

# MCG News

Newsletter of the  
Mendip Caving Group

Golden Chamber, Upper Flood Swallet, 2004

Number 330  
October 2005

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

Founded 1954

## August cottage work weekend

by Linda Milne (and Martin Rowe), photos by Joan Goddard

An interesting "thread" has been started on the UKCaving Forum recently about cottage building (see screenshot, below). It would be tempting to reply that MCG are far too busy caving to be concerned with cottage building, but the lack of caving reports recently suggests that there may be some truth in the opinion that MCG is an abbreviation for the Mendip Construction Group!

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**Club Huts**

Posted: Wed Sep 28, 2005 12:06 pm

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Johnny</b><br/>menacing presence</p>  <p>Joined: 30 May 2003<br/>Posts: 237<br/>Location: Derbyshire</p> | <p>I recently stayed at the Belfry down in the Mendips and, as has been the case with all my visits, I was made extremely welcome. A big thanks to all.</p> <p>I particularly enjoyed listening to the older boys squabbling as they got on with building an extension to the place, they were like a bunch of overgrown kids with a den (meant in an affectionate way).</p> <p>I have heard it said that clubs with huts spend all thier time doing DIY and not caving. Does anyone agree with this sentiment or are club huts beneficial to a club and to the caving community?</p> |
|---|---|

Seriously though, the cottage should be a great asset to the Group, providing a permanent caving base on Mendip as well as a place to keep the tackle and, of course, the library. As with any other building of its age (25 years old now) it needs some TLC from time to time, and all members have the opportunity to help with the repairs and maintenance on the annual Work Weekend, which this year was on the 5/6/7th August.

The outside of the cottage was to be the general theme for this year. Much was achieved by a hardworking bunch of volunteers. Some of the jobs tackled were: Door ledges painted, grass cut, brambles and ash seedlings cut back/dug out, drive way weeded, gutters and gullies cleaned, gas store door fixed and painted,

porch post and washing line posts painted, drying shed scrubbed and treated, Forman's Lounge (south facing window painted). Shower heads were de-scaled and the kitchen was given a thorough going over. The biggest job was the replacement of the facias and cladding of the west side dormer, very impressively achieved by Brian and Keith with Tim and Louisa doing the wood preparation.



## From the Editor



*Is there anybody there!* I have received very little for the newsletter which is why it's a while since you had one.

We went through a phase like this many years ago and that was when the one-page MCG Bulletin began. Looks like I'll have to delve back into the archives and pull it out again – hopefully only for a while. The idea of the Bulletin was that during the phase of little or no articles we still had a publication of sorts to ensure dates and other important news was regularly sent to members.

Of course I would much rather be editing a 10-page newsletter, and I'm sure you would much rather receive such a publication, so come on – please put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and tell us all about your latest caving trips, holidays etc.

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## MCG Doings

### On the move

**Simon Stevens** ☒ 3 Bluebell Close, Seaton, Devon EX12 2UP

### Email changes

**Louisa Minahan's** email address has changed again. Please do not use the @treasury-solicitor.gsi.gov.uk

She is now at DFT and on: [louisa.minahan@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:louisa.minahan@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

### Membership

Natalie Field has been accepted as a probationary member ☒ 60 Ellan Hay Road, Bradley Stoke, Bristol

[nataliefield@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:nataliefield@blueyonder.co.uk)

Applications for probationary membership have been received from

**Anthony Smith** ☒ 16, Upper Close, Forest Row East Sussex

[tonytrogsmith@aol.com](mailto:tonytrogsmith@aol.com)

**David Whitchurch-Bennett** ☒ Gorsedd, Coursing Batch, Glastonbury BA6 8BH [david.rwb@gmail.com](mailto:david.rwb@gmail.com)

### Cottage doings

11 new covers have been purchased for the mattresses in the 8- and 6- Rooms. The old-style, dark, stretch covers are no longer available and our mattresses are the wrong size for off-the-peg ecru (light mud-coloured) covers so we have been supplied with made-to-measure covers which come only in virginal white - sorry, couldn't manage the virgins too!

The fireguard has been mended; please make sure you use it when leaving the fire unattended.

BT engineers have been up and mended the phone.

Joan

We all enjoyed a splendid BBQ in the evening (food organised by Joan and Brenda and Joan) which included a guest appearance from JR who we were pleased to see is now up and about (with the aid of a walking stick) following his car accident. And at dusk the local bat population treated us to a display of aerobatics – fantastic.

Many thanks go to the team of happy workers: Geoff Beale, Joan Goddard, Mike Richardson, Tim Francis, Louisa Minahan, Brenda Whybrow, Keith Knight, Brian Snell, Mick Norton, Bryan Pittman, Malcolm Cotter, Linda Milne and Bob Templeman.



### Hidden Earth 2005

by Joan Goddard

Ten MCG members attended the conference this year, which was held at Churchill Community School – almost on our doorstep! There was the usual fine selection of talks and expedition reports, including an excellently presented talk by Tim on the five visits made by MCG members to the Andean foothills in Argentina.



We set off in different directions according to our interests. On Saturday I went along to Maurice Hewin’s talk on the Wells Museum/UBSS cave cine archive, the aim of which is to prevent unique film being lost for ever but with copyright remaining with the originator. Maurice showed clips from film taken as long ago as 1933 by Professor Tratman of UBSS. A Lamb Leer film of 1937 was produced for an early BCRA Conference. Hopefully more people will deposit their film with the archive as it is valuable as a historical record.

Dave Irwin gave a talk on Swildon’s Hole history and also showed the Swildon’s bike slide show (which I believe we had as after dinner entertainment at a dinner a few years back). Pete Mathews was impressed with Rik Marten’s film ‘The Way of the Water’ about a very wet cave in Belgium, and Gavin Newman’s re-edited Wookey film was excellent. Sunday followed with more expedition reports including The Lost World of Venezuela which I enjoyed. Wales provided a report on Digs and Hydrology of Ystradfellite & Blaenavon followed by a very enthusiastic talk on Parys copper mine in Anglesey where the flooded abandoned levels have been recently drained to reveal the old passages. I think the younger MCG members went along to more of the expedition reports than I did – you’ll have to ask them about them.

Throughout both days there were workshops and competitions (Julie won the ladies’ ladder climbing and tackle bag stuffing competitions) and Martin Peck exhibited some lovely photos taken in Slovenia on last year’s holiday - we think he should have won! The trade and club stands were a little thin on the ground this year but the photo and art competitions were well supported. A tremendous amount of work goes into Hidden Earth and the organisers are to be congratulated on great event.

Next Year’s Hidden Earth is likely to be in Derbyshire



BPC’s winning stand, above; Julie wins the ladder race, left; Cave art on tiles, Mel Loyd, below



### MCG socials

Sat 05/11/05 Half Yearly Social. Bonfire and fireworks display at Priddy Green followed by the Hunters. The start of the Bonfire is approx. 6.30. Grub will more than likely be available at Priddy as well as at the Hunters.

Sat 03/12/05 Christmas Dinner at Nordrach Cottage. More details from Linda Milne.



Above: T\*\* F\*\*\*\*\* at the 2004 Xmas Dinner

### MCG half - yearly meeting, Nov 5th '05

The half-yearly meeting will take place at Nordrach Cottage on Saturday, 5th November 2005 at 2.30 pm.

Unlike the formal AGM, the mid-year meeting is informal. There is no fixed agenda, no Officers Reports, no Minutes to agree.

The purpose of the meeting is to give members an opportunity to raise any subject they wish to discuss. For example, Julie Hesketh has suggested we consider a venue for MCG’s 2006 summer meet.

Please try to come along. We need to hear members ideas and opinions. If not, you may well get what the committee think you want—you have been warned!

## Digging doings

### Ogof Draenen

Tim and Peat did a super fast trip to Pontypool or Bust on the weekend of 13 – 14/08/05. Total trip time of 7.5 hrs and 32 skips removed. (And then managed a tourist trip for the SWCC down Upper Flood on the Sunday. My knees....) The current dig is now 30ft + from the little chamber (getting smaller by the skip load). We furtled on at the end and can see something promising at last. An air-space, broken up by ridges in the roof, runs across the front of the dig from left to right. It drops away quite steeply to the right. The next session should see us there. **Tim Francis**

### Carcass Cave

On the weekend of 13 – 14/08/05, Doug, Bif, Duncan Harbour, Mike Richardson and Mick Norton dug in the tunnel off the new chamber found last Christmas. Maybe 120 drums of spoil were taken out from the dig face to the surface. This tube is now about 8 metres long, air fine, but it has closed down to nothing

**Mick Norton**

### Upper Flood 2

Biff, Mick, Bill and Doug, had a difficult job lifting the lid on UF2 before Bill went down and bailed. Biff using his compressor to drill 1¼ ins hole straight down for 4½ ft, but no void. Then we drilled a 4½ ft long hole in the direction Tim had indicated. Tim led a party into Rip Off Aven for a sound test; we heard each other but it was not loud. Doug has fitted his own padlock as the one on there had fallen apart - the lid locking mechanism is rotting

**Mick Norton**

## 'The Caves' open day, Banwell

by Joan Goddard

The current owners kindly open the grounds and the Bone Cave to the public three or four times a year and it was a novel experience for me to see the Bone Cave illuminated only by candlelight. Bishop Law, who became the Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1824, used the existence of animal bones in the cave as proof of Noah's flood. He constructed a number of follies accompanied by plaques intended to give visitors 'food for thought'. The one at the entrance to Stalactite Cavern read:-

*O thou, who trembling, viewst this cavern's gloom,  
Pause and reflect on thy eternal doom,  
Think what the punishment of sin will be  
In the abyss of endless misery.*

But there was a brighter end to my visit – cream tea served on the terrace with wonderful views over the Bristol Channel towards Wales.

The Banwell Caves Heritage Group is a small group of local people who are helping the owners to conserve and restore this unique site, which is an SSSI. It is next open as part of the Heritage Open Days Scheme on Sat 10<sup>th</sup>/Sun 11<sup>th</sup> September and would make an interesting diversion for a lazy day on Mendip!

## 'The Cave' the movie

Following on from the release of "The Descent" last month, the latest cave-adventure offering "The Cave" has now gone on general release. Reviews have been varied—you will either love it or hate it. It hasn't reached Arnside yet, so I can't give you my opinion. However, credit must be given to Sony Pictures at least for the way they went about making the film. Here is their press release:

*Synopsis: Deep in the Romanian forest, a team of scientists stumbles upon the ruins of a thirteenth century Abbey. Upon further inspection, they make a startling discovery--the Abbey is built over the entrance to a giant underground cave system. Local biologists believe the cave could be home to an undiscovered ecosystem, so they hire the top cave divers in the world to help them investigate its depths. They arrive in Romania with all the latest equipment, including a new type of scuba unit that allows a diver to remain submerged for up to 24 hours. The crack unit immediately begin their exploration. But what they find deep inside the cave is not just a new eco-system, but an entirely new species altogether.*



The Cave may appear to be simply the product of a writer's imagination, but the film has a deceptively complicated story. There's a lot of technical and scientific information that's woven into the script. To complete the underwater vision of the action thriller, the producers contacted Wes Skiles and Jill Heinerth and their team at Karst Productions film production com-



the team on this project has laid more 'virgin line' in unexplored caves than any one on the planet.

"In Romania, there were many dangers involved with the magnitude of the stunts that we were performing underwater. We had divers plunge into the water through bubbles of propane that were lit into an exploding fireball as they departed. We had to orchestrate landslides of rock on top of guys who were diving without masks and fins," she added. Over the course of the production, the aquatic filming crew put in a total of over 3,500 hours underwater. "There are not a lot of people that do underwater photography," said Executive Producer Richard Wright of finding the underwater team. "We were going to shoot eight or nine weeks of underwater footage on this film, and it would have been an incredibly huge undertaking to try and do it the Hollywood way: bringing in 20 people from Los Angeles to give it the big feature film look. We went the opposite route. We wanted people who shoot cave documentaries, to give us that realistic edge.



"We were very lucky in finding Wes Skiles and Jill Heinerth, who are among the top cave divers in the world. We looked at their body of work and knew instantly they were the ones for us. We realized that not only were Wes and Jill utterly capable technically of shooting our movie, but that these were the people our movie was about! They put themselves in harm's way for no money just because they want to, and because it's there."

After the main shoot in Romania, the team moved to the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico to film more of the amazing underwater scenes. "The tank in Romania offered a good controlled location for stunt work, but it lacked the mesmerizing beauty of a cave that cannot be duplicated," Heinerth explained. "We covered about one mile underwater to shoot the different set locations in the real caves of the Yucatan. These caves are one of the natural wonders of our earth. We shot in a location called Hidden Worlds, a place which is very dear to my heart and I cannot think of a more beautiful place on the planet. I come back year after year to explore, film and photograph this wonderful place. Wes Skiles directed the underwater portions of the IMAX film Journey Into Amazing Caves in the same location in 1998. He has been mesmerized by the cave ever since then." "Many of the crew utilized closed circuit rebreathers on- and off-camera during our time in Mexico," she continued. "This is because we needed to minimize the bubbles we create in the cave to stop silt-outs. Traditional scuba gear that makes bubbles will often create so much silt that the team has to retreat and wait for the water to clear for additional takes."



To view the theatrical trailer and online video game log onto the website: [www.enterthecave.com](http://www.enterthecave.com) For more information about Karst Productions and the Underwater Unit go to: [www.karstproductions.com](http://www.karstproductions.com).

### Mine subsidence sparks evacuation



Some of you may know that I work for a Housing Association in Cumbria. Imagine my delight then, when a hole some 30 feet across suddenly appeared in the back gardens of some of our bungalows in Egremont. The area was used extensively for iron ore mining and the collapse is thought to have been caused by subsidence. It seems that the bungalows had been built over a 523feet deep mine shaft....

The hole quickly filled with water coloured red because of lingering iron ore deposits, so a descent was out of the question (although I did briefly think about telling Fiona Crozier...)

The local press, not wanting to alarm people, printed the following quotation from a local mines explorer: "It would be ill-advised to frighten people unnecessarily, but most of Egremont sits on top of the mines"

Mine collapses are not unknown in this part of Cumbria. In 1990, a 980 foot deep shaft opened in Brigg. And an even deeper shaft (1300 feet) opened up following subsidence a few years ago at Baybarrow.

The Brigg subsidence cost £110,000 to fill in 1990 and our shaft will have to be filled-in and capped to make the area safe. Fortunately, there is a government-funded scheme that hopefully will cover much of the cost.

**Martin Rowe**

**HE Library Additions**

A few items were purchased at Hidden Earth some of which were replacements for lost and missing items. I have not had time to review any of them yet.

**Wookey, The Caves Beyond** by Martyn Farr, 1985

**Caves Of Skye** by F Ryder with contributions by Alan Jeffries, 1995

**The Caves On The West Bank Of The Afon Tawe** by Keith Jones

**Britain Underground** by Norman Thornber, A & R Stride and J. Myers, 1953

**Three Below Gower** by M.C.Taylor (1991)

**Exploring The Limestone Landscapes Of The Three Peaks And Malham** by Phillip Murphy, 2005 (BCRA Cave Studies Series No 15)

**Depths Of The Earth – Caves And Cavers Of The United States** by W.R.Halliday, 1976. A quick glance suggests that this book gives a brief, albeit dated, overview of many of America's most noteworthy caves in a number of different states. Probably a worthwhile read if you are visiting the States.

In addition to providing some of their newsletters which were missing from our set, WSG has kindly donated some reprints of miscellaneous expedition reports. A further donation is **The Caving Songs of Mendip** edited by Roger Biddle (Rev edn 1990)

Joan Goddard

**Library additions**

**The Black Rose on Storrs Common, 2005** by Ged Dodd – This CD-ROM was given a good review in Descent No. 183 and at only £4.99 post free it is entertaining and informative. It relates the history of caving at Storr Common, Ingleborough, from the 1950s. There are club politics and non-PC comments to keep one clicking onto the next page together with a large amount of information on the caves, digs *etc* and with a useful index near the beginning.

**Delving Deeper, 2003.** Occasional Publication No 11 of the New Zealand Speleological Society which reached its 50 anniversary on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1999. Compiled (*and signed!*) by Moira Lipyeat and edited by Les Wright. Tim brought this back from his recent trip to New Zealand. It is a 306 page hardback book which describes half a century of cave discovery in New Zealand. Each chapter covers a decade and to prevent the reader getting bogged down in chronological detail the pages are laid out attractively with photos, maps, surveys, quotes and a smattering of humorous illustrations. The photos are not reproduced to the highest quality but no doubt production costs came into the equation. Appendices include New Zealand's longest and deepest caves, bibliography and related reading, and affiliated caving clubs. Anyone visiting New Zealand – and there seem to be a lot of people doing just that! – will find this book invaluable when sorting out their itinerary.

**Passamà Nos. 1 (1993) and 2 (2003)** published by the Grup d'Investigacions I Recerques Espeleologiques Sesrovires (Barcelona) are full of cave descriptions and surveys – very useful, I should think, if you are planning to cave there.

**Cheddar Caving Club 2005 Journal** – not sure if this is their first journal or not. A5 format and with rather small print; enthusiastically written with trip reports etc.

**MNRC Newsletter No. 105 Summer 2005** contains two pages documenting 6 mine shafts on the nature reserve at the MOD Yoxter firing range. Also visited Pyman's Mine (haematite) and Frog Pot (a natural feature dug some years ago).

**Axbridge Caving Group Journal 2005.** Three interesting articles by Alan Gray. The first is about converting a standard cap lamp to a 21 LED cap lamp for less than £7 using an LED torch bought from E-Bay. Although the resulting lamp is not suitable for illuminating large chambers it is fine for smaller passages and for digging. The second article is a review of notes from the Somerset Records Office concerning mining on Shute Shelve Hill and the third relates the search for the lost cave of Axbridge.

**Wessex Cave Club Journal Vol. 28 No. 295 June 2005** An article by Dave Irwin on Goatchurch draws heavily on a piece by A. Bartlett in the Summer 1901 edition of Boys Own Magazine. The cave description, although somewhat flowery and exaggerated, makes light-hearted reading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Under Grotto Mountain, Rat's Nest Cave** by Charles J. Yonge, 2001 is a nicely produced glossy paperback book about this 4km long Alberta cave. Chapter 1 takes you on a 'tour of the cave' (for which a leader is required) and Chapter 11 describes it's exploration from the early 1960s. Chapter 2 gives a general resume of caving in the Canadian Rockies but most of the book is given over to the scientific aspects of the cave. I especially liked the section on cave formations which is well written and illustrated. A pocket at the back of the book contains a survey.

**Jura/Doubs areas of France-** CD containing masses of useful information about caves in these areas (donated by Tony & Denise Knibbs)

**A short History and Guide to Banwell Caves** by John Chapman, August 2005. This little book has been produced primarily for visitors to The Caves which is the name of the house which was built over the Bone Cave. It provides a short history of the caves and describes the follies and Banwell Tower which were built in the mid 1800s.

**Focus on Bats, discovering their lifestyle and habitats, 2003** is a small publication by English Nature with good photographs of many of the different species. Also a list of British species with their roosting preferences and areas where they might be found.

## Mesolithic engravings at Cheddar Gorge

Current Archaeology, Issue 199

After finding rock engravings at Aveline's Hole, University of Bristol Spelaeological Society continued searching for Palaeolithic or Mesolithic art in other Mendip caves. Cheddar Gorge was an obvious target, as caves here are rich in the archaeology of these periods. Investigations have taken place in Gough's Cave, Gough's Old Cave, Long Hole and Great Oone's Hole. In Long Hole, they have now found abstract engravings which may date to the Mesolithic period.



Long Hole Cave is immediately above Gough's Cave, the major show cave in the Gorge, and access is controlled by the show cave management. The cave consists of an elliptical tube leading 250 metres into the hillside. The engravings are located on the west wall of a small chamber, about 70 metres from the entrance. The way on from this chamber is up an awkward 5 metre climb and so it may be regarded as the end of the entrance passage. There are three separate engravings in this chamber. All three engravings are rectilinear abstract designs made with more or

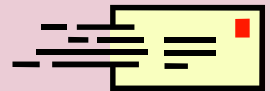
less parallel groups of two or three lines. The lines appear to have been cut with stone tools and show a degree of patination characteristic of considerable age. There is a recent scratch over one engraving which is far brighter. This is characteristic of the later graffiti elsewhere in the cave. On stylistic grounds the engravings are probably Mesolithic, rather than the Palaeolithic because such abstract designs are more characteristic of that period.



less parallel groups of two or three lines. The lines appear to have been cut with stone tools and show a degree of patination characteristic of considerable age. There is a recent scratch over one engraving which is far brighter. This is characteristic of the later graffiti elsewhere in the cave. On stylistic grounds the engravings are probably Mesolithic, rather than the Palaeolithic because such abstract designs are more characteristic of that period.

Aveline's Hole was sealed from the Early Mesolithic until 1797, and so the Aveline's engraving could not be Neolithic, Bronze Age or later. Long Hole has, in effect, always been open and has been subject to visits throughout time. It was used in Roman times and contains graffiti dating as far back as 1668. Tratman dug

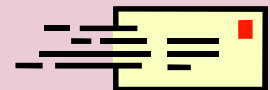
some trial trenches in the cave in the 1960s and found that the deposits had been 'completely disturbed'; in addition, no certain Palaeolithic material has come from this cave. However, both Palaeolithic and Mesolithic archaeology can be found in abundance in the surrounding caves, therefore, considering their condition and style, these engravings are probably Mesolithic.



**From:** Philip Hendy  
**Sent:** 01 Sept 2005  
**To:** yvonne.rose  
**Subject:** Limekiln Dig

In reading the recent MCG newsletters (for receipt of which, thanks) I notice in the June issue that the club has named the dig at Charterhouse 'Limekiln Dig'. I believe that there is precedence for this name, as many years ago the Wessex started a dig in Eastwater Lane, and gave it the same name. To avoid confusion, it may be advisable if your dig was renamed. I suggest you check with the Mendip cave Registry (Dave Irwin) so see if the Wessex dig has this official name.

**Phil Hendy**  
 Wessex Librarian

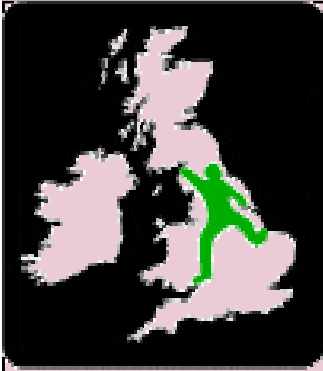


**From:** MCG  
**Sent:** 01 Set 2005  
**To:** Philip.Hendy  
**Subject:** Limekiln Dig

Thanks for your comments. The name Limekiln (Dig) was suggested by John Cornwall, the previous digger, who turned up on the day we did the work. It seemed a good name at the time as it is close to the old limekiln in the adjacent quarry. As it happens, we soon realised the potential for confusion, and we are thinking of calling it Roman Rift (unless there is another Roman Rift that we don't know about!). Of course, when it enters the Cheddar master cave (any day now?), we will have to think of a better name.

Regards

**MCG**



# BCRA

## Cave Science Symposium, 4th March 2006

The British Cave Research Association is pleased to announce that its next annual Cave Science Symposium will be held at the Bristol University School of Geographical Sciences on Saturday 4 March 2006.

Whether you are an academic, an amateur scientist or a caver wanting to find out more about the underground environment, you'll find something of interest at the Symposium. Each year the verbal presentations and posters cover a wide range of cave science topics - from archaeology to hydrology, and from biology to geology.

To offer a presentation please contact the lecture secretary:

Andy Baker, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT

Tel: +44 (0)121 415 8133

[a.baker@bcra.org.uk](mailto:a.baker@bcra.org.uk)

Presentations from students, including undergraduates, are particularly welcome.

Further information, including directions to the venue, will appear on the BCRA website <http://bcra.org.uk> as the Symposium approaches.

## Rescue from The Smithy, OFD

### **West Brecon Cave Rescue Team**

C/O SWCC Headquarters, No. 2 Powell Street, Penwyllt,  
Pen-Y-Cae, Swansea, SA9 1GQ  
Registered Charity No. 1016463



On the May 29 the WBCRT undertook the longest rescue from OFD for many years. The rescue lasted some 27 hours and in excess of 170 cavers attended. Here are the main details of the rescue. The incident log is available for those who are interested - all 45 pages! Ask any of WBCRT exec if you wish to read it.

The accident was the result of a simple fall some 6m down one of the holes in the Smithy, at about 1430 hrs on the 29 May. The party were undertaking a Cwm Dwr to Top Entrance through trip. The callout started at 1515 hrs. when one of the party exited to raise the alarm. Because a SWCC working week had already begun a strong party was formed and away pretty quickly, with an advanced first aider and comms. By 1630, via the HeyPhone, it had been diagnosed that the injuries were pelvic, (pretty close in the circumstances!), which precluded an evacuation out of Cwm Dwr with a full stretcher carry via OFDII Streamway, up the Stretcher Hall pitch, (by Maypole Inlet), and out of Top, the only choice.

A second party was raised from those at the club and those available locally and an extended callout was started.

The callout was frustrated, it being a Bank holiday Saturday, and there was a low hit rate. It was decided to put Glos Cave Rescue Group on standby and it quickly became obvious that they were indeed needed. They responded very well. As the rescue progressed the casualty was packaged and the haul up the shaft undertaken and the carry to the Confluence started. At the Confluence the stretcher was loaded onto the floating stretcher and the 1584m carry come float up the Streamway commenced. A WBCRT doctor had reached the team, just before the carry started, to support the first aiders, something for which they were grateful,

The Streamway carry proved to be very difficult, not helped by low water which prevented the floating stretcher performing better. The injuries required a good deal of care and horizontal carrying was essential. The threat of hypothermia meant that the stretcher party had to keep the casualty as dry and warm as possible, something they did extremely well. Those who know the OFDII Streamway will appreciate the difficulties of moving the bulky floating stretcher along the restricted sections but it proved invaluable over the pots and deep water sections. For the second time in 3 years the Fault Aven pole proved an invaluable tool in getting the team across the pots relatively dry. The WBCRT will be arranging for two slightly longer poles to be stashed in the cave.

A major glitch occurred which did put a bit of a crimp in the rescue controllers plans. At 0045 hrs Sunday there was a report from one of the relieved teams that the casualty was about 1-1½ hours from the Oxbow. With those on standby, on-site or on their way it was thought that at this stage that there were enough resources available, bearing in mind that we could re-cycle 'used rescuers' later and that those who had been, 'above the limit', (it was a Bank Holiday and perfect barbeque weather), when first called - would be available during the Sunday morning.

The report of the stretcher parties progress proved to be ambitious. We had lost comms when the team started the Streamway carry and had been out of contact for several hours. The HeyPhone had been sent ahead to the Oxbow but HeyPhone comms had never been re-established, for reasons we have not yet been able to ascertain. Meanwhile a landline - for FrancePhone comms and route marking - was laid from the club to the Stretcher Haul pitch and the haul party for the 90' pitch, (close to Maypole Inlet), assembled and dispatched. As comms had not been re-established with the stretcher party a runner from the 90' haul team was sent to find out where the stretcher party was.



At 0345 hrs. we learnt that the casualty was at the First River Chamber. Control realized that we did not have enough resources available and the callout was re-started. If anything the hit rate was lower than on the Saturday evening which, not surprising considering the time. Whenever available cell phone numbers were also called. As it appeared that we were not going to have a very quick response it was decided that to go for back up cave rescue teams would be more effective. The Gwent and Glos teams were asked for more members and fortunately one of the MRO wardens, who had been on a team earlier, had got up and knew how to contact the MRO. We had only tried one of the MRO wardens thus far and were happy that they could be called by the onsite member. The GCRG were also asked to call Midlands CRO. By 0800/0900 hrs. another relief party had reached the stretcher team and we learnt that 8 members of the MRO were on the Gower, had been contacted and were turning out. This party also included a caving doctor who was willing to take over from the first doctor. The MRO responded by turning out 20 members and the second GCRG trawl and the MCRO added a further 15. From the Cardiff area we had another 22 available for 1200 hrs. This was the first time since the Daren dislocated shoulder rescue that other teams have been called to Wales, (a WBCRT assisted Gwent shout). The WBCRT have been called twice in two years to assist GCRG.

The casualty arrived at the bottom of the Stretcher Haul pitch, the doctors met, medical details exchanged and the haul undertaken. The injuries demanded a horizontal haul, the shape of the pitch meant that we had to swing between horizontal and vertical, but went very smoothly. The casualty arrived at the top of the pitch in good spirits and the evacuation through Top entrance started. During the evacuation through Top Entrance there was a dip in the casualty's condition. This caused concern but fortunately did stabilise with more medical input by the third cave rescue doctor. The casualty was out of Top Entrance and into the Air Ambulance Helicopter by 1800 hrs 30 May. The injuries proved to be two crushed vertebrae and a bruised kidney. Recovery is well underway.

The WBCRT held it's de-brief a fortnight after the rescue. As always a rescue of this scale provided lessons and the WBCRT will learn from these and endeavour to improve. Mistakes did occur and the WBCRT will be considering changes to some equipment packaging, (some revision has already been undertaken), and to callout procedures over the next couple of WBCRT exec meetings. Those present at the debrief asked that a special mention be made of the Soup Dragons and the married quarters ladies who did such an excellent job of providing surface and underground food throughout.

The WBCRT exec, and the casualty, would like to extend their thanks to all that took part, members of the WBCRT, Gloucester Cave Rescue Group, Gwent Cave Rescue Team, Mendip Rescue Organization, Midlands Cave Rescue Organization, SWCC, individuals of local caving clubs, the Air Ambulance, Dyfed Powys Police for allowing us to do our job without interference but with their full support, the Soup Dragons and of course the press, for missing a story and leaving us alone.



**The first known case of Lyme Disease has been contracted on the Mendip Hills in Somerset.** The disease is caused by ticks, which can bring on arthritis, nerve and heart problems. It is transmitted to humans through bites. Andrew Tinknell, of Congresbury, was out running on the hills when he was bitten by a tick. He told the BBC: "It was only when the rash came out that I thought I'd better go and see the doctor about it." The ticks bite humans in order to feed on their blood. They hide in shady, moist, leaf litter, but also cling to tall grass, shrubs and low tree branches, waiting for an animal to brush against them so they can climb on board. Ticks can attach themselves almost anywhere on the body, but prefer creases like the armpit, groin, or back of knee. In the US, where the disease is more common, the *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria causes the disease.

## Lyme Disease

Most tick bites are, harmless and can be treated with an insect bite cream or antihistamine ointment to reduce irritation. However, Lyme Disease is an illness which can develop in humans who are bitten by a minority of ticks which carry the *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria, or other diseases. Although ticks are abundant, most are not infected by the bacteria and the incidence of bites from infected ticks that develop into Lyme Disease in humans is low. Keep a watchful eye on the bite area for a few days afterwards. Rashes occurring within a few hours of a bite are not caused by Lyme Disease and are likely to be simple allergic reactions or infections. However, symptoms of Lyme Disease usually show a few days to several weeks after being bitten. Early signs might show as an expanding reddish rash, sometimes very faint, around the bite area. Of greater concern is if symptoms also resemble influenza, with swollen glands near the site, mild headaches, tiredness and aching muscles and joints. If in any doubt or concern, consult your local health care provider. Lyme Disease can affect the skin and, in more serious cases, may also cause partial paralysis of the face, painful joints, and tingling or loss of sensation in the limbs. If left untreated, it will simply go on spreading across a much larger area but, if acted upon promptly, it will respond rapidly to effective antibiotic treatment. The more serious cases of infection may require longer and more strenuous antibiotic treatment.

**Group Headquarters**

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**Booking the Cottage**

Please make bookings  
for Groups (whether MCG  
or Guests) through [Joan  
Goddard](mailto:Joan.Goddard@btinternet.com) 01934 732760  
to avoid double bookings.

**GROUP INFORMATION**

|                          |   |        |
|--------------------------|---|--------|
| <b>Weekly Meeting</b>    | At The Hunters Lodge, Somerset, Tuesdays at about 10pm  |        |
| <b>Monthly Meeting</b>   | At the Group HQ on the first Fri/Sat/Sunday of the month  |        |
| <b>On-line Meeting</b>   | <a href="http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/mendip-caving-group/">http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/mendip-caving-group/</a> |        |
| <b>Accommodation</b>     | Available at the Group HQ (for members and guests)  |        |
| <b>Cottage Fees</b>      | MCG members, members' children, SWCC, NPC   | £ 2.00 |
| <b>(per night)</b>       | Guest clubs and member's guests   | £ 3.00 |
| <b>Camping Fees</b>      | MCG members, members' children, SWCC, NPC   | £ 2.00 |
| <b>(per night)</b>       | Guest clubs and member's guests   | £ 3.00 |
| <b>Season Ticket</b>     | Available to members only   | £40.00 |
| <b>Subscription 2005</b> | Full and Probationary (excluding BCA insurance)   | £30.00 |
|                          | Associate Members (excluding BCA insurance)   | £15.00 |
| <b>BCA Insurance</b>     | Cavers £18.00 Non-cavers £6.00 (all members must have cover)  |        |
| <b>Reciprocal rights</b> | MCG members have reciprocal rights with SWCC and NPC  |        |
| <b>NPC bookings</b>      | secretary@northernpennineclub.org.uk  |        |
| <b>SWCC bookings</b>     | Keith Goodhead, tel 01874 610080 <a href="mailto:hutbookings@swcc.org.uk">hutbookings@swcc.org.uk</a>                     |        |

**CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR 2005**

| DATE         | AREA   | EVENT                  | CONTACT       | TEL           |
|--------------|--------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Members W/Es | Mendip | Digging, Carcass Cave  | Bill Chadwick | 0118 9691812  |
| Oct 08/09    | Mendip | Members weekend        |               |               |
| Nov 05/06    | Mendip | Members weekend        |               |               |
| Nov 05       | Mendip | Half yearly meeting    | Tim Francis   | 0208 392 2572 |
| Nov 05       | Mendip | Half yearly and social | Linda Milne   | 01420 562315  |
| Dec 03       | Mendip | Xmas Dinner            | Linda Milne   | 01420 562315  |

**THE 2005—2006 MCG COMMITTEE**

|  |   |
|--|---|
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**COTTAGE BOOKINGS** Latest updates at <http://www.caver.plus.com/MCG/>

| Who                  | Date Arrive  | Date Leave   | Nights | Beds |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------|------|
| Steve Taylor Scouts  | 14th October | 16th October | 2      | 8    |
| Kent Uni CC          | 14th October | 16th October | 2      | 14   |
| Kent Uni CC          | 21st October | 23rd October | 2      | 14   |
| Clive Maybury Scouts | 7th April    | 9th April    | 2      | 12   |