



Extension to Sa Gleda, Mallorca

Here's an interesting page talking about the extensions in Sa Gleda. Apparently its gone massive. There was a great article in a recent edition of the Mallorca Daily Bulletin that my parents dug out for me. It's actually quite near the villa so perhaps this year we might go and dip our toes in the sump. Tim Francis

Press release - Grup Nord de Mallorca, Cave-diving Section

The cave **Cova de sa Gleda** (Mallorca, Illes Balears, Spain) is the largest subaquatic cave in Europe, and among the six largest caves in the world of this type with only one single natural entrance.

Cave divers from the Spanish caving group Grup Nord de Mallorca (GNM) have managed not only to break the record for Spain but also the European record for subaquatic caves. They have also placed sa Gleda among the first six caves in the world of this type, which have only one single natural entrance, and the cave is now the largest cave of any type on all the Balearic Islands.

After two and a half years of work, members from the GNM have so far explored some 10,500 metres of submerged passages and chambers. But the final cave could be far more extensive as the group has not as yet completed a detailed exploration of all its known parts.

The previous European record was held by the Keld Head System in the UK, which has a total survey length of 8,000 metres. The previous Spanish record was held by Cova des Coll with a total survey length of 4,880 metres, of which 3,389 metres are subaquatic. Interestingly, this cave is also situated on Mallorca in a village called Portocolom, and furthermore this record was established in 1997 by a team which includes members from the actual sa Gleda group.

Cave Location:-

The cave entrance is situated about 1.5 km inland from the south-eastern coast of Mallorca, within the municipal district of Manacor, and more or less half way between Portocolom and Porto Cristo, which is famous for its two show caves Coves del Drac and Coves dels Hams.

Cave Description:-

The entrance itself lies on the course of a now non-active torrent and was formed when a doline (or sinkhole) collapsed onto the floor of a chamber 30 metres below, which has left behind an opening of about 30 metres by 17. It is worth mentioning at this point that many caves do not in fact have natural entrances and are often only discovered when a section collapses or an opening is made by natural processes or man-made activities.

The chamber is about 80 metres long and 40 wide and it has a west-east orientation. Its floor slopes down both eastward and westward and at its eastern end there is a lake, from which the submerged portion, which is by far the largest part of this cave, is entered. The surface of this lake, which is about 30 metres wide, 7 across and 35 metres beneath ground level, coincides with the water table.

The subaquatic cave can be best described as being a complex network of submerged passages and chambers, which at times become labyrinthine. Curiously this part of sa Gleda has a predominant northeast-southwest orientation which means that it runs parallel to the coast and not perpendicular to it as might be expected.

The submerged passages and chambers of sa Gleda show a wide range of evolutionary stages. In some the corrosive processes of the water dominate, and so they are almost boulder free and adjacent passages have merged into one after their partitioning walls have been crumbled away. In others, breakdown processes dominate where heaps of blocks, from collapsed ceilings, and broken speleothems (stalactites, stalagmites, etc.) are often found. Obstructions of this type are fairly frequent and they can divide chambers into two and even block off possible continuations.

continued on page 4

2001 MCG CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR

DATE	AREA	EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
Aug 4/5th	Mendip	Porch work weekend	Wayne Hiscox	01749 671282
Aug 4/5th	Mendip	Shed project weekend	Ben Cooper	01256 364199
Aug 4/5th	Mendip	Linda Milne's party	Linda Milne	01344 774589
Sept 1/2nd	Mendip	Bone Hole work weekend	Tim Francis	0208 392 2572
TBA	Mendip	Archaeology walk	Yvonne Rowe	01524 762664
TBA (n/1 292)	Somerset	Castle Cary tunnels		
Every Weds	Mendip	Mid-week caving	Richard Carey	0117 986 0945

ACCOMMODATION:	Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol BS40 7XW Tel: 01761 462797 Grid Ref ST51475606 OS 1:50,000 sheet 182
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 on Wednesdays at 7.00 pm for caving trips.
COTTAGE FEES per night:	MCG members, members children, SWCC, NPC £1.50 Guest clubs and member's guests £2.50
PREPAYMENT STICKERS:	(Available to members only) 25 nights accommodation £30.00
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:	Full and Probationary Members: £30.00 Associate Members: £15.00
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 2001 - 2002 COMMITTEE:

Secretary	Tim Francis	Flat 6, 16 Lambert Avenue, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4QR	Tel: 0208 392 2572 secretary@m-c-g.org.uk
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Caving Secretary	Vacant		
Tacklemaster	Martin Rowe	'Abingdon', 11 Church Hill, Arnside, Lancs., LA5 0DB	Tel: 01524 762664
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Rescue Warden	Brian Snell	01329 238341
Conservation Officer	Vacant	
Cottage Extension	Wayne Hiscox	01749 671282
Examiners	Charlie Allison Fiona Cockburn	01903 821447

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
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MCG News and items from the Annual General Meeting held 07-07-01

MOVING ON:- Doug Harris has moved to Lilac Cottage, Heneage lane, Falfield, Wotton-under-Edge, Glos., GL12 8DN
☎ 07976 165908

Bill Richards and Lynn Furneaux have moved to 1 The Retreat, Tudor Road, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1HU
☎ 01626 366960

Ben Cooper to Granville, Circle Hill Road, Crowthorne, Bershire. RG45 6RN

WELCOME to Gary Woollacott of 31 Middle-combe Drive, Poundswell, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 3UY
☎ 01271 378334

e-mail: gary@aerostanrew.co.ukand....
Simon Stevens of 61 Totterdown Road, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset, BS23 4LJ ☎07971 792688
e-mail: simon.stevens@gkn-wds.co.uk
....who have both been accepted as Probationary Members.

AN APPLICATION has been received from Matthew Amner of 17 Lane End Park, Barnstaple, devon, EX32 8PP
☎ 01272 325536
e-mail: matt-amner@talk21.com

MCG WEB ADDRESS: The site now has a new address - <http://www.m-c-g.org.uk>. Please update any links or references to the MCG site. For now the old address <http://m-c-g.fsnet.co.uk> will also continue to function. The advantage of this is that we now have our own web address which is independent of any particular service provider. The site is still hosted by Freeserve and there is no intention to change. However, if in the future Freeserve should go out of business, or we should need to change provider, the new address can simply be transferred to another service provider, without discontinuity with links, search engines etc.

AGM SNIPPETS:-

The Cess Pit: There was a fairly lengthy discussion about the state of the cess pit and whether it would continue to cope with guests' and MCG's 'output'. The general opinion was that it would. Ben Cooper suggested that we could purchase a sewage works (a 3-stage filtering system) but this was considered un-necessary. It was finally agreed that we should get it emptied more regularly. Arthur Spain agreed to arrange the cess pit emptying and to be at the cottage when it happens.

Cottage work: A very lengthy discussion took place over the lack of volunteers for cottage maintenance. It was suggested that we pay a local odd-job man to do cottage work 1 day per month. The committee is to look into it.

Gift Aid: There was a short discussion on Gift Aid and how it works. Someone asked what would happen if someone donated a gift. It was explained that who donated the gift would have to be registered, plus the cost of the gift, and it would have to go through the accounts which would make turnover look greater than it is and make a lot of extra work for the treasurer. Malcolm Cotter and Martin Rowe are going to try to sort out a missing year (1998) and to find out who paid subs so they can make a claim from the Inland Revenue.

Work weekends: Local members asked that a specific day and approximate time be advertised for jobs on special work weekends, like the Bone Hole lid weekend. This is so they can arrange to help when the work is being done instead of arriving at the cottage to find people are still in bed, or after the work has been done. This was agreed.

50th Anniversary: In less than 3 years time MCG will be 50 years old!. It was agreed that we should make it a special occasion. An advert is to be placed in the newsletter for ideas.

There were many more items under discussion and for more details of these, and the above, members are advised to read the AGM minutes accompanying this newsletter (*hopefully*).

Extension to Sa Gleda, Mallorca - continued from page 1

The largest chamber so far found has some very impressive dimensions. It is 500 metres long, which is approximately the same length as five football fields placed one after another. The distance between its roof and floor oscillates around 12 metres, and its width is typical between 40 and 50 metres, reaching 70 metres or more in places.

This chamber was only discovered after one of the cave-divers had forced a tight 50-metre passage through a boulder choke (an obstruction caused by roof/wall collapse), which is a very psychologically stressful task when it is carried out totally underwater.

Geomorphology of the Cave:-

The cave lies within limestone rock which formed between 10 and 5 million years ago during the Upper Miocene Epoch of the Tertiary Period. It is an example of what are called solution caves and these owe their origins initially to the dissolution of bedrock along structural weaknesses such as joints and faults within the rock and the bedding-planes between strata.

Sa Gleda, like many caves, has had a long and complex history. The submerged sections of this cave were formed by the diffused infiltration of surface waters, and as these waters had slow flow velocities, they tended to dissolve the bedrock along all possible joint openings. The result of this is the actual network of passages and chambers.

The origins of the entrance chamber, on the other hand, can be attributed to the infiltration of surface waters through the doline, where the volume and flow velocities of the circulating waters were higher. During the Quaternary Period, which covers the last 1.65 million years of geological history, the level of the Mediterranean Sea has both risen above and fallen below its present level on numerous occasions. This means that the currently flooded sections of this cave have been dry at times, and during these dry periods speleothems, calcite formations such as stalagmites, stalactites, stalagmite columns, flowstone, draperies, etc., were able to form.

More importantly, telltale bulbous growths can form on speleothems when they are only partially covered by the subterranean water because of sea-level changes. These growths can be dated by measuring the decay of naturally occurring radioactive isotopes, and the results can then be used to help scientists determine when and by how much the Mediterranean sea-level changed.

The sa Gleda group have been collaborating with the Universitat de les Illes Balears and two Italian universities, Università "Roma Tre" and Università "La Sapienza", both of which are in Rome, by supplying them with samples of these growths taken from this and other caves that they have explored.

The group have also taken other types of samples and specimens from the submerged sections of this cave to help other investigators with their research projects. They have also found a few pieces of pottery, which they have passed onto archaeologists.

Grup Nord de Mallorca, Secció d'Espeleobuceig/Cave-diving Section:-

The cave-diving section of the GNM has a small but very active group of members who, on average, do 12 monthly dives between them in submerged sections of caves. The core of the group consists of three cave-divers, Francesc Gràcia, Juanjo Lavergne and Bernat Clamor, and Peter Watkinson in a support roll. Exploration History. The first serious exploration of sa Gleda took place in 1974 when Miquel Trias, G. Pulido and Lluís Roca (from the Speleo-Club de Mallorca) explored and mapped the terrestrial part of this cave. Around the same time as their exploration, another Mallorcan caver, Francesc Ripoll, carried out a subaquatic inspection of the cave's lake, and he discovered that it opened out into a large submerged chamber. Possibly because of the technical difficulties that existed at those times, he decided against exploring any further than this chamber. The results of their work were published in the Balearic Caving-journal *Endins* in 1989. Because of the importance of his initial discovery, the sa Gleda group have named this chamber "Sala d'En Francesc Ripoll".

During the 80s and early 90s the lake was again explored by divers, including the renowned Welsh cave-diver Martyn Farr. But again only the initial chamber was explored. In 1997 the cave-diving section of the GNM started its exploration and in 2000 the GNM announced that the sa Gleda group had up to then explored about 6,000 metres of submerged passages and chambers in the cave Cova de sa Gleda, which set a new Spanish record for a subaquatic cave. Since 1997, the sa Gleda group have visited the cave on 160 occasions and have completed over 600 hours of diving.

Cave diving is without doubt the riskiest form of caving there is. In fact, it is generally considered as being a very high risk activity, which requires both specialized equipment and training. The sa Gleda divers initially started the exploration of this cave using just two compressed-air bottles, the minimum for this type of diving, but as the cave has got bigger they have been forced to increase the number of bottles they carry. Luckily for them, most of the submerged sections lie between 10 and 15 metres below the level of the water table, which helps to reduce the amount of air needed to be carried (the volume of air consumed a minute increases with depth, so a given compressed-air supply will last longer at shallower depths).

The furthest point reached so far is 1,700 metres from the lake and it is also where the maximum depth of 24 metres was found. To reach this point, the divers are carrying between three and four bottles and it is taking them about three hours just to swim there and back. To this time, they are having to add about twenty minutes of decompression time (this is to reduce the amount of nitrogen absorbed by the body's tissues during the dive to a safe limit). They decompress using a separate bottle which they have left underwater for this purpose near to the lake.

At the moment, the sa Gleda group have had to reduce their activities in this cave, as they are currently trying to raise funds for the necessary equipment that they will need to be able to continue and finish the exploration of this cave.

The sa Gleda group can be contacted as follows:-

Juanjo Lavergne (Catalan, Spanish and English) (+ 34) 659267106 E-mail: jjlavergne@readyssoft.es

Peter Watkinson (English and Spanish) (+ 34) 686 711 517

Grup Nord de Mallorca web-page: <http://www.terra.es/personal/grupnord>

The sa Gleda group also have a number of digital photographs available.

<http://www.terra.es/personal/grupnord/pressre.htm> 4-6-01

AT YOUR SERVICE

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

The following Officers were re-elected at the AGM:

Secretary: Tim Francis
Treasurer: Richard Carey
Editor: Yvonne Rowe

The following Officers were co-opted at the committee meeting following the AGM:

Recorder/librarian: Jane Baldwin
Tackle Master: Martin Rowe
Social Secretary: Lynn Furneaux
Cottage Warden: Ben Cooper

Ben will no longer has time to manage the cottage maintenance, therefore he would like a volunteer who could take this on... *please*. He will still attend committee meetings once a month and deal with cottage bookings etc.

OTHER POSTS agreed at the AGM:

Rescue Warden: Brian Snell

Examiners: Charlie Allison
Fiona Cockburn

Conservation and Access Officer: None

This is the second year that MCG has been without a Conservation and Access Officer. If anyone is interested in this post and would like to know what is involved, contact either Tim Francis (see page 2 for details) or Marcus Ward on 01252 815112. The Group is also currently without a Caving Secretary... any volunteers?

THE MCG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on Saturday 13th April 2002 in the Hunter's Lodge Inn, Priddy, at 10:30am.

CAVING SNIPPETS

MENDIP CAVE ACCESS: Mendip and area (CSCC) - updated on 12th June '01.

The following caves/areas are now open:-

- Banwell Bone Cave
 - Banwell Stalactite Cave
 - Fairy Quarry Cave
 - GB Cavern
 - Charterhouse Cave
- Longwood Valley including -
- *Longwood/August
 - *Rhino Rift
 - Tynings Farm
 - St Cuthbert's Swallet
 - Singing River Mine

* access must only be via Cheddar Gorge and Blackrock Gate - do not use the normal route from the Charterhouse Road as this involves crossing open farmland over which there is no public right of way.

Burrington Combe and Crook Peak are now open to the public.

The following caves WILL NOT be reopened for the time being:-

- Cuckoo Cleaves
- Thrupe Lane
- Swildon's Hole (situation is to be reviewed at the end of June)

Velvet Bottom also remains closed to visitors.

Most of the Bath Stone Mines remain closed. No current update available.

It is essential to check first before visiting any other cave site. Do not assume that it is open especially if it involves crossing farm land. It should be noted that some footpaths will remain closed and unless this changes, visiting some caves using a public footpath could be against the law.

Please note that the situation can change rapidly and with further recent outbreaks

in Somerset and in other caving areas it is advisable to check regularly for updates.

Note: As the newsletter goes to print Swildon's is still not open but it is worth checking regularly as the situation could change at any time.

WARNING: Thefts from cars is rife at the moment. Obviously the thieves are monitoring the relevant web sites. Normal advice applies, however, previously safe areas may now be suspect.

RESCUED...

A potholer trapped underground for 5 days has surfaced after an intensive rescue operation in the Fontanilles Cave near Montpellier, France.

Teletext, 7th June 2001

VIRTUALLY THERE

The Time Team from Channel 4 television have a web page where you can take a trip into Cooper's Hole. You can find it on:
http://www.channel4.com/plus/timeteam/cheddar_recon.html

Dates for your diary:

August Conference on Sustainable Development in Karst Regions, China. See BCRA website: www.bcra.org.uk/events.html

Sept 7 Conference on Limestone Hydrology and Fissured Media, France. See BCRA website: www.bcra.org.uk/events.html

Sept 22-24 NAMHO Conference, Co. Wicklow, Ireland - *Cancelled due to foot and mouth restrictions.*

Oct 12-14 Hidden Earth 2001, Buxton Community School, Derbyshire.

Cottage Warden's Report AGM 2001

The Cottage Warden's role basically divides into three separate jobs:

- Cottage Maintenance
- Arranging Guest Group Bookings
- Participating in the general running of the club through the monthly Committee meetings

In terms of Cottage Maintenance, the work weekend last spring saw a huge amount of progress, as reported in the June newsletter. In summary, the library cupboards were fitted, a number of window frames were stripped, repaired and stained, the door frames were painted and stained, a new man hole cover over the cesspit was fitted, the shed was stained, electric sockets were fitted in the charging area, the spotlight over the washing down area was moved and repaired, and a large amount of spring cleaning was carried out.

A second work weekend was held later in the summer. The window frames stained in May were given a second coat of stain. The two front upstairs windows were "emergency repaired" inside and out. These were found to be in a very poor state, with areas of soft rotten wood. This has been partially stabilised by the emergency repair (i.e. copious amounts of 5-star and stain), but the intention is to strengthen the wood with hardener and fill the worst of the holes with plastic wood, and then seal with stain. Dark oak stain, as mentioned in the June report, was used on these two windows. In the event, I think I prefer the mahogany stain as used on the other window frames, and so, in future I recommend we use that.

The excess stone left over from building the wall was finally cleared away. A big thank you to Doug Harris for offering the use of his trailer. That means we can now complete the lawn – a mammoth task to dig over and de-stone the remaining two-thirds. People keep telling me that a cultivator would help – and I am prepared to believe it, so if anyone would like to arrange this, I am sure the committee would support it.

Then foot and mouth hit, and activities at the cottage were suspended. Just before the start of the crisis, we had ordered a new shed – a small wood shed. This arrived just too late, and a small number of us visited the cottage at the start of the crisis to erect it. Then, once the all clear had been given, we held another work weekend in June. One of the main activities was to clear out the old shed, and cut up all of our wood and stack it in the shed. Surprisingly, this took six people nearly all day, and completely filled the new shed. A number of other tasks were also completed, as reported in the news letter. Thanks to everyone who took part.

In terms of bookings, I received another 36 bookings 1st April to 1st April 2001, representing a revenue of about £2000. The increase came particular during the first two months of this year, which was particular busy with group bookings every week. I even had to turn away a couple of groups. It was a great relief, as usage of the cottage had been very slow towards the end of 2000. Sadly, the frenzy all came to an abrupt halt with the FMD crisis. You may remember that I put together the 30-bed proposal at the half-yearly. Well, no-one has taken me up on the offer. I think that when it came to it, groups were not prepared to pay the £75 per night.

In terms of participating at committee meetings, there are a number of particular things to report.

You may remember that I promised to look into the cottage insurance. This year, we agreed again to remain with the current insurers. I did get a quote from Zurich, but it was significantly higher.

The committee increased the membership by £5, and we agreed at the half yearly that this would be put towards the cottage long-term fund. The first of our major projects will be to landscape the car park, and cap it with a hard surface. This should greatly improve living conditions during the winter months. We are in the process of obtaining quotes for the work, and will make a decision when we have the information. This may take many months to arrange, as with all things MCG, we are always reliant on voluntary effort. Please be patient.

Finally, you will be aware that our Cotags are all nearing the end of their life. We agreed at the half-yearly that the club would fund the replacement of Cotags, which cost about £10 each. So far, I have bought 20 new ones, and intend to continue to replace them, on demand. If your Cotag has failed, please return it to the Cottage Warden, including a deposit cheque of £5 (we now ask for a deposit of £15 for set of the keys), payable to the Mendip Caving Group. In return, you will receive a brand-new Cotag. (Of course, if you have already paid a £15 deposit, then the £5 is not required.)

I would like to end on a personal note. Over the last year, my personal circumstances have changed, and I am no longer able to offer as much time to the MCG as I did two years ago. In particular, I find the maintenance of the cottage the hardest burden, as it really needs someone who can visit the cottage more often than once a month. There are also a small number of jobs – such as getting the fire extinguishers checked, that need someone to visit the cottage mid-week. So, while I am prepared to stand again as Cottage Warden, I would prefer to hand over to someone else – particular the maintenance aspect of the job. If I am asked to stand again, then I would gladly welcome offers of help in that respect.

Ben Cooper June 2001

Calling all locals (and mid-week visitors): As you will see from the previous, and this newsletter, a lot of caving has started happening again on Wednesday nights now that most of the foot and mouth restrictions have been lifted. Why not meet up with Richard Carey and Co. at the cottage on Wednesday evenings and join them for a caving trip.

We're back!

The Third Way Goatchurch Cavern 9th June 2001

June the 9th was the official day of reopening and things are beginning to pick up only very slowly here. Swildon's is still closed so Paul Craddy I went down Goatchurch, something easy to start with. Once in the cave we seemed to forget that we had had an almost 3 month lay off and explored with great enthusiasm. We checked every nook and cranny and seemed to find all the tight difficult bits. Eventually we got to the Boulder Maze and went to have a look at the third way down into the Boulder Chamber. In all the 15 years since I started caving again I don't think I have ever succeeded in this route. I had always found it impossibly tight. Paul slipped through without any problems and I believed him when he said I could get through. I knew it was a mistake almost straight away, as it became increasingly obvious that I could not climb back out. I managed to get through the first part of the squeeze by means of an extreme exhale. The problem with the next bit is not so much that it is tight but that it has two edges of a rift to negotiate. The fear of embarrassment is a wonderful thing so I persevered. There was just about enough room to remove my oversuit with a lot of Paul's assistance, he came back round to help get the top off and then back round to pull the rest off. With an extremely deep exhale I forced it very slowly. The two edges of the rift that I was unable to get into ran across my chest and it was quite painful but not impossible. The relief was unimaginable. I regained my oversuit, helmet and boots and we decided to call it a day. The squeeze had taken 30 minutes. If I had had to be rescued I would probably have to give up caving on the Mendips for the shame of it.

A Mid(ge) Summer Night's Dream Rod's Pot 13th June 2001

Wednesday Nights are back and kicking, well at least for the moment. Jacky Gibbons, Lee Hawkswell, Paul Craddy and myself turned up at the Cottage, drank some tea (English Breakfast) out of matching cups, thanks Ben, ate some biscuits, (Coffee and Caramel chip cookies) and decided we would keep it fairly low key and go to Rod's Pot as we could drive right to the entrance. A few months off can make you very lazy not to mention unfit. Once we were changed we entered the cave and remarked that the normal puddle at the entrance had been reduced to mere soft mud. We carried on down the cave passing over the Pots. Paul went the tight way on the left and joined the rest of us at the top of the Boulder Chamber. A partial descent of the chamber saw us into the alternative descent on the right hand side. This is a bit more sporting and offers some fairly mild squeezes to negotiate. After a few minutes we regained the chamber and after a cursory look at the climb up to EyeBall Rift we carried on down to the Bear Pit. Mission completed we returned to the surface using the alternative rift on the left to regain the entrance chamber. It is really nice to come out into the sunshine and the midges were extremely pleased to see us. Feasting to their hearts content as we hurriedly got changed. They probably haven't had anything to eat yet this year. Anyway back to the cottage for apple pastries, thanks Jacky, and more tea. This is the MCG after all.

Size 10 Pierre's Pot 16th June 2001

This was going to be a major club expedition with Tim Francis, Julie Hesketh, Paul Craddy, Peat Bennett, Stephen Duckworth and me going to do a full exploration of this impressive cave. I got through the slot last year by removing my oversuit and thought that that would be sufficient this time around. Of course last year I was a lot fitter and probably a lot more agile. Last year it had been a bit tight on my chest but do-able. I don't know if my chest would fit as I could even get my behind in. I decided that if it was going to be this much trouble to get in it would be virtually impossible to get back out again so I let the size tens carry on and contented my self with a browse round in the upper series. I understand they had a good trip but then that is their story.

Do we need a key for this? Sidcot Swallet 20th June 2001

It seems to be taking a bit of time for people to get back into the swing of Wednesday nights and this evening found only Steve Duckworth and myself at the cottage. We agreed we would do something "easy" as we have been inactive for a while. We decided we would do Sidcot and got changed. I had not brought my cottage key and Steve left his inside. As soon as we had shut the door we realised our mistake. So, it was a quick trip to visit Jacky Gibbons to borrow a key and then off to Burrington Combe. Sidcot Swallet is

among the "Burrington Six" and is much favoured by beginners. No problem for me then, I thought. We walked up West Twin Valley and peered into the recently excavated Flange Swallet and arrived at the entrance. We entered the cave and decided that we would do Paradise series only. Squeezing through the Tie Press saw us safely into the chamber and we continued our descent down to the Lobster Pot. We descended and carried on down to the end of the cave, well at least as far as the duck. The return journey was uneventful apart from the Lobster Pot. It seems that I have grown in the last few months and now I know what the lobster feels like. With a lot of grunting and Steve's help I managed to extricate myself. After that there were no more "events" and the evening sunshine was reached.

Something for the Weekend GB Cavern 23rd June 2001

A fairly gentle trip down to the sump via the Oxbows for Jacky, Lee and myself. Surprisingly enough the sump was completely dry and only a trickle was falling over the 40ft pitch. Our energies were further saved by the gracious intervention of Geoff Beale who ferried us to and from Gruffy Field.

Goatchurch Revisited Goatchurch Cavern 27th June 2001

The third Wednesday since the Armistice saw Stephen Duckworth, Simon Stevens, provisional member and myself going to Goatchurch. I don't think Simon had been there before and it was years since Steve was last there. We used the main entrance and dropping down the Giant's Stairs we traversed along to the entrance to The Maze. This is a low crawl, which we decided to save for another day when we were feeling a bit more energetic. We descended to The Terrace and bypassed the Boulder Maze and descended Jacob's Ladder from the Boulder Chamber, I avoided the Third Way like the plague. We then crawled up the Smartie Tube. Next we climbed down to The Drainpipe but decided not to explore any further than the chamber and returned back to the Water Chamber. We exited via The Coffin Lid and followed the far right of The Boulder Maze emerging at the bottom of The Coal Shute which we duly free climbed. We climbed out of Tradesman's to a warm summer evening.

What a Shower! Longwood Swallet 30th June 2001

After the consumption of copious quantities of tea soaked up with doughnuts we finally decided to target Longwood. We didn't have a great deal of time as Paul had to get back to Bristol for a Family meal so we decided to do a quick round trip. Lee, Jacky, Paul and I got changed at the cottage and set off for Black Rock. It is quite an easy walk from here and we soon arrived at the entrance. The lock was duly unlocked although it did fall apart and Paul was sent ahead to rig the Ten Foot Drop. Jacky decided that she was not ready for the entrance rift and Lee decided it wouldn't be fair to leave her on her own. Paul and I persevered and arrived at the Traverse. I was sure that we should just carry on at the same level but decided to descend any way. We followed the stream to its ultimate conclusion and then returned to climb up for the continuation. There didn't seem to be that much water going down Swing Pitch as we traversed across to enter Christmas Crawl and initially it was quite refreshing as the water seemed quite warm. We continued up the crawl, which is certainly a lot longer than I remember and found the rift to be climbed. If this is what a power shower is like then I definitely want one. It was virtually impossible to see so we hooded up and began the climb. It wasn't so much the power of the water but the total lack of visibility that made the climb difficult. It was very exhilarating. We soon regained the Ten-Foot Drop and after a bit of a struggle on the entrance rift daylight was regained. A short struggle ensued trying to get the lock back together and locked. Then back to Black Rock and to the cottage for tea.

by Richard Carey

MCG NOTICEBOARD

A COTTAGE WORK WEEKEND is planned for the August members weekend (also Linda's birthday party - see below).

This is for two projects:

1. To finish the porch - plaster the walls, quarry-tile the floor, finish the tiles on the roof, plus a few other necessary jobs. Wayne Hiscox will produce a task list and a sequence of work. He will also be on hand to help and advise.

2. 'The shed project' - to run concurrently with the porch work if there are enough people. To replace rotten panels, install wiring for the de-humidifier, fit the de-humidifier, plus any other work required. Ben Cooper will produce a task list.

BONE HOLE WORK WEEKEND:

Due to the foot and mouth restrictions the Bone Hole work weekend planned for 3/4 March had to be postponed. It will now take place on September 1/2nd (members weekend). We require lots of able bodies to haul the new lid up the hill to the cave and to fit it... *Please!*

PARTY

☞ Don't forget Linda's **40th** birthday party on 4th August, and remember too, if the weather permits there will be a barrel and barbecue, if not there will be a barrel and curry (for the usual nominal charge).☞

YV'S DROPPING...

MW (on his mobile): "I've got a puncture and I have been trying for ages to undo the wheelnuts but I can't..... hang on a minute..... Zoe's just undone them!!!"

'THEY WORDS...' I thought it was worth mentioning that this is the 300th issue of the MCG News... and that adds up to an awful lot of *they words!*

THE NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING is on Saturday 4th August.

Staff Discounts on Siemens and Bosch

Dear MCG Members,

As I work for Siemens, I can get significant discounts on Siemens and Bosch products, which I am allowed to pass on to family and friends. This includes free standing or built-in washing machines, fridges, freezers and cookers; small appliances like kettles and toasters; Blaupunkt in-car hi-fi; Bosch professional and domestic power tools (both new and refurbished); Bosch, Atco and Qualcast garden tools; and Bosch combination boilers.

For further product information on household appliances, call the Siemens brochure hotline on 01780 722 123. You can also see these for sale in House of Fraser, John Lewis, Alders, Currys and even Comet. Prices from the Family and Friends discount scheme are typically 25% to 50% of shop prices. Example price is a washing machine for £200. Delivery is a flat fee of about £25 to anywhere in the UK.

For more information on Bosch products, see the Bosch website www.bosch-pt.co.uk. An example price for the 24V hammer drill is £65 refurbished, £117 new. Delivery is £5.

Fujitsu-Siemens also sell best-price computers - see their website www.underagrand.co.uk.

If you want to make a purchase, or learn more about the scheme, please phone me, Ben Cooper, during the day on 01344 850 539. By the way, there is nothing in it for me, other than the satisfaction!

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

Jul 30 - Aug 3	HMS Collingwood	(16)
Sept 22-28	BTCV	(16)