost Cave of Cheddar

A lecture given by Dave Irwin (BEC and UBSS) who has spent years delving into historical writing and reports spanning 700 years of references to a lost cave of Cheddar. Early references to a large cave at Cheddar could refer to Wookey Hole or another cave in the Cheddar area waiting to be re-discovered.

The last lecture was a glass lantern slide show given by Chris Hawkes (UBSS) and Dave Irwin (BEC and UBSS). These glass slides were taken by Jack Duck – pre great war and kindly loaned by Wells Museum who also supplied the glass slide projector (a huge beast compared to today's projectors).

Saturday evening was the Wessex Challenge. Part orienteering, part treasure hunt with hidden surprises for the contestants. This was eventually won by Wessex CC. They should know better - the objective is to come second, thus not having to host the following year's challenge! This was followed by a loud noisy stomp with food provided by MRO, to which all profits were given.

#### Sunday Morning

Many clubs were given the opportunity of selling unwanted caving items on a "boot stall". MCG had a stall operated by Joan Goddard who managed to sell a lot of surplus MCG kit and items donated for sale by members. Again all proceeds for stall/table rental went to MRO.

Joan also has a large number of back issues of DESCENT and CAVES & CAVING for sale to members if anyone is interested in adding them to their individual collections. See Joan for details.

Sunday also saw a demonstration of MRO rescue equipment including the mole phone, stretcher, drag sheets, proper use of Entinox and Dragon breathing systems. This was given by Brian Prewer and Danni Bradshaw. This demonstration was supposed to have been given in Swildons, but due to lack of interest in numbers, was given in Priddy Village Hall to six participants.

Other activities on Sunday included an assault course and practical SRT demonstrations given by Andy Sparrow.

In all, a very enjoyable weekend. The Foreman's Lounge bedroom was taken over by a visiting Guides Leaders Pack which gave problems to members looking for a bed for the weekend. It is hoped that during the BCRA conference weekend in September the cottage does not attract many visiting groups.

*by Geoff Beale*  
☎ 0118 972 2510

**British Cave Research Association (BCRA) and the National Caving Association (NCA)**  
– Update on Joint Discussions

*By Julie Hesketh*

Since our discussions at the AGM this year on the discussions between the NCA and BCRA over ways forward or joint working by the 2 organisations, things are moving forward. You will recall that the BCRA and NCA produced late in 1999, a key issues paper that basically identified that there was in fact little overlap or duplication in the work of the BCRA and NCA. Following debate at respective NCA and BCRA Council meetings, both Councils gave approval for further work.

In considering possible ways forward, the organisations decided to jointly seek help of a consultant from the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) who provide services (legal and administrative) to organisations such as BCRA and NCA. Funding was secured to appoint a CAF consultant and work has begun to proceed with stakeholder consultations. Stakeholders have been defined in 5 distinct groupings: NCA and BCRA; the 5 Regional Caving Councils including CSCC; individual cavers and caving clubs/societies; the other NCA constituent bodies (BCRC, CDG, NAMHO and Pengelly) and external bodies such as the Sports Councils, English Nature and others. Consultation meetings with the stakeholders have begun. Individual cavers/clubs and societies will be consulted via appeals in the caving press for ideas/concerns and by organising an open forum during the BCRA Hidden Earth Conference 2000 in Bristol on 15th – 17th September. The two Councils hope that a draft formal report will be available for their consideration by October.

The consultant's brief is to undertake a functional analysis of the BCRA and NCA and produce some ideas for discussion at the Hidden Earth Conference. He had already met with individuals from the NCA and BCRA Councils. He wishes to start by considering what cavers want from a national organisation and decide whether these aims are best served by 2 separate organisations (or, indeed, more than two) or is there some other alternative?

I attended a Stakeholder meeting with the CSCC on 1st July and met the CAF consultant and put to him many of the points that were raised at the discussion at the MCG AGM. The overall tone of the meeting was positive and I was pleasantly surprised at the level of agreement there was between the individuals who attended – on issues of principle at least. The key points I noted from the discussion were:

- The meeting took some time to consider what cavers want from a national caving organisation. There was broad agreement that the following "vertical" functions were desirable:
  - *Access* (including issues of conservation)
  - *Training and certification*
  - *Insurance*
  - *Communications* (both the communication of information relevant for cavers to cavers as well as communication of caving issues and "PR" to the outside world (an education/information function))

Cutting across all these vertical issues and underpinning the success of work in all of these areas are the need for

- *a stable financial situation*
- *efficient administration.*

A national organisation might also act as a conduit for getting grant funding to cavers from government and other sources.

- One view is that we do not presently have two national organisations but one umbrella body (NCA) with lots of organisations like the CDG and NAHMO that sit beneath the National Body. There is a view that the BCRA is basically a caving "club" with a national membership but that it is good at communicating to its members. The NCA is generally less good at communicating its activities.
- Reasons for individuals joining the BCRA were generally twofold – to get cheaper insurance for foreign trips and access to publications. It was generally agreed that these were functions any national body could effectively administer (though there was general consensus that Caves and Caving had deteriorated in quality and that there may only be room in the caving market for one quality magazine).
- The Wessex CC representative noted that their position was that they would wish to see no overall national representative body but just have regional councils. This suggestion was discussed but there was little support for this idea outside of the Wessex CC as the disadvantages are many and varied:
  - ~~Government want one point of contact with cavers (and other activities sporting and commercial alike);~~



- No regional body exists yet for Scotland:
  - Government consultations on environmental and health and safety issues generally cover England and Wales together and Scotland separately – the present regional structure for caving is not compatible with the way government operates:
  - This would in turn allow for disparity between positions of regions – leading to further weakening of cavers voice in national issues:
  - It would be difficult to agree national policies such as bolting and training policies – scope for inconsistency:
  - At present some regional councils are more effective than others are – there is no guarantee that there would be better effectiveness of existing regional bodies if they were given more autonomy.
- There was some debate over the need for paid officers. The meeting did not come to a conclusion on this. Some people agreed that paid officers would shift the perception of a national organisation towards a “professional” organisation. The BCRA model for employing paid contractors was not considered a suitable model in the future if paid officers were appointed. There was some concern that the appointment of paid officers would lead to the loss of many volunteers. The consultant replied that Citizens Advice Bureau’s (CAB) had precisely this problem when the first paid officers were appointed but soon volunteers returned once divisions of labour were defined etc.

### The Way Forward?

Following this meeting of individuals, the CSCC will discuss the issue at its September meeting and possibly develop a CSCC position. Once the Consultant has considered views of all of the stakeholders – including individuals at the BCRA conference, he will make recommendations. These will be addressed to both the councils of the BCRA and the NCA who jointly commissioned his work. Beyond that, the final outcome is difficult to predict, depending on just how revolutionary are his recommendations.

As stakeholders, individuals are welcome to make input into the process by writing to the CAF consultant at the Charities Aid Foundation (<http://www.cafonline.org/charitycentre>)

Alternatively, anyone wishing to make input via the MCG (who will contribute to the CSCC) should pass comments on to Tim Francis.

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## MCG news

**MOVING ON:-** Charlie Allison to Flat 1, Beach View, 121 Marine Parade, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 3SA % 07974-542013

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**WHOOOPS!** Did anyone spot the deliberate mistake in the last newsletter? I asked you on Tim’s behalf to check the enclosed membership list and contact him if there were any mistakes, or to tell him your postcode if it was missing. Well, it was not enclosed, and no-one informed me - perhaps you all thought that someone else would? Or perhaps you didn’t even notice! I have remembered to enclose it this time so could you let Tim know if you spot any errors or omissions please. Thanks.

**MCG BARBECUE AND ROUNDERS:-** I have heard via different members that this weekend was very successful. There was a good turnout from both MCG and the Wessex and everyone enjoyed the BBQ and barrel - which I’m told just lasted out. The rounders match was good clean(?) fun which we won 17½ to 5. (I don’t know how you get a ½ in the score. I thought you only scored a point if you got all the way round in one?) Well done everyone who turned out and made the event such a success.

**MCG RESCUE PRACTICE:-** I expect Brian Snell will send a report in in due time (after holidays etc.), but I did hear that Cara Allison volunteered to be the ‘victim’. It would be interesting to hear how it went from the casualty’s point of view as well.

**NO NEWS....** Probably due to to it being the holiday season there have been few news items submitted, also there has not been a committee meeting, so nothing else to report.

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING:-** will probably be on the weekend of 2nd/3rd September - TBC

## 3-PEAKS CHALLENGE - continued from page 1

We tried to settle again, then at 5:30am we heard a gentle tapping on the window. It was a very disappointed and bedraggled Letti trying to wake us but not wake us (there's logic there somewhere). Scafell had beaten her. It's a tough climb and although she was nearly at the top she just ran out of steam - and there were more who did the same after her. The other three (now the Intrepid Three) returned at 8am absolutely shattered but exhilarated at completing their second challenge. *Two down, one to go.* What they didn't tell us until some time later was that having got some way up the agreed route, they noticed that everyone else was going the wrong way. It didn't occur to the Intrepid Three for quite a while that in fact they were going the wrong way! Eventually they realised when they saw the cairn they were looking for a long way off on the *other* route, so had to backtrack all the way to the beginning again. (*Stupid boys! - as Captain Mainwaring would say.*)

Everything was sorted and packed away and we were off to north Wales and Snowdon - the final challenge. We went via Milnthorpe on the A6, not far from Arnside, where we had left Marcus's car to pick up on the way down so he didn't have to drive all the way back up north after Snowdon. I drove it to Snowdon while he caught up with some sleep in a reclined seat next to me. This gave the others marginally more space in the Land Rover to sleep. Mike was to go back south with Marcus after the challenge to help drive/keep him awake (they had to go to work the next day!). Dave and Letti had left their car in our garage as they were going to have a night/day in Lancaster before going home.

We got to the carpark at the foot of Snowdon at 12:30pm and the Intrepid Three went straight off, planning to be back in 3½ hours to make the whole 3 peaks within 24 hours. Knowing how absolutely exhausted they were we didn't honestly think they'd manage it. Just before they'd reached the top - very close I'm told - Dave's knees and legs gave out. Marcus and Mike tried to tell him how close to the top he was but he felt he would spoil their chance of finishing in time and sadly made his way back down. He must have felt seriously bad because he doesn't give up that easily.

Now, that huge camper van I mentioned earlier... well, while I sat in the Land Rover in the Snowdon carpark waiting for Mike and Marcus I noticed that camper van parked facing me in the row opposite. I didn't notice him leaving but was startled by a sickening crunch. I looked round and saw that he had hit a huge boulder placed just on the pavement to stop vehicles mounting or parking on the kerb! What's more it wasn't the exit which is probably why he couldn't get his camper van round the tight bend. He looked extremely embarrassed by everyone, including me, staring at him. He stopped in the road, walked back to pick up the large chunks of lights and bodywork that he had torn off then drove away quickly. *What a prat! What justice! We felt somehow vindicated.*

After all this excitement we suddenly realised that Mike and Marcus has just reached the bottom of the mountain and were heading for the carpark - and only 3 hours after they had set off! ...and they were within the 24 hour challenge set. Marcus and Mike said they encountered quite a bit of camaraderie on the mountains, especially on Snowdon where everyone was tired, and finding the going slow and arduous with lead legs. Another weary team had walked alongside Mike and Marcus on the last agonising stretch, encouraging, jollying and giving support, and vice versa. It was very nice to hear that this sort of behaviour still exists amongst sportspeople when the going gets tough.

Marcus and the others had decided to do the 3-Peak challenge to raise money for charity. The charity chosen was St Oswald's Hospice in Newcastle where Marcus's Grandad (my Dad) was looked after in an extremely caring and dignified way until his death this January. Their attitude and care for him, and us as a family, was second-to-none and they deserve every penny of the £400 raised. *Well done.*

*by Yvonne Rowe*

... some 3-Peaks Yv's droppings:-

YR: "Look at that rape. You don't see that much up here."

DT: "No. You bugger sheep instead!"

YR: "It's frustrating hearing all the birds but not seeing them."

DT: "Now you know how it feels to be a young lad!"

MW: "What was that?"

YR: "Two deer by the side of the road"

DT: "That's why we didn't stop to buy any!"

DT: "....it makes Snawdon more rewerding!"

## Redcliffe Caverns

I will arrange a trip into Redcliffe Caverns in Bristol for Friday 15th September 2000. This will be led by Ian Mildon of the Axebridge Caving Group.

This is the Friday night of the BCRA Hidden Earth Conference (15th to 17th September 2000). The start time will be 19:00 hrs.

If you are interested, please contact me on 01189 722510.

*Geoff Beale*