

**DRAFT**  
**MINUTES OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**HELD ON 23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2013 AT**  
**The Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy**  
**The Mendip Caving Group is a registered Charity No. 270088**  
**Chairman:**  
**Ed Waters**

Full Members present: 19

Others present (non-voting) : 6 (4 probationary, 2 associate members)

Attendance List: Bob Templeman, Jenny Plumb, Fiona Kempston, Roy Kempston, Hayley Clark, Peat Bennett, David Lossel, William Morris, Bernard Reeves, Denise Knibbs, Tony Knibbs, Keith Knight, Brian Snell, Tom Harrison, Steve Porter, Russ Porter, Karen Fendley, Ed Waters, Richard Carey, Andrea Russe, Sue Speight, Linda Milne, Bryan Pitman. Biff Frith and Joan Goddard.

1. Apologies for absence
  - 1.1 Bill Chadwick, Julie Hesketh, Mike Haselden, Geoff Rodwell, Doug Harris, Ben Cooper, Mick Norton.
  - 1.2 No requests for postal votes had been received.
2. **Minutes of the previous AGM held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012**
3. Agreement that the minutes (above) are a true record of that meeting .
  - 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were examined and as there were no comments it was proposed by Linda Milne and seconded by Richard Carey to accept the AGM minutes as a true and accurate record and was unanimously agreed.
4. **Matters arising .**
  - 10.2 It was noted that the proposed cottage extension was on hold, whilst the committee considered the impact of drop in bed nights.
  - 10.3 Upper Flood. 10 applications for guest leader had been received and training was in hand. Discussions between MCG (Tim Francis) and SCC were progressing.
  - 10.5.1 It was noted that Bill Chadwick had full access to the group's website.
5. Officers reports and matters arising from those reports.

**5.1 Secretary's Report 2012 – 2013 - Andrea Russe**

This is my 2<sup>nd</sup> year as the Honorary Secretary. It's been another busy year in terms of caving for the MCG with lots of caving on Mendip. The members weekends have been busy with caving and lots of digging. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Trips have been very successful with at least 5 or 6 people turning up and the calendar is looking busy in terms of trips organised, so thanks to those people who have made the trips possible. The cottage has been much warmer this winter and has made a difference on the colder weekends. We have had positive feedback from people staying and the scouts had a much warmer visit this February. Membership remains pretty good - currently we have 121 members – a few people have not re-joined this year.

I am resigning from being secretary and hope other members will support the club and volunteer to take on this role. We still do not have an Editor and this post needs to be filled as well. I must also

say a big thank you to Mike Richardson and Richard Carey who stood in as guest Editors and made sure the club had at least 2 Newsletters. The Chairman thanked Andrea for her work on the Committee.

## **5.2 Treasurer's Report 2012-2013 – Sue Speight**

At the time of writing this report the examination of the accounts is well underway and it is hoped that by the time of the AGM we will be in a position to publish fully examined accounts.

With this in mind the accounts included with this notice are subject to a few small changes.

One of the areas that I have focused on this year is in ensuring that the group complies with the latest charities act legislation which has recently changed. I am in a fortunate position of dealing with charities for work so am able to bring my expertise and knowledge to the group.

You will see from the accounts that the information is presented slightly differently than in previous years. This is because I have tried to follow the guidance issued by the charity commission and as our income is classed as low we are not required to provide much detail in the accounts. Although the accounts are not published at the charities commission we are still required to prepare them as any member of the public could ask for them. As an aside, our income is so low that under the legislation we are not required to have the accounts independently examined. This is only completed as it is stated in our constitution that the accounts are independently examined each year.

As the accounts do not go into as much detail as in prior years I thought I would add some additional information on certain areas.

One problem with comparing this year's accounts with last year is that the accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis but sometimes the amounts paid out relate to prior years expenses or future expenses.

One example of this is the broadband cost included within Telephone and Internet. This had previously been paid directly by a member who had submitted a claim this year to be reimbursed from the group. The cost in the 2012 accounts relates to Broadband used in two months of 2010, all of 2011 and 2012. This has been resolved going forwards as the payment is now made monthly directly to the broadband provider by MCG.

Another example of expenditure in this year's accounts is the cost of the gas for the LPG tank. We have to pay upfront for the gas. Russ has a more detailed report on the actual usage.

### **Cottage Income**

The total cottage income has gone down this year from £4,876 last year to £4,202 this year. This is concerning as great expense was incurred in making the cottage more welcoming with the installation of the LPG heating and water. Feeling is that although the members bed nights have decreased the use of the cottage may not of decreased. I do not want to suggest a forced day rate, partly due to the additional admin this will cause for recording, and the inevitable chasing of forgotten day fees. I urge members to remember the donation boxes placed in the cottage but if you feel that you use the cottage and are not staying the night and do not have any money on you, you can always make a donation online.

Shower box donations (day fees) have increased slightly this year from last. Generally the amount collected is around the £5 mark or less, with one month when the amount collected was around £10, two months it was around £20.

The cottage expenditure, not including the improvements is £1,412 more than income this year.

This does include all of the gas costs, some of which will be used next year.

The largest expense for the group during the year was maintenance & improvements of the cottage. Obviously most of this expense relates to the gas installation. The total cost ended up being just under £6,000. This was funded by money put aside for cottage repairs and improvements.

At the end of the year our cash funds have decreased but we are still in a good position. The investments have been rearranged so as to provide income rather than increasing in value.

As has already been published bed nights are to increase by £1 to keep up to date with the times. The committee do not currently feel that any further increase in either bed nights or subscriptions is required but will continue to monitor the situation and if an increase in subscriptions is thought to be required an EGM will be called. Finally, Sue announced that the accounts had now been fully examined.

### **5.3 Caving Secretary's Report 2012 – 2013 - Richard Carey**

This has been my 1<sup>st</sup> full year as caving secretary and it has been quite successful. There have been organised trips on member's weekends and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday trips have proved a good way of introducing beginners to the sport, not to mention quite a few new members. We have now also had a couple of Family days which have been very popular with members with young children. Once again digging has continued unabated with progress in Battery Swallet and Bone Hole. The link has now been completed which avoids Bare Hands Crawl which will open up Neverland.

There was a full programme of events for 2012 and Member's weekend trips included Swildon's Hole, Eastwater Cavern, Charterhouse Cave, Thrupe Lane and Hillier's Cave to mention but a few. A full programme of events is posted on the website and currently there are about 24+ trip advertised. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary trip of the Swildon's Short Round Trip was a spectacular success with some 11 MCG members attending. Additionally the T shirts were very popular and proved to be a nice earner for the group.

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday trips were introduced as a beginner's programme, with visits to the "Easier" caves such as Goatchurch, Sidcot Swallet, Rod's Pot and so on. Andrea Russe has helped with this and in a change to last year we will switch so that the "Beginner's Trips" will take place on Member's Weekends so as to introduce them more fully into club life. 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday trips will continue but will be at more advanced level.

Leadership of Upper Flood Swallet has now been opened up to members of other clubs and their training continues. Linda Milne thanked Richard for his work which was fully endorsed by members.

### **5.4 Cottage Warden's Report 2012 – 2013 - Russ Porter**

2011/2012's main focus was the installation of a gas fuelled heating and hot water system. This involved a major project of hiring an excavator and Biff digging a massive hole in the garden, installing an underground bulk storage gas tank, and also, a trench was dug from the tank area to the far end of the lounge to route the gas pipe work into the cottage. By the end of this work the garden was turned into a quagmire, and needing much TLC. During the early summer of 2012, a small group of MCG members met up at the cottage and moved a large amount of top soil, sowed a huge box of grass seed and trampled it into the soil. It took until nearly August for the seed to take hold but this has left us with a well established lawn for the future. Over the October work weekend many

jobs were carried out, all the new oak windows have been cleaned and re-oiled, and the existing soft wood windows have been repainted. The heating system pipe work was boxed in and a good general tidy up around the cottage. Thanks to all those who gave up their valuable time and took part. Other jobs through the year include some new racking in the under stairs cupboard, we have a new rope washer and new carpet installed on the stairs, many thanks to Lee Collis for sorting the rope washer and carpet. Biff sourced us a fireproof safe to store our important documents, thank you Thanks to Doug for a shed load of wood! Weather depending, this year we plan to carry out some repairs to the 8 room dormer. There are signs the wooden cladding has rotted out and this will need replacing. I have now looked into the running costs of the new heating and hot water system. I am pleased to report that taking into account a large reduction in our electric bill and assessing our gas usage over a twelve month period, the actual extra cost of running the new system is around £37.00 per month, not bad considering the benefits we have gained. As always, a massive thank you to every member who gives their time and resources to help run the Mendip Caving Group.

### 5.5 Tacklemaster's Report 2012 – 2013 Biff Firth

I will start by thanking our previous tackle master Brian for his stewardship of the tackle store since 2007, Indeed he left the store in such good order I have had little to do since, but after reviewing the tackle store last month I can see the need for a little more order amongst the chaos, basically its very untidy with ropes and tackle sacks not being put away properly, and some ropes not being cleaned to an acceptable standard, also two ropes were missing and not signed out, they are a 35 metre dynamic rope, designated letter P, and a 15 metre SRT rope designated S13.

If anyone has these ropes could they please return them, indeed all tackle should be returned to the tackle store after a trip in a reasonable time, not left in the boot of a car.

An SRT rope designated S7 and 55 metres long has at sometime been cut, one end, a length of about 15 metres was still in the rack still marked 55 metres, of the remaining 40 or so metres there is no sign, I would be grateful if any of the membership could enlighten me as to the history and present whereabouts of this rope.

Indeed the tackle master should be informed of any alteration, loss or damage to any of the group's equipment.

Two new lengths of rope have been added to the SRT ropes, they are 89 metres designated S6 and 91 metres designated S4, these came into use August 2012.

Dynamic Rope usage				Static Rope usage		
Id.	Length m.	Year		Id.	Length m.	Date
A	20	2011		8	55	2007
F	15	2011		5	31	2007
G	24	2011		14	25	2008
E	15	2011		7	55 (cut?)	2007
H	18	2011		9	37	2008
J	20	2008		11	32	2008
I	21	2011		13	15(missin g)	2008
D	12	2008		2	23	2007
P	35(missin g)	2008		3	14	2007

K	16	Retired		10	25	2008
L	25	Retired		15	23	2008
M	27	Retired		12	19	2007
N	30	Retired		6	89	2012
O	32	Retired		4	91	2012
Q	35	2008				
R	36	Retired				
S	40	2008				
T	45	2008				

I will endeavour to tidy the store in the near future, and replace retired ropes as needed, also another ladder spreader would be useful, if other items of equipment are thought to be needed please inform me and I will consider any additions.

Happy caving and Digging, Biff, your friendly tackle master.

#### 5.6 Editor's Report 2012– 2013

*(As the position is currently vacant, no report was given)*

#### 5.7 Recorder/ Librarian's Report 2012 – 2013 *Bob Templeman*

I have nothing spectacular to report, other than a number of good publications have been added to the library, including;

***Wookey Hole, the Cave & its Story***, written by Alan Bell, illustrated by John Hassall, 1928.

***River Scenery at the Head of the Vale of Neath*** by F.J.North, 1938. A classic book with simple descriptions of the formation of river features including Porth-yr-Ogof cave *(donated)*

***The Origin and Story of Kents Cavern*** with a descriptive tour of the caves by *Clive Pemberton*. 1950. An earlier edition than one we already hold. *(donated)*

***Subterranean Britain: Aspects of Underground Archaeology*** by Harriet Crawford, 1979 – chapters on Grimes Graves (flint) mines, early metal mining, Roman mining, Irish souterrains, 19thC mining and curiosities such as grottos, labyrinths and ice houses. *(donated)*

***The Cave of Nerja*** by Eduardo Ortega Rodriguez, 1970 – a substantial guide book to this show cave near Malaga published by the Patronato de la Cueva de Nerja, 181pp. It describes the cave, its history, excavations, cave paintings and the music and dance festivals held in the 'Ballet Hall'. *(donated)*

***Caverns Measureless to Man*** by Sheck Exley. *(donated)*

***Underground England*** by Stephen Smith, 2010. A bit odd! *(donated)*

***The Mendip Hills: 8 Wild Walks, Mendip Hills AONB, 2009*** *(donated)*

***Wookey Hole, the Caves and Mill, 1986/7*** *(donated)*

***Earth Colours -Mendip and Bristol Ochre Mining*** by Marie Clarke, Neville Gregory & Alan Gray MCRA

During this year it is intended to continue the review of our DVD collection with a view to digitise to a format and media that will be with us for the foreseeable future. If it turns out to be a too difficult task to complete in house to obtain professional quotes though there may be problems with both copyright and or financial viability.

Lastly I bring to your attention the Descent Index Online A new online index is now available on the Descent website at [www.wildplaces.co.uk](http://www.wildplaces.co.uk). You can search article titles, authors, surveys & area maps, and view the contents of each issue a very useful facility.

## 5.8 Social Secretary's Report 2012 – 2013 *Jenny Plumb*

This year has flown by and I can not quite believe it is the end of March already. Over the last year there has been an influx in new members and the group organising communal meals on a Saturday night.

The beer drinking has slowed due to most our reliable drinkers taking time out for medical reasons. The food has been amazing, thank you to all the folks that have organised prepped and delivered outstanding meals, and special thank you to the Christmas team who pulled out all the stops and installed a temporary additional kitchen in the cleaning cupboard and out the back.

It was a great relief to me to have someone take that on, life has got in the way of my caving this year digging and with the happy news of an engagement it's going to get busier.

The AGM dinner this year will be hosted at Wells golf club due to a request for a change of venue. It was discussed at length whether a formal meal was still wanted by the group and the consensus overall was yes.

In previous years I have had time to chase up and keep up with my emails. I have badgered people and guests and really been on the case sorting everything out. This year I have not been able to and there is a poor attendance for the dinner of just over 40 (half what it was my first year matches effort = people) which could have fitted into a restaurant. And all guest speakers that were approached were not available and no other clubs have put forward a guest. They were emailed and invited via their committees / web sites. A quarter that say they are coming have not paid and I am relying on them bringing money today, not much interest in transport as most people now drive.

Thank you to those who have offered to drive, there should now be names of people who want a lift on the white board – please take them with you and if you want, bring them back! I've not been up to date on things this year and as previously mentioned I am going to be planning a wedding, it for this reason that I cannot commit to organising the Mendip Caving Group's 60th Anniversary dinner in 2014 as I do not feel that I would be able to do it justice at this time. I am standing down from the committee, but remaining a member of the group.

## 5.9 Other Officers' Reports

### a. Trustees' Report Year ending 31st December 2012 *Ben Cooper*

2012 was a good year for our investments with an overall return of just over 11%. The valuation is now back to where it was in 2007 before the crash, despite taking out more than £750 of income from our investments this year.

Earlier in the year we changed our investment strategy to be predominantly income based rather than growth based. Experience indicates that the net return from income funds is as good if not better than growth funds, with the added flexibility of providing income or increased growth if the income is re-invested. To that end, we transferred our entire holding of Charifund Acc for Charifund Inc; and our entire holding of Schroders US Smaller Companies for Premier Monthly Income. This also reduces the number of funds to 6, making administration a little easier. The transfer was completed half-way through the year; next year we can anticipate a full annual income about £1100 (if the rate of return is similar to this year).

Investment Valuation and historic comparison

	31-12-2007	31-12-2008	31-12-2009	31-12-2010	31-12-2011	31-12-2012
Henderson Global Care	£3,498.90	£2,267.33	£2,719.43	£3,124.22	£3,065.30	£3,629.82
Henderson (New Star)	£3,104.74	£1,591.02	£1,900.60	£2,168.09	£2,123.84	£2,405.44
IFDS Brown-Shipley	£2,004.97	£1,239.35	£1,767.82	£1,969.49	£1,881.92	£1,938.47

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(Solus)						
M&G Charifund Acc	£10,166.48	£7,358.47	£8,514.74	£9,633.19	£9,593.56	£0.00
M&G Charifund Inc	£5,086.69	£3,446.45	£3,752.70	£4,027.63	£3,815.35	£15,008.57
Premier (Credit Suisse)	£2,455.49	£1,699.78	£1,920.96	£2,050.89	£1,999.67	£5,969.29
Rathbone Income Fund	£2,870.39	£1,860.13	£2,289.42	£2,717.08	£2,709.13	£3,112.24
Schroders US	£2,897.18	£2,542.69	£3,151.67	£3,955.22	£3,772.52	£0.00
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>£32,084.84</b>	<b>£22,005.22</b>	<b>£26,017.34</b>	<b>£29,645.81</b>	<b>£28,961.29</b>	<b>£32,063.83</b>
COIF	£5,101.38	£5,380.60	£5,439.31	£5,474.62	£5,513.66	£5,562.21
<b>Total investment value</b>	<b>£37,186.22</b>	<b>£27,385.82</b>	<b>£31,456.66</b>	<b>£35,120.43</b>	<b>£34,474.95</b>	<b>£37,626.04</b>

#### Unit Prices and historic comparison

Investment	Unit Price 31/12/20011	Unit Price 31/12/20012	Unit Price Growth
Henderson Global Care ...	£0.8190	£0.9313	13.7%
Henderson Higher Income...	£0.3630	£0.3953	8.9%
IFDS Brown Shipley (Solus)	£1.3410	£1.3813	3.0%
M&G Charifund Accumulation	£123.9670	£143.9819	16.1%
M&G Charifund Income	£10.9010	£11.9982	10.1%
Premier (CS) Monthly Income Fund	£1.4990	£1.5675	4.6%
Rathbone Income Fund	£6.1380	£6.7606	10.1%
Schroder US Smaller Co...	£11.7700	£12.3900	5.3%
<b>TOTAL Investments</b>			<b>10.9%</b>

#### b. Gift Aid Report 2012 Sue Speight

Shortly after the AGM last year correspondence was received from HMRC which explained that due the way the group is constituted we are not eligible to claim gift aid on members subscriptions. We could claim gift aid on other donations received but as the work involved would outweigh the benefit the group would receive the committee has decided not to pursue this further.

#### c. Conservation and Access Officer's Report 2012-2013- NTR

#### d. Rescue Wardens Report 2012 – 2013- Richard Carey

Richard reported that he had attended 2 meetings and asked that members took advantage of attending training exercises as and when staged.

#### 6. Election of Honorary Officers for 2013-2014

Editor Tackle Master No nominations received. (Where posts remain unfilled, volunteers for co-option by the Committee will be sought at, or subsequent to, the meeting.)

It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Roy Kempston to vote on block those nominated as received below.. Agreed unanimously.

Secretary	No nominations		
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Treasurer	Sue Speight	Jean-Paul Burch	Robert Templeman
Caving Secretary	Richard Carey	Ben Cooper	Jean-Paul Burch
Cottage Warden	Russell Porter	Joan Goddard	Julie Hesketh
Tackle Master	Biff Firth	Robert Templeman	Jean-Paul Burch
Editor	No nominations		
Recorder/Librarian	Robert Templeman	Joan Goddard	Julie Hesketh
Social Secretary	Andrea Russe	Robert Templeman	Richard Carey

Subsequently, Brian Snell offered to be co-opted as Secretary, and Tom Harrison as ex officio Editor. Action for the Committee to co-opt.

## 7. Election of non-Committee Posts

**Rescue Warden:** *No nominees received in advance* It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Tony Knibbs that Richard Carey be elected. Agreed unanimously.

**Conservation Officer:** *No nominees received in advance* It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Russ Porter that Mark Williams be elected. Agreed unanimously.

## 8. Election of Examiners 2013 – 2014

Both Roy Kempston and Linda Milne agreed to stand again. Roy was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Sue Speight. Unanimously Agreed. Linda was proposed by Andrea Russe and seconded by Joan Goddard. Unanimously Agreed.

## 9. Motions

none received

## 10.00 Any other business

### 10.01 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Richard Carey told the meeting that he had considered a number of venues which either were too expensive or could not provide a single room to cater for say 150 diners and also some overnight accommodation. However, The Batch Country House, Lympsham, was current favourite, that ticked all the right boxes.

### 10.02 Barn Dance and informal half yearly

It was notified that a Barn Dance at Priddy Hall was being considered for the Autumn and the membership would be canvassed for support to ensure the viability to proceed.

### 10.03 Logbooks

Joan Goddard and Ed Waters raised their concerns that many caving trips were not being entered into the log book. In order to reverse this trend, Ed Waters is offering a £50 prize to encourage MCG cavers to record their trips in the logbook and Joan Goddard has also generously offered a £25 prize for the best trip write up. Details for both to be set out in the next news letter.

### 10.04 Bed nights

After discussion it was proposed by Ed Waters and seconded by Tony Knibbs that the Committee



review the current use of the cottage in order to propose a new charging model so as all members pay an equitable rate to cover their use of the cottage.

**11. Date and venue of next Annual General Meeting.**

Subject to availability of the selected venue for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner, it was agreed to hold the AGM on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April, Time 10 a.m., venue The Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy (to be confirmed)