

# MCG News

Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group

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www.m-c-g.org.uk  
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## Wretched Rabbit / Pool Sink Exchange - 12th June '04

By Yvonne Rowe

Wretched Rabbit team: Rupert Knowles, Martin and Yvonne Rowe.

Pool Sink team: Julie Hesketh, Tim Francis, Duncan Horne, plus Natalie Field (guest), Alan Jeffreys (GSG)

Julie had organised this trip so we could get together and brush up on various caving techniques before the MCG Slovenia trip. She booked bunks at the Yorkshire Speleological Society hut at Helwith Bridge for Friday 11th and Saturday 12th June. The hut has all a caver needs for his/her creature comforts, but best of all it has a pub right next door! We all met in the pub, had a few nightcaps and decided what caves we would do the next day.

Being an old crustie, more used to Mendip caves, I didn't want anything too strenuous or long, but I needed to find out what my limitations were. Wretched Rabbit (WR) was chosen for Martin and I, and Rupert asked if he could join us and I'm glad he did. The others chose Pool Sink a few yards further up Ease Gill Beck, which requires ladder and line. Each team was to return the way they came in, so this wasn't planned as an exchange trip.

Being a warm summer day, it was a fairly hot ½-hour walk to the caves. I looked forward to cooling off once inside the cave. Martin, Rupert and I set off down WR and things weren't too bad until we came to a series of awkward drops assisted by fixed hand-lines into the Big Rift. They were alright going down with gravity to help, but I did wonder how on earth I was going to get back up them, even with the hand-lines, as mostly the slides and sides were smooth. My muscles aren't as supple and strong as they used to be, and my cordura nylon over-suit doesn't create much friction. Anyway I was down and would worry about that later. The cave consists of lots of meandering passages, not difficult but hard work. With that and various other clambers and crawls I started to overheat and lose energy. Also, sweat kept dripping into my eyes and stinging, and my glasses kept steaming up. Rupert was very patient and didn't complain at my having stops to wipe my eyes and glasses and to try to cool down.

The guide book talks about cascades and streams but due to the recent lack of rainfall the cave was practically dry. Even the larger stream-way we came out into was a mere trickle. The only clue we had of wetter times was in the low passage at the end of the Big Rift which was ceiling high with flood debris - a bit un-nerving to say the least.

By the time we came out into the stream-way I was extremely hot, tired and not only worried about having enough energy for the return trip, but those awkward smooth climbs near the entrance.... I needed to make a decision at this point. Rupert felt that we couldn't be that far from the connection with Pool Sink and the ladders rigged by the others near the entrance. But were they still in the system or had they finished their trip, de-rigging as they left?

Rupert, being the gentleman that he is, offered to go and see if we were far from Pool Sink, or if he could meet the others en-route while I rested and tried to cool down. He had only gone a short time when a very bright light appeared - it was

### From the Editor



It doesn't seem five minutes since we had the AGM and MCG 50th anniversary dinner, and here we are almost at our summer celebrations. As you will know by now, there are lots of activities planned to suit all interests. It should be a lot of fun and it would be good to see lots of ex, 'old' and current members together again. See you there.

Sorry there are not many MCG articles in this month's newsletter, but what with house moving, holidays, caving etc., I guess members are too busy at the moment to write articles. I hope to see some coming in for the next newsletter which is planned to be ready towards the end of July. Your newsletter needs you.  
*Yvonne*

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## MCG doings

### Welcome:

to the following probationary member: **Louisa Minahan**

### Belated birthday wish..

for Louise Curley who celebrated her 40<sup>th</sup> over the 50th dinner weekend. She fell asleep on the leather arm-chair after the dinner and we woke her up (Alan Mellon being the ringleader) with chants of 'happy birthday to you'..... *LM*

**Newsletter posting:** has been done for a long time by Linda Milne, but she has recently moved house and is too far away from Mike Lovell (who does the printing) to be able to do it any more. New member Brenda Wybrow, who lives not far from Mike, has volunteered to take on this task. *Thanks to Linda for enveloping, stamping and posting the newsletter all this time, and to Brenda for offering to take over.*

Tim (with his new Nova). Rupert had met the others and, yes, we were close to the ladders and exit. I meanwhile had cooled down and was feeling much stronger again. Duncan volunteered to return and show us the way to Pool Sink and to help haul me up the ladders if necessary. The others decided to continue on to explore down-stream via the Minarets as far as Bob's Boss, before retracing their route and then exiting via WR.

Meanwhile, back at Pool Sink, a bit more meandering and my team came to the ladders, 3 short ones about 20ft or so, and the last one of 50ft and the one I didn't think I'd manage without help. However, I managed all four. The only slight problem I had was the constriction at the top of the 50ft where I was reminded that I really must lose weight! Martin, Rupert and Duncan de-rigged as we went. I had a hot and tiring but thoroughly enjoyable trip, even though I got very worried at one point about overheating and loss of energy... and for all that the trip only took 4½ hours. Thanks lads.

On the subject of overheating (which I do all too easily): I recently changed from a TSA PVC over-suit and an old-fashioned thick furry-suit to a 'cordura' nylon over-suit and a lighter fleece under-suit to try to combat overheating. However, I still get too hot and wondered where to go from here. Well, while we were in Ingleton we called in at the Daleswear factory shop as they were advertising a sale and we found these extremely thin, lightweight fleece under-suits at £28 each. I'm hoping this will be the answer to my problem (and anyone else who suffers likewise). I'll let you know.

## Into the depths of Swildons

By Fiona Crozier

I had a great trip down Swildons to Sump 9 on Sun 16th May with a couple of others. It was a hot day outside and we set off into Swildons at 7am with all our kit and bottles. Lowering the kit down the 20' ladder, we then pushed further on to good old Sump 1 which was just as refreshing as ever, then on to Sump 2.

Sumps 2, 3, 4 and 5 - they all went well. Then I entered Sump 6. This proved to be quite a challenge as there was a lot of protruding rock sticking out and I seemed to come to a place that I could not get through. I had to back up a little, then I found the way on still with line in hand. There are nice lines in all the sumps that are very helpful, as in sump 7 you have to go through a very small slot in the wall on the left to bring you out to a dry bit. It's easy to miss as straight on leads to a dead end. The right turn leads down into the sump where the mud has come down and you might have to plough your way through mud to surface. So you have to get it right.



Swildons Nine (between sump 8 and 9) is a mountain to climb with all your kit. This is a boulder pile and climbing up certainly took quite some doing. At last we made it to Sump 9 where we were able to drop one of our cylinders off for our next trip which will be into sump 12. Oh wow! What a trip.

We left the cave at 2pm rather knackered and black and blue but it was well worth it. If there are any keen cavers that might like to get involved in sump diving feel free to give me a call.



## Hidden Earth 2004

This year's conference will be held at the Brewery Arts Centre Kendal, a really special venue as it is the home of the annual Kendal International Mountain Film Festival. It has three purpose built theatres, three bars and a quality restaurant, along with many other features. The conference will be taking over the expansive 350-seat 'Malt Room' as its HQ, with its own bar.

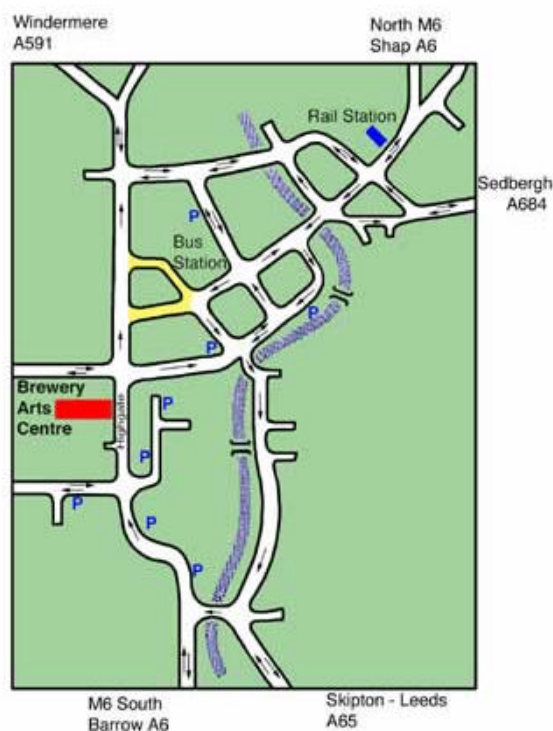
Brewery Arts Centre is in Highgate near the centre of the town. Parking at the site is pay & display and very limited. There are other car parks around the town. Kendal's one-way system is infamous, and there can be long delays getting into town at peak times (e.g. Saturday morning).

Please note that there is no camping in Kendal, but there is plenty of B&B accommodation available in the town. There is a YHA attached to the conference venue, and there is camping outside the town.

Kendal being only a short drive from Austwick, Hidden Earth 2004 will start on Wednesday evening, 29th September with field events based on the Dalesbridge Centre. The Centre has been reserved for bunkhouse accommodation and camping space from Wednesday evening, and field trips/caving trips on Thursday and Friday will be arranged as required.

For more information/accommodation contact enquiries@hidden-earth.co.uk  
For field trips/caving trips contact p.mann@hidden-earth.co.uk

The highlight of the conference is likely to be the China Caves Spectacular with Andy Eavis & Gavin Newman featuring spectacular 3 dimensional images. Gavin's new China Caves film will run on Friday evening at 7-30 pm, and Saturday at 8-00 pm. Limited availability — Book early to avoid disappointment



As you may by now have read, I went caving in Yorkshire recently and I had quite worrying problems with overheating. After I wrote the article Martin checked out [ukcaving.com/index.htm](http://ukcaving.com/index.htm). Much to our surprise, one of the questions was about overheating in caves with possible solutions. The answer given was as we found for ourselves – that you can now buy really light, thin fleece under-suits, and for a reasonable price.

What this rambling is all leading to is the fact that this has only become a fairly recent problem for me. Much of my caving is done on Mendip where most of the caves are dry, but in Yorkshire I expect the caves to be inherently damper and colder, even in the summer. At first I thought it was something to do with my age(!), but I couldn't think why that should be. With others of all ages now suffering the same problem I am wondering whether caves have become another victim of global warming? It seems to be affecting so many other parts of the earth so why not caves too? What do you think?

### NAMHO Conference

'The Extractive Industries of Cumbria' - the 2004 National Association of Mining History Organisations NAMHO Conference - is being organised by the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society, on 24th to 26th July at the old mining village of Coniston, in the Lake District National Park. More at details at [www.catmhs.co.uk](http://www.catmhs.co.uk)

### Could we be sued?

Yes, we could!

Reading through my newsletter (No 3 2004) from the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs an item states that *all* members of a small club are being sued for damages as a result of an accident that occurred during a run organised by the club and involving a member who was driving without insurance. Allegedly, the run was an unofficial treasure hunt and the accident was caused by the driver stopping on a blind bend to solve a clue. Presumably, if true, the action is based on a claim of negligence on the part of the club for not requiring insurance and/or siting a clue in a position where it is dangerous to stop or slow down.

Now, it doesn't take much imagination to transpose the above scenario to a caving scenario. It could be an official or unofficial club meet where one of the party is uninsured. A badly placed bolt allows the rope to rub on a sharp flake causing it to fail, resulting in serious injury to one of the cavers...

*Yvonne Rowe*

### Yv's droppings:

Looking through Malcolms caving items for sale:

LM: "Is there anything I'd like to have that I don't know I'd like to have?"

At the BBQ:

LM: "Brenda usually gives you a good spread!"

## Recent remedial work in Waterwheel Swallet

*A letter from Chris Binding, Secretary Cheddar Cave Club*

I write to update MCG on some remedial work which has recently been done at this site following consultation with the outgoing CSCC C&A officer (Martin Grass) and the Head of Centre, John Baker, at Charterhouse. I apologise for overlooking the possible need to consult with MCG!!!

MCG, Cheddar CC and Charterhouse Centre all hold a key for Waterwheel Swallet. Cheddar CC have been keeping an eye on the cave under the Descent 'Adopt-a-cave' scheme for many years. As MCG members will know, Waterwheel Swallet contains many of Dr. Stanton's digging aids in the form of small dams, water collection piping and stairways. Over the years some of these features have deteriorated. Work has recently taken place and the following 'improvements' to the man-made structures in situ have been done.

The tube/swim dam has been deepened by about two inches, thus making it a very fun feature of the cave.

Another dam has been installed downstream from the tube/swim dam (see why below).

The large (final) dam has had the major leak plugged and it should now refill in times of flood (and when the bungs are pulled on the three previous upstream dams, thus 'flood pulsing' the final large dam). This final dam holds about 90 cubic metres of water and in order for the 'lake' to fill it is necessary for 'water in' to be more than 'water out' and therefore the three upstream dams collectively hold almost enough water to half-fill the lake. In times of rainy weather, the dam should be about half full anyway - it has many small leaks at about the half-way up level. On progressing down through the cave, a visiting group should be able to pull out all three bungs on their way in and eventually arrive at the lake as it begins to fill to the brim! I have never witnessed this and am looking forward to enjoying this restored feature of the cave. I must get some photographs too!

The old rusty chains (with dangerously worn/thin links at the fixing points) at the entrance and on the climb down at the pitch have been removed/replaced respectively.

A fixed ladder is presently propped up against the final large dam; this is a precaution. When the final dam is full there is a possibility that some cavers may be out of their depth. For this reason the ladder is in situ for cavers to use should they need to get out of the water quickly. The original diggers used fixed ladders at the pitch, possibly for the same reason although I am not proposing that fixed ladders should be placed on the 7m pitch. However, it has been suggested that perhaps a fixed 'traverse line' rope might help short people who find they are out of their depth.

There are plans to remove the metal stake belays nearby the final pitch and the water rift and replace these with resin bonded anchors (to be done by Somerset County Council). The stakes are still regularly used by visiting groups but doubt has been cast over their internal strength, having now been in situ for almost twenty five years. Consultation with the CSCC Bolting officer will occur before any anchors are placed.

I sincerely hope MCG approve of these improvements/restorations to the man-made elements of the cave and enjoy their future visits to this fine, fun and interesting site. I believe the work has been sympathetically done with reference to Dr. Stanton's article in UBSS Proceedings, 1987, vol 18.no..

In order for the dams to work properly it is important that cavers make sure the bungs are a good fit when they replace them upon exiting the cave.

If you have any comments or suggestions please let me know. A sign has been placed in the first chamber, below the entrance tube, notifying cavers of the recent work. The sign will be removed in due course once it has become more widely known that the cave is now a much wetter experience than has been the case for many years.

I should also like to know whether other cavers consider the orange taping in the cave to be 'a bit OTT' and whether it should perhaps be reduced a bit, and if so, where?

*Editor: MCG members with a view on any of the above should contact any committee member, preferably before the next committee meeting on 3rd July.*

## Notice of MCG Extraordinary General Meeting, 9th October '04

This replaces the annual HalfYearly Forum this year and was planned for the October members weekend (1-3rd Oct)... but please note...

Due to the Hidden Earth Conference being held 1-3rd October, the members weekend has been moved to 8/9/10 October, therefore The MCG Annual Meeting will now be held on Saturday 9th October 2004. More details on that later.

Also, on the new October members weekend there will be caving in Burrington, the choices being Lionel's Hole, Goatchurch Cavern, Rod's Pot and, for the chronically slim, Pierre's Pot.

## The Promotion of Volunteering Bill

This Bill aims to protect volunteers from unreasonable litigation, particularly in the areas of sport and adventure training. It introduces the concept of statement of inherent risk as a means to reintroduce the idea of informed consent and to acknowledge that accidents can happen without contributory negligence. It would address the problem of the increasing cost of liability insurance which threatens the viability of many sporting clubs and societies, such as MCG. The National Caving Association has already written to Mr Brazier (MP) in support of this Bill and CSCC now ask you to e-mail or write to your MP expressing your support for the Bill, which will have its third reading on Friday 16th July. It is unlikely to become law in its present state but, given enough support, it is hoped Government may take note that such legislation would be welcome and in time, will introduce its own version of the Bill.

As you can see, we do not have long to make ourselves heard so we need to act promptly. You can find a list of MPs with mailing, as well as e-mail addresses at [www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alms.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alms.cfm). When writing to your MP, please keep your message short and poignant. A few lines expressing your support for the Bill and the consequences of excessive litigation will suffice. Alternatively, use the text below supplied by CSCC.

"Dear (MP)

I write to express my support for the Promotion of Volunteering Bill, introduced by Mr Julian Brazier MP. As cavers, we have all benefited from the knowledge and experience handed over voluntarily by those that have been before us. It is a reflection of our increasingly litigious society that we are now having to insure against a claim for damages, suffered as the consequence of a bona fide accident whilst practising a sport which carries inherent risks. Combined with the spiralling cost of insurance, this is imposing limitations to our activities and causing many of us to think long and hard before taking new enthusiasts caving and this can only be detrimental to our sport. I for one would welcome a common sense Bill that reduces the risk of unreasonable litigation and recognises that accidents do happen.

Yours sincerely (Signature) "

## Social events

### Jul 2/3/4th

Can anyone help with raffle prizes for the 50th Barn dance, please? All items gratefully received, either on the day of the Barn Dance or earlier (*hand to Ann Pittman or Joan Goddard, or leave in the box provided in the library.*)

### Sep 3/4/5th

After the success of the BBQ at the cottage on 5th June another one is planned for the members' weekend in September. Bring your own meat (or alternative); baked potatoes/salad will be provided for a small charge. (*To avoid any misunderstandings the money will be collected at the beginning of the evening.*) If you can let Joan know in advance that you are coming it would be helpful - but not essential.

## Another good weekend...

There were three caving trips on Saturday 5th June - to Swildon's, Shute Shelve and Charterhouse, and on Sunday there was a trip down Upper Flood and a walk from the cottage to Axbridge to see Joan's new abode. On Saturday evening there was a superb barbecue attended by 21 people. The weather was hot, right into the evening. Special thanks go to Bryan Pittman for mowing the 'lawn', to Doug Harris for donating a new barbecue, and to Jacky for buying and preparing baked potatoes, a lovely salad and all the extras.

## Mugs and t-shirts

T-shirts at £6.00 each, and mugs for £6.50 each or 4 for £25.00 are still available, but make sure to buy yours soon as stocks are limited.

### Council of Southern Caving Clubs news

Maine's Barn on Priddy Green has had some work done to reduce the problems associated with the pigeons.

The previously lost cave of Loxton (now found) may be fitted with the CSCC standard padlock but club leaders may need to be appointed for conservation reasons.

Stainsby's Shaft has had a new grille top installed and is on the CSCC standard padlock.

Priddy Green Sink is also on the CSCC standard padlock.

If you issue your CSCC key to persons who are not members of your club and an accident occurs you may be liable to an insurance claim from those persons. CSCC does NOT have insurance for its member clubs or non-members or guests. Only issue CSCC keys to paid up members.

Fairy Quarry car park is now finished and visiting cavers are asked to make use of this facility rather than parking in the road - the road takes a lot of 38ton lorry traffic so please do not park in such a way that they cannot pass you. CSS still allow cavers to park at their HQ and walk down to the quarry. There have not been any reported car break-ins but you should always remove valuables from display anyway.

Fairy Cave Quarry Management Committee report that all non-leader caves (in the quarry; i.e. Balch's, Fairy, Hilliers etc. are locked with CSCC locks. Chris Binding, the new C&A Officer can be contacted for further details. The car park has a combination lock on it and the combination is available to bona fide visitors (call 07968 275969).

### Discovery and Digging Report of Carcass Cave (Part Three)

*In the light of recent accounts of discoveries at Carcass Cave in the MCG newsletter and elsewhere it was thought that an article on the early days of the Carcass dig might of interest to the wider MCG membership. Following on from the earlier instalments in MCG News 319 and 320, in the form of logbook entries, the main protagonists continue to outline how the dig progressed. After several years of inactivity at the Carcass Shaft dig, Mick Norton takes up the story as he recounts the discovery of the Carcass Cave entrance and the resumption of digging on Shute Shelve hill.*

#### The New Bit by Mick Norton

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2001** Doug Harris organised and led a beginners' day for Bracknell District Caving Club. There were eight of us including Doug. We started off with an impromptu trip up Banwell tower, our first time and we found it very impressive. We then did the Bone Cave, including some squeezes, which were unexpected but enjoyed. Then we did the Stalactite Cave to the bottom of Great Chamber. The beginners then encamped themselves in the garden and had a leisurely lunch. I could not believe their cheek, (some were Londoners). After they had rested we tackled Shute Shelve Cavern. On leaving, they were happy and tired, having done more than they expected. A further surprise was still awaiting them, yes you've guessed it: digging at Carcass Cave.

For some time I have been saying to Doug that we have left a lead untouched. I said that before we finish, we should at least have one go at opening the abandoned badger hole leading off from the walk-in entrance of Carcass. We had with us some ammunition: a slim, agile, first time young woman from London. I told her to lay on her stomach and enter the badger hole feet first. Then I told her to feel with her feet. Almost right away she said there was a head-sized hole going horizontally into the hill. We ripped her out the way and tore into the ground. After an hour we could see into a very tight twenty feet long tunnel going slightly up and straight into the hill. Richard Woodrow, who has been caving as long as me, was very impressed with this new lead as were Doug and I. However, the beginner's eyes were glazing over, they had had enough excitement for one day. So over to A.C.G. for the next push.

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2001** Doug Harris, Gwen Sawicki, Terry Seavers and Alan Gray digging out and entering the badger hole. After a metre of preliminary excavation, they found they could access the small tunnel heading east into Shute Shelve Hill. Pulling back the fill, they gained twenty feet. This tunnel is against one solid limestone wall. It is alive with insects, spiders and beetles.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2001** I got Geoff Beal to drop me off at Shute Shelve, I climbed up the hill and did five hours solo digging. I broke through into a low chamber 3m by 2m. The floor seems to be badger bedding, no poo, just tiny bits of bracken; the life in the chamber is helping to break it down into soil. This chamber appears to be phreatic but is now rotten rock. Leaving my stuff in the cave, I then had a two and three quarter hour walk in the rain across the Mendip back to the cottage and Linda's party. The next day Geoff Beale was treated to his first trip in Shute Shelve Cavern, led by Alan Gray. Doug had a small dig in Elm Street. Then we went to Carcass Cave and did about one and a half hours digging, lowering the floor of the small chamber.

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2001** Doug and Mick enlarging the entrance section, then concentrating in the Badger bedding Chamber. We have entered an extremely tight tunnel behind it, by a metre.

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2001** Elaine led a huge number of Axbridge members down Shute Shelve; afterwards we all went to Carcass for a look. After they had feasted their eyes on the new finds, Doug and I did an hour's digging-no new discoveries. Oh!

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001** Mick invited Tim Francis (to reciprocate Tim kindly allowing me some year's earlier to dig with him at his site in Pinetree Pot) and Peat Bennett to accompany me at Carcass. The day did not start well; we left for Axbridge in torrential rain, all other diggers having declined. I gave them the first go while I pulled out the drums and emptied down the hill. They were in full caving gear and nice and cosy in the cave. I was in a boiler suit and sodden raincoat and outside in the storm but digging is FUN whatever you do and you always get your go at the sharp end.

When it was my turn I started to dig open a phreatic tunnel heading towards Axbridge, I had previously pulled out a badger skull from here, the only bone I've found in this new dig at Carcass. After Tim and Peat left, I stayed for another two hours just deepening this new tube. Later in the evening, lots of us attended a slideshow of Caves of Benerat, Borneo. They look a lot bigger than Carcass but a bit farther away!

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2001** Mick, Elaine, Bill, Tim and Julie excavated the fill from the new

phreatic tunnel. At the end are two stal about 2' long and some very fresh badger poo. This inquisitive badger could not have entered this tunnel before, so I suppose he was exploring like us; no further evidence of the creatures has been seen. The new tunnel is now four metres long, one metre high and half a metre wide. The floor will dig out further; there is one tiny calcited hole going into the hill. A six-hour shift for Bill and me and a huge volume of fill out of the cave today.

#### Exploration Fever by William Chadwick

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2001** Tim, Bill, Stefan Natynczuk and Martin Peck starting off with some slow digging in the confines of the far end of the new tunnel. We soon tired of this and so enlarged the tube considerably by removing soil to a rock floor. By mid afternoon the tunnel was some four feet high by two feet wide so we switched our attentions back to the far end where there is a small phreatic swirl chamber. The chamber has a hard layer over sand. Bill prised a rock from the left-hand side revealing a void into which the crow bar could easily be inserted. Tim switches to the dig front and soon becomes excited by the increasing size of the void. He could see blackness beyond, the pace quickens and Tim has his helmet off forcing himself down the tiny hole pushing rocks and sand in front of him. We asked him, 'what is there?'. Then he was gone: 'come on through,' he called. As Tim had slightly cut his head in the squeeze, we urged him to have a look and report back. He was gone a minute or so. 'Stand up walking chamber,' he told us. Bill and Martin scooped out the squeeze to allow entrance 'be-helmeted'. The rift chamber beyond has extremely old flowstone formations on the left and crumbling rotten rock on the right, a considerable amount of which litters the floor. The chamber is about thirty-five feet long between two to six feet wide and up to ten feet high. At the far end a small hole appears to be the only way on. The elated party set out for home, anxious to return soon. (Ref. MCG News 306)

#### Clearing and pushing by Mick Norton

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2001** Bill and Mick spend six hours digging at Carcass. First Bill proudly shows me the chamber they found two weeks earlier. I was impressed with this geologically interesting passage. Bill took some digital images of the formations. Bill and I haul a huge four-foot long slab of fallen calcite to the undecorated side; we start building a dry stone wall. Then we deepen the chamber's access squeeze. Doug joins us and clears the bottom of the farthest part, exposing a level calcite floor. Above him; dangerous peeling-off copper sediment, a loose small body-sized hole under this was not entered. We then set to lowering the floor of the Badger Bedding Chamber. Doug started to excavate the third entrance. Bill and I started to clear out the tunnel which links to this. Another void seems to go into the hill from this third entrance.

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2001** Bill Chadwick, Tim Francis, Mick Norton and Doug Harris. We completed the dry stone wall in the stalactite chamber and made a level, sand-covered floor. We probed the small, calcited hole at the far end; it draughts slightly.

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2001** Tim, Bill and Mick. I started by digging sand from the entrance of the stalactite chamber; two feet down I found a solid phreatic floor. Tim and Bill were under taking a smoke test at the bottom of the shaft. Then we completed the tunnel heading north from the entrance to the third entrance. Then we dug down in the badger-bedding chamber. Finally, we explored the stal wall and noticed that the fault continues at least a metre but very thin. Back to A.C.G. for the next push?

*In the next issue: Doug and Mick briefly recount the digging activity of 2002.*

## Training Weekend, 6/7th November '04

Do you fancy brushing up on your general caving techniques? John Crowsley is running a training weekend over the November members weekend (6/7th Nov) and is availing his services free of charge. Places are open to MCG members with full insurance only and numbers are limited.



Closing date is the General Meeting weekend (9/10th October). To book a place contact John

#### Earwig in on the committee meeting held on 05/06/04

**Bone Hole:** work will be completed by the July members weekend.

**Storage heaters:** are all wired up and working (one in the lounge needs tweaking to run properly).

**Floor/lino:** rather than replacing the damaged lino by the kitchen entrance with a mismatching patch, it is agreed that we will replace the entire dining end, joining it to the lounge lino with a levelling strip. Floor repairs to be undertaken first.

**Objects of the Group:** the Charity Commissioners have agreed to the new wording in principal and just need a copy of the AGM minutes as proof that they were agreed and passed.

**CSCC keys:** the previously open caves at Fairy Quarry (Hilliers, Balch's and Conning Tower) have now been gated and locked. A CSCC key is required to open these locks. There are now 2 more CSCC keys in the tackle store.

**Fairy Quarry Caves car park:** for the code to open the gate, contact Martin Grass when requesting a trip (who trips have to be arranged through).

**Charterhouse Cave:** Nick Gilson has resigned as our 'Mendip' Charterhouse leader. Richard Carey has volunteered to take over from him. Charlie Alison remains our 'non-Mendip' leader.

**Occasional publication:** text covering the first formative 10 years of MCG is to be proof-read by Joan Goddard and the committee before inserting photographs, printing and issuing.

## ***Mendip Caving Group - Constitution and Rules***

### *Part One: Administration*

1. **NAME.** The full name of the Group is the MENDIP CAVING GROUP.
  2. **OBJECT.** The object of the Group is, for the benefit of the public, the furtherance of all aspects of the exploration, scientific study and conservation of caves and related features.
  3. **MEMBERSHIP.** Membership shall be open to anyone over the age of 16 years with an interest in the objects of the Group. There are four classes of membership as follows:
    - (a) **FULL MEMBERS,** i.e. people who have been probationary members for at least six months, who have completed a training trip (as defined by the Committee) and who have been approved for full membership by a majority vote at a Committee meeting.
    - (b) **PROBATIONARY MEMBERS,** i.e. people who have been proposed by two full members, who have attended at least one Group meet where Committee members were present, who have been advertised in the newsletter or notice board (together with their sponsors) for at least one month and who have been accepted as probationary members by a majority vote at a Committee meeting.
    - (c) **ASSOCIATE MEMBERS,** i.e. either:
      - (i) former full members who are unable to play a full part in Group activities, but who wish to continue their association with the Group. Their change of membership requires the approval of a majority vote at a Committee meeting.
      - (ii) persons who wish to become members of the Group, but who are unable to take part in the regular caving activities and who have been approved by a majority vote at a Committee meeting.
    - (d) **HONORARY MEMBERS,** i.e. people who have given exceptional service to the Group. Election to this class of membership requires a unanimous vote of the Committee.
- Note:** Persons aged under 16 years may be sponsored by a member and attend meetings as their guests.
4. **PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP.** Use of the Group's cottage at reduced rates, use of Group equipment and the library, free publications and advice of meetings and activities. Full members may stand for election to the Committee and vote at general meetings. Associate members have similar privileges except that they have no vote at general meetings, and not more than one at a time may hold office on the Committee. Probationary members may have the same privileges as associate members except that they may not stand for election to the Committee.
  5. **EXPULSION FROM MEMBERSHIP.** Membership may be terminated by the decision of two - thirds of the Committee (all being present). The member shall be notified of the intention of expulsion, and shall be given reasonable opportunity of attending the meeting and presenting a case. A full or associate member may appeal against the Committee's decision to a general meeting called for this purpose by the Secretary.
  6. **SUBSCRIPTIONS** are payable on January 1st each year. Members failing to pay by January 31st may have their membership terminated. Members joining after June

30th in any year shall pay reduced subscriptions at pro-rata rates.

The amount of subscription shall be determined at a General Meeting and notified to members in time to take effect from the next due date of subscription. The Associate Membership fee shall be half the Full Membership fee. Members may apply to the Committee for consideration of a reduced personal subscription, in three circumstances:

- (i) Members aged 60 or over,
- (ii) Members living overseas for at least 6 months a year,
- (iii) Members on low income.

7. **COMMITTEE.** The Group's business shall be regulated by a Committee of eight members. They will normally be elected at the annual general meeting to serve for a period of twelve months. If a post falls vacant during the year, a substitute officer may be co-opted for the remaining period. The honorary officers shall be: Secretary, Treasurer, Caving Secretary, Cottage Warden, Tackle master, Editor, Recorder/Librarian, and Social Secretary.

8. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS.** Any officer may call a Committee meeting. The quorum for the Committee shall be more than half the number of posts filled. The decision of the Committee shall be binding on all members unless varied by a majority vote at a General Meeting.

### 9. GENERAL MEETINGS.

- (a) The Annual General Meeting shall be held in the spring of each year to:
  - (i) receive the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting,
  - (ii) receive the officers' reports and examined accounts,
  - (iii) elect officers for the following year term,
  - (iv) appoint honorary examiners for the following year / term,
  - (v) discuss formal motions and any other business.
- (b) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be requested by a majority of the Committee or by five Full Members.
- (c) Notice of any General Meeting, together with the agenda, shall be given by the Secretary to members at least 14 days before the date of that meeting.
- (d) The chairman of each meeting will be appointed by the Committee.
- (e) Nominations for office and proposals to change the Constitution and Rules must be submitted in writing by first class post to the Secretary's home address with the signatures of Full Members proposing and seconding and at least 25 days before the meeting. A nomination for Office must be accompanied by a signed agreement to stand for election by the nominee.
- (f) Votes at General Meetings shall be counted by two tellers appointed at the meeting. The election of officers shall be by secret ballot.
- (g) The Committee may grant a postal vote to any member who applies in good time to the Secretary.

### 10. FINANCE

- (a) The Group's funds shall be placed in such account, or accounts, with banks or be otherwise invested as the Committee shall direct.
- (b) The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts and receipts of all transactions.



## **Mendip Caving Group - Constitution and Rules**

### 10. FINANCE (cont)

(c) The signatures of two members, as nominated by the Committee, shall be required on all cheques and notices of withdrawal. Any signatory not already being a member of the Committee shall by virtue of being a signatory also be a trustee within the meaning of the Charities Acts 1960 and 1992.

(d) Two independent examiners shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting to serve for a period of one year. They shall examine the books up to the end of each financial year, and may conduct examinations at such times as they may deem necessary and report them to the Committee.

(e) The signatories may require the authority of the Committee before signing cheques etc. for sums in excess of £200.

(f) A member may not hold more than £150 of Group funds in the form of cash for more than 28 days.

(g) Any member of the Group not already being a member of the Committee, who is appointed by the Committee to be a manager of the Group's shop, shall by virtue of that appointment also be a trustee within the meaning of the Charities Acts 1960 and 1992.

11. THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES of the Group may be changed only if approved by at least four-fifths of the members voting at a General Meeting. No amendment may be made which will cause the Group to cease to be a charity at law.

12. NEITHER the Mendip Caving Group, nor the Committee of the Group, nor any member, can accept responsibility for any loss, injury or death arising from a Group activity, howsoever caused. In particular, members and guests stay at the cottage and camp and cave with the Group entirely at their own risk. Nor is responsibility accepted for the loss, or any damage to personal property. Members of the Group and guests are deemed to know of, and accept without qualification, this rule.

13. THE COMMITTEE shall have full powers to deal with any matter that might arise that is not otherwise provided for in the Constitution and Rules.

14. CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES. There shall be four custodian trustees of the Group. The first custodian trustees shall be appointed by the Committee, and the Group's real property (land and buildings) shares, unit trusts and such bank accounts and other investments as the Committee shall decide shall be vested in the custodian trustees to be dealt with as the Committee shall direct by resolution (of which an entry in the Minutes Book shall be conclusive evidence). The custodian trustees shall be indemnified against risk and expense out of the Group property. The custodian trustees shall hold office until death or resignation or until removed from office by a resolution of a four-fifths majority of members present and voting at an Annual General Meeting. Where necessary the Committee shall by a resolution of a quorum of the Committee present and voting at any meeting, nominate the person or persons to be appointed the new custodian trustees and, for effecting such nominations, the Secretary is hereby nominated as the person to appoint the new or additional custodian trustees of the Group within the meaning of Section 36 of the Trustee Act 1925. He shall, by deed, duly appoint the person or persons so nominated by the Committee as the new or additional custodian trustee or custodian trustees of the Group.

The provisions of the Trustee Act 1925 shall apply to any such appointment. Any statement of fact in any such deed of appointment shall, in favour of person dealing bona fide and for value with the Group or the Committee, be conclusive evidence of the facts so stated.

15. DISSOLUTION OF THE GROUP. In the event of the dissolution of the Group, and after satisfaction of all due debts and liabilities, and remaining assets may not be distributed amongst the members but will pass to a body with similar objects established for exclusively charitable purposes or to some other charitable body.

Part Two: Caving. THE GROUP recommends that all members read and act in accordance with the National Caving Code as published by the National Caving Association, enclosed with this Constitution and Rules.

### **NATIONAL CAVING ASSOCIATION - The National Caving Code**

**A**lways include experienced cavers in the party.

**P**ick a cave or pothole within everyone's capabilities.

**L**eave a note of your trip and latest time of return with a responsible person and report to them on your return.

**A**sk for, and act on, local advice.

**N**o less than four in the party and keep together.

**T**ake notice of the local weather forecast.

**O**ne reliable cap-lamp for each person: without light, you're lost.

**B**oots, helmet and warm clothing are essential.

**E**mergency lights, food and first aid kit should always be taken.

**S**ee that ladders, belays and ropes are inspected and rigged properly before hanging your life on them.

**A**ccident underground is always easy: rescue is sometimes difficult, sometimes impossible.

**F**alls, loose boulders, rising water and exposure cause most accidents.

**E**xit takes more effort than entry. Plan with the return in mind.

**C**lumsiness can wreck cave formations.

**O**bserve marked routes - they are there to safeguard the cave.

**N**ever leave litter or spent carbide in a cave - pollution kills cave life.

**S**et others a good example when caving - persuade them to follow it.

**E**nlist the help of the Regional Caving Council in passing on scientific information to be recorded nationally.

**R**esponsible leaders will avoid taking novices where they may accidentally cause damage.

**V**andalism means damage to stals, mud floors, rimstone pools, etc - help prevent it.

**A**lert your Regional Caving Council to any developments which may possibly damage caves.

**T**ake care not to disturb cave fauna or remains which may be of archaeological interest.

**I**nvoke help in taping off formations to keep caves in their undamaged state for the generations to follow us.

**O**rganise a trip to clear up litter now and again.

**N**ature needs YOUR help to safeguard her interests NOW!

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP**

**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**SUMMER BARN DANCE**

**CHEWTON MENDIP VILLAGE HALL  
SATURDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2004**

**19.30 – 23.30**

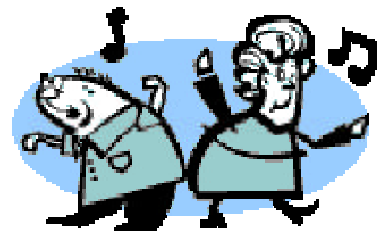
**DANCING TO THE  
BACKROOM & VELVET BOTTOM BAND  
LICENCED BAR**

**BUFFET (INCLUDED IN PRICE)  
RAFFLE**

**TICKETS - ADULT £10 CHILDREN £5**

**TICKETS FROM:**

**ANN OR BRYAN PITTMAN**



## Menu

*Smoked salmon & tarragon tarte*

Pissaladerie

Olives, peppers, cherry tomatoes, aubergines & herbs

All on a golden pastry

Spicy chicken pieces

Sweetcorn & pepper/stilton & broccoli flan

Roasted potatoes

With rosemary

Ruby coleslaw

Red cabbage, apples, onions etc in a mayonnaise dressing

Taboule

A cous cous salad with roasted vegetables

New potatoes

In a minted crème fraiche dressing

A selection of breads & butter are included

Cheddar strawberries

Served with cream or crème fraiche

Chocolate heaven

A full compliment of white, milk and dark chocolate on a  
chocolate cake layered with cream

Summer lime cheesecake