

MCG News

Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group

Number 314
June 2003

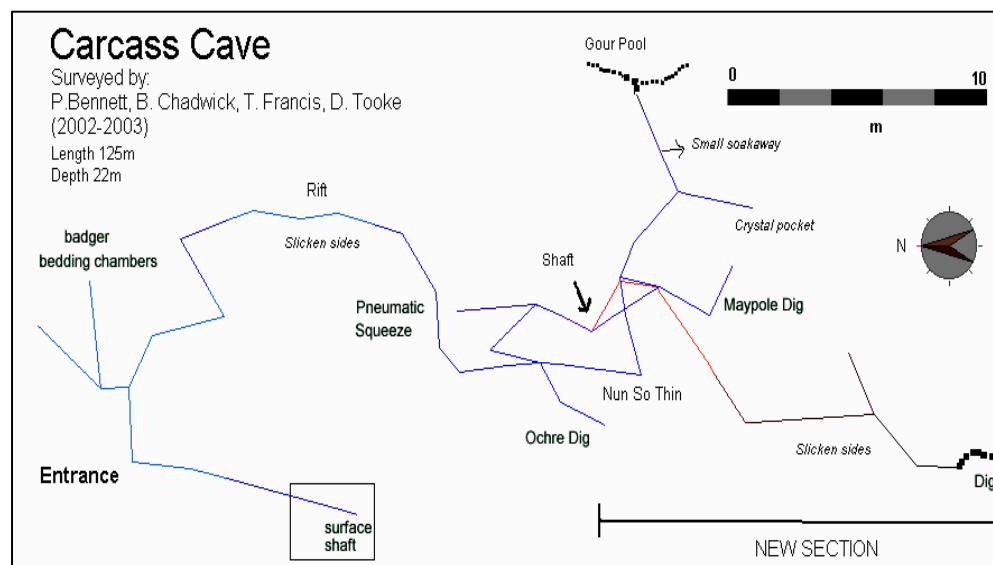
www.m-c-g.org.uk
Founded 1954

The acceptance of the inherent lies in digging*

By Tim Francis

Recent diggers: Peat Bennett, Ben Cooper, Malcolm Cotter, Bill Chadwick, Tim Francis, Biff Frith, Jackie Gibbons, Lee Hawkswell, Doug Harris, Mick Norton, Bryan Pittman and others (Bracknell, Axbridge).

For once believe the hype: Carcass really is a goer. A flurry of activity across the Easter period was rewarded by another 30m+ of passage with more undoubtedly to come. Indeed such has been the interest that a brief tour of Carcass has become de rigueur for the Nordrach set and encouraged a few diggers out of retirement. Quite what we might find behind the Carcass dig is anyone's guess, but certainly the cave passage is ancient stuff and will bear no resemblance to the current hydrology. There are no known feeders for the tiny resurgence in Axbridge (26 litres/sec) and with no swallet sinks in the 8km² catchment the resurgence must be fed almost entirely by percolation water. The cave is liberally filled with yellow/orange ochre, a weathering by-product of iron containing minerals. Small quantities of ochre were mined in the area for making paint and we're doing our bit to revive the industry.



The last digging update (newsletter 307) left us working our way down a boulder choke at the deepest point in the cave. Initially this only draughted slightly but the air movement picked up as we scaffolded and chiselled our way down. Note that the upper levels around the gour pool and maypole dig still seem to have the best draughts. The back wall of the shaft lies right on the fault that consistently dominates the passage formation in both Carcass and Shute Shelve. So we were always hopeful of breaking out into something if the choke could be passed. Five metres down the shaft we did just that by intercepting a small passage running underneath the

From the Editor

I'm sorry this newsletter is a bit late but I've been very busy at work. My college is short-staffed so the rest of us are helping out as much as we can. We have also been inflicted with the dreaded Inspectionmania!

I still have articles that I have not published and the authors should not think I've ignored or forgotten them. One is 18 pages long and I can't decide whether to spend time shortening it, or to save it for a special publication. The other is a really interesting short article that is not to do with any current events so I'm keeping it for when I have that awkward half page to fill.

Please don't forget - if you have any interesting articles, photos or snippets to do with the earlier years of MCG, I would love them for the 50th special publication.

Yvonne Rowe

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* "Some comfort is gained from the acceptance of the inherent lies in everything" Damien Hirst, (1996), sliced cow in formaldehyde, Saatchi Gallery, County Hall, London

MCG doings...**On the move:**

✉ **Letti Tooke**
18 Hunstanton Close,
Colnbrook, Berkshire SL3
ORL

✉ **Jane Baldwin**
brooklands.baldwin@vigin.net

✉ **Jacky Ankerman**
jacky.ankerman@blueyonder.co.uk

✉ **Doug Harris**
2 Lynch Crescent, Wins-
combe, Somerset BS25 1AS
☎ 01934 843636
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Membership:

An application for member-
ship has been received from:

✉ **Paul Dungey**
53 Weybank Close, Farn-
ham, Surrey, GU9 7UF
☎ 01252 710221
■ 07944551849
✉ paul@dungey.co.uk
Proposed by T Francis
Seconded by R Carey

Unpaid subs

8 members did not pay this
year's subs, and have been
deemed to have resigned.

Members are becoming in-
creasingly tardy with the
payment of subs, which is
unfair on the already over-
worked Treasurer who has to
chase payments. The com-
mittee have therefore agreed
that, in future, membership
will lapse on the 1st mem-
ber's weekend after the
AGM. Their Cotag will be
deactivated and they will
receive no further newslet-
ters. They can, of course,
redeem their deposit by re-
turning their cottage key and
Cotag fob.

choke. Over a few weekends this passage was opened up down-slope and after some serious chiselling and desperate squeezing a breakthrough was achieved on 19th April.

The continuing passage is fault controlled, running SSW/NNE, with slickensides present in several places on the right hand wall. The passage is, as usual, bone dry with a pleasant sandy dig at the end. The end has a fine, slightly meandering phreatic tube. This is easily diggable but the draught here isn't as strong as at the base of the shaft so it is possible that we have missed the main way on. Further shoring would be needed at this point to continue further down. In terms of the relationship between the dig and Shute Shelve, although it does lie above the latter in places, the depth differential is in the region of 30m. A rock tapping sound connection was achieved between the two on 11th May, proving if nothing else that at least the survey must be reasonably accurate.

Mendip Mines and Oxfordshire

By Joan Goddard

Recently, while reading about Oxfordshire local history my attention was caught by a reference to "Mendip Mines".

Fawler is a small hamlet in West Oxfordshire through which I pass on my way to and from work, where mining of Jurassic sedimentary iron ore started around 1858. It was a small undertaking (employing only about 10 people) and working appears to have ceased in about 1866.

In the early 1880s efforts were made to increase and extend the iron ore pits and the owners sold out to THE DUCAL IRON AND COAL COMPANY which was formed "to acquire the Fawler Iron Mines and those in the Mendips". The prospectus for the company, dated February 12th 1881, listed Lord Randolph Henry Spencer Churchill as the chairman and one of the Board was W.W. Kettlewell Esq. J.P. of Harptree Court, East Harptree, Somerset. The aims of the company included plans to build furnaces at Fawler in which to smelt a mixture of Fawler ore and ore from the Mendip area. Experiments at a Staffordshire ironworks had shown one part Mendip ore to three parts Fawler ore produced a very good pig iron such "that even in the worst times good profit may be confidently expected". Mendip ore was to be brought in by train. However there is no evidence that any furnaces were ever built and Fawler ore was probably taken away by train to be smelted elsewhere.

The Ducal Iron and Coal Company appears also to have been known as Bolton & Partners Ltd. Mining of iron ore apparently ceased in 1887, less than 5 years after it restarted in 1882, and the lease was surrendered in 1892 by Lady Bolton, the executor of the late Sir F.J. Bolton, and R. Leigh Holland as a director of the Mendip Company.

The following extracts from the Prospectus (written to attract investors to the company) refer to Mendip:

Item 1 "The company is formed for the acquisition and working of the FAWLER and MENDIPS Iron, Coal and Mineral Properties.

Item 3 "The Mendip Mines, extending over more than 5000 acres are near to the railways which run from Bristol to Radstock and from Wells to Bristol (via Yatton) and it is proposed to connect them to one of these railways by the construction of a short branch line."

The iron is a red siliceous hematite, and occurs in large quantities both as a deposit in the New Red Sandstone, and in veins in the Carboniferous Limestone.

This ore shows by analysis 42 to 47 per cent of Metallic Iron, and 20 to 25 per cent of

Silica, without sulphur, phosphorus, or other impurities of consequence. Kidney hematite ore, of over 60 per cent metallic iron, and manganese and manganiferous ores are also found in pockets near the Iron-ore veins.

Item 6 "At the Mendips there are, besides the Iron, large deposits of Lead Slimes and Slags, which may be worked. From prospecting work now being carried on, there is great probability of valuable veins of Lead ore being found."

Three trial borings for Coal have also been put down at a cost of over £8,000, by Messrs Bolton & Bewick, on the ground belonging to the Company near East Harptreeand the existence of good workable seams has been proved, at a depth of about 100 fathoms, over a considerable area."

There are quantities of Yellow Ochre, extending over many acres and of several feet in thickness, lying close to the surface; Calamine too is met with in considerable quantities and valuable clay deposits also exist upon the Mendip properties."

Item 8. Messrs. Bolton & Bewick, the Owners of the Mendip Mines are willing to sell their property, plant and materials, for a like number of 250 Ordinary Shares on condition that the Company will take over a mortgage of £3,000 at five per cent..... and will also refund to them the sum of £3,000, being the amount of a first mortgage which has just been paid off by them."

My curiosity aroused, I looked at Gough's Mines of Mendip (1967) and found that iron mining was going on in several places on Mendip although output was small. Most of the iron mining was the work of a series of firms in which the most prominent figure was Colonel Francis Bolton (later in partnership with a Mr. Bewick). Bolton's name first appeared in 1872 when he enquired about prospects on the Waldegrave Estates. For some years his chief interest was lead but later became more concerned in other minerals, especially iron. Between 1880 and 1882 the firm acquired leases for working over a wide stretch of country extending from Compton Martin to Chewton and is recorded as owning a 'Hematite Mine' at East Harptree for several years in the 1880s. In 1881 Bolton was concerned in floating a company called "THE DUCAL COAL AND IRON COMPANY" [the same one as mentioned in Oxfordshire] which trialed for coal especially near Harptree and Ubley. In 1887 iron was still being raised but the firm of Bolton & Partners came to an end in 1890. Its works were taken over as a going concern by a firm called 'The Mendips Limited', which continued to raise iron at Lams Bottom. However, by 1891 "iron mining proper on Mendip" had come to an end - although yellow ochre was mined on Shute Shelve and red ochre near Compton Martin in the early 1900s.

References:

The Fawler Ironstone Mines – Terry Pratley, April 1980
The Mines of Mendip – J.W. Gough, Revised Edn, 1967
The Heart of Mendip – F.A. Knight, 1915
Mineral statistics - Geological Survey of GB

Rescon 2003 - the international cave rescue conference

The international cave rescue conference (fee £25.00) will be held on 21st-25th July at the SWCC headquarters, Penwyllt, South Wales. Accommodation is available at the SWCC (cottage or camping) for £3.00 per day or at the tourist camp site for £4.00 per day.

The conference aims to promote the exchange of cave rescue skills and provide an environment where these skills are demonstrated underground.

Sessions will cover stretcher hauling, casualty packaging, cave diving, communications, rescue control, first aid, rescue training, ropes, very tight passages, large passages, river passages, Heyphone.

Further details from Mark Lumley ✉ mark.creativeedge@virgin.net ☎ 01761 419246 or Keith Knight ✉ Keith.Knight@gb.vodafone.co.uk ☎ 01329 280386

Lost property

Someone has left a brand new digital camera in the MCG library. We assume that it was left by a member, but it is also possible that it was left by a guest and put in the Library for safe-keeping. We believe the camera has been about the cottage since about mid May.

We have viewed the images but do not recognise any of the faces.

If you have lost a digital camera, please contact Yvonne Rowe on 01524 762664. If you can describe the camera (eg the serial number) we will arrange to return it to you.

Coming Soon

Due to lack of space this month, an up-to-date membership list and an NCA survey will be sent later.

Problems with spelling

Despite proof-reading the newsletter, the occasional mistake somehow still slips past my spell-checker. I was talking to Chris Whittle about this, and he has since sent me this short poem which may explain why!

*That's awl right
Eye have a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques
Four my revue
Mistakes eye cannot sea
I've run this poem threw it
I'm sure your pleas too no
Its letter perfect in it's weigh
My chequer tolled me sew*

MCG 50th Anniversary Events March 2004

Friday 26th March

- Commemorative caving trip down Swildons - 50s style.
- A slide show at the cottage followed by a party in the evening with food and beer.
- A Marquee/tent by the cottage will be available as overflow facilities.



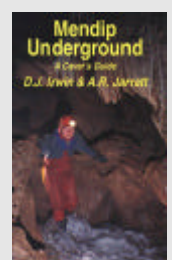
Saturday 27th March

- The cottage will be available during the day as a meeting point with beer and food available. On display will be 50 years of the clubs history along with the 2004 journal, a photo competition, commemorative T-shirts, mugs, etc and slide show.
- The AGM will be held in the morning at the Hunters.
- Caving trip/re-enactment (TBA) in the afternoon.
- A dinner will be held in the evening at Coombe Lodge, Blagdon (0761 463355) - a grand Jacobean style house (see picture opposite) with wood paneling, open fires and original Art Deco features. The building is set in its own grounds in an area of outstanding natural beauty (see web site www.coombelodge.co.uk). There are 28 rooms which are available to us for a discounted price of £25pp including breakfast.
- Tickets for the dinner are now available priced £25 each. Cheques payable to Mendip Caving group.
- Various distractions will take place during the evening and the history display and photo competition will also be on show.
- Coach transport will be provided from Wells and the cottage.



Sunday 28th March

- 'The Caves of Burrington Coombe'. How many can you locate? A lighthearted challenge to see if you can find them all!
- A preview of the clubs commemorative overseas meet in Slovenia will be held at the cottage in the afternoon.



July 2004

Friday 2nd July

- BBQ/picnic at a site of historical significance (TBA) e.g. the site of the first cottage or say, at Timber Hole, the site of the first dig. Bring a chair or a blanket. There will be a small charge for food and you can bring your own beverages and games. Fun for the whole family!
- In the evening there will be a Quiz at the cottage with food and drink. A Marquee will provide overflow facilities.



Saturday 3rd July

- A monster breakfast will be served in the Marquee (open to non residents!).
- Adult caving trip and a family caving trip during the day followed by a Barn Dance at Priddy Hall in the evening. Tickets £7.50 for adults, £3.75 for children. Buffet. MCG history display. Fireworks.



Sunday 4th July

- Another monster breakfast in the Marquee.
- For those who still have any energy there will be a walk/bike ride to include a pub stop or two, all abilities welcome. It may even turn into a sponsored/themed event to raise money for charity. Meet up in the Hunters after.



Summer 2004

Overseas Meet - Slovenia

Catering for all abilities of caver, with all types of accommodation options (camping, B&B, Hotels) close to caving areas. Flexible transport options. Co-ordinated by Julie Hesketh. Further info will be published in the Newsletter and on the MCG Web site.



Further information

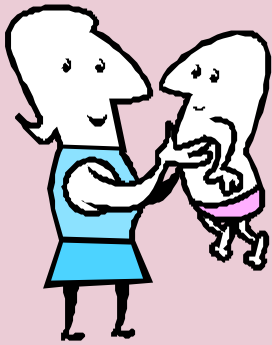
Contact Linda Milne (on 07767 267849 and linda.milne@btinternet.com) or any committee member. Information will also be posted on www.m-c-g.org.uk and in the newsletter.

This schedule is not fixed in stone, so if you have any further ideas and suggestions for these events get in touch with any committee member

Isn't she gorgeous

Ross and Julie's baby has been named Eva Rose.

Mum, Dad and Baby joined the MCG workers for an Indian meal in Wells on the cottage work weekend. Eva was well behaved and very quiet....



... but the same cannot be said of the MCG, especially Baz who was very loud!!



50th Anniversary Events

A sub-committee has been formed. Joan Goddard will be making photo displays. Yvonne Rowe is producing a Special Publication. Jacky Ankerman and Lee Hawkswell will arrange publicity. Bryan and Anne Pittman are helping with organisation, bookings and contacts. Linda Milne is arranging a speaker for the dinner.

The Really Big Event of 1953

By Tony Knibbs

50th anniversaries seem to be in the air this year, but the real achievement of that year has, so far, received no public recognition. Queens and coronations are all very



Hilary and Tensing on Everest

Coronation

St Cuthbert's

well, as are ascents of Himalayan peaks, but the real event of 1953 was the discovery of St Cuthbert's Swallet on Mendip.

By the end of 1953, exploration had sufficiently advanced to confirm that St Cuthbert's was a major cave. In those early days (before the Entrance Rift was widened) exploration was dependent on weather conditions. This effectively slowed down the rate at which the system was explored.

By the spring of 1954 the number of pitches negotiated had reached double figures and expectations of a huge, deep system were running high. BEC were even obliged to make more wire ladders to keep up with the exploration. In those days my travels to Mendip depended on getting lifts or hitch-hiking. My first caving weekend of 1953 was planned to be a trip to Black Hole in Swildons. I arranged a lift with Dennis Kemp, meeting him and his ubiquitous Land Rover at Gloucester Road tube station on Friday 19 March. Our accommodation was at The (old) Belfry which we reached at 11h30pm. Dennis had arranged the Black Hole trip in advance but it quickly became apparent that heavy rain had called into question the wisdom of doing such a trip. Growing disappointment soon changed to elation when it was suggested that we should join a 24-hour trip into St Cuthbert's to start at midday Saturday 20 March. Dennis declined the offer but I managed to get myself onto the trip. So far, my caving trips had never exceeded eight hours, so this was going to be something special! Don Coase and Roy Bennett (both BEC) were the movers and shakers for the trip and simply exuded enthusiasm. I only kept a caving diary for my first three years' exploits but this trip is included.

At noon the dam was put in to be able to stop the stream flow for long enough for the six of us (Don Coase, Roy Bennett, Bobby Bagshawe, Chris Falshaw, Jack Waddon, Norman Petty and myself) to get down the Entrance Rift safely with 24 hours' sustenance and adequate tackle for a 24-hour session. The first job was to put in a Rawlbolt at the head of Arête Pitch. We then followed what was known as the New Route, descending Pulpit Pitch (65ft) with the stream after a bit of "gardening", then Gour Passage Pitch was followed by the spectacular Water Chute where I used a "knobbly dog" (short aluminium 'rungs' through the centres of which ran the same wire rope as used for ladders, and similarly fixed) for the first time. This was used in the same way as a knotted rope. By the increase in noise level and the arrival of the full stream it was obvious when the dam was released. Although only dressed in the usual sweater and boiler suit, I had kept relatively dry up to this point.

In a short while we stopped for a brew-up in Dining Chamber. Soup, bread, tea and

biscuits fortified us for the next six hours of exploration in the Railway Tunnel and Rabbit Warren areas. We seemed to go for miles and I marvelled at the sheer size of many of the passages and chambers. There was an overriding sense of purpose to the exploration – many of its moves were at the limit of my abilities, but I was in safe and very competent company.

Having pushed every rocky orifice in sight we went back for another brew in Dining Chamber. Suitably nourished we went to the end of the Dining Chamber farthest from the main streamway (from which it is entered) and pressed on into Cerberus Rift to reach the long, high rift of Cerberus Hall. I chose to explore a hands-and-knees crawl in the floor which degenerated into a flat-out squeeze, finally opening in a small, steep rift down to a beautiful deep, green lake (Lake Chamber). Being unprepared for a swim I turned back, pleased with my discovery, to meet the others. Everyone having admired the lake, we took a left turn on the return along the crawl.

The small, dry passage soon opened out into a smooth-walled grotto from which a tricky climb gained a squeeze at roof level. This surprised everyone by coming out into Everest Passage where the spacious surroundings were in marked contrast to our access route. The return to Dining Chamber was quick and easy via a short stretch of the main streamway. The exploration was dividing itself into six-hour exploration shifts punctuated by rests for food and drink in the Dining Chamber. All the time we were on the go I expected to reach the “end” of the cave; but it never happened. The size and complexity of St Cuthbert’s was mind-blowing to someone of my limited experience. It was like being in an endless caving paradise.

The next ‘meal’ was followed by a long rest - I think we were getting quite tired by this time (the small hours of Sunday morning). We had arranged for the dam to be put in at midday, so it was decided to make the next shift a return to the surface with sight-seeing and detours. Probably the most interesting detour was an exploration of Drinking Fountain passage above the Water Chute. Roy led the way up, followed by Don into the narrow slot in the roof bringing in a heavy drip. My curiosity was acute and I was eventually helped up into the slot to almost immediately meet the other two on their way back, making a noisy and painful-looking descent of a short climb (easier going up than coming down). They had reached a climb which would require a maypole at some future date. We climbed Pulpit Pitch and then waited above Arête Pitch for the stream to subside when the dam went in. After what seemed a long wait the stream diminished dramatically leaving us in almost total silence. With varying degrees of agility we struggled up the dripping Entrance Rift then climbed out of the wooden-shored, excavated entrance shaft. Yet another meal was provided in The Belfry before I left for London with Dennis.

I don’t remember feeling tired after the trip, but my hands and feet had become so wrinkled after such a long soaking that I seriously wondered if they’d ever get back to normal! Of course, they did.

The ‘management’ of the new discovery was good from the outset. The need to reach a formal agreement with the Hodgkinsons of Wookey Hole Paper Mill concerning non-pollution of the stream imposed the need to consider how access was to be organised. The early decision to create a leader system was far-sighted and, despite much early criticism, has today made it possible to see parts of this magnificent cave virtually as it was in 1953. I took little part in the further explorations in St Cuthbert’s but, some ten years and umpteen qualifying trips later had the immense pleasure of being accepted as a St Cuthbert’s leader for MCG. I still remember that first trip into the cave with great affection. In fifty years it is still perhaps the best caving trip I have ever done. On Monday 23rd March I celebrated my 18th birthday.

* In recognition of the Mount Everest epic of 1953 I read “Ghosts of Everest” by Hemmleb, Johnson and Simonson (Macmillan 1999). Having read that account of the 1999 Mallory and Irvine Research Expedition, I am convinced that Mallory and Irvine actually reached the summit in 1924.

More Monthly Mendip Members Meets (Maybe)

The named meet-of-the-month was hailed as a good idea, at least it worked in May. Although the named cave was GB, the 4 who arrived decided to visit the dig in Carcass Cave instead. See page 10 for future meets.

Yv’sdropping

TF: “DMM resin anchors must be installed by a qualified anchor installer”

DT: “That’s anchor with a silent W!”

Hidden Earth 2003

BCRA have changed the date and venue of this year’s Hidden Earth conference.

It will now be on 3rd-5th October at Hanley Castle High School, Upton on Severn. More details at www.hidden-earth.org.uk



Archaeologists have discovered the earliest known example of prehistoric cave art in Britain

It consists of 12,000-year-old engravings of birds and an ibex carved into the stone walls at Creswell Crags, Derbyshire. The British art is less impressive than the paintings found in continental caves. It is also substantially younger.



It is thought modern humans appeared in Europe around 45,000 years ago. Over a time span of about 15,000 years, they replaced the continent's then occupants, the Neanderthals.

It is surprising that Palaeolithic cave art has not been identified in the UK before now because the British Isles was linked to the continent during this time and known to have been inhabited. However, experts believe that most cave paintings would have been destroyed in Britain's damp climate.

The researchers examined the Creswell Crags because of previous discoveries at that location. In the 19th Century a 12,000-year-old bone needle was found there. The engravings are of a style similar to the cave art of France and Spain. Of the two birds carved on the wall of the cave, one might be a crane or swan, the other a bird of prey. The other engraving could be an ibex.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/1/hi/sci/tech/2994130.stm>

Extracts from the Log Book, 15th February - 4th May

This précis of the log book entries for Feb, March, April and May Bank Holiday shows that in fact there is a fair amount of activity at the moment.

15.02.2003 - **Charterhouse** (Ch Allison + others). Ground frozen solid so there was very little water in the cave. Very pleasant 2 - 3 hour trip to Singing Stal.

22.02.2003 - **Upper Flood**. (T Francis + 3 guests) Cold and wet. Air 11°, Water 6°

22.02.2003 - **Swildons**. (T Francis, P Bennett, R Carey and I ???). Richard ran us around his specialist Figure of eight, "Route Myriad", in the Upper Series. Huge amounts of Shepton, Wessex, Bracknell and associated groups milling about and blocking the pitch.

27.02.2003 - **Bath Swallet**. (S Cotter and M Cotter) Lives up to its name - well washed and clean!

08.03.2003 - **Goatchurch**. (Ch Allison + guest) Beginners trip. Drainpipe and back. Very crowded and good fun. *"Fantastic fun; I will be back!" Guest.*

09.03.2003 - **Singing River Mine**. (T Francis, R Carey, L Hawkswell, J Ankerman) A gentle stroll and splash about in the puddles.

15.03.2003 - **Ogof Draenen**. (T Francis, P Bennett, D Horne) More digging at Ponty-pool or bust. Rocks moved care of the new hammer. Air and lots of sand ahead.

21.03.2003 - **Upper Flood**. (L Hawkswell, J Ankerman) To Midnight Chamber and Midnight Streamway.

06.04.2003 - **Carcass Cave**. (B Chadwick, T Francis + B Cooper) Despite hang-overs, progress was made at the bottom of the shaft. Biff + gang (Bracknell District Caving Club) had drilled away yesterday - we heaved out some sizeable boulders and revealed a small tube running across the base of the shaft. Plenty of air space so should be easy to dig. Downslope is the obvious way to go.

12.04.2003 - **Thrupe Lane Swallet**. (Tim F, Richard C, D Horne, Rupert, Aggi, Paul + Ian) Very dry - hasn't rained for a few weeks. Rigged pitch using naturals. Good splash down pitch. On exit Ian had a few difficulties on the ladder - well, to be fair, it was only his second cave and first big ladder. Afterwards walked over to see where Thrupe Swallet was. Apparently ATLAS diggers found a 60 foot pitch here last week.

12.04.2003 - **Cuckoo Cleaves**. (M Cotter, L Cotter, B Parker + John) Had fun watching John and Baz trying to fit into their oversuits. very dry down cave. Found Canyon. Enjoyable trip.

13.04.2003 - **Carcass Cave** (B Cooper, T Francis, P Bennett + M Cotter) Very promising session at the dig. Loads of air, loads of draught. Baz and John came in for a view as well. Breakthrough not long, I reckon. (TF)

19.04.2003 + 20.04.2003 - **Carcass Cave** (B Cooper, T Francis, B Chadwick, Biff (BDCC), M Norton + 2) Well, as I predicted, a mini breakthrough! (TF).

26.04.2003 - **Carcass Cave** (M Cotter, B Pittman) My first caving trip since I moved to Mendip. Very impressed with the effort so far and the dig's potential. Removed 6 buckets of spoil (BP). Fantastic effort last weekend (MOC).

28.04.2003 - **Longwood** (G Woollacott + M Amner) Wet, raining but cave wasn't too bad. First proper trip for both of us down this cave. Went down the two 10 Foots and

had a look at Great Chamber. Came back and had a look at the route down from water Chamber. We will do this next time now we know where we are going! Two and a half hours zipped by!

02.05.2003 - **Carcass Cave** (M Norton, D Harris and Biff) Digging trip.

03.05.2003 - **Carcass Cave** (T Francis, D Tooke, Biff, B Cooper, D Harris, M Norton + B Chadwick) Tim and Dave surveyed new passage. All of them dug at the end. Cave isn't longer but the end chamber is certainly bigger. Oh! And the chamber before the end is smaller.

03.05.2003 - **Archaeology Walk** (C Whittle, J Pudduck, B Pittman, J Goddard, Ca Allison, M Rowe, Y Rowe [leader]). Excellent walk. Saw various types of 'enclosures', traces of Roman fort and settlement at Charterhouse, henge at Gorseby Bigbury (near Longwood) and various rock shelters in the Gorge. JP and BP hadn't brought any sandwiches which gave them the excuse to leave at lunchtime for the Hunters - the rest of us imbibed at the White Hart, Cheddar at the end of the walk!."

04.05.2003 - **Carcass Cave** (T Francis, B Cooper, M Rowe Y Rowe, J Goddard, Cara Allison). After failing to locate the entrance on a previous occasion we tagged on to Tim and Ben's digging trip. Glad we did. Excellent cave with much of geological interest - slickensides, fault breccias and fault gouge. Afterwards Rowe's, Joan + Cara looked at entrance for Shute Shelve and realised how close we had been when we failed to find it before - the map on the wall at the cottage shows it the wrong side of a wall. Tim and Ben stayed on at Carcass to dig at draughting hole at base of scaffolded shaft. Poor air at new dig so left that to ventilate.

04.05.2003 - **Templeton Pot** (T Francis, D Tooke, J Goddard + Ca Alison) Go and have a look. You won't believe how huge this dig is! It's a Tusker driven mega Hy-mac dig with a one tonne skip capacity.

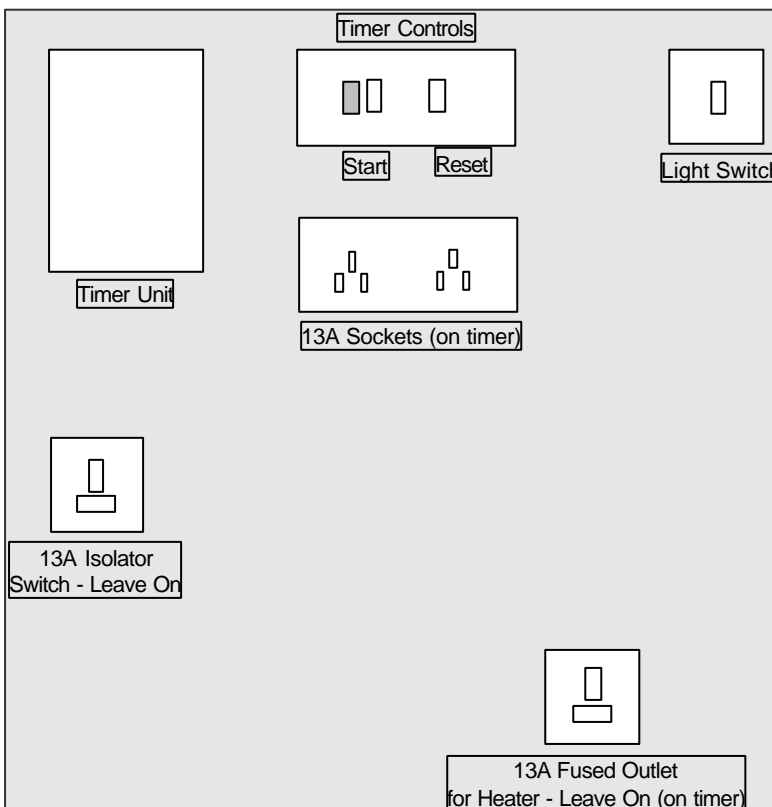
Cottage doings

Work Weekend

Richard Cary and Dave Tooke re-roofed the shed and Paul Dungey repaired the shed floor. Geoff Beale fixed the leaking taps. Ben Cooper installed a de-humidifier in the shed. Two new storage heaters were installed by Barry Parker and Dave Tooke. Part of the garden was dug over and reseeded by Linda Milne, Jane Baldwin, Wayne Hiscox, Dave Tooke, Ben Cooper, Martin and Yvonne Rowe. Lorna Cotter and Tim Francis painted the stairwell. Sorry if I haven't mentioned everyone. YR

Cottage heating

There are proposals under discussion by the committee to install a back boiler and central heating radiators (cost £4000 including installation). Uprating the electrics as well would also cost £4000 including digging a new trench.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR DE-HUMIDIFIER

These instructions explain how to use the de-humidifier and heater in the shed. The shed electrics operate from a timer that gives 10 hours power – but the light in the shed operates independently, so please remember to turn off the light when not in use. Otherwise, the heater and de-humidifier can be left on, as they will automatically switch off after 10 hours.

1. Empty de-humidifier reservoir. Pull open the door at the back, and lift out the plastic reservoir. Empty the water outside, and replace the reservoir, ensuring it is seated so that the internal switch is properly activated. (In the future, we may plumb in a permanent drain.)
2. Ensure the de-humidifier is plugged into one of the 13A sockets and the plug is switched on (it should be always left like this).
3. Ensure heater is switch on (it should be always left like this).
4. Press the Start switch by the timer. The green light should come on, and the de-humidifier should rattle into life.
5. Close the door, to ensure that the shed can heat up and the de-humidifier can dry the air in the shed.

If you wish to stop the heater and de-humidifier before the 10 hours have expired, press the Stop switch.



Group Headquarters

Nordrach Cottage
Charterhouse-on-
Mendip, Blagdon,
Bristol BS407XW
01761 462797
Grid Ref ST51475606

Monthly Member's Mendip Meets

Swildons round trip

Meet MCG Cottage
Saturday 4th August
2003 at 10.00am

Non-committee Posts

Rescue Warden

Keith Knight
01329 280386

Conservation Officer

Peat Bennett
01223 2406333

Examiners

Ben Cooper
01344 776306
Mike Lovell
0118 966 3747

Gift Aid

Administrator
Malcolm Cotter
01784 252643

Booking the Cottage

Please make bookings
for Groups (whether MCG
or Guests) through the
Cottage Warden to avoid
double bookings

GROUP INFORMATION

Weekly Meeting	At The Hunters Lodge, Somerset, Tuesday at about 10pm		
Monthly Meeting	At the Group HQ on the first Fri/Sat/Sunday of the month		
Accommodation	Available at the Group HQ (for members and guests)		
Cottage Fees	MCG members, members children, SWCC, NPC	£	1.50
(per night)	Guest clubs and member's guests	£	2.50
Season Ticket	Available to members only		£30.00
Subscription 2004	Full and Probationary (excluding BCRA insurance)	£	25.00
	Associate Members (excluding BCRA insurance)	£	10.00
Reciprocal rights	MCG members have reciprocal rights with SWCC and NPC		
	NPC bookings	Nic Blundell tel 01203 713849 (hm) or 01203 838940 (wk)	
	SWCC bookings	Ian Middleton tel 01703 736997 email ian_m@tcp.co.uk	

2003/04 CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR

DATE	AREA	EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
Members W/Es	Mendip	Digging in Carcass Cave	Bill Chadwick	0118 9691812
18 -19th July	S Wales	OFD I and II, DYO	Geoff Beale	0118 9722510
Autumn 2003	Mendip	EGM - BCRA Insurance	Lee Hawkswell	01985 212690
27th March 2004	Mendip	50th Anniversary Dinner	Lee Hawkswell	01985 212690

THE 2003- 2004 MCG COMMITTEE

Secretary	01985 212690	secretary@m-c-g.org.uk
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Jacky Ankerman	48 Deverill Road, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9QR	
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Caving Secretary	0208 392 2572	t.francis@research-int.com
Tim Francis	Flat 6, 16 Lambert Avenue, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4QR	
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Jane Baldwin	Brooklands Cottage, Twyn , Glascoed, Usk, Gwent, NP4 0UB	
Social Secretary	01344 774589	Linda.Milne@btinternet.com
Linda Milne	40 Harts Leap Close, Sandhurst, Berkshire, GU47 8PB	

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

Who	Date Arrive	Date Leave	Nights	Beds
Steve Taylor	Sat 27/07/03	Fri 01/08/02	6	20
Robert Robson	Fri 08/08/03	Sun 10/08/03	2	15
Pete Mullins	Fri 12/09/03	Sun 14/09/03	2	24