

MCG News

Newsletter of the
Mendip Caving Group

Golden Chamber, Upper Flood Swallet

Number 334
June 2006

www.m-c-g.org.uk

Founded 1954

More Golden Chamber extensions

by Tim Francis

The story so far: the floor of Golden Chamber was dug through on the 5th February 2006. Beyond a too tight rift we could hear the streamway rumbling up ahead and see tantalising glimpses of muddy boulders.

Upper Flood had yet again thrown up one of its challenges - a glimpse of the 'promised land' but again no huge breakthrough into the fabled Cheddar Master Cave. But unlike in previous years at least we could see the way on. It was just getting there that was going to be the problem. Both Sonya and I had wriggled along the rift to a slight widening and were just able to peer ahead into the gloom. You couldn't quite see the streamway but it seemed to be a T-junction and what looked like a jumble of boulders. Things were ridiculously tight so we were clearly in need of some extra firepower. The MCG drill was dusted off and packets of hilti caps requisitioned from various personal tackle stores.

The mood was extremely optimistic with predictions of a breakthrough in perhaps three trips. Unusually for Upper Flood, volunteers even for spoil hauling, were not hard to find. I think at the AGM we had 9 people at the dig at the same time which must be something of a record. So we were quickly able to shift large amounts of spoil back to the Red Room. But not surprisingly for Upper Flood things didn't quite go to plan straight away. The first trip saw a great deal of spoil removed back to Andrew's Grotto and the first bend widened, but on the next trip the drill battery decided it didn't like swimming. Top tip - bring Ortleib bags rather than use black bin liners. The battery was easily brought back to life but if we were to get through the rift in a reasonable amount of time we were going to need something more persuasive. Certainly the 24V drill wasn't going to cope with the size of hole required for the snappers that Malcolm had purchased. A 36V Bosch drill with two Lithium Ion batteries was purchased at a bank balance destroying cost but it has already proved its worth.

The first trip with the new drill saw us widen the rift to a comfortable proportion all the way to the widening and beyond. Bill really got into this hilti-ing lark. The new firing pin made by Biff really worked well, and the new drill was extremely effective as was the piece of carpet borrowed from the 8 room. Again the 24V drill blew a fuse as we attempted to put in a large hole for the snapper at the end. But we were extremely optimistic that the next trip, planned for the following week, would see us through. However our excitement was short-lived. It was on this trip that Malcolm sadly suffered fatal heart failure in the canal on the way out. Malcolm had seen the way on beyond the rift so he knew that there were good things ahead for exploration of the cave that he loved.

We were determined to carry on and I am sure that is what Malcolm would have wanted. So it was back down the dig on the following weekend, Sunday 7th May, to finish off the job. Not surprisingly the mood was somewhat subdued and all of us were engrossed in our own thoughts on the way in. Again we had the new drill with us and it only took three more double hilti's to see Peat and I through. A couple more set off from the inside and the larger members of the team, Doug and Mike, were also able to wriggle through.

So what have we found? The breakthrough squeeze drops you straight back into

From the Editor



Those of us who knew him well are mourning the loss off Malcolm Cotter. Due to the special publication devoted to Malcolm's caving life, this newsletter is later than it would have been. Consequently I have more than I can publish in this issue, so apologies to those whose articles do not appear. I promise they will be in the next issue which will follow as soon as possible.

There have been some interesting and varied trips over the past few months, with more planned. They have also been well attended, with the last organised MCG trip into Gough's Cave having 16 cavers in the party, three of whom were novices. New members are slowly trickling in with three new members alone agreed at the last committee meeting. It just gets better...

Yvonne Rowe

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MCG Doings
On the move

☞ davetooke@hotmail.com

Welcome

to the following Probationary Members:

Paul Ketcher

☞ St Aubyns, Alfold Road, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8NB

☎ 01483 277143

Proposers: M Norton, M Rowe

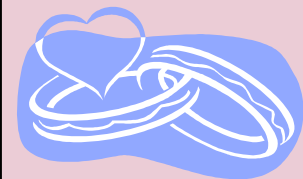
Michael Moxon

☞ 18 Starling Close, Weston-super-Mare, BS22 8SP

☎ 07941 600982

Proposers: J Crowsley, M Amner

Congratulations

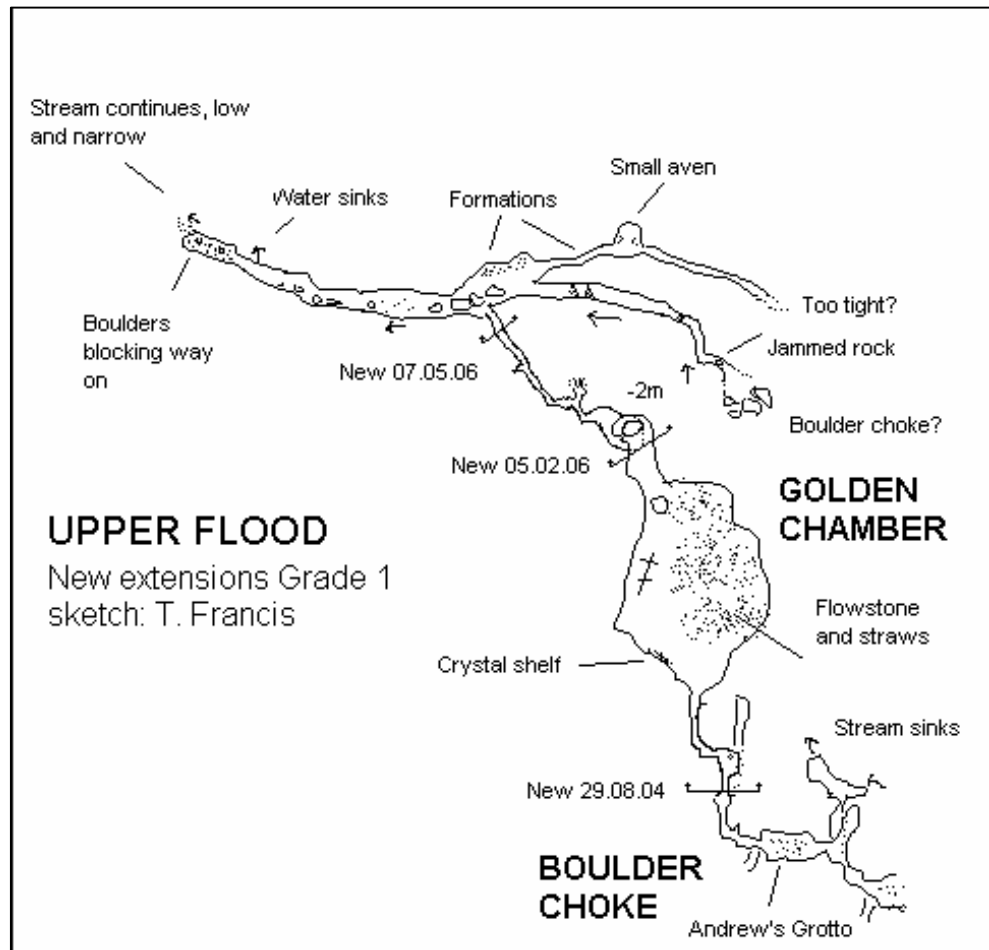


to **Jonathan Roberts** and **Jacqueline Flexney-Briscoe** who are now happily engaged.

Best wishes

Former member **Eric Dowley** is recovering in hospital after his recent operation. After a spell in intensive care he is now able to eat real food again – not sure if he can manage beer yet, though! – and is looking forward to being moved to a hospital closer to home so that Joan can visit him more easily. We send him our very best wishes for a speedy recovery

the streamway. This flows from right to left (see survey) and one has to assume that is the same water that you last see below Andrew's Grotto. The floor is littered with large boulders and the passage is of walking size. This really is a cracking bit of passage.



Looking upstream

Upstream is a hands and knees crawl along a very prettily shaped passage. There are two pairs of false floor which so far we have been able to pass without damage.



One of the false floors

Beyond, this passage becomes constricted before a small cascade comes in from the right. Just around the corner a jammed rock blocks further progress but you can just about peer into a wider section. It looks like the stream is flowing along the base of the boulder choke and some of the boulders look like they may be covered in flowstone, but I couldn't quite see. The rock will hammer off so we should be able to get into this bit next time.



Peat Bennett in the rift

Straight ahead from the breakthrough squeeze is a **finely decorated rift**. You needed to stoop to pass underneath some stalactites in the ceiling but the passage is of sufficient height for these to remain protected.

Further along the rift is a small ascending aven, the walls of which are completely coated with flowstone. It closes down at the top so it will need taping off to prevent further damage.



Flowstone in the aven

Finally at floor level is a very low and wet thrutch. I only went along this for twenty feet so this needs a proper check, this time head first, to confirm that it does indeed close down.

Of course **downstream** is where all the interest will lie. Initially this starts off as walking sized passage with a floor of boulders and rocks. It certainly has the feel of a fault controlled rift. But very soon the water sinks in a tight hole on the right and cannot be followed at this point. A small dry extension carries on straight ahead but this terminates in a jumble of boulders. After a spot of rummaging it soon became apparent that we could hear the stream below us. A few rocks were ripped out and we could just spy a tight continuation in the floor. More work will be required here

before we can get back down to stream level and we are hoping earnestly that the continuation isn't too tight. Watch this space!

Recent diggers: C Allison, P Bennett, B Chadwick, B Cooper, M Cotter, S Cotter, T Francis, D Harris, L Milne, J Hesketh-Laird, M Richardson, Chris Seal (CSS), M Ward.



Doug Harris in the boulder choke



Widening the squeeze

STOP PRESS: Sunday 04/06/06. **Downstream** was pushed back down to the stream level. The water disappears down a small crack. Above is a boulder choke which we managed to force a few body lengths. It draughts well and is diggable. **Upstream**, Peat forced the very tight rift below the pretty aven into about 50ft of passage. Small people only need apply here as its horrendously tight and muddy. But at the end the decorations are excellent. We will photograph, survey and tape off as it won't sustain any traffic. Elsewhere I bashed away at the rock blocking progress in the streamway upstream. This was larger than I remember so it will need a chisel or perhaps a hilti to remove. I've left the hammer just by the cascade. The way on beyond looks fairly large so there may be a bit more passage yet. **TF**

MCG social events 2006

8th July – Nostalgic cave meet and party (Yvonne and Tony's birthday bash).

5th August – Photographic weekend with pub Sat evening.

2nd September – Novice weekend and Hunters lodge Sat evening.

7th October – Half yearly meeting with Beer and Skittles Sat evening.

4th November- Cave meet and Fireworks on Saturday night.

2nd December – Cave meet plus Christmas Dinner, in house.

For further details on any of the above contact Linda Milne on 07767 267849 or see Page 10 of this newsletter.

Fire Extinguishers

Many thanks to Joan Goddard for arranging to have the cottage fire extinguishers serviced by K&S Fire Protection, Weston-super-Mare.

The old style CO2 extinguisher has been exchanged for a modern unit which is very much lighter and has a new-type sprayer which doesn't freeze your hand to the sprayer - something the old one would have done! The small kitchen one was OK and the water unit from upstairs hall had been let off as suspected by a group who stayed last year.

Joan has arranged for K&S to come to the cottage to service the extinguishers on an annual basis.

'New' Dining Table

There is now a 'new' dining table in the lounge, courtesy of Phil Elliott.

Yv'sdroppings

YR: "I gave Tim 25p for his services".

LM: "I don't know where Aveline's is".

TF "I used to play Nania as a student".

LM: "Grants for solar power stopped at the end of March, but we could use wind".

RK: "We've got lots of that!"

AGM Yv'sdroppings:

"We have caving, armchair caving, now newsletter caving".

(In response to the comment: "It was a lively newsletter, more caving in the newsletter than appears in fact".)

In response to a discussion on how we can promote the Group and attract new members:

BT: "If we advertise our good library we might attract local robbers!"

In response to discussion on the negatives for young and old people staying at the cottage:

JG: "But we've got lighting set up for shove ha'penny".

PW: "That'll bring 'em in!"

Talking about the problems of cottage heating and high electric bills:

MN: "I'm here for a week sometimes. I don't bring a heater but I do have a clock radio".

For sale

FX5, oldham style headlight and uni-charger, only used for fishing. Cost £220, will accept £75

John Vowles, Minden, Wet Lane, Draycott, Cheddar 01934 741110

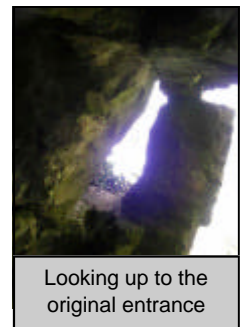
Cave art in Aveline's – Sunday 7th May '06

by Yvonne Rowe



Having agreed that Malcolm would not want any caving to be cancelled on his behalf we broke off from the work weekend to meet Graham Mullen and Linda Wilson down Burrington Combe. Bob Templeman (meet secretary) had arranged for them to show us the recently found Mesolithic engraving in Aveline's Hole.

We all met in the carpark just before Aveline's, Charlie arriving in boy-racer style with Louisa, Linda and Karen in his shiny mini – hood down and hair blowing free (posers!). *I'm only jealous!* Before we set off into the cave Linda and Graham told us a bit of the history of the discovery of the cave in January 1797 and pointed out the original entrance way above our heads. Apparently a dog had chased a rabbit into this hole. The dog owner had to pull a few rocks out to recover his dog and was met by the void we now know as Aveline's Hole.



Looking up to the original entrance

When the cave was first opened a large number of human skeletons (homo sapien) were found. The cave was dug a number of times during the 19th century, mostly by the University of Bristol Speleological Society. Unfortunately, virtually all the documentation and artefacts (barbed antler point, a long bone with a series of cut lines, a series of pierced shells, and drilled animal teeth) were destroyed during wartime bombing in November 1940. Recovered from the ruins were pieces of amonite and a fossil gastropod which had been found in the upper layers at Aveline's. More recently, however, the cave has been emphasised as being one of the most important and largest Early Mesolithic cemetery sites in Europe. Evidence has been found of human activity in the cave from late-glacial times until the Mesolithic which was domestic and probably seasonal, the people at this time being hunter-gatherers.

Following the discovery of Palaeolithic cave art in Church Hole, at Cresswell Crags, it was thought that there could be further finds in caves where there had been a human presence during the Upper Palaeolithic. Initial investigations in the caves of Cheddar Gorge drew a blank, but in July 2003 two rows of engraved crosses were found in Aveline's Hole consisting of six crosses in the upper row and four in the lower. It was difficult to date the engravings as there was no material (eg. paint) to date, but evidence shows that the cave was probably sealed shortly after the final burial in the Mesolithic (about 8,800 BP), until its rediscovery in 1797. Thus the engraving can be shown to be more than 200 years old, and highly likely to be more than 8,000 years old.

When the engravings were viewed, even in the light from our caving lamps, they looked surprisingly sharp and fresh, but when compared with a modern engraving (gaffiti) a few feet away and produced in a similar fashion, the difference became very obvious. The Mesolithic engravings show a degree of patination / weathering not present on the modern, fresher graffiti. The engraving is at about shoulder height on a flattish surface sloping away from the viewer which is fortunate



The Aveline's Hole engravings. Photo: A Atkinson, from Proc. UBSS 2004 23(2) p77

because it is not the obvious place to put a hand when moving through the passage into the further reaches of the cave, which has probably helped towards its preservation.

Linda explained how the crosses have been engraved using a piece of rock with each line cut in one sweep rather than pecked (lots of short gouges). She also pointed out how you can also see one line of the cross overlying the other and thinning towards the bottom end, showing the order and direction in which the lines were cut.

Our thanks to Graham and Linda for a very interesting and informative trip. So much was it enjoyed that some of us bought the relevant UBSS Proceedings so we can read up and learn more about this fascinating and enigmatic engraving.

The archaeological information above has been taken from the Proceedings of the University of Bristol Society, 2004, 23 (2), 75-85. Further and more in-depth information can be found in the earlier mentioned UBSS Proceedings, a copy of which is kept in the MCG library.

Trip members: Bob & Mary Templeman, Yvonne & Martin Rowe, Linda Milne, Karen (guest), Louisa Minahan, Joan Goddard, Charlie Alison; leaders Graham Mullen & Linda Wilson (both UBSS)

Clearwell Caves Tourist Trip

by Joan Goddard

The first use of Forest of Dean iron is believed to date from Neolithic times as analyses of artefacts from that period suggest a Forest source for the iron content. Early surface workings were known as 'Scowles' (rather like Mendip rakes) and there is some evidence that they were worked in Roman times.



Throughout the Medieval period the Forest was an important source of iron ore. Mines were operated on a family basis and work would have been sporadic and small-scale. Graffiti (in New Dun mine) proves that prior to the 18thC miners had worked well below 300ft (92m). Clearwell Caves is part of Old Ham Gale, a Gale being the area a Free Miner may work. The mine closed in 1936 when The British Colour and Mining Company stopped working. It was reopened during the Second World War, subsidised by the Government, but closed in 1945. It was bought by Ray Wright in 1968 who subsequently opened it as a tourist attraction.

MCG meets program 2006

July 7/8/9th

Nostalgic 1980's style weekend and BBQ.

August 4/5/6th

Photographic weekend for beginners – Bob Templeman

September 1/2/3rd

Novices Weekend – details to be finalised

October 6/7/8th

Cheddar cliff caves or Grebe Swallet (party of 3 inclusive of leader)

November 3/4/5th

Reservoir Hole (After dusk GMT timings only) – leader: Geoff Beale

December 1/2/3rd

Christmas Dinner

For details of any meet contact **Bob Templeman** (see page 10)

Hidden Earth 2006

Hidden Earth 2006 is on 22-24 September at Leek High School, Staffordshire.

Leek is a market town about 12 miles south of the spa town of Buxton, which is at the heart of the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire.

Information about the event will be posted at <http://hidden-earth.org.uk/> in due course.



CSS 50th Anniversary

2006 is the Cerberus Speleological Society's 50th anniversary. To mark this occasion CSS would like to invite all MCG members to their **Open Day and Party on Saturday 17th June** at Larkshall (Cerberus HQ, Grid Ref: ST 6505 4720 www.cerberusspeleo.org.uk). There will be displays, music, BBQ (and beer) from noon to about 6.00pm. At about 8.00pm, after the general public have left, the Party will start with a 50/60/70's etc disco, food and more beer.

CSS anticipate the cottage being full but there is considerable camping space available should you wish to stay over. If you are interested please contact Rick Gledhill, 30 Court Rd, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 9QD. Tele: 0117 9611924 / 07723006520. Email: r-gledhill@tiscali.co.uk so that he will be better able to guess the beer quantity required for the evening.

MNRC 100th anniversary

The MNRC take great pleasure in inviting all Mendip cavers to join us in celebrating our 100th Birthday at a Stomp at Priddy Village Hall on Saturday 28th October. Details of times and tickets will follow.

Lost Property

Items left at the cottage:

1. A green waterproof coat (possibly lady's?) left in 6-room.
2. Black velour/velvety cardigan - now in library.
3. Blue shirt left in 16-room.

Contact Joan Goddard to claim

Geology: During the Permian Period erosion of the overlying coal measures resulted in residual soils rich in iron minerals. Rainwater would have picked up sulphur from the Coal Measure strata to form a ferruginous weak acid solution which would have percolated downwards into the limestone to form caves. The Crease Limestone was particularly prone to this because of its relatively open 'box-like' structure. Some of the iron was deposited as a crust on the cave walls. The best ore would have occurred in the chambers near the surface.



Crease Limestone displaying an open box-like structure

There are three main types of iron ore: **Goethite** – stalactitic ore known locally as 'brush ore' because it resembles brushwood. **Kidney ore or haematite** – usually massive botryoidal or 'mammilated', dark red when powdered. **'Colour' or ochre** – dry powder or wet clay-like material used as pigment in paint. Red ochre is the most common but it also occurs as yellow, brown and violet.

The roof of the cave is formed by the Whitehead Limestone, referred to as the 'lidstone'. By following this bed and working the ore beneath it the mining was carried out (relatively) safely.

The deepest known workings in Clearwell are at 545ft although the guided tour only goes to 100ft. The 200 ft level has a shaft to the surface up which the iron ore was winched in kibles from levels at 64m and 70m. It was known as New Ham Pit shaft or 'The Firs' but was infilled in the early 1960s.

Tour: Walking past the blacksmith shop, we noticed various bits of machinery many of which had been acquired from coal mines in the north – they would otherwise have been buried in the flooded abandoned mines. We then passed across a bridge over the top of an incline with a 2ft gauge rail line used to bring up equipment and ochre which is still mined commercially in small quantities (for artists' paints, educational samples and experimental furnaces). The walls of the caverns or 'churns' are covered in pick marks where the miners have removed the ore from the rock surface.

In early times ore was worked using antlers and wooden shovels but later on iron tools were used. 'Cat sticks' were tree branches wedged between two sides of the passage to enable miners to get to ore which was otherwise too high to reach. Children were sent into the small cracks and difficult places. In some areas the miners used fire-setting followed by dousing of the hot rock with water to weaken and break it.

In parts of the mine the structure of the Crease Limestone was clearly visible – the 'box-like structures' were filled with either whitish calcite or black iron ore. Most of the iron ore is found in this limestone.

At one point in the mine we were shown a reconstructed 'Billy' - a wooden container (hod) to be filled with ore and loaded onto a boy's back for him to carry to the surface. Attached to the 'Billy' by a leather strap was a curved wooden or metal handle (known as a 'Billy catcher') which passed over the shoulder and under a waist belt. This left the 'Billy Boys' hands free for crawling etc. In 1841 a Parliamentary Report stated that a 9yr old boy was expected to carry a Billy holding 60-70lbs (30kg) of ore (I could barely lift the 30kg piece of iron provided for us to try the weight – OK! I'm decrepit). In 1842 an Act of Parliament



Reconstructed dram or ore truck

prevented women and children under ten years from working in the mines. In one area a wooden dram had been reconstructed using the original wheels and base; also on view were various types of rail line, dram wheels *etc.*

The miners used a 'Nellie' to light their way. This was a ball of clay into which a tallow candle was pushed. A stick was also pushed into the clay and this was held by the teeth - across the mouth so that the lit candle was to the side of the face - if it was directly in front of the eyes the light would dazzle and they would see nothing. The candles also acted as timepieces - 1 candle lasted 50-60 minutes. When they had used 12 candles it would be the end of their shift.

Near the end of the tour was a small collection of implements including a 19thC ladder drill for drilling into softer ground.

More mining tools are on show in the Dean Heritage Centre at Cinderford.

<http://www.deanheritagemuseum.com/>



19th century mining tools

Cottage Work weekend 6th and 7th May

by Linda Milne

Good (ish) weather allowed most the outdoor chores to be rattled off. The main job we anticipated doing, replacing the south facing gable end bargeboards, was postponed because the scaffolding would not go high enough (eek!). However, there is always something else waiting in the wings and the boys got their tools out and replaced the veranda (joists cut, stained and reassembled, clear Perspex cut re-assembled and sealed). And what a fine structure it looks too. Well done Doug, Pete and helpers.



Other outdoor jobs included: clearing brambles behind shed, finish painting the shed, logging the wood (phew), filling and painting the outside, upstairs, roadside window (second coat still required), cleaning the silt traps (as always), cutting the grass and finishing the new cottage sign. You'll be impressed to know that the latter two jobs were largely done by a guest! And you'll be even more impressed to know that it didn't put her off, not even

after a trip down Goat Church. Karen asked me afterwards what was the initiation ceremony for joining the club, well I think she's done it already.....

Tim managed to turn our wood store in to a Tardis by stacking what seemed to be the entire beech tree neatly inside. Thanks should also go to Mike for doing most of the chopping. Apparently he's done a lot chopping because he had to do it at home for his wood burner. I feel a nick name coming on.....

Some of the indoor jobs achieved over the weekend included some very fine work from our window sanding team (Joan, Yvonne and Charlie and Mary - is that everyone?). The Lounge window and the changing room window were beautifully

Roman Rake update

Tim has spoken to English Nature and has it in writing that we are ok to continue digging. No new consent is needed to be issued.

A few things we need to do: **Make** a courtesy call to the Mendip Wardens to chat about our plans, spoil removal *etc.*

Ensure that digging activities are kept discrete such as keeping the dig tidy and that spoil can't be seen from the road/paths.

Spoil actually needs to be scattered at the site rather than taken away. We need to avoid smothering vegetation.

So lets hope for a long hot summer and caverns measureless. Initial tasks will be to finish off the pointing work and fashion a scaffold tripod. **TF**

Dragon Caving Gear

This may be common knowledge, but in case it isn't - I understand that Dragon Caving Gear will be closing at the end of June (due to retirement) so if any one needs any Dragon gear there isn't much time left.

Aerial photos

Not sure how useful this is, but the following link (you may have to cut and paste it into your browser) takes you to an aerial photo of the MCG cottage and the Fry's yard:

<http://local.live.com/default.aspx?v=2&cp=51.301666~-2.6982&style=h&lvl=18>

You can almost read the number plates on the cars....

CSCC Padlocks

For a combination of reasons, but including conservation, stewardship and economics, the CSCC has decided that later this year it will change all the padlocks on CSCC-controlled caves/mines. New keys will then be required to gain entry to these sites.

The changeover of padlocks will take place on one day, yet to be decided, chosen so as to minimise disruption to trips. The date will be announced in good time. Our current thought is for it to take place in July/August when most people, and Clubs, are on their holidays.

The CSCC would also like to take this opportunity to discourage the use of aerosol-type lubricants (like WD40) on its locks. The lubrication offered by these products is very short-lived. A light machine oil (such as 3-in-1 penetrating oil) is much better. Difficult-to-open, seized, or faulty, locks can always be reported to the CSCC C&A Officer. In most instances they can be changed in 48 hours.

Steve King, Hon. Sec.,
CSCC secretary@csc.org.uk

Study weekend

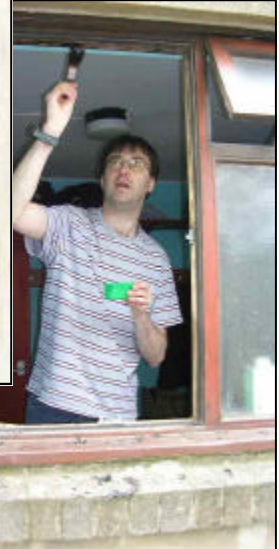
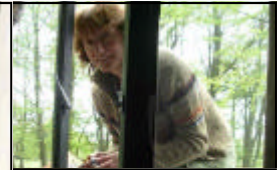
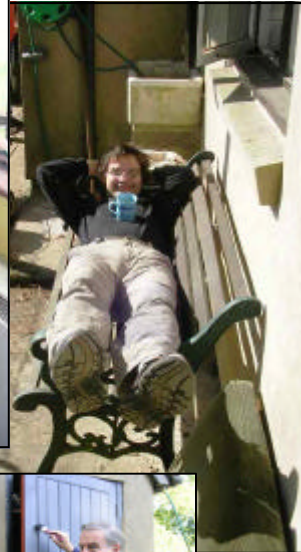
Subterranea Britannica is holding a study weekend in the Bristol and Bath area 7th-9th July 2006. Visits are planned to a working and a disused Bath Stone Mine, Redcliffe Caves sand mine, the Clifton Rocks Railway tunnel and a cold war bunker. It is expensive (£140) but includes accommodation in a hall of residence, meals and transport). Details are filed with Sub-Brit publications in the library.

restored. One of the worst jobs of the whole weekend has to be cleaning behind the cooker (yuk). This was bravely undertaken by Louisa and Mary. The Chimney was swept and holes filled in the ceiling, the gas store was cleaned out and the draught strip under the lounge door was adjusted. I suspect there were other jobs done which were not even on the list.

A trip to the Ring of Bells followed. Drink, grub, second helpings then back to the cottage for more....WELL DONE EVERYONE



The Team - Bob and Mary, Tim and Louisa, Doug, Pete, Mike, JP, Karen and Linda, Joan, Martin and Yvonne.



Replacing the lounge floor, Feb 2006

by Martin Rowe

The old wooden floor turned out to be very rotten. There was only one solid piece of wood left, next to the window below the storage heater. The rot set in at 2 points: from the gap into the kitchen and from the Library door. The reasons: water penetrating the floor when the kitchen was mopped; and exposing the floor to the elements when the Library extension was being constructed. Once water penetrated below the vinyl, it had nowhere to go, and could not dry out. Rot was then inevitable.

The floor was quickly removed, and the concrete slab exposed. This was in good condition, so all we had to do was concrete-in the small channels which once contained the wooden battens to which the floorboards were attached. All this was done on the first day!





Bryan, Wayne, Arthur and Doug then began to lay the new tiles but we soon realised the tile adhesive was not setting due to the cold weather. Work was stopped, and the cottage closed up. Wayne and Bryan returned the following week to find that the adhesive had still not set, so temporary space heating was installed to raise the temperature.



By mid March, the weather had improved enough for the adhesive to set and the new floor was ready in time for the AGM weekend.

Most of the work was done by Wayne Hiscox, Bryan Pittman, Doug Harris, and Arthur Spain. Joan Goddard, Pete Goddard and Martin Rowe also helped. (Apologies if I have missed anyone out.) Tim Francis and Louisa Minahan then spent a weekend cleaning the cottage before the AGM.

Archaeology of Mendip and its Environs, 11-12th November 2006

This two-day conference, at Bishop's Palace in Wells, has as its focus the archaeology of the Mendip Hills and its environs. Speakers will present the results of new research and new ideas about the rich archaeological sequence of the region, a sequence that stretches back half a million years. Speakers, including Roger Jacobi, Malcolm Todd and Michael Costen, will consider the evidence for Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval activity in this upland limestone landscape and the surrounding lowlands. The cost is £35 for the two days (including refreshments): concessions £25.

For more information contact Dr Jodie Lewis, Department of Applied Sciences, Geography and Archaeology, University of Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcs WR2 6AJ ☎ 01905 855182.

Email jodie.lewis@worc.ac.uk

Next month's issue.

I have had to hold over some articles due to lack of space this month. Apologies to the authors.


So, in next month's issue, there will be articles on Mallorca, the break-in at SWCC and theft of the Rescue Landrover, the MCG Log, and Library Additions.

Plus notes of the 2006 Annual General Meeting.

Please keep the photos, articles and snippets coming, and thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter.


Yvonne

caving



An invitation to Yvonne Rowe's and Tony Knibb's birthday bash
Saturday 8th July 2006

barrel




Yvonne's 60th birthday coincides with Tony's 70th so we have decided to join forces and have a good bash on Mendip over the July members' weekend. The plan is to have:

- o A barbecue if the weather permits... or
- o An in-house meal if not
- o A barrel (it's traditional)
- o A re-enactment of Yvonne's first caving weekend in 1983
- o Some nostalgic caving trips for Tony
- o Some cottage games from the period (if you can bear it!)

Tony is providing a selection of cheeses and ingredients for aperitifs (crème de mûre, white wine, a few nibbles and saucisson) as well as a few litres of a suitable red wine. Yvonne will provide salads, baked potatoes and bread. And of course, there will be at least one barrel (subsidised?). Just bring your own sausage, burgers, meats, or veggie equivalents, for the BBQ.


On Saturday, there will be a trip to GB as far as The Gallery to have our photos taken, once again, looking out across Main Chamber. Tony has nostalgic reasons for doing GB and might have Swildon's or Charnel Shaft as other options (not all on the same day!). *Everyone* is welcome of course, but it would be especially nice to see those who were around in 1983 (or earlier!).

socialising



We look forward to seeing as many of our friends and acquaintances as possible over our special weekend, *new members as well as old*. Do come and join in the various activities and help us to celebrate our joint age of 130 years! It should be a good weekend.

barbeque



**Group Headquarters**

Nordrach Cottage,
Charterhouse-on-
Mendip, Blagdon,
Bristol BS40 7XW
☎ 01761 462797
Grid Ref ST51475606

**Custodian Trustees**

Pat Walsh
Jon Roberts
Pete Matthews

Rescue Warden

Keith Knight
01329 280386

Conservation Officer

Lee Hawkswell
01985 212690

Examiners

Fiona Kempston
(MCG member)
Anne Pittman
(External)

Booking the Cottage

Please make bookings
for Groups (whether MCG
or Guests) through [Joan
Goddard](#) 01934 732760
to avoid double bookings.

**GROUP INFORMATION**

Weekly Meeting	At The Hunters Lodge, Somerset, Tuesdays at about 10pm	
Monthly Meeting	At the Group HQ on the first Fri/Sat/Sunday of the month	
On-line Meeting	http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/mendip-caving-group/	
Accommodation	Available at the Group HQ (for members and guests)	
Cottage Fees	MCG members, members' children, SWCC, NPC	£ 2.00
(per night)	Guest clubs and member's guests	£ 3.00
Camping Fees	MCG members, members' children, SWCC, NPC	£ 2.00
(per night)	Guest clubs and member's guests	£ 3.00
Season Ticket	Available to members only	£40.00
Subscription 2006	Full and Probationary (excluding BCA insurance)	£30.00
	Associate Members (excluding BCA insurance)	£15.00
BCA Insurance	Cavers £15.00 Non-cavers £5.00 (all members must have cover)	
Reciprocal rights	MCG members have reciprocal rights with SWCC and NPC	
NPC bookings	secretary@northernpennineclub.org.uk	
SWCC bookings	Keith Goodhead, tel 01874 610080 hutbookings@swcc.org.uk	

CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR 2006

DATE	AREA	EVENT	CONTACT	TEL
Jul 7/8/9th	Mendip	Members weekend		
Jul 8th	Mendip	Caving 1980's style	Bob Templeman	01923 773973
Jul 8th	Mendip	Birthday party	Yvonne Rowe	01524 762664
Aug 4/5/6th	Mendip	Members weekend		
Aug 5th	Mendip	Cave photography	Bob Templeman	01923 773973
Sep 1/2/3rd	Mendip	Members weekend		
Sep 2nd	Mendip	Novice weekend	Bob Templeman	01923 773973
Oct 6/7/8th	Mendip	Members weekend		
Oct 7th	Mendip	Half yearly forum	Tim Francis	0208 392 2572
Oct 7th	Mendip	Grebe Swallett	Bob Templeman	01923 773973
Oct 7th	Mendip	Cheddar Caves	Bob Templeman	01923 773973
Oct 7th	Mendip	Beer and skittles	Linda Milne	01420 562315

THE 2006-2007 MCG COMMITTEE

Secretary	Tim Francis	t.francis@research-int.com
0208 392 2572	3 Rosemary Cottages, Rosemary Gardens, Mortlake, London SW147HD	
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Social Secretary	Linda Milne	Linda.Milne@btinternet.com
01420 562315	Woodfalls, Abbey Road, Medstead, Alton, Hants GU34 5PB	

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

Who	Date Arrive	Date Leave	Nights	Beds
M Pittman	Fri 21/07/06	Sun 23/07/06	2	20