

# MCG AGM

5th April 2003

[www.m-c-g.org.uk](http://www.m-c-g.org.uk)

Founded 1954

## MENDIP CAVING GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003

The Annual General Meeting of the Mendip Caving Group will be held on Saturday 5th April 2003 starting at 10.30am

**Change of venue: as the Hunter's Lodge is NOT available, the meeting will take place at the MCG cottage**

To assist the smooth running of the Meeting, please submit motions (but not for the Constitution and Rules) to the Hon. Secretary prior to the meeting.

THE COMMITTEE MAY GRANT A POSTAL VOTE TO ANY FULL MEMBER WHO APPLIES IN GOOD TIME TO THE SECRETARY

### AGENDA

(Chairperson: Wayne Hiscox)

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2002 (pages 2-4)
3. Agreement that the minutes are a true record of that meeting.
4. Matters arising.
5. Officers reports (pages 4-12) and matters arising from those reports
6. Election of Honorary Officers for 2003/ 2004

POST	NOMINEE	PROPOSER	SECONDER
Secretary	No nomination		
Treasurer	Richard Carey	Tim Francis	John Puduck
Edltor	Yvonne Rowe	Martin Rowe	JP Burch
Cottage Warden	No nomination		
Tacklemaster	No nomination		
Recorder / Librarian	Jane Baldwin	Tim Francis	JP Burch
Caving Secretary	Tim Francis	Simon Goddard	Charlie Allison
Social Secretary	Linda Milne	Martin Rowe	Julie Hesketh

7. Election of Rescue Warden and election of Conservation and Access Officer.  
(Nominations for these two non-Committee posts will be accepted at the meeting)

8. Election of Examiners 2003/ 2004.
9. Motions (page 13).
10. Any other business.
11. Date and venue of next Annual General Meeting.

**Minutes of the Mendip Caving Group Annual General Meeting, held on 13th April 2002, at the Hunter's Lodge, Priddy**

The Mendip Caving Group is a Registered Charity No.270088

**Chairman:** Geoff Beale. Present 26 full members 4 associate members 1 custodian trustee.

**1. Apologies for absence** Marcus Ward, Dave and Letti Tooke, Julie Hesketh, Mick Norton, Bill Chadwick, Nick Gilson, Doug Harris, Graham Old, Phil Elliott, Simon and Pete Goddard.

**2. Minutes of the AGM held on 7th July 2001 at the Hunter's Lodge Priddy.** Copies of these minutes were circulated to all members with newsletter no.301 (01.09.01).

**3. Agreement that the minutes are a true record of that meeting.**

**a. Paragraph 65 election of Honorary Officers** There was some dispute as to whether this point had been agreed at the meeting. It was decided that the matter is not still disputed and the matter is to be discussed later. The Committee are to fill the vacancies.

**b. Para 10.3 Annual Dinner** Malcolm Cotter wants to be noted as suggesting December as a good time based on the success of the previous meal.

The minutes were proposed for acceptance. Proposed: Tim Francis. Seconded: Richard Carey.

**4. Matters arising.** There were none.

**5. Officers Reports.** These were circulated with the newsletter except for the Cottage Warden's which was handed out at the beginning of the meeting. Each officer gives a brief summary of their report.

**Secretary** Arthur Spain proposed a vote of thanks to Tim for a job well done. This was heartily agreed by everyone.

**Editor** Yvonne stated that being on e-mail is creating more input to the newsletters. It was asked whether there were any plans to e-mail newsletters to the membership. Yvonne said that it is possible and several members expressed an interest in having their newsletters issued this way in order to save costs for the club.

**Social Secretary** Linda wants to encourage more of the membership to attend social functions. 45 people are attending the AGM dinner and Linda requested feed back from those that attend. Surprise was expressed that 45 was considered to be a good attendance, when in the past 70 plus would have been good and there is a

membership in excess of 100. Cost was cited as one of the issues for low attendance. Also discussed were finding ways of attracting new and local members to attend the functions. It was suggested that local members only want keys and caving on a Wednesday and not join in or be involved. It was decided that the Christmas dinner had been a success and one will be organised this year. Summer events used to be successful. Suggestions should be forwarded to Linda. It was requested that something special be organised for the club's 50th Anniversary 2003/4. Discussion ensued along the lines of: should ex members be contacted needs to be a bigger event although not necessarily more expensive. Overseas interest has already been expressed in any 50th celebrations. It was decided that all suggestions should be forwarded to Linda as we should start to organise this now.

**Caving Secretary** Although there is no caving secretary it was noted that cavers staying away from the countryside boosted farmers moral but did nothing with regard to the foot and mouth epidemic.

**Treasurer** Less and less members are staying at the cottage. Guests are currently outnumbering members 6-1. It was asked whether the heating for the library is proving costly. Richard's response was that occupation of the cottage is irrelevant to the electricity costs as the hot water and heaters are on all the time. The accounts have not been audited. Charlie was advised in January that the accounts were ready for auditing and after many promises nothing materialised. The other person who was to audit the accounts has not done them either. There is no legal obligation to audit the accounts but it is generally felt by those present at the meeting that it is important for this to be done. Wayne has volunteered to audit the accounts. The value of the library books was queried. In the accounts the value is shown as £2,000; however for insurance purposes £14,000 is recorded. It was decided that it is all arbitrary and as long as we are well insured it isn't really a problem. Thanks were proposed for Richard and the hard work he has put in as treasurer.

**Cottage Warden** It was decided that due to the Bank Holiday the work weekend would be moved to the 8/9th June. There was a discussion regarding a couple of cavers who had turned up to stay for few days and as there were no members with keys staying for the entire length of their visit that there were no keys available to leave for their use. Should a spare set be left at the cottage for the use of visitors? In the end the suggestion was withdrawn as being too impractical to monitor. It was also stated that the Fry's set of keys must never be used for anything other than a dire emergency. From the keys the discussion then moved onto the locks themselves and whether the Yale lock should be changed as it is sticky. Ben reckoned a replacement barrel would cost around £100, and to replace the whole system in the region of £1,000. It was asked what

the purpose of the 2nd lock is and should it be changed to a mortise lock. The result of much discussion was to leave things as they are. The Cotags are failing and Ben is unable to keep up stocks. He currently has some new ones but they are not working and he will have to wait for the replacements. Ben made the point that it is the Cotags that are failing and not the Cotag system. Once all the Cotags have been replaced the system will be as good as ever. The subject of the shower and electric shocks was brought up and Ben assured everyone that the showers have been earthed. Resurfacing the car park was also a subject raised. Ben's response was that it is an on going discussion at committee meetings and it has not yet been decided whether to tarmac or use chippings to resurface with. There are also decisions to be made regarding drainage and costs etc.

**Tacklemaster** Nothing was added to the report and no questions were asked.

**Recorder/Librarian** Nothing was added to the report and no questions were asked.

**Custodian Trustee Report** Concern was raised regarding investments. Should the committee be seeking independent financial advice before proceeding with any investments? After discussing the pros and cons of making investments and the risks involved relative to the amounts being invested, plus the cost of any financial advice sought it was decided to leave things the way they are. The membership that attended the meeting are happy with the current arrangements.

**Tax Recovery Report** Malcolm thanked Richard for being so efficient.

**6. Election of Honorary Officers for 2002/2003.** Malcolm proposed that the nominations stand and Roy Kempston seconded the proposal. There was a vote and only one person was against the proposal so it went ahead. There were 2 volunteers for the post of Tacklemaster, Julie Hesketh and Brian Snell. The committee will decide at a later date who to co-opt to the post. A Secretary desperately needs to be found.

**7. Election of Rescue Warden and Election of Conservation and Access Officer.** Pete Bennett has put his name forward to be considered for the post of Conservation and Access Officer. Brian Snell stated that he would continue for one more year as the Rescue Warden and then step down. He raised the question of whether the MCG should be more involved with the MRO with regard to the rescue practices rather than operate independently. The advantages would be that there would be access to more modern and up to date equipment and a real life rescue would involve multiple clubs. Our contact network would increase. Wayne proposed that we should proceed along those lines with the next practice and Yvonne seconded.

**8. Election of Examiners** Wayne Hiscox and Mike Lovell volunteered to examine the accounts next year and were accepted at the meeting.

**9. Proposed Amendment to the Constitution and Rules** It was proposed by Ben Cooper and seconded by Linda Milne that point 4 be deleted, and replaced with a new point 4. Proposed new wording as follows:-

**PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP** All classes of membership are entitled to use of the Group's cottage at reduced rates, use of Group equipment and the library, free publications, and advice of meetings and activities. Full members may stand for election to the Committee, vote at general meetings and hold keys for the tackle store and library. Associate members have similar privileges except that not more than one at a time may hold office on the Committee, they have no vote at general meetings, and they may not hold keys for the library and tackle store. Probationary members may have the same privileges as associate members except that they may not stand for election to the Committee.

The current wording for point 4 is as follows; -

**PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP.** Use of the Group's cottage at reduced rates, use of Group equipment and the library, free publications and advice of meetings and activities. Full members may stand for election to the Committee and vote at general meetings. Associate members have similar privileges except that they have no vote at general meetings, and not more than one at a time may hold office on the Committee. Probationary members may have the same privileges as associate members except that they may not stand for election to the Committee.

Strong objections were received. Tony Knibbs put forward several objections, which are précised as follows:- He felt that it was a pointless reduction in the value of associate status and also demeaning to associates by withdrawing benefits, which have been around for a long time without objection or problem. The original definition of associate membership as he saw it was to give ageing or less active members a way of staying in touch with the Group, giving them recognition of the contribution made to the Group in the past. Without a full member present at the cottage associates find themselves with two "no go" areas as they haven't any keys. Without a vote associate members are unable to signify how they feel about the proposed change to their status. The cost of recalling keys and replacement with guest keys was also a factor to be considered. Tony suggested a revised wording for the clause, which is:-

"All classes of membership are entitled to use the Group's cottage at reduced rates, use of Group equipment and the library, free publications and advice of meetings and activities. Full members may stand for election to the Committee, vote at general meetings and

hold keys for tackle store and library. Associate members have similar privileges except that not more than one at a time may hold office on the Committee, at general meetings they may only vote on matters which concern the constitution. Probationary members have the same privileges as associate members except that they may not stand for election to the Committee."

Several other people spoke up about associate members paying their way, and there was a lengthy discussion on the exact definition of an associate member. Longer serving members felt that the associate member category had originally been set up for spouses who did not want to cave but still wanted to be part of the Group. There was mention of it being for people who were living abroad together with Tony's previously mentioned definition.

Tony then proposed two counter proposals. He respectfully asked the proposer and seconder to withdraw the motion. He proposed the previously mentioned amendment, which he feels will redress the current absence of what would appear to be essential voting rights for associate members. Ben responded by saying that the Committee believed associate members to be non cavers who want to keep in touch and that the amendment was not about depriving people of their rights but to clarify the constitution and rules. Tim proposed that the Committee go away and draw up a definition of associate membership so that there is no over lapping of categories. Richard seconded Tim's proposal and the original motion was withdrawn.

**Proposal to alter the Constitution and Rules to avoid the Committee being unable to co-opt substitute officers.** This is specifically in the instance where the Committee no longer has a quorum due to an insufficient number of elected officers. Under point 8 COMMITTEE MEETINGS replace "Five officers shall constitute a quorum" with "The quorum for the Committee

shall be more than half the number of posts filled." This was proposed by Martin Rowe and seconded by Richard Carey. A vote was taken on this and there was 1 against 2 abstentions 23 for. Proposal passed.

**10. Motions. Clarification of the primacy of the Annual General Meeting in directing the Committee with regard to co-option of Committee members.** Malcolm Cotter and Tim Francis. Malcolm's view is that a general meeting has the power to co-opt. It was asked whether people would just not bother to put nominations in for Committee posts and just get co-opted at AGM's. It was stated that the ability to vote against a candidate in a postal vote would be lost. Martin opposed the motion and it was decided that the Committee should resolve the issue. The motion was withdrawn.

**Creation of a new elected non-committee post responsible for administering the Gift Aid scheme and reclaiming tax on all donations and subscriptions.** Malcolm Cotter and Tim Francis. A vote was taken 18 for, 2 against. Motion carried.

**Reinstatement of a season ticket for cottage fees to replace the bed nights sticker scheme.** Richard Carey and Tim Francis. It was proposed that the annual rate should be £30 for as many nights as members like, subject to no more than a 15 day stay, in a 30 day period without prior consent from the Committee. A vote was taken, 15 for, 1 against, and 5 abstentions.

**11. Any Other Business** It was felt that the need for a Secretary to be found was rather glossed over under point 6 and that without a Secretary the Committee would be rudderless. John Pudduck volunteered to become the new Secretary. The Committee will consider this at the next meeting.

**12. Date and Venue of the next AGM** 5th April 2003, 10.30a.m. at the Hunter's Lodge

## Hon. Secretary's Report—2002-2003 John Pudduck

With no volunteers for this post, at last years AGM, I stepped in at the very last minute. The post is an onerous one and is central to the co-ordination and smooth running of the club's affairs. Unfortunately I cannot give the club the time and dedication that this job requires, while I am continuing with a university course. At the risk not fulfilling my responsibilities, the post will again become vacant in April. As I write this, no nominations have been submitted for this post.

The MCG, at committee level, work as a team. This is not the case amongst the membership at large. The club has many great assets with its cottage, strong membership and a warm welcome. Many members are happy to pay their subs each year and continue to take a mild interest in the activities and "goings-on", from a safe distance. We thank them for their support.

The committee work very hard to keep our assets safe and provide a service to those wishing to go caving. The added value of social events and entertainment take many hours of preparation and deserve more support than has so far been afforded in recent years.

The post of club secretary should be one of facilitation, for the committee and members alike, to meet the aims and objectives of the club. It is the "front line" position for taking enquiries from other clubs and the public at large. Most requests come from people wanting to know more about caving and wanting to join the MCG.

Most of the work I have done for the group has been on the computer; answering emails for membership enquiries and committee business. Another major part of the post is to keep up with our subscriptions to the many caving institutions and Councils, to which the MCG belong.

Attending committee meetings is central to the responsibility of all committee members, which are held on Mendip. The diverse spread, in geographical location, of the committee, is not ideal and needs further consideration by us all, in the interests of the club. Many meetings are not "quorate" despite the changes in the constitution last year. Gone are the days when we met at a cosy Fuller's pub in Brentford, a couple of hours before a club night!

The secretary's post requires a member who has the time and interest to attend a few CSCC meetings and the Charterhouse Caving Company AGM. He or she would want to take up the offer of other clubs' dinner invitations and other social events, especially on Mendip. Liaison with the SWCC and the NPC, the clubs with which we have reciprocal arrangements, is part of the varied responsibilities of the post.

We have had some highly charismatic figures doing the job of secretary, in the past and the club has benefited enormously from them. Many other secretaries have just got on with things quietly, behind the scenes, but still doing an excellent job. May I say that Tim and Joan before him, are just two examples of very good and hard working secretaries of the MCG. We should never take them, or other committee members, or indeed any members, past or present, who have given their time and effort to the club, for granted. Now, who's hiding their light under a bushel...?

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### **Hon. Treasurer's Report—2002-2003 Richard M Carey**

Things are now back to normal on the caving front and once again I am pleased to be able to announce that the Group has again made a surplus (£201.91). Our investment income (£777.43) and due entirely to the efforts of Malcolm Cotter the tax refund (£1277.75) have brought this up to the grand total of £2256.99. Everyone thought that the world had recovered from September 11 but no one could foresee the devastating effects of the Enron and Worldcom scandals. Unfortunately this has had a somewhat damaging effect on the value of our investments. I **still** believe that  $2+2=4$ .

The cottage has again made a small surplus in no small part due to the number of guests staying (1964.50). It now seems that even the AGM is no guarantee of a full house for the membership. I do not understand why despite the annual complaints about the cost of the meal that members will quite happily splash out to stay at a hotel despite the fact that there is a coach to and from the cottage. The Annual Dinner made a small loss probably entirely due to the fact that there were only 16 people on the coach. The increase in electricity is due to the return to normal occupation in comparison to the Foot and Mouth year. The increase in waste collection is due entirely to the fact that Cleanaway have the monopoly and can charge more or less what they like. This issue has been addressed and the number of collections reduced so that next year we will see a reduction of its cost. Along with the rest of the world insurance costs continue to rise. It was also felt that the old cooker had done sterling service and deserved to be retired (scrapped) and a new one was purchased at the cost of £334.98. We will be replacing the storage heaters with modern and efficient ones and are investigating the viability of improving the cottage by installing central heating. Whether it will be solid fuel gas or oil has yet to be looked into. I hope shortly to obtain estimates for the costs and relative merits of each type of fuel.

The library extension is now virtually finished. And should see very little spent now to complete the job. It would appear that the newsletter is more expensive to produce despite it being available by email. We will have to remember that in 2000 it cost £701.42. So it would appear that the email version is saving a substantial amount of money to the Group. However it should be noted that the increase in administration costs is largely due to the fact that I can no longer distribute the renewal notices via the newsletter and have sent it out by post. The Public Liability insurance has doubled this year from £2.50 to £5 per member. Currently the Group can absorb this extra cost although if what is being written about it comes to be then the situation regarding subscriptions will need to be renewed. I do not see any reason to raise subscriptions at this time.

No doubt the AGM will be a lively affair and I look forward to seeing you at the cottage.

## MENDIP CAVING GROUP RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2002

2001	Cottage Receipts	2002	2001	Cottage Payments	2002
£15.00	Day fees	£36.00	£171.92	Mendip Council Rates	£166.06
£67.97	Donations	£169.42	£33.15	Gas	£34.50
£1,688.50	Guest fees	£1,964.50	£490.35	Electricity	£666.65
£261.00	Members fees	£394.50	£16.00	Coal	£53.70
£0.00	Subs 2000	£0.00	£688.67	Building insurance	£781.64
£575.00	Subs 2001	£0.00	£130.00	Household	£4.78
£0.00	Subs 2002	£497.50	£331.55	Maintenance	£443.24
£120.00	Vouchers	£60.00	£190.98	Water rates	£193.92
£0.00	Subs 2003	£5.00	£286.08	Rubbish collection	£430.39
£0.00	Season Tickets	£30.00			
£2,727.47	<b>Total Cottage Income</b>		<b>£3,156.92</b>	<b>Total Cottage Expenditure</b>	<b>£2,774.88</b>
£575.00	<b>Cottage Fund</b>	£502.50	£114.00	Wood shed	£0.00
			£0.00	Cooker	£334.98
	<b>General Income</b>			<b>General Expenses</b>	
£30.00	Access/Keys/ Permits	£18.40	£107.50	Access/Keys/Permits	£30.00
£0.00	Annual dinner	£1,082.50	£69.96	Administration	£130.39
£25.90	From phone	£91.05	£0.00	Annual dinner	£1,108.75
£145.00	Key deposits	£175.00	£0.00	Bank charges	£0.00
£0.00	Loan	£0.00	£218.50	BCRA insurance	£575.00
£0.00	Mendip 2000	£0.00	£695.83	Caving equipment	£121.60
£0.00	Overpaid	£0.00	£233.25	Cotag/Keys	£376.02
£16.50	Shop	£0.00	£0.00	Donations	£10.00
£0.00	Subs 2000	£0.00	£0.00	Drying room	£0.00
£1,700.00	Subs 2001	£0.00	£81.28	F & M Administration	£0.00
£0.00	Subs 2002	£1,990.00	£0.00	First Aid	£0.00
£0.00	Subs 2003	£20.00	£10.00	Goodwill	£0.00
£1.00	Surveys/Journals	£4.00	£10.00	Key deposit refund	£30.00
			£359.54	Library books	£255.70
			£0.00	Library extension	£221.08
			£0.00	Loan Repayment	£0.00
			£0.00	Mendip 2000	£0.00
			£474.99	Newsletter	£538.45
			£0.00	Overpayment	£0.00
			£18.25	Periodicals	£74.20
			£126.11	Phone bill	£115.41
			£0.00	Repayment	£0.00
			£125.50	Subs to others	£142.00
			£0.00	Survey equipment	£0.00
			£18.27	Web site	£0.00
£5,220.87	<b>Total income</b>	<b>£7,040.37</b>	<b>£5,001.68</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£6,838.46</b>
	<b>Other Income</b>			<b>Gain</b>	<b>£201.91</b>
£24.00	Credit Suisse	£79.26			
£20.47	Div. Bristol Water	£21.51			
£0.00	Div. Wessex	£0.00			
£363.12	Dividend COIF	£0.00			
£0.24	Giro Sav Int	£0.06			
£160.40	Interest COIF	£127.44			
£63.27	Interest COIF Cotag	£53.44			
£0.00	Interest COIF Cottage	£25.16			
£40.21	Interest COIF Trustees	£87.85			
£113.13	M & G Dividend	£191.91			
£211.47	National Savings Int	£0.00			
£0.00	New Star	£36.45			
£91.28	NPI Global	£79.05			
£52.30	Rathbone	£75.20			
£1,999.41	Tax Refund (GAD)	£1,277.75			
£3,139.30	<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>£2,055.08</b>			
£8,360.17	<b>Total</b>	<b>£9,095.45</b>		<b>NET GAIN</b>	<b>£2,256.99</b>

MENDIP CAVING GROUP  
BALANCE SHEET YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2001

	<b>2001</b>		<b>2002</b>		
Bristol Water	£418.40	Bristol Water	£353.60		
COIF Cotag	£1,433.12	COIF Cotag	£1,486.56		
COIF Cottage	£0.00	COIF Cottage	£517.18	<b>New</b>	
COIF Deposit	£3,262.33	COIF Deposit	£2,506.01		
COIF Fixed	£0.00	COIF Fixed	£0.00		
COIF Trustees	£2,040.21	COIF Trustees	£3,332.12		
Credit Suisse	£1,982.06	Credit Suisse	£1,608.00		
GIRO Current	£1,251.51	GIRO Current	£670.97		
GIRO Deposit	£0.00	GIRO Deposit	£0.06		
M&G Charifund Acc	£3,445.21	M&G Charifund Acc	£3,075.23		
M&G Charifund Inc	£3,813.08	M&G Charifund Inc	£3,226.72		
National Savings Inv Account	£0.00	National Savings Inv Account	£0.00		
New Star	£0.00	New Star	£1,597.58	<b>New</b>	<b>+£2,000</b>
NPI Global Unit Trust	£2,985.94	NPI Global Unit Trust	£2,189.22		
Rathbone Income Fund	£1,859.78	Rathbone Income Fund	£1,614.14		
Schroeder US	£2,030.48	Schroeder US	£1,463.49		
Solus UK	£1,813.18	Solus UK	£1,096.36		
Bristol Water Decrease	-£64.80				
Credit Suisse Decrease	-£374.06				
M&G Charifund Acc Decrease	-£369.98				
M&G Charifund Inc Decrease	-£586.36				
New Star Decrease	-£402.42				
NPI Global Decrease	-£796.72				
Rathbone Income Fund Decrease	-£245.64				
Schroeder US Decrease	-£566.99				
Solus UK Decrease	-£716.82				
Balance R & P	£2,256.99				
Uncleared cheques	£268.74				
<b>Total</b>	<b>£24,737.24</b>		<b>£24,737.24</b>		
<b>Total value of investments</b>			<b>£16,224.34</b>		
<b>Other accounts</b>					
Giro Current Account	£670.97				
Giro Deposit Account	£0.06				
COIF Deposit Account	£2,506.01				
COIF Cotag Account	£1,486.56				
COIF Cottage Account	£517.18				
COIF Trustees	£3,332.12				
Total other Accounts			<b>£8,512.90</b>		
<b>Other assets</b>					
Cottage	£157,000.00				
Land	£1,000.00				
Cottage contents	£20,000.00				
Caving equipment	£5,650.00				
Library books	£14,000.00				
Total other assets			<b>£197,650.00</b>		
Total Assets			<b>£222,387.24</b>		

## **Hon. Caving Secretary's Report—2002-2003 Tim Francis**

It's been a quiet year for the Caving Secretary, not that this post in recent years has required a great deal. I did organise one secret meet that was publicised in the newsletter after the event. My main role has been to maintain a level of continuity on the Committee so that the transition to a new Secretary passed relatively smoothly.

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## **Hon. Cottage Warden's Report—2002-2003 Ben Cooper**

### **Cottage Maintenance**

This year has seen good progress on the library extension, thanks to Brian tiling the porch floor. This has made such a fantastic difference to the entrance to the MCG. It was followed up at the work weekend with a new shade of paint on the porch and hallway walls. The final colour was not quite what I expected, but everyone seems to have grown used to it.

The work weekend had a good turnout. In addition to painting the hallway, some much needed decorating was done to the shower room ceiling, door and frame. Some of the shower taps were replaced, and the pipe-work re-arranged to relieve strain on the shower hoses and to fit maintenance valves. The shower electrics was finally sorted out. Two improvements were made, firstly to move the boost to the upper element so it heats more quickly, and secondly to ensure that only one element is on at a time to stop tripping the fuse. Numerous other jobs were also carried out, including further progress on the ongoing huge task of making-good the side lawn. Thanks to everyone who turned up and worked so hard, and in particular to Tim Francis who has since spent many lonely hours painting door frames, varnishing doors, and has even been seen painting some of the tatty old door handles.

The shed continues to suffer, and despite repairs to the walls, work is now urgently needed to the floor by the door. Various rodents have also been in residence, and apart from the soiling of the floor, have eaten holes through the internal wall cladding and pulled out some of the insulation. The committee will progress this when a workman can be found.

The next work weekend is planned for 6<sup>th</sup> June – I hope that many of you will make the effort to help out. We want to continue with the internal decorations started last year – this time extending the paintwork up the stairway. I intend to use a yellow here, to contrast and lighten up the strong red used in the hallway. The committee are also keen to see the dormer cladding and window frames treated, repaired and stained. Some of the windows were decorated two years ago, and this work needs to be extended to all of the external woodwork. In addition, there is work to be done in the shed, finishing touches to the library extension roof, spring cleaning, and no doubt many odd jobs.

### **Bookings**

For the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002, I received 36 bookings for a total of 771 bed nights or £1927. This is slightly down on last year (47 bookings for 805 bed nights). We had a very quiet period from the spring through to the summer, but from the end of September through to mid December was very busy with large groups coming every weekend.

This year has started well with another very good February – the 15<sup>th</sup> of February has proved particularly popular with three large groups wanting to book the cottage (one of them mine!). Unfortunately, there's only room for one. In total for this year there are a total of 5 bookings for 154 bed nights or £325.

### **Committee Matters**

Following on from last year's report, the committee did consider various major projects to take priority, and finally discussed this with members at the half-yearly. It was agreed that storage radiators should be the first priority, and I have taken an action to cost this up in the next few weeks.

The Cotag replacement programme has continued. A further 30 Cotags were purchased since last year's report, making a total of 70, of which 17 are available in stock. If you want to replace your old Cotag, please return it to the Cottage Warden, including a deposit cheque of £5 (we now ask for a total deposit of £15 for the set of 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.)

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## Hon. Tackle Master's Report—2002-2003 Brian Snell

In order to have something about half interesting to write about in this report I began with the tackle logging sheets starting with 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2001. I figured that there must be something interesting in two years worth of logs and after collating the information the following points on gear usage came to light.

### Dynamic Ropes Usage

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	Totals
2001	2	2	2			7	3		4	1	3	3		2	7	4		1	1	7				49
2002		1		1	1		5	3	1		9	4	4	1			3	1	3	2				41
Totals	2	3	2	1	1	7	8	3	5	1	12	7	4	3	7	4	3	2	4	9	0	0	2	

### Static ropes

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2001	1	1			1			
2002	2	2	1		1	2	2	
Totals	2	3	2	0	2	2	2	0

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Totals
2001	1	2	2		7	1		4	4			1	4		4	4	3	1	3	1	3	2	1	48
2002			8		5	4		8	8			3	3	3	2	1	1							46
Totals	1	2	10	0	12	5	0	12	12	0	0	4	7	3	6	5	4	1	3	1	3	2	1	

From this, there are the following points of interest.

For the year 2001, the number of trips requiring rope was 49. So plenty of cave trips occurring each month.

The number requiring ladders was 41. For the year 2002, the number of trips requiring rope was 48 and the number requiring ladders was 46. Again, plenty of caving activity.

In both years ropes U(10m) and V(12m) were not used. Yet rope K(12m) was the most used - maybe nobody likes the colour of ropes U and V. I think the frequency of rope K's use, is perhaps a reflection of the more common pitches done. For example Swildon's 20; GB - Ladder dig; Longwood/August - Swing pitch.

In both years, ladders 4, 7, 10 and 11 were also not used. After running a quick check on our ladders I found that ladders 4 and 10 were not there. Perhaps they are, but their tags are missing, as there are several of our older ladders, which don't have id tags. I will try to do something about this. Ladders 7 and 11 are 16ft and I wondered if it was because 15ft pitches were not often done. Having said that, I can think of a couple of places where I've used a 15ft ladder on a 20ft pitch. Swildon's 20 for example. Perhaps that's why I'm getting a reputation for laddering pitches too short. Quite unfair, caving supposed to be challenging and fun. Anyway, having to learn the techniques of free climbing in wellies provides a post trip talking point. Re-visiting the ladder usage, ladders 1, 14, 15, 16, 22 and 23 are all 15/16ft and they were used 18 times between them. So it is more likely that ladders 7 and 11 were simply not within easy reach.

Ropes F, N and Q were removed from use in 2002 and ropes B, E, G, O, S and T are to be replaced this year. The most common ropes used, are for 20ft and 40ft pitches and as these ropes cater for this, they will be replaced like for like.

### Summary

The gear is getting plenty of usage and it is being cleaned well after use. Although I have found one ladder on the shelf which looked like it had been dropped in concrete then left to dry. Naughty naughty who ever that was. Only a hard core few seem to be using the SRT ropes and this has often been out of the country. Therefore, we either don't have many keen SRT'rs in the group, or more likely, there's a finite number of times one would want to do Atlas or Rhinos.

### Purchases

Two second-hand tackle bags - in good condition - were purchased last year and as stated, 6 ropes are to be replaced this year.

This completes the Tackle Master's report. Happy caving.

**Hon. Editor's Report—2002-2003 Yvonne Rowe**

Hello again. I've lost track of how many Editor's reports I must have written now and I'm running out of different things to say. It really is about time someone else had a go at being Editor – fresh blood and all that. I don't mind doing it if no-one else will, but it would make the logistics of editing, getting the masters to Mike Lovell, and then getting the copies to Linda Milne to envelope, stamp and post, a lot easier. Having said that, computer technology has made things much easier – at least to most people!!! I still struggle with our new computer (and that's besides all the problems we had earlier with constant crashing) and without Martin I would only be able to produce the simplest and most basic newsletter. So you see, a younger, or computer literate member to take over as Editor would be better I think, and they could find it such fun with all the technology available to them.

The new newsletter layout brought in many positive comments and only one or two negative ones, and they were only about particular aspects, not the presentation as a whole. Martin now sends out about 45 newsletters via e-mail and these members are rewarded by receiving them with colour photos, surveys, headings and text boxes etc.

I still receive a trickle of high quality articles and other snippets from my small but reliable band of roving (or should that be caving) reporters, without whom there would be no newsletter. *Thank you all very much – keep them coming please.* There have been one or two quiet periods (summer and Christmas) when there was not enough material to produce a newsletter, nor were committee meetings held then so there was no news to pass on.

The newsletter would also not get to you regularly if it were not for Mike Lovell who, besides frequent business trips, does all the printing, and Linda Milne who does the necessary to get it through your door. *My ever grateful thanks to them.*

The members (and I) would love to hear about your caving exploits and holidays and there must be a few stories to be heard out there, so get it down in writing and let us all know about it. It doesn't have to be a huge article – just half a page will do. And remember the photos and surveys too – they can bring an article alive. It doesn't have to be just about caving either – there are social events, walks, cottage doings etc.

Well, for someone who had run out of things to say I've said quite a lot. Goodbye.

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**Hon. Recorder/Librarian's Report—2002-2003 Jane Baldwin**

This report was not received in time and will be given at the meeting.

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**Hon. Social Secretary's Report—2002-2003 Linda Milne**

This report was not received in time and will be given at the meeting.

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**Gift Aid Administrator's Report— 2002-2003 Malcolm Cotter****TAX RECOVERY FOR THE PERIOD 6 APRIL 2001 TO 5 APRIL 2002**

The period under review has been extremely satisfactory with resolution of the problem period 1997/1998, a record tax recovery for period 2001/2002 and a "Windfall" tax interest receipt.

As previously reported no membership payment list was available for 1998 subscriptions. Lists were held for the year previous and the year following. Other information was available to the committee such as eligibility to vote at the AGM and membership details from committee minutes. To satisfy the Inland Revenue the committee were asked if they could produce a membership payment roll for addition to the 1998 accounts. The difficult task of compiling a schedule was undertaken and completed by Martin Rowe and approved by the committee as a supplement to the

1998 accounts. Fresh covenants had been returned for 1998, which included new entrants and repeats from members who had previously signed up. It seemed reasonable that the member returning the covenant had paid their subscription on the date shown on the form. A few checks were made and the foregoing found to be the case. Accurate dates were thus available for about half of the covenanters. Inspection of the payment schedule pointed to unlikely absences. Those members were followed up and some provided the necessary information. In the end only four were left off the final tax claim. We received a total rebate of £416.24 made up as £414.52 from covenants and £1.71 from a Wessex Water tax credit.

The Gift Aid claim for tax period 2001/2002 went smoothly, the system having been worked out for the previous tax period. Again we benefited from spoken declarations, all participants being extremely helpful. Although the membership dropped by four we only lost one to Gift Aid. The sum of the claim was however greater than in the previous year due to the generosity of members making additional donations. The rebate was £728.69 of which £34.84 arose from additional gifts.

Tax relief on dividends was reduced from 17 available in 2000/2001 to 13. The dividend rebate was larger than in the previous period because of higher taxed dividend receipts. Dividend tax relief was £22.15. The total received was £750.84.

An unexpected windfall arose from interest paid on our late claims! £35.79 for 1996/1997, £19.57 for 1998/1999 and £18.35 for 1999/2000. We may hope for interest on our problem year 1997/1998. The Inland Revenue is making the payments in date order of claim receipt. We received £1240.79 from the Inland Revenue in 2002, the third highest repayment of tax received in the course of a year. Tax claims are now completely up to date, so the rebate will settle into that available for each tax period.

Please will any tax-paying member not signed up contact me to join or rejoin the scheme. An annual renewal is not necessary. Altogether a good years result with thanks due to Martin Rowe and to Richard Carey for passing on the required information.

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## **Custodian Trustees Report 2002 Malcolm Cotter**

The Custodian Trustees are required to hold the group's real property (land and buildings), Shares, unit trusts and such bank accounts and other investments as the Committee shall decide...

Overall 2000 was calamitous for equity investment. The year started well for shares encouraging a £2000 investment in New Star Higher Income Fund. By May we were in overall gain including purchase costs. At the beginning of June a disastrous slide commenced. Continuing news of fraud, mainly from the U.S.A., and final collapse of the technology, media and telecommunications bubble undermined confidence. The forgoing, together with worsening world trade, a downward selling spiral by insurance organisations to protect their solvency levels and the threat of war saw global stock markets collapse further.

Six out of nine of our investments fared better than the 24% fall of the FTSE 100. Solus UK Special Situations gives cause for concern having dropped dramatically since changing manager. Of our dividend paying investments four increased their rates, NPI dropped but all yielded well above the interest available from National Savings. Solus proposed a dividend for payment in April 2003.

Two columns of information, shown previously, have been left out of this report. The column showing reinvestment because dividends and tax rebates go to the treasurer's pool so making it complicated to directly assign sums. In 2002 the treasurer transferred £3291.91, to the custodian trustees, so it can be argued that all dividends and tax credits, amounting to £548.57 was reinvested.

The COIF Deposit Fund increase derives from dividends, interest and Gift Aid rebates. Dividend tax relief has declined so losing impact, thus only one column has been kept to show the overall picture. The axed columns have been replaced, one showing the original cost of investments and the other showing the yield on that investment. An additional column ranks performance. With a final tax recovery on account of Wessex Water a closing statement has been shown.

CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE INVESTMENTS	31.12.02	31.12.01	CHANGE	CHANGE	% OF	RANK/	DIVIS/INT	DIVIS/INT
	£	£	ON	ON	TOTAL	SAMPLE	2002	£ SINCE
			PERIOD	PERIOD %		NUMBER	£	BOUGHT
32 Bristol Water	354	418	-64	-15	2		21.51	81
1334 Credit Suisse Monthly Income Fund OEIC	1608	1982	-374	-19	8	37/78	73.26	103
350 M&G Charifund Income	3227	3813	-586	-15	17		191.91	305
47 M&G Charifund Accumulation Note 4	3075	3445	-370	-11	116		N/A	58
3210 NPI Global Care OEIC	2189	2986	-797	-27	11	69/78	79.05	389
367.56 Rathbone Inome Fund UT	1614	1860	-246	-13	8	4/78	75.2	128
320.518 Shroder US Smaller Companies UT	1463	2030	-567	-28	7	2/13	No dividends paid	
310.848 Solas UK Special Situations OEIC	1096	1813	-717	-40	6	291/292	No dividends paid	
Sub Total Shares / Units Held 1 Year	14626	18347	-3721	-20	75		440.93	1064
COIF Deposit Fund	3332	2040	1292	63	17		87.85	128
NEW INVESTMENT		13.03.02						
3801.96 New Star Higher Income Fund OEIC	1598	2000	-402	-20	8		36.45	36
End Year Totals	19556	22387	-2831	-13	100		565.23	1229

CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE INVESTMENTS	2002 TAX	TOTAL TAX	VS RPI	VS RPI	END	COST £	YIELD
	CREDITS	REBATE £	% SINCE	+INT+TAX	YEAR	OF INV-	% ON
	T.B.C. £	TO 05.04.02	BOUGHT	CREDITS %	YIELD %	ESTMENT	OUTLAY
32 Bristol Water	1.20	11.45	-39	-20	6.7	487.4	4.8
1334 Credit Suisse Monthly Income Fund OEIC	4.42	5.46	-23	-17	5.0	2000	4.0
350 M&G Charifund Income	N/A	Note 2	-22	-15	5.9	4000	4.8
47 M&G Charifund Accumulation Note 4	N/A	Note 2	167	173	Note 4	1000	Note 4
3210 NPI Global Care OEIC	6.32	52.54	-28	-11	3.9	2625	3.3
367.56 Rathbone Inome Fund UT	6.02	2.1	-22	-16	5.0	2000	4.1
320.518 Shroder US Smaller Companies UT			-30	-30	0.0	2000	0.0
310.848 Solas UK Special Situations OEIC			-48	-48	0.0	2000	0.0
Sub Total Shares / Units Held 1 Year	17.96	71.55			3.2	16112.4	2.9
COIF Deposit Fund	N/A	Note 3					
NEW INVESTMENT							
3801.96 New Star Higher Income Fund OEIC	2.92		-22	-20	FT 4.7	2000	
End Year Totals	20.88	71.55				18112.4	

Wessex Water update follow ing the final tax claim in 2002 for the period 1997/8	OUTLAY	SALE	DIVID-	TAX	OVERALL	% GAIN
	COST £	RECEIPT	ENDS £	REBATE	GAIN £	LESS RPI
Most Wessex dividends bought additional shares	321.6	1659.9	116.3	34.34	1488.95	424

Note 2	Tax reclaimed by fund managers	Abbreviations					
Note 3	Tax free to Charities	COIF	Charities Official Investment Fur	DIVIS	Dividends	VS	Versus
Note 4	171 Income Units bought 19.07.90	NPI	National Provident Institution	INT	Interest	N/A	Not Applicable
	converted to Accumulation Units 04.02	OEIC	Open Ended Investment Compar	T.B.C.	To Be Claimed	UT	Unit Trust

The yield was calculated as the percentage of the dividend plus years tax credit and the value of the holding at the end of the year. Where the investment was held for less than a year the yield given in the Financial Times (FT) has been shown. The yield on outlay was calculated as the percentage of the dividend plus years tax credits and the total purchase cost of the holding.

#### OTHER MATTERS

Title deeds and licences continue to be held, through the good offices of Ron Saunders, at the offices of Reynolds-Jones & Crawford. Custodian Trustees minutes and certain reports are to be kept in the library. The Custodian Trustees are Peter Mathews, Jonathan Roberts, Patrick Walsh and Malcolm Cotter.

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## Amendments to the Constitution and Rules

### 1. Proposal to alter Paragraphs 3(c) and 4. Proposed by Tim Francis and seconded by John Pudduck

3(c). ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, i.e. persons who wish to be associated with the Group but do not wish to be full members, and who have been approved by a majority of the Committee.

#### 4. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- a. Use of the Group's cottage at reduced rates
- b. Use of Group equipment
- c. Use of the library
- d. Free publications
- e. Advice of meetings and activities
- f. Stand for election to the Committee
- g. Vote at general meetings
- h. Public liability insurance
- i. An annual Charterhouse Caving Company permit
- j. Hold a key to the Group's Cottage
- k. Hold a key to the library
- l. Hold a key to the tackle store

FULL MEMBERS: are entitled to all privileges of membership.

PROBATIONARY MEMBERS: are entitled to privileges (a), (d), (e), (h), (i), (j) and (b) and (c) only under the supervision of a full or honorary member.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: are entitled to privileges (a), (d), (e), (f), (j).

HONORARY MEMBERS: are entitled to all privileges of membership.

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### 2. Proposal to substitute Paragraph 7 for the new paragraph 7. Proposed by Malcolm Cotter and seconded by Norma Cotter.

7(a) The Groups jobs to be undertaken by the following elected Honorary job holders: Secretary; Treasurer; Caving Secretary; Cottage Warden; Property Maintenance Agent (Land Agent); Tackle Master; Editor; Recorder (Minutes); Librarian; Social Secretary; Rescue Warden; Access and Conservation Officer; Tax Claimant; Web Master.

(b) The groups business shall be regulated by a committee of seven members. They will normally be elected at the annual general meeting to serve until the next annual general meeting. The secretary treasurer and recorder will automatically be members of the committee. The four remaining members shall be chosen from the elected job holders by a secondary ballot in the way specified under para 9 (e) (f) (g). Each full member may have one vote for each contested post up to a total of four to cast in the secondary ballot. Should two or more candidates for different posts receive equal votes all may serve and the committee expanded to accommodate.

(c) All co-options can be made at a general meeting.

(d) If a job falls vacant, at a time other than a general meeting, the committee may co-opt a new job holder.

(e) If the committee numbers fall below seven, at a time other than a general meeting, the number may be made up by co-option by the committee from the elected job holders. A job change will be required in the case of resignation by the Secretary, Treasurer or Recorder in order to co-opt an elected post holder.

(f) Failure to fill the foregoing three posts from elected jobholders will need to be resolved by calling a general meeting.

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## Other motions

There will be a discussion about the implications of BCRA's changes to the way the cost of Public Liability Insurance is calculated.

## **MENDIP CAVING GROUP ANNUAL DINNER**

5th April 2003

Lyncombe Lodge Hotel,  
Churchill

7.30 - late

£21.50 per person

7.30 - late

### **Menu choices**

#### **Starters**

Cream of tomato soup

Tulip of baby melon fillet with citrus fruits steeped in Grand Marnier

Smoked fish terrine surrounded by tomato, lime and chervil coulis

Cajun spiced sweet potato cakes with dressed salad leaves

#### **Main courses**

Poached supreme of chicken sliced onto a black cherry, balsamic vinegar and basil sauce

Strips of pork fillet dusted with cumin and ginger; surrounded by a rosemary and thyme jus

Grilled salmon supreme topped with chive butter and sauteed peppers

Saute of seafood and shellfish in a Thai style lime and coconut sauce served with a timbale of rice

Mushroom ravioli with a smoked cheddar and caramalised onion sauce

#### **Desserts**

A choice of desserts

Butcombe will be available at the bar

Cheques and menu choices to Linda Milne by 31 March 2003, please.

### **Notes**