

MCG NEWS

Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group

Departure Lounge, Upper Flood (by Charlie Allison)

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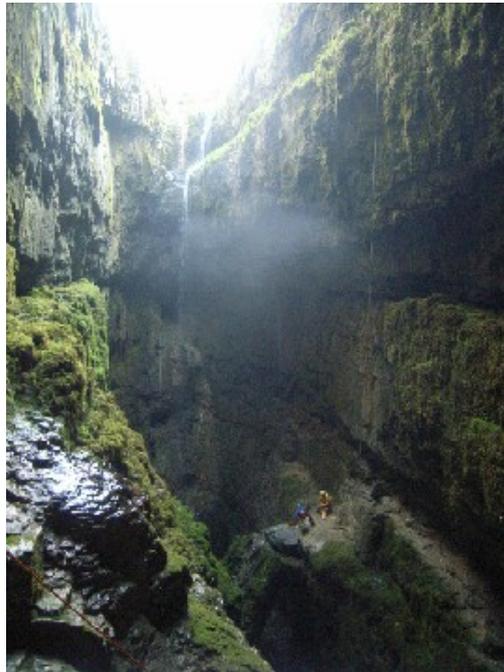
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Founded 1954

MCG Yorkshire Weekend April 2009

Great to see a really big trip to Yorkshire attended by (take a deep breath) Jeremy, Angela, Russ, Karen, Biff, Adrian, Giles, Ed, Hayley, Geoff, Debbie, Emma, Angus, Julie, Mike, Linda, Jon, Bego and Miguel and visiting Alum Pot, Sell Gill, Upper & Lower Churn, Ireby Fell, Bull Pot, Swinsto, Great Douk !The trip was such a success, that a similar extravaganza has now been planned for the Autumn in Derbyshire.

To start with here are a couple of photos of Alum Pot by Russ (left) and Biff (right)



Ireby Fell Cavern

(By Ed Waters)

Saturday morning saw a group of six of us (Biff, Julie, Miguel, Mike R, Adrian and myself) heading up the fell in glorious early morning spring sunshine. We started early as Ireby is always popular, and we guessed it would be doubly so now that the delights of the passages beyond Sump 1 are now accessible to us mere mortals who prefer free-range air to that kept in the confinement of a steel bottle. Therefore the plan was to get in before anyone else and miss the congestion, or worse find that so much gear was already rigged that we would not be able to descend.

It was about 6 years since my last visit to the cave, and it has definitely moved further from the track in that time! However, the huge depression with the tell tale concrete pipes was quickly identified, and after a few minutes kitting up we were away.

From the Guest Editor



Well no, the bashed head is not from preparing the News Letter ! Actually the mug shot was taken after a feverish breakthrough in Carcass Cave, hence the big grin !

Nearly every time Mike R, Julie H and myself meet up we still remark about what an exhilarating experience the discovery of Neverland was.

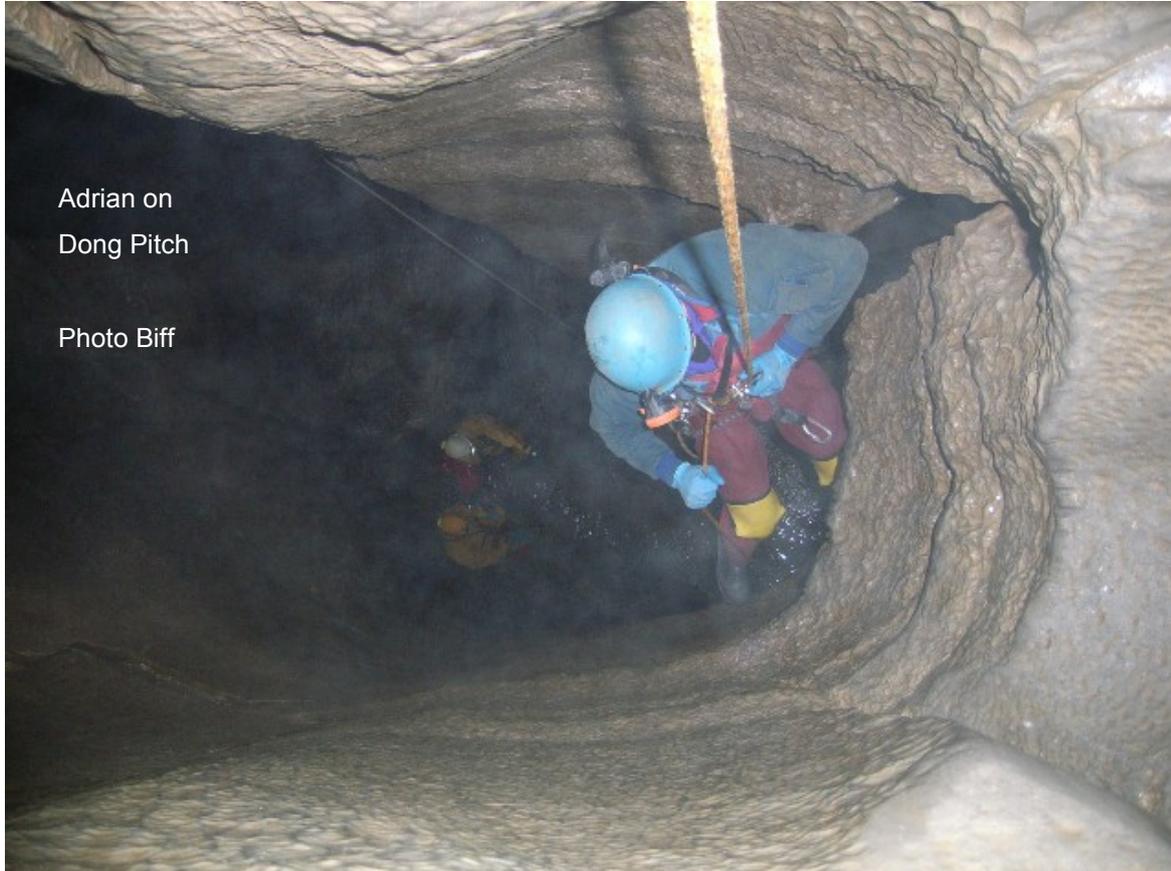
I very much hope that more of you get to have similar experiences. So I am pleased that the News Letter includes news on MCG's latest digs. We have a 3 pronged attack going on to spear the 09 Mendip Digging Barrel! The Charterhouse team have just raised the stakes again with another 500m discovery!

Bill Chadwick

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The first 3 pitches (Ding, Dong & Bell) are all short and very straightforward, and soon passed. Pussy pitch (which is often free climbed) was found to be rigged with a permanent rope, presumably by the guys who have put in so much work to open up the sump bypass. It is obviously rigged with wet weather in mind, and on the whole it was easier to climb it.



Adrian on
Dong Pitch
Photo Biff

Below Pussy Pitch, a short crawl leads to a superb section of narrow meandering streamway. Miguel certainly seemed to enjoy this section on his first proper trip in the Dales, very different from Malaga caving I suspect. A short crawl under a stal bank ensures a thorough wetting, before reaching Bell Pitch. This is a little more technical than the entrance pitches, a short descent to a traverse followed by the final hang. Though short it is in my opinion the best looking pitch in the cave.

Shortly after Well Pitch, is the final obstacle in reaching Sump 1, Rope Pitch. This is very short (c.4m) and very easy, though it can be somewhat damp. Below here is fine stonping stream passage which gradually enlarges into the large phreatic tunnel of Duke Street. At the end of Duke Street the stream flows into the Sump, and until recently this was the limit without use of diving kit. However, after major digging operations (including draining of the 25m long sump on occasions) not one but two bypasses to the sump have been opened up recently. The first one, Cripple Creek, is gaining a reputation of something of a "collectors piece", we decide to use the much easier Whirlpool Passage route instead.

A short way upstream of the sump is a fine chamber, known as Whirlpool Chamber. This is now easily identified by the fixed rope leading up, and the mound of muddy spoil beneath it which is gradually being washed away by the stream. The pitch up is easy enough, and the passage at the top a comfortable hands and knees crawl. This gradually degenerates to lower, sometimes flat out, crawling over sand (though it is never tight) for something like 200m or so, until it pops out in the wall of a canyon passage in Ireby II. The amount of work this must have taken to excavate is amazing, and the persistence of the group of diggers to do this equally so.

We had dragged a 30m rope through Whirlpool Passage as we did not know whether the pitch at the end of it was rigged, or how big it was. However, we found it rigged for SRT and with a handline, and the pitch to be less than 5m. This lands in knee deep water in a gloomy canal. The problem we now had, was that we hadn't the faintest idea of where we were! We knew we were in Ireby II, but where was the big stuff?



Miguel, Julie and Adrian in Duke Street II, Ireby Fell Photo Biff

The passage is simply stunning, much larger than upstream of the sump and dotted with the odd white formation. There are many side passages, which we did not have time to explore fully, in particular we failed to find our way to the vast Jupiter Cavern – that will have to wait until next time.

The return was nice and steady, and for what is regarded as an easy cave it seemed rather tiring (or I have got even more unfit than I thought I was). We were out to late afternoon sunshine after about 6 hours underground. The only downer was that our planned après pot-holing pint at the Game Cock in Austwick was sabotaged by the pub being closed. I think everyone enjoyed this trip, and the new sump bypass turns what was once a good trip into one approaching a great trip.

Sell Gill Hole

(By Jonathan)

www.ukcaves.co.uk lists Sell Gill as

An overused system with several different routes, some wet and some dry, entering a large rift chamber. The stream outlet leads through a low duck but closes down soon after. There are some side passages in the dry route. The highest possible pitch is 40 m but is usually far too wet to be considered.

Jeremy, Geoff, Russ P, Hayley, Begona, Linda, and myself walked up to the pot from the car park. T was a lovely day, and very beautiful. The Pen-y-Ghent hill sits softly in the background. Tis farming country and so there is a multitude of sheep and quad bike tracks. On arriving at the cave we donned our SRT gear with Hayley, Geoff and Jeremy helping me and Linda with what goes where. Begona had problems with her arm and so decided to stay topside, and climb Pen-y-Ghent.

We chose to do the dry route which is a straight down affair with three pitches and a good place to start for the inexperienced SRTist.

The first pitch has a slight traverse and then a re-belay to get onto the main pitch. Geoff explained the technicalities of SRT safety and rigging such as always hooking the Krab upwards onto the rope, clipping into the loop of rope and not the Krab or the bolt, and also to use your short cowstail first on the way down and your long on the way up (Tis a short way down and a long way up). I found this very interesting, especially as my sieve/memory only retains things if it has reasons with which to hook them. He talked us through getting onto the first rope. This was my first SRT trip and as such I was pretty nervous of how I was gonna deal with dangling off the ground dependant entirely on equipment. Once I had got to the edge and realized the chances of anything going wrong due to equipment failure were pretty damn low I relaxed and concentrated on what I had to do.

Because it is open to the sky pretty much you can see all around you. It is an amazing experience to lower yourself vertically down into a cave, down where the water fell or still falls, one which I feel privileged to have experienced. The first pitch takes you into a chamber which very quickly moves on to the second pitch. Jeremy had rigged a traverse along the left hand wall which then linked onto a Y hang directly over the pitch. Getting onto this involved stepping out over the drop to thread the descender and so it was decided to rig it along the right hand wall which provides more psychological protection. Geoff rigged this whilst we watched. Jeremy pointed out that there is an entrance in the wall a short way from the top of the first pitch which leads to another way down. Well done to Russ who had had trouble with this pitch the last time. This pitch leads into a larger open chamber and you descend only by the light you take with you. A large sloping wall leads up to the side and the way on leads down through a cleft with traverse.

The third pitch has a more complicated rebelay to contend with, involving a loop hanging out over the head. Again we were talked through this by the kindly experienced and it all felt very safe. Hayley decided that she was quite happy doing just the first two pitches and prusikked back up. All pitches were of a pretty equal size. The bottom of the third had a large slope up and a way on down through a hole. This has been dug is being dug by the The Craven and has involved at some point a mined shaft with geometric sides straight through the rock for about 20 metres. This opens out into a chamber with a ladder tied together from rope and plastic tubes already rigged on the left hand wall. This leads to grotto although I didn't climb it not knowing the age, state or way it was rigged. All the way along these passages runs thin electrical wire, <for explosives?>. After a little explore it was time to return and we did it all in reverse, prusikking rather than descending. I did not have my gear set up right and would recommend anyone doing SRT for the first time to try and optimize efficiency by setting up the footloop and chest harness properly. After some decidedly gangly prusikking I reached the top with the knowledge that I would be definitely doing this again. I had a thoroughly enjoyable and stimulating trip and would like to thank everyone involved for making it so.

Photo Karen F

Team on the way to Allum



Upper Flood Swallet progress

Tea'n'Chilli at the East Passage Cafe

(By Mike Richardson)

After Ben and I discovered the Rift Series in June last year, we'd noticed that the passage from Zebra Aven to the Rift Series continued, or rather, failed to continue on account of having been filled with soil. Why, I have to ask? There is a lot of space down there, so why does soil infill always have to get itself into the most inconvenient place? Still, after an initial run in with some bad air, and an admission that Picket Pot was a non-starter even if we had started on it, Tim and I returned in July and started to shift the infill.

Compared to some of the squalid bits that have been poked at in Upper Flood, this was pretty pleasant. The passage was the best part of a metre high, the infill was nice and loose, and there was a very convenient rift to dump the spoil into. OK, so the bottom of the rift had a small horizontal slot at the bottom, and Ben was a tad miffed to hear that we'd buried it, but we know where it goes (which isn't at all interesting), so that was that.

Progress was satisfyingly quick, and the tube headed directly towards a line which Tim had drawn through solid rock from the end of Rift Series to Royal Icing. It was confidently predicted that in about 8 metres we'd intersect a rift. Mind, the crawl at West End was called 95% Crawl on account of Tim's expertise in these matters. Plus, there was always a hint of a draught to keep the air fresh.

Still, there must be something down there, so here's an impression of what it might soon look like .



Photo Anon

Now, there is a joke (which probably should not be repeated in a family publication), the moral of which is that when one is up to one's neck in, shall we

say, mud, it is best to keep one's mouth shut. Notwithstanding this cautionary take, there were confident predictions of imminent breakthroughs from certain diggers; well, if you predict it often enough, you increase your chance of eventually being right.

Result: the passage got lower, the infill got harder, and the air got worse as the passage dipped down. Encouragement was needed!

Well, the British Empire was founded on Tea. Tea is the second most important liquid in the known universe. Clearly Tea was needed. Plus Chilli. Chilli is filling, Chilli is warming, and if Chilli is good enough for the Hunter's then who are we to argue? So, if you want tea'n'chilli, roll up at the East Passage Cafe! Meat and vegetarian menu available, and a semi-infinite supply of tea with or without sugar; all other requests considered (Chana Gosht for anyone?) Regrettably we don't actually have any pictures yet, but tis may give some idea of how it looks (though we are currently experiencing visibility prob-



Photo Anon

lems due to the steaming mugs of tea). Reviews have been universally good, even if the management has experienced some quality control issues.

And that's is, really. At the beginning of May, its still going. Its still low, but its about 8m long, the infill seems to be getting looser again, and it appears to be sloping up again. Plus, there is air movement once more. So, in a spirit of eternal optimism, a breakthrough is a definite maybe. Be there when it happens or you'll hate yourself for the rest of your life. And, no tea'n'chilli for you neither.

Upper Flood Squeeze Easing

The first bit of text here (compiled by Mike Richardson) is a summary of the discussions that have taken place about the opening up of the UF squeezes .

The issue of enlarging squeezes in Upper Flood has been discussed recently on the MCG mailgroup, privately amongst leaders and other interested parties in the MCG, and most recently at the 2009 AGM, where the issue was voted on as a show-of-hands. A decision has been made to carry out work to enlarge some of the squeezes in Upper Flood.

The primary intention is clearly to allow larger members to gain access to the new sections of the cave (ie., to be able to pass the boulder chokes between Andrew's Grotto and Departure Lounge). A secondary concern is that the second boulder choke (between Streamway Regained and Departure Lounge) will need stabilisation work, which will be easier with improved access. And, of course, more people means more diggers!

This is clearly a contentious issue. Although the show-of-hands at the 2009 AGM was significantly in favour, there were both votes against and abstentions. Hence, I am sending this email to advise leaders of the scope, limits and constraints on any work that will be undertaken.

It is definitely **not** the intention to enlarge the cave to the point that any caver can gain access, a trip into the new passages is and will remain a challenging trip. The essentially arbitrary measure of the proposed work is that it will allow a Biff Frith sized caver to gain access, given a significant amount of determination.

As a general principle, all enlarging trips will take place with at least two leaders, and will not undertake any work that has not been generally agreed upon amongst the leaders in advance of the trip. This does not mean that the trip must return for permission for each and every chisel blow or hilti cap; rather, caution must be exercised, and work must stop if, for example, an unexpected obstacle is encountered. Basically: view and review.

The first trip should take place on Sunday 12th April. Bill Chadwick and Mike Richardson (and anyone else who'd like to come along!). The plan for this trip is as follows:

- 1) We try to get Biff to Andrew's Grotto without any hammering or chiselling (so, for instance, no changes will be made to Bypass Passage). If Biff can't get that far then we abort and report back where he got stuck. This is the limit reached by Russ, Joe Frampton, Pete Glanvil and Adam Etherington (and others).
- 2) If Biff can get that far, then it is acceptable to remove a few 'small' knobs of rock from the boulders, but no more (and probably only one), to permit him to gain entry to Golden Chamber. The leaders present will agree on what 'small' and 'few' mean in this case. If it can't be done by removing a 'few' 'small' knobs, or we are at all dubious about the 'small' and 'few'. Then we stop and report back about what else would have to be done to get Biff in.
- 3) From Golden Chamber, we are fairly confident that Biff will be able to reach the first squeeze after 3D in

the main choke. We will stop there and survey what would have to be done to get him through it and report back.

And here are some words and pictures describing what actually happened at the Easter Easing.

Biff passed Sludge Duck after a bit of dredging and reached Andrew's Grotto. From Andrew's Grotto, we had to remove 1.5" or so along the corner of the boulder on the left of the first squeeze (top photo) for Biff to pass. He tried valiantly first (bottom photo) but simply would not fit. The knob above the squeeze and the right hand side were left intact.



Photo
Bill Chadwick



Photo
Bill Chadwick

Biff got stuck again trying to pass the next squeeze. This time after much deliberation, we removed one inch from the right hand boulder (the one with bag pass hole behind it). Biff tried again but still could not pass. One more inch off the same spot and he was through, though with a lot of grunting. From there, Biff got in to Golden Chamber and managed to get his foot into Streamway Regained, but not the rest of him. To get him through here will need some of the rock floor to be removed by Hilti. We stopped there.

On coming back out Mike and Bill felt that the second squeeze felt no different - its a bit of a pull up and twist. The first squeeze is though now a little easier for us smaller framed folk.

Battery Swallet progress

(By Mark Ward, his Photos too)

After a recent lack of digging, it was great to get back on 25/26 04 09 for a serious push. Mick and I spent 8 very tiring hours on Saturday pushing forward and shifting 40+ drums. On the Sunday Ed joined us and we shifted another 50+ drums. At the end of the day a small channel was opened in the floor and a small inlet could be seen 1.3M away! Too tired for anymore that day!

With excitement, Brian, Keith, Mick and I returned the following weekend and soon got to work with the air chisel, reaching the inlet within an hour! This turned out to be approximately 0.3M square and trending up-hill in the direction of Vee Swallet with no continuation? This just couldn't be right, so an all out assault was made on the floor, which was sounding hollow with each chisel blow.

Within minutes a hole had been opened in the floor and a small cross rift section taking the water could just be seen. The water seemed to flow away towards the supposed 'Cathedral' sized passage towards the farm and bomb craters? The whole place was very tight and squalid, so work continued to make the passage digable.

The dig so far has been in mudstone, which can be a real so and so to dig! But progress had been fast over the two weekends. Approximately 50+ drums shifted again. However, the geological map shows the cave laying in Harptree beds. Mudstone overlaying Dolomitic conglomerate, which all lays over vertical Limestone..... We had hit the Limestone! This will now need Hilti capping and Snapping and with the Wookey Brothers permission, maybe something more persuasive? We have probably extended the cave approximately 3M, with a length of 10+M?

Biff has stated that before the original diggers he had tipped a barrel of water down a vertical rift and heard the water disappearing over several waterfalls. This rift he feels was somewhere near the present entrance. So this could be a possibility to look for if all else fails?

The entrance is approximately 300M above sea level and there is an approximately vertical limit of 200M to Sherborne spring, if that's where it goes...? Or maybe.....Cheddar here we come? So nice after all the hard work to have finally hit the Limestone! Watch this space!!

Stainsby's progress

(By Biff)

Over the weekend of 22/23 Feb we dug down in Stainsby's nearly 4 metres with voids all over the place. We don't have to remove the spoil anymore, just rearrange it. We need more scaffolding again to make it safe. We have taken to using a safety line for the digger as the floor might drop out. We have heard movement below us so who knows it might be deeper next time we dig?



MCG 2009 AGM — The Highlights

The AGM on the 28th March was attended by 37 people, 27 of them full voting members. The meeting had a good purposeful air and was over by lunch time to permit some afternoon activities prior to the evening's annual dinner. Full minutes are available elsewhere. Below I have selected some of the more interesting points that were discussed, quoting directly from Brian Snell's minutes.

Following up on the 2008 AGM ...

Section 5.2 – The year's electricity bill was almost twice that of the year before. Action – The committee will review the electricity supplier to ensure that we are keeping the costs as low as possible.

The question was asked about the committee's review of our electricity supplier. The reply was that various quotes had been received from alternative suppliers but none were sufficiently lower to warrant transferring to a new supplier.

Section 5.4 – Problems with cold showers. Action – It was proposed that Ben Cooper's idea of altering the action of the shower boost relay should be followed through and the committee will investigate a new hot water system.

Ben Cooper's action had been a complete success so it was deemed that this was completed.

Section 5.5 – Oversuits in the shed should be used for beginner trips.

The suits were checked out and repaired where necessary and had been used on various beginner's weekends.

2009 Reports ...

5.1. Secretary's report 2008-9 Mike Richardson

Mike highlighted the progress that had been made in Upper Flood and considerable progress in Stainsby's. He also thanked Linda for her excellent work as Social Secretary over that past number of years, and Martin and Yvonne Rowe for their excellent work done for many years as Treasurer and Editor respectively. All were unanimous in praise for these three committee members who were now standing down.

5.4. Cottage warden's report 2008-9 Doug Harris

Doug went over the various projects which required to be done on the cottage. Arthur Spain asked what had been decided on the windows issue. Brian Snell said that the committee had looked into the costs and pros and cons of UPVC vs wood windows. He said that the decision had been made to replace 5 windows which were in the most need of attention with hard wood. These were the main dormer windows upstairs in all bedrooms and the library window. Arthur asked why we were not then replacing them all. Brian said that the remaining windows were either in good condition or easily repairable. Jeremy added that we have other projects to consider and funds were limited. Keith Knight asked who was going to project manage the fitting of the new windows. Biff Frith volunteered. Ben Cooper said that the saving made when changing windows from an insulation point of view was about £40 p.a. so why change them. He stated that double glazing does not pay for itself in the short term. Mike Richardson proposed that the 5 windows mention should be replaced with hard wood. Linda seconded. This was put to the vote. 24 agreed, 1 against, 1 abstain. Vote carried.

5.9 e. Guest Bookings report 2008-9 Mike Richardson

Mike said that things were positive and bookings were continuing to come in. Keith Knight asked if there had been any feedback on the raising of guest fees. Mike said that at least 2 groups had put extra in because they felt they were underpaying for the facilities.

6. Election of Honorary Officers for 2009/10

	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Secretary	M Richardson	T Francis	B Chadwick
Treasurer vacant			
Caving Sec.	J Gilson	R Porter	M Richardson
Cott.Warden	D Harris	J Gilson	M Norton
Tacklemaster vacant			
Editor vacant			
Rec.Librarian	B Templeman	M Rowe	Y Rowe
Soc.Secretary	G Martin	L Milne	J Gilson

Karen Fendley was co-opted as Treasurer; proposed by Mike Richardson, seconded by Jeremy Gilson. Brian Snell will be co-opted as Tackle Master. The Editor post remained vacant.

7. Election of non-committee posts

Rescue Warden: Keith Knight
 Gift Aid: Martin Rowe
 Conservation & Access Officer: Mike Richardson

10. Any other business

The Newsgroup

Tony Knibbs said he wasn't happy with the way the newsgroup was being used and that some rules needed to be established. One suggestion was that we could have more than 1 moderator. **Action** - committee to look into how the newsgroup should be moderated.

Heating

Mike Richardson talked about the background to the discussion on heating. His personal opinion was to use a multi fuel stove. There followed a lot of discussion on the topic. The priority order of the projects was discussed. It was agreed that the committee should manage



We are now going ahead with a new stove, something like the one on the right, though stood out into the lounge. Should be just as cosy for our younger cavers (sat on the UF squeezebox). Thanks to Russ etc. for making this happen.

Be warned... The new stove will be hot enough to melt wet socks !



these appropriately.

WW2 Bomb Discovered in Velvet Bottom

(By Joan Goddard)

A group of archaeologists from CHERT (Charterhouse Environs Research Team) have been investigating the old stone dams in the lower part of Velvet Bottom. While surveying one of the dams someone noticed what he thought was an old bottle in a crevice in the wall. Someone else thought it might be a camping gas cylinder. Further investigation revealed that it was metal with a red top and fins!

In typical British spirit, the archaeologists enjoyed their pub lunch before contacting the police. An officer came out and took a photograph which he sent to the bomb disposal team at Tidworth where it was identified it as a Second World war device. A day or so later the bomb disposal squad arrived, police officers cleared the area and the object was identified as a mortar bomb – with the safety pin intact. It contained 8oz of plastic explosive still inside and a further 8 oz was used to blow it up. It was reported as making a “fair pop and created a small crater”.

The question is why was it left behind? - The mortar looked as if it had been purposely shoved into the wall - possibly with a view to retrieving it later? Apparently there was a firing range somewhere near Manor Farm and the Home Guard is known to have trained in the Blackmoor and Velvet Bottom areas – Bleak House was used for target practice, for example, which is why so little of it remains, and there are traces of an ammunition store in the field behind Charterhouse Centre.

I wish I'd been there when the device was found and to see it blown up – I was surveying the dam the previous week but had moved on to an area higher up the valley. I did go and have a look at the “bomb crater” but it had been partially backfilled and wasn't very impressive, only about a metre in diameter but with clods of earth over a much larger area.

This report is based on a conversation with CHERT members who were there and on an article in The Cheddar Valley Gazette dated 23rd April 2009. ”

Swildon's Plaque

After reading '*Swildon's Hole – 100 Years of Exploration*' a Priddy resident was intrigued by the map of the village superimposed on the Swildon's survey and thought more should be done to let villagers and visitors know about the cave system beneath their feet.

As a result, just behind the fountain, there is now a stone plinth supporting a smart stainless steel plaque showing the relationship between the cave and Priddy. This should be good for showing to first time cavers and of interest to all.

Library Additions

The MCG Library, one of the clubs great assets, has acquired the following (purchases and donations)

Mallorca, bellezas en la oscuridad by Daniel Mayoral & Tomeu Mateu, 2006. A4-sized glossy paperback guide to the caves of Mallorca. Plenty of photos, surveys and much more – in Spanish!

Somerset Sump Index, Fourth Edition Compiled by Michael McDonald and Duncan Price. 2008. Published by the Cave Diving Group. 191 pages of clear descriptions of 50 sites, presented in logbook format and accompanied by surveys of Wookey, Wigmore, Swildon's, Stoke Lane and Gough's. Upper Flood (Chuckle Sump, East Passage Sump and Neverland Sump) warrants almost two pages.

Castleton Caves by Trevor Ford, 2008, Landmark. Provides an excellent overview of Peak and Speedwell Caverns, Giant's Hole, Odin Mine and others. There are numerous surveys and there are also sections on geology, hydrology, speleogenesis and suggestions for future exploration. Well worth a read and contains a 32 pp colour section with many photos by Paul Deakin. No index, unfortunately, and the binding is a bit fragile so the book will need careful handling. (Won in a recent Descent competition!)

The Caves of Scotland by Tony Oldham, 1975

Mendip – The Great Cave of Wookey Hole by H.E.Balch, 3rd Edn., 1947

Caves of Mystery by John Scott Douglas, 1957

The Cave by Richard Church, 1972

Vercors Caves by Des Marshall, 1993

The Ancient Springs, Streams and Underground Watercourses of the City of Wells by W.I.Stanton. (23pp). Reprinted from *Wells Natural History and Archaeological Society annual report for 1987 & 1988*

Martel's visit to Mendip in 1904 by T.Shaw, 1988. Reprint from *UBSS Proceedings, Vol 18(2), pp 278-291*

British Caver Vol 44 (1966)

Of Caves and Caving – a way and a life by John Gillett, 2002. Signed copy. A series of “essays” about the author's cave trips during the last 40 years

Mulu, the Rain Forest by Robin Hanbury-Tenison, 1980. Describes the 1977 expedition to Mulu with Chapter 7 describing the caves.

Speleo dans le Vercors, Tome 1 and Tome 2, by S Caillault, D haffner, T Krattinger & J. Delannoy, published 1997 and 1999 respectively. Excellent guidebook if you are going to the Vercors.

Library Journals

As well as bought and donated books and articles, the Group subscribes to **Descent**, **Subterranea** (Sub-Britannica), **Cave and Radio Electronics**, **Compass Points**, **Cave and Karst Science** and **Speleology**.

We receive a number of **exchange publications** and these will be found either in the in-tray to the right of the door (where they stay for a while before being catalogued) or filed in the relevant place on the shelves. Have a look at these, especially the Mendip-based clubs, as they are a good way of keeping up with local news that might otherwise be missed. Exchanges include:

Axbridge Caving Group

Bradford Pothole Club

Bristol Exploration Club

Cerberus Speleological Society

Chelsea Speleological Society

Craven Pothole Club

Grampian Speleological Group

Mendip Nature Research Committee

Plymouth Caving Group

Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club

Shepton Mallet Caving Club

Shropshire Caving and Mining Club

South Wales Caving Club

University of Bristol Speleological Society – latest volume has detailed paper on landscape and cave development in the Burrington area

Wessex Cave Club

Westminster Speleological Group

National Speleological Society of America

New Cottage Access System

Progress is being made with the installation of the new Access System and some initial wiring has been installed. It is planned to do this in at least three phases. The first phase will be to get the front door connected. This will be followed by the Tackle Store and Library doors.

The advantage of the new system is that it is passive and the cards/fobs do not require batteries and therefore should last for the life time of the system. Like the COTAG system, it will require a key fob (or card) to open the doors on which the system installed.

This project has been budgeted for and therefore once the system has been activated everyone will be entitled to an access card (at no cost). However, the key fobs are more expensive and we do not have the funds to cover the cost of these. Consequently there will have to be a charge of £5 per fob. There is an example of one of the new fobs currently hanging on the cave trip ticket board above the lectern in the cottage. Please do not remove this as it is there for everybody to take a look at. The cards are similar to a credit card in size but are about 1.5mm thick. We will be ordering the cards and key fobs soon but we need an idea of the numbers to order. A notice was put out on the Yahoo Newsgroup to this affect and consequently there have been a number of requests for fobs. But for those who may have missed this, can all those members who would like one and have not yet requested one, please email Brian Snell (brian.snell@tiscali.co.uk) to request one. If you don't have email access please contact Brian on 01329 238341 to request one.

Welcome to the following new members

Dave Naismith from Bath, Rob Alfano from Wellington Somerset, Lisa Flynn from Kintbury, Miguel Tome Mejias, Paul Davies, Deborah Freeman, Andrea Russe and Tracey Fisher all from Bristol, Jenny Plumb from Wokingham and Stefan Marjoram from Lower Langford Somerset.