

MCG PRACTICE RESCUE 22ND JULY 2000

Attendees:

Brian Snell, Keith Knight, Dave Tooke, Letti Tooke, Tim Francis, Bill Richards, Geoff Beale, Jacky Gibbons, Julie Hesketh, Lee Hawkswell, Jean-Paul Burch, Andy Shand, Vicky Landeryou, Paul Cadey, Pete Bennet, Graham Old, Charlie Allison, Rob Wake and our volunteer casualty Cara Allison.

Rescue Summary

This year it was rather a toss of the coin whether we were going to hold the rescue practice in Manor Farm Swallet or Swildon's Hole. I had already done a little bit of reconnaissance work in Manor Farm earlier in the year and had found all the suitable anchors necessary for pitch hauls. Unfortunately I hadn't had the opportunity to get one more visit in to finalise rope lengths, pulley arrangements and all the other bits of detail needed to aid the smooth running of a practice rescue.

I suppose one could argue that ethically a rescue shouldn't be preplanned and that you should go into the cave armed with enough gear to cover for all eventualities. The problem with that is that it would inevitably extend the time required for the practice. There would also be the unnecessary lugging in of gear that didn't get used. Apart from being a valuable learning exercise, I have always felt that a practice rescue should in essence be fun, not an ordeal. Otherwise the numbers of those wishing to take part would inevitably dwindle. So doing anything to make the whole thing run more smoothly has got to be a bonus. Once you know what gear you will need and where it will be used, it can be suitably bagged and taken underground in the correct order. This also means that individuals can be allocated the responsibility of rigging specific hauls and everything is parceled up ready to achieve it. This worked particularly well on the Longwood practice in 1998.

By the time I called Brian Prewer to arrange for picking up the stretcher on the Friday night I had made up my mind that I had not done enough preparation for Manor Farm so it was going to be Swildon's. The rescues have been increasing in technicality each year, so I thought it would be nice to go for an easier option for a change. With this in mind I decided to start the rescue from first bend down-stream from the old 40-foot pot, at the place where you can see folding in the rock of the cave wall. We would then exit via the Short Dry Way and Jacobs Ladder. What could be easier? I went over the route in my mind's eye and estimated what gear we would need to overcome any steep obstacles. This amounted to two kit bags, the stretcher frame and the dragsheet.

I was quite surprised by the turn out. Initially we had ten rescuers and more were to follow later. The final total underground eventually swelled to eighteen. After assembling on the Green we headed off in two groups to the entrance. I briefly popped in at the farmhouse where you pay the entrance fee and explained who we were and that we were performing a practice rescue. Consequently no fee was necessary. At the entrance I asked that the steel frame be taken in assembled, so that we could get some idea where we might have problems in the tighter sections. This highlighted only one problem point and that was at the left hand bend, which leads down the steep shoot to the base of the 40-foot pot. We could just get the frame to turn this bend but with no room for a casualty. The decision was made therefore, to bring the casualty up this section in the dragsheet. The frame was lodged in the stream just above the water level and the dragsheet could be moved straight onto the frame, as it was manoeuvred through the hole at the top of the shoot. After overseeing Cara's incarceration into the dragsheet along with a lifeline attachment, the rescue started at about 12:15pm. All went well and the rescue was completed by about 3:00pm.

continued on page 4

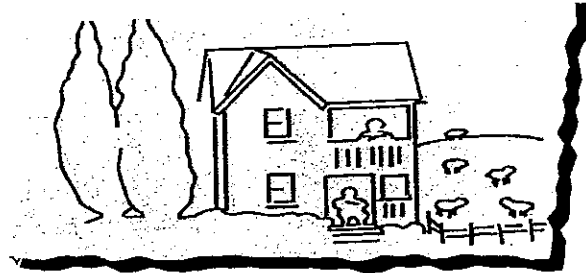
MENDIP CAVING GROUP

Nordrach Cottage
Charterhouse-on-Mendip
Blagdon, Bristol,
BS40 7XW
Tel: 01761 462797
Grid Ref ST51475606
OS 1:50,000 sheet 182

Ben Cooper (Cottage Warden)
Tel: 01256 364199
Or e-mail: ben.cooper@sbs.siemens.co.uk

MCG information:- Tim Francis (Secretary)
Tel: 0181 392 2572

High quality caving accommodation available for bookings of up to 16 people. All usual charging facilities, keys etc. Guests £2.50 per night.



WEEKLY MEETINGS:	At The Beehive, Egham, Surrey, on Thursdays from 9.00 p.m. At The Hunters Lodge, Somerset, on Tuesdays about 10.00 pm or at the cottage at 7.00 pm for caving trips.	
COTTAGE FEES per night:	MCG members, members children, SWCC, NPC Guest clubs and member's guests	£1.50 £2.50
PREPAYMENT STICKERS:	[Available to members only] 25 nights accommodation	£30.00
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:	Full and Probationary Members: £25.00 Associate Members:	£12.50
RECIPROCAL RIGHTS:	MCG (members only) have reciprocal booking rights with SWCC and NPC NPC bookings via Nic Blundell, tel: 01203 713849 (hm) or 01203 838940 (wk) SWCC bookings via Ian Middleton, tel: 01703 736997 or email ian_m@tcp.co.uk	

THE 2000 - 2001 COMMITTEE:

Secretary	Tim Francis	Flat 6, 16 Lambert Avenue, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4QR	Tel: 0181 392 2572 Timf@bjm.co.uk
Treasurer	Richard Cary	Hamleaze, Old Bristol Road, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 2AA	Tel: 0117 986 2029 Richard@richard42.free serve.co.uk
Caving Secretary	Martin Rowe	'Abingdon', 11 Church Hill, Arnside, Lancs., LA5 0DB	Tel: 01524 762664
Tacklemaster	Bill Richards	6, Elizabeth Square, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 4EJ	Tel: 01626 366639
Cottage Warden	Ben Cooper	10 Coronation Road, Basingstoke, Hants, RG1 4HA	Tel: 01256 364199 ben.cooper@sbs.siemens.co.uk
Editor	Yvonne Rowe	'Abingdon', 11 Church Hill, Arnside, Lancs., LA5 0DB	Tel: 01524 762664
Recorder / Librarian	Wayne Hiscox	3 Keward, Glastonbury Road., Wells, Somerset, BA5 1TR	Tel: 01749 671282
Social Secretary	Lynn Furneaux	4 Tor View, Wallaford Road, Buckfastleigh, Devon, TQ11 0AP	Tel: 01364 643679

Rescue Warden	Brian Snell	01329 238341
Conservation Officer	Marcus Ward	01252 815112
	J-P Burch	01737 217039
Cottage Extension	Wayne Hiscox	01749 671282
Examiners	Tony Knibbs	0033 5 61858232
	Charlie Allison	0181 224 7591

THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP IS A REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 270088

MCG NEWS IS PUBLISHED BY THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP, NORDRACH COTTAGE, BLAGDON, BRISTOL BS40 7XW

ORIGINAL MATERIAL © 2000 MENDIP CAVING GROUP AND THE AUTHORS

MCG news and items from the half-yearly forum held 7th October 2000

MOVING ON: Pat Newman to 5911 Barbados Place, # 201, Rockville, MD 20852, USA. Tel: 00 1 301 468 3513

E-mail: npatnmary@aol.com
or... patrick-newman@qwest.com

e-mail correction for:

Vicky Landeryou:
landeryou@bandv.freemove.co.uk (sorry Vicky)

THE NEWSLETTER: I was on the receiving end of quite a bit of flack because the newsletter is not advertising enough dates for meets and cottage bookings. I explained that I can't print what isn't happening and summer is usually bereft of meets and other caving activities due to most members taking their holidays over this period. Let me know about any impending trips that you have planned, or contact Martin if you want something special organised. I tried to pad out the last newsletter by writing up my own articles but if you want more, you must contribute more. I need you to write up accounts of your trips or anything else of interest for the newsletter.... *please!*

Members were also unhappy about the newsletter delivery being late. I can say from experience that enveloping, addressing and stamping takes a fair bit of time and I know Linda cannot access a post office during the week (or Saturday mornings if she's otherwise busy). Quite a few envelopes need weighing due to inclusions, doubles or for foreign postal. I have had a chat with Linda and we have come up with a couple of ways to speed things up so please bear with us until we can sort things out, and remember it is all done voluntarily.

COTAG KEY-FOBS: The cotag fobs will soon be coming to the end of their life and some have already needed replacing. Interest on the £10 deposits of currently owned fobs will not cover the cost of new ones which now cost £10 each. An estimate of £1300+ will be required. The current fobs might take up to 2 years to run out so the cost could be spread out. There were 3 suggestions put forward by members:-
1. Members buy their currently owned fobs before they run out for £15 (£5 + £10 already deposited).

2. The group has always funded changing the locks and replacing keys every 5 or 6 years so the Group should fund the new fobs and charge a deposit (£15).

3. We could ask members to relinquish their present deposits (we've done similarly before), ie. on return of their £10 deposit ask members to hand in their fobs, then give them a new one for £15.

The floor voted for proposal No.2 - the Group should fund the cost of new fobs.

New members will receive a new fob for a deposit of £15. Current members wishing to replace old or failing fobs will pay a £5 deposit (on top of the £10 they've already deposited) for a new one.

HOSING DOWN AREA: A proposal was put to the committee some time ago to cover the top and three sides (the third side being the shed) of the hosing down area. It was thought that if the area was sheltered, members would be more likely to change and clean gear outside and less likely to change out of dirty caving gear in the shower area. The proposer was asked to cost it. He then re-submitted it to the Forum. The cost for two sides and a roof in Corrolux sheeting is £450. It would be a temporary structure so no planning permission would be needed. There were 4 further suggestions from members:-

1. Arthur Spain said he could get Corrolux sheeting much cheaper through his business connections.

2. Some members thought the sides should be made from wood panels as this would be more aesthetic.

3. A suggestion was made to simply use a couple of wood fence panels to screen the hosing down area off.

4. A suggestion was made to do nothing yet until the whole of that side of the cottage has been looked at regards improvements.

It was agreed to leave it to the committee to decide.

More on page 10 >

MCG PRACTICE RESCUE - continued from page 1

Earlier I mentioned that this should be an easy rescue for a change. Oh dear, how easy it is to dismiss things as being simple but the sum of the difficulties add up to something less than simple. Suffice to say that it was quite hard work and ironically the rescue flowed less well as more people arrived. This was because there were too many people in certain sections of the cave. The enthusiasm of the rescuers was fantastic however and I think that everyone came out of the cave having enjoyed the practice. On last year's rescue in Waterwheel I arranged for a large bottle of water to be taken in but I had forgotten to do this on this rescue. So it was an added bonus that Linda Milne was waiting at the entrance with much needed bottles of drink and bananas. Thanks Linda.

Afterwards, one comment made to me was that there hadn't been an opportunity for those interested, to see how the haul sections were rigged. What anchors and backup anchors were used, where pulleys and jammers were located. The interest was shown because of the possibility of being thrown into a rescue situation during an expedition and the confidence would be needed in suitable rigs for hauling. A good point. I will have a think about this and for those interested, perhaps try some simulations on the surface.

Yet again it was a successful event due to the enthusiasm of those who participated. It makes the effort of planning and running a practice worthwhile. I send my thanks to everyone who turned up and took part.

Finally my thanks to Cara for volunteering to be the casualty. At times it wasn't a comfortable time for her on the rescue and she provided very positive feedback afterwards from the casualty's point of view.

by Brian Snell

The report sent to the MRO follows on pages 8 and 9.



DANGER WARNING

Simpsons and Swinsto through trips

The area below the Great Aven in Simpsons Pot, Kingsdale is dangerously unstable and is an accident waiting to trap the unwary or inexperienced or unlucky. If someone gets clumsy in there, it'll take a long time to dig them out!

A number of large boulders and a quantity of mud has fallen from beneath the huge jammed boulder which forms the 'floor' which you land on descending the Great Aven pitch, threatening to block the way down into Kingsdale Master Cave. One very large boulder (~3 m³) is perched just above the squeeze down at the base of Simpsons/Swinsto final pitches and seems likely to be knocked further by any more falls, effectively cutting off this way on.

Philosopher's Crawl may remain open, but if the huge boulder comes down this will also likely be blocked. Looking up, it is difficult to work out what is holding the rest up, and further collapse seems likely. For the time being it seems sensible to avoid descending the Great Aven, and potential through trippers should be aware that Simpsons/Swinsto through trips may well be impossible, and should bear this in mind if contemplating one way trips.



COTTAGE BOOKINGS:

7th - 11th Nov TCI - ED (12)
24th - 25th Nov Bill Richards (12)

RICHARD CARY: is available for caving on
Wednesday nights - phone 0117 986 2029

MCG POLO SHIRTS: Don't forget these are
available, any size, any colour, £14.50 each.
Contact Lynn Furneaux on 01364 643679

The next committee meeting is on Saturday
4th November 2000 at Nordrach Cottage.

REDCLIFFE CAVES – BRISTOL

At the Mendip 2000, BCRA weekend at Priddy, one of the lectures was on the extensive Redcliffe Caves in Bristol, given by Alan Gray of ACG.

I subsequently arranged a trip into Redcliffe Caves with Ian Mildon also of ACG for the Friday night of the recent BCRA weekend at the University of Bristol.

MCG members on this trip were myself, Steve Eddy and his chum Martin and we were duly shown around the mine workings by both Alan Gray and Ian Mildon.

Redcliffe Caves are right on the water front at PHOENIX WHARF in Redcliffe which is in the centre of Bristol. There is a large red sandstone outcrop over many acres which was extensively mined for sandstone that was used in the glass making (beer bottles) industry during the 16th-18th Century. When the glass making process was finished the mines were used for storage of all manner of imported goods brought into the docks. Local legend also says that some slaves were also housed there but this cannot be substantiated (yet) by Alan Gray.

The mined passages were of 10 feet in height and width and meandered through the sandstone in no discernable mine layout. Block walls showed where individual storage companies or cargos were stored.

Our tour took several hours through the mine workings. Other members of ACG were laying tape in the passages as there was to be general public access to the mine over the weekend. The tapes were laid in such a manner so that visitors could walk around the mine in a large circuit without inlet/outlet traffic meeting.

We were shown to some obscure areas of interest. One such was a passage that had been backfilled but dug out by ACG which gave access to a small chamber with dates and names from the 1700s. Other parts of the mine complex has been used as sewage tunnels that emptied into the docks basin at high tide.

Several shafts to the surface were seen which in most cases were 20-25 feet above the mined level. Traffic could be heard on roads above.

In one area of the mine a local entrepreneur had discovered how to make round lead shot and subsequently built a 50' tower over known passages and dug out a shaft to the mine to perfect his process. The tower has since been replaced with a modern "plastic" pub on the site.

After our tour we went to the local pub called the OSTRICH INN on BATHURST BASIN.

Our thanks go to ACG and in particular to Alan Gray and Ian Mildon for showing us around this fascinating mine complex, right in the middle of Bristol but not too far from MENDIP.

VERBAGE FROM VIRGINIA

by Paddy (Pat) Newman

I have not been involved with caving since I moved back to London from Bristol in 1993. However, I got married to Mary last year in Washington DC and became a resident in the DC area of the US, and as a means of getting to know the place and its people I thought it would be a good idea to make contact with the local caving club, or 'grotto' as they call it here. There are many good caves in Virginia and West Virginia, about 3-4 hours drive from DC, so the DC grotto is an active group which meets once per month on a Monday evening in a suburb of DC called Silver Spring.

One fateful day in February this year I drove over to the library where the meet was held and duly took a seat near the back, watching as various folk arrived and chatted about all things caving... and who should walk in just before the meeting came to order? *Miles E Drake*. "Who's he?" you ask! Well, those of you who were on the 1985 Christmas Majorca trip will remember that American chap who latched onto our group (he called himself a window cleaner). He arrived at our digs and announced that he had 'full vertical equipment'!!! I decided that discretion should be the better part of valour and that I should not make any assumptions about him based on my memories from Majorca. As it turned out, Miles is much the same now as he was then. I introduced myself during the break and after a few moments he remembered the group of 'Brits' as they call us here.

Miles is a very keen and conscientious caver, as those of you who met him may remember, but I'm sure you haven't forgotten his abseiling techniques, or rather the lack of them (allegedly). His reputation precedes him and he is known throughout the DC grotto for his fearless but alas frictionless descents, landing on his hapless victims below.

Enough of Miles for now, and a brief resume of my first caving trip to Highland County (HC), Virginia. There are some promising digging projects going on in various parts of Virginia and West Virginia. These projects are sometimes aimed at finding new entrances to existing caves, rather than just finding new caves. This is due to the problems of land owners granting permission to cross their land.

So, on a Friday afternoon back in March I found myself travelling west with Miles and Bob Zimmerman (no relation to Bob Dylan). Our host, Rick Lambert is conducting a survey of all the known caves in HC and looking for new ones too, hence the digging trip. British cavers have a good reputation here for digging out new passage, and although my digging credentials are by no means strong, Upper Flood being about it for me, my presence was well received. Saturday saw the five of us working on a couple of not very promising leads near stream level on the grounds of a Christian retreat. Fortunately, no prayers before digging, but they were really nice people and provided an excellent lunch. Unfortunately both leads closed down after 2-3 metres having moved a number of large boulders from the entrances. Saturday evening - no pub - no beer - oh dear! But Rick Lambert showed his video of Otter Hole (the 1970's Sid Perou one), again I am famous as I've done Otter *and* I lived nearby!

Sunday again sees us out prospecting in a different area. There are many places around here where various skirmishes and small battles occurred during the American Civil War. You therefore have to be careful how and where you dig to avoid disturbing a battlefield site. Basically, you are allowed to excavate and enlarge existing holes, but you cannot dig new ones. Such a hole was found by a large tree and over a period of 2-3 hours a body-sized entrance

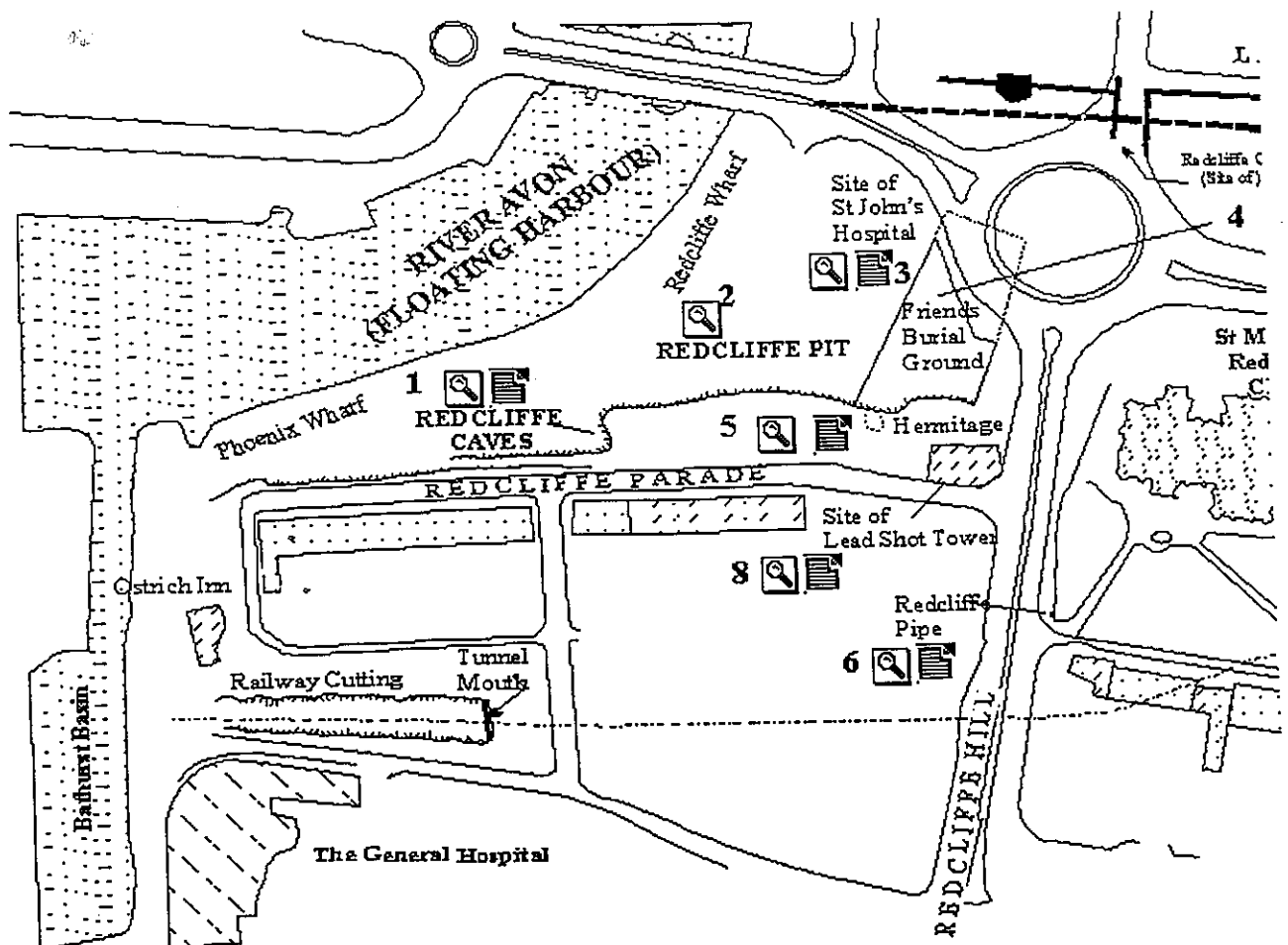
was made, with a promising echo below. As I'm the visitor, the new man in town, it's my privilege to go first. On with the yellow oversuit (not washed for 10 years, and smelled like it too). I slipped nicely through the hole into a standing-room, body-sized chamber and into a slot below that was too narrow for me. So now I've got to get out but can't! After 10 minutes of flailing about, my buddies dropped me a rope which I managed to loop around my foot to use as a foot-hold. At last a sweaty Paddy appears at the surface, and much relieved too!

Miles is the ultimate attack weapon in these situations as he is very slightly built (skinny). Miles descends and even he can't get through the slot. After half an hour with a hammer and other tools, he breaks through to find 200-300 metres of passage, with more to follow. Meanwhile on the surface, a name for this new passage is discussed and quickly agreed upon - Flailing Brit Pit! Well - so much for the 'caverns measureless to man' discoveries I had hoped for.

After clearing up, it's time to head back to DC after a very enjoyable first weekend away. The week after this trip I started a new job and have not had the opportunity to return yet. Now that winter is approaching, I will try to get on some more trips to the more popular caves and if I find something interesting to write about, I'll drop a you line.

Ed: In his accompanying letter, Paddy commented on reading in the newsletter about Martin's and my Landrover. He said it brought back memories of the one bought for the MCG Sima GESM expedition in southern Spain in 1988. He remembers the look of total shock after Neil Hutchinson drove it for the first time, and Andy Bear's description of the drivers seat as 'the bridge of the Enterprise'. Ah! - those were the days!

REDCLIFFE CAVES - continued from page 5



Mendip Caving Group - Practice Rescue Report 2000

Introduction

This is a report on the annual MCG Rescue Practice held this year in Swildon's Hole cave in 22nd July.

The aim of the practice rescue was to attempt to carry a casualty from a short distance downstream from the old 40-foot pot, back to the surface via the Short Dry Way and Jacob's ladder. It would prove to be a good exercise for crawls, steep passage and tight sections. Initially we were a team of ten plus the casualty and this later increased to eighteen.

The rescue was started at 12:15pm at the first bend down stream from the 40-foot pot. Here there is a convenient area to put someone onto a dragsheet and stay out of the stream. The volunteer casualty was strapped into the dragsheet with a short length of rope attached to her harness. This protruded out of the top of the dragsheet once it had been fastened, and allowed easy attachment of a lifeline.

The initial part of the carry was to be on the dragsheet only. We had discovered earlier, that the assembled frame with a casualty strapped to it would not fit around the bend that leads to the steep slope down to the base of the 40-foot pot. So the plan was to start the initial carry in the dragsheet. We would then pull the dragsheet up the slope, through the bend and straight onto the frame, which was positioned just out of the water. Once the casualty had arrived at the base of the 40-foot the lifeline was passed up so that the casualty could be lifelined from the rift passage that leads back to the Water Chamber. Once the casualty was ready to be lifted, a largish person sitting in the hole at the top and acting as a dam blocked the flow of water. This stopped the spray and allowed the casualty to be lifted up to the top section of the slope before water began creeping past the sides of the human bung. At this point some time was spent moving on due to the awkwardness of the situation. A little water ran in at the top of the dragsheet giving the casualty a slight soaking. The fact that she was wearing goggles however – something learnt from earlier rescues – at least kept the spray out of her eyes. Before too long we had the dragsheet through the hole and onto the stretcher frame and strapped in ready to be moved on.

The rift is somewhat awkward again to start but soon becomes easier and movement began to flow a little better. At this point more people had turned up to increase the numbers but this actually had the affect of disturbing the order of things as people got in the way of each other. The rescue continued uneventfully past the steep climb up into the Water Chamber and on along the rift passage to the Old Grotto where the next obstacle was encountered. Here, there is a step up in the passageway and a squeeze past a large white boss. The stretcher was turned on its side to negotiate this but was through quite quickly. It could have been lifted directly up into the chamber from this boss but the steel frame can cause damage to flowstone when dragged over it and am keen to avoid this whenever possible. The carry then continued under the false floor and up to the main chamber of the Old Grotto and the start of the Short Dry route to Jacob's Ladder.

Whilst the carry continued along this next section of passage Jacob's Ladder was rigged in preparation for the haul up into the final crawl to the entrance chamber (See Fig 1.). There is a large block at the top, which provided a good anchor with backup anchors. This haul was rigged with two pulleys. The haul rope was anchored onto the head of the stretcher. It then ran to the head of the pitch, through a jammer and pulley and back down to another pulley connected to the head of the stretcher and back to the head of the pitch again. A backup lifeline was also rigged to independent anchors. When the stretcher arrived, the ropes and pulley was attached and the haul began. Initially all went well with steady progress being made. Then something strange happened. With each tug of the haul rope the casualty went up but the base of the stretcher didn't move. For a moment I thought that our casualty was being stretched as if on a rack but there were no cries of pain. A closer look revealed that the buckle on the tape, which holds the two halves of the frame together, had rubbed against the rock and undone. This had been put on with the buckle downwards so that it would not press into the casualty's back. Consequently the two halves of the frame then proceeded to separate. The casualty was still quite safe however. The only danger here being that the lower end of the upper frame was now digging into the casualty's back. The pace was quickened and the stretcher was soon at the top. The frame was reconnected securely and an attempt made to take it through the crawl to the entrance chamber. This again proved very problematical and eventually the frame was removed and the casualty taken through in the dragsheet. Again it is likely that the actual MRO frame would fit through here. One final effort and the casualty was back in the sunshine and being released from bondage at about 3:00pm.

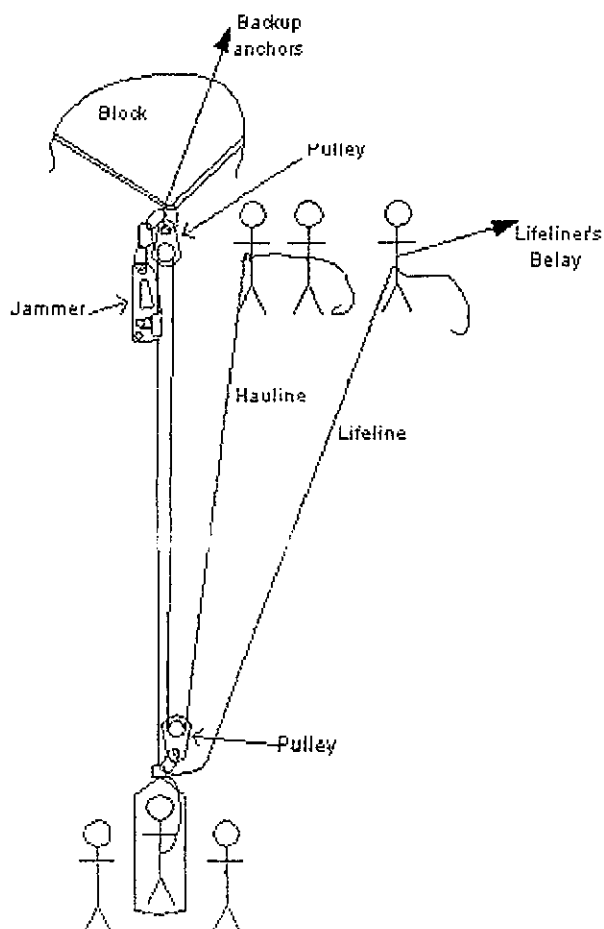


Fig 1.

Conclusion

The rescue on the whole went well but was certainly not as easy as expected. With the number of rescuers eventually totaling eighteen, on occasions there were too many for a given section and rescuers got in the way of each other. Had this been known from the beginning the rescue would have been planned better, with one team handling the earlier section of the cave and a second to handle the later half. Some members of the team wanted to get a closer look and understanding of the rigging of the hauls but didn't have a suitable opportunity. This is something to be addressed later with simulations on the surface.

The goggles proved to be beneficial although on occasion they did steam up too much giving the casualty a feeling of claustrophobia. Rubbing some fairy liquid inside the lenses before use could probably have eliminated this.

When the casualty was being carried out of the frame there were occasions when the head section of the dragsheet was lifted too much, with the consequence that the casualty's chin was driven into her chest. Not clever if there had been a neck injury. More attention will be paid on future practices to ensure that the casualty is treated a bit more gently. There will be more emphasis on the casualty's simulated injuries and this will be added as a continuous consideration throughout the practice.

With this in mind we will need to spend some time in the coming year looking into the medical kit used by the MRO and include it, if possible, into next year's practice.

by Brian Snell

More MCG & Forum news:

LIFE MEMBERSHIP: A proposal was put to the Forum for the option of life membership of MCG for £500 (equivalent to 20 years subs at the current rate). This would benefit Group coffers as well as members. In the discussion that followed the meeting was reminded that BEC did it years ago and got into serious difficulties as they ended up with very few members paying annual subs 15-20 years on.

The floor agreed that the proposal needs proper pricing to make sure the Group does not lose out financially in the long term. It was felt that the only real benefit was that of guaranteed membership for the member.

MCG EXPEDITION: Martin asked the floor if there was any interest in a group caving expedition/holiday for summer 2001. Richard Cary said there will be trip to Argentina (contact him for details) and although a few other places of interest were put forward, no one was able to commit themselves. Plans and bookings need organising now so instead we are going to speak to MNRC to see if MCG members would be welcome to join their trip to Matienzo and the Picos de Europa for caving and walking. Martin and I have already had an invitation on the strength of our joint trip to Orkney (and the Landrover!) so we'll let you know ASAP what the answer is.

WOODSTORE: It has been proposed that we put the woodstore over the cess-pit in a shed structure - cost would be about £250. *The floor agreed but that we should look for something nearer £100.*

TREASURER: You will be pleased to hear, as we on the committee are, that Richard Cary is back in the country and is to resume his post as the Group's Treasurer.

HAS ANYONE GOT... a lawnmower they can donate to the Group? It's a bit late in the year now but we will need one for the coming spring/summer. Any type will do as long as it works and is servicable. *Thanks.*

MCG ANNUAL DINNER 2001:

Next year's annual dinner will be at the Cox's Mill Restaurant. Date and time TBA. The menu will be as follows:-

STARTER

Soup (Chef's choice)
Prawn Cocktail
Homemade Farmhouse Pate
Devilled Whitebait
Chilled Melon Boat

MAIN COURSE

From the carving table:-
Roast Topside of Beef
Roast Leg of Pork
Roast Turkey
All served with fresh vegetables
and roast potatoes

Vegetarian alternatives:-
Vegetable Chilli with Rice
Vegetable and Cream Kiev

DESSERT

Belgium Apple Pie
Raspberry Pavlova
Fresh Fruit Salad
Cheese Board

Tea or Coffee and Mint

The cost will be £20.00 per person.

There will be a coach booked so people don't have to drink and drive. There will be a selection of beers at the bar, a raffle, and a room available upstairs for a slide show or guest speaker etc. Also, Cox's Mill is an hotel with 10 rooms at £15 per person, for those of you who prefer to stay 'on site'. For more information contact Lynn Furneaux on 01364 643679

Dates for your diary:

Peak Cavern, Derbys, 17-19th November,
Contact Geoff Beale on 0118-972-2510

TBA - Exploration of tunnels at Castle Cary
(see newsletter no. 291).

TBA - Devon cave meet, possibly February -
contact Martin Rowe on 01524-762664