

MCG NEWS

Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group



Departure Lounge, Upper Flood (by Charlie Allison)

Number 344

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www.m-c-g.org.uk

Founded 1954

Wall Street, Upper Flood

From information and photos supplied by Tim Francis

Following the discovery of Wall Street on 02/06/07, Tim Francis and Richard Carey returned on 16/06/07 with a disposable camera and made an attempt to push the passage.

Tim reports that Wall Street is very pretty throughout its length but many of the formations will be safely tucked away on the side. The draft here is one of the strongest in the cave. It's cold as well, whereas most of the cave near to the stream is quite warm. So they were thoroughly shivering to death after an afternoon's digging, and bruised and battered after carrying in the drill and assorted metal-ware all that way.



Richard looking out of Wall Street



Montage: The Way On

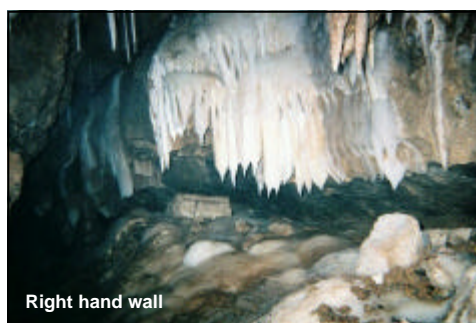
It is all very constricted at the end but if you look at the photo, left, "The Way On" (there was no room for a caver for scale) you can clearly see that it continues. Tim shoved his head in a bit further and it does get bigger. It drops away quite steeply and looks to be well decorated. He suspects that this is in the region of Pork Pie Passage and hopes it connects in an area that isn't too sensitive.

Tim had planned to hilti the obstruction but it is only 1 inch of flowstone sitting on top of a mud and rock/calcite fill so Richard dug out most of the flowstone face and everything is now is mostly mud. The gour pool was drained through a hole in the floor but after a week two of wet weather it will be grim again. One more trip to clear out all the floor to make some space and then an attack on the flowstone should see a breakthrough (maybe). However, there just isn't room to get a decent swing with the hammer. And using elbows as a fulcrum isn't much fun. The pom pom formations are rock solid and will clean up afterwards.

The approach inlet passage to Wall Street up to the dripping avens at the end was taped off. Please take care - it may take another roll of tape to tidy it up.



Richard in the crawl



Right hand wall

From the editor



It's really good receiving all the latest caving news by e-mail and via the Yahoo Newsgroup, especially living so far from Mendip, but I find I am having to produce articles myself (with Martin's help) from these snippets rather than having articles sent to me already written up for inclusion in the newsletter. I know we all have less and less time to do things like write articles, but I would be very grateful if the more major subjects could be written up for me. I have to say though that the quantity of photos to select from on various subjects is great and brings the articles alive I think you'll agree... and please don't stop the reports - it's our window on the Group's activities. **Yvonne**

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MCG Doings

Job vacancy

Mike Lovell announced that he is retiring from his job in September so will no longer be able to print the newsletter at a reduced rate. Can anyone take up the baton?



If you do not yet receive your Newsletter by email, please consider doing so as this saves on the cost of printing, enveloping and postage. Contact Yvonne for details.

Congratulations

to the following who have completed a Training Trip and have been accepted as Full Members:

Bill Chadwick (Blackmoor Shaft with Doug Harris and Mick Norton).

Giles Martin (Eastwater Cavern with Richard Carey and Ben Cooper).

Michael Moxon (Waterwheel Swallet with Yvonne and Martin Rowe).

Welcome

to **Mike Buchanan** who has been accepted as a Probationary Member.

For more about Mike see the note on page 3 about his cave and karst blog.

Notes of the AGM held on 23/03/07 in the Hunter's Lodge

Note: full minutes will be circulated prior to the next AGM.

The AGM was attended by 22 Full Members and 2 Probationary Members.

Subscriptions: Members are reminded that they may apply annually to the Committee for consideration of a reduced personal subscription in two circumstances: (i) Members living overseas for at least 6 months a year and (ii) Members experiencing financial hardship.

Voting at AGMs: The meeting asked the committee to reconsider the Privileges of Membership (particularly the right to vote) for Probationary Members and report back to the next Half-Yearly Forum.

Secretary's report 2006-7 Tim Francis Due to work and domestic demands, Tim no longer had the time needed to carry out the job of secretary. He was given a vote of thanks from the rest of the committee and a round of applause from the floor.

Treasurer's report 2006-7 Martin Rowe The accounts have been audited by one examiner and no problems or serious discrepancies were found. Fiona Kempston now has the books and will complete an audit.

Caving secretary's report 2006-7 Bob Templeman MCG have been invited to join BDCC in the Ardech this summer. A bunkhouse with camping has been booked and there are caves to suit all abilities, including a superb show cave nearby. The meets list has been working well with good attendance. Without the weekly pub meets of old, we should be using the newsgroup more for planning trips etc., especially when at short notice. Richard Cary has completed 4 trips towards the 15 needed to qualify as a St Cuthbert's leader. There are also Loxton leadership trips planned.

Cottage warden's report 2006-7 Doug Harris There have been lots of comments about the hot water. On the Friday before the AGM the showers went cold within minutes of turning the tap on. On the Saturday, Brian Snell fitted a new mixer valve to the system and it looks as if the problem might have been fixed. It was noted that the Group is aware and appreciates the huge amount of work done personally by Doug, often through the week when no-one is around to see it.

Tackle master's report 2006-7 Peat Bennett 200m of SRT rope had been purchased but we still need new lifeline rope. We have also had a request to provide helmet and lamps for beginners. An electron ladder has been left in Upper Flood and rope in Roman Rift. After a short discussion it was agreed that we need a fixed aid policy and annual inspections.

There are no hangars, maillons or karabiners in the tackle store. The Group will provide rope protectors, but metalwork is personal as the owner will know the history of its usage. It was, however, suggested that maillons could be kept in the SRT box for SRT leaders to access. To be looked into by the committee.

Editor's report 2006-7 Yvonne Rowe Yvonne thanked Mick Lovell for printing the newsletter with little or no notice, and Geoff Beale and Brenda Wybrow for enveloping, addressing, stamping and posting. However, Mick is retiring in September and will no longer be able to print the newsletter for us. We need to encourage more members to receive their newsletter by e-mail. Yvonne received a vote of thanks from the floor.

Recorder/librarian's report 2006-7 Louisa Minahan The library needs a complete set of minutes etc. and everything needs archiving digitally, especially the log books. We need to see what we've got and what is missing.

Social secretary's report 2006-7 Linda Milne The club is on a high and the social side is well-attended. Upper Flood has brought the club together – we need more breakthroughs in the next year. Membership-arranged parties have been good and well-attended. There are nearly 60 people for the annual dinner this year, compared with 50 last year. The Christmas do was oversubscribed with 30 people attending.

Custodian Trustees report 2006-7 Ben Cooper Changing the signatories has

been complicated, but he has more knowledge now about the issues involved. The committee have decided to invest £6000 in Charities Aid Foundation investments.

Conservation & access report 2006-7 Mick Norton Biff Frith has made 3 lids – 1 each for Coral cave, Hanover Chalk Mine in Reading and Charnel Shaft. Preparation work for fitting the lid on Roman Rift was done in 2006 and completed very quickly. Cow Hole was entered and £1000 has been earmarked by CSCC to save the cave from being 'lost'. Access to Timber Hole remains difficult. SWT have granted permission to reopen Charnel Shaft and have shown us the lost shaft by the road. The Conservation and Access policy for Upper Flood continues to be updated. Conservation has been implemented and everywhere is taped as we've gone down passages. All work in the cave is funded by MCG to keep it an MCG cave/dig. The radio location exercise was unsuccessful. Another radio location exercise is to be organised.

Rescue Warden's report 2006-7 Keith Knight MRO are keen to get MCG involved in their activities and exercises with Keith as the contact. MRO has regular meetings on Thursday evenings. We need local members to go along. MRO were impressed with their Upper Flood trip. Now they know what they would be up against. They have a set of fixed points on the surface so they know where to put communication points in a rescue situation.

The MCG rescue bags need to be re-stocked with comfort items – not technical gear. We have a rescue dump in the cave with food, warm clothing, bivvy bags, stove etc.

Guest Bookings report - Joan Goddard Bookings are looking good and picking up. Flyers have been sent to lots of local places and we are hoping for overspill from other activity centres.

Election of Honorary Officers

Secretary:	Mike Richardson (co-opted)
Caving Secretary:	Bob Templeman
Cottage Warden:	Doug Harris
Treasurer:	Martin Rowe
Editor:	Yvonne Rowe
Tacklemaster:	Peat Bennett (co-opted)
Social secretary:	Linda Milne (co-opted)
Recorder/librarian:	Brian Snell (co-opted)

Election of non-committee posts

Rescue Warden:	Keith Knight
Conservation & Access:	Mick Norton
Gift Aid:	Martin Rowe
Examiners:	Fiona Kempston, Anne Pittman

Proposal to upgrade the Group's IT equipment. We need to meet the modern needs of the cottage based on things like log books, administration, communications (Yahoo), website, presentations, photography etc. We need to think about what members might expect, eg. IT facilities, a scanner, a printer, to be able to pull up membership forms, to help with projects like Upper Flood with surveys, conservation, photography, and reports. We need to be able to run relevant software, send and receive e-mails, update Yahoo groups, but we will also need broadband or a wireless network. The cost can be absorbed in 1 year's surplus and there should be no negative impact on the Group. We need to take into account that in 5, 10, 15 years time it might need updating which could be just as costly. The need for an A3 scanner was questioned. Security could be a problem – we would need to put expensive items out of sight.

The debate was then split into two parts: on-site IT needs, and internet needs. The meeting agreed that the principal of a new PC is right. The meeting asked the committee to review the need for broadband.

Amended motion: The meeting invites the committee to further consider the motion as presented by Ben Cooper, taking into due account the several points

Congratulations

to Andrew and Sarah on the birth of Sophie Rebecca Beatrice born on Monday 9th July, weighing 9lb 8oz



Cave and karst blog

New member Mike Buchanan from South Africa has been involved in cave and karst conservation for around 27 years as you can see at www.caveandkarst.blogspot.com Mike says "feel free to visit the site and comment should you wish"

MM Mine

On Sunday 19/08/07 Mick Norton, Bill Chadwick Paul Ketcher and Biff Frith extended the mine by approx 10m, looking for a connection to Upper Flood. They dug the mined rift for only a metre and broke through to a 6m crawl to a t-junction. Left went 3m to an upward choked rift; right went 2m to the bottom of a mine shaft which was choked some 3m up. They found the remains of a wooden stemple in a wall of deads, and numerous shot holes in the walls. The mine had been back-filled from the far side and the shot-holes had been drilled from the opposite direction to their approach. The shot holes are probably from the Cornish Miners 1850's re-exploration of the 'Old Mans' workings. The entrance shafts used for this exploration must have been filled from higher up later by the miners, or natural collapse. It will be interesting to see where a survey puts the two filled shafts they reached. Biff reports that although there is a strong cold draught, future digging will be tricky! He believes what was found is historically interesting, as it gives an idea of what the rakes are like underground, but Stainsby's Shaft may be a better prospect for finding a new way into Upper Flood.

Does anybody know the origin of the name MM ?

raised in discussion at the AGM. *Vote for amended motion:* Carried

AOB

MCG's charitable status Parliament is asking questions about charities and their charitable status because some may not be 'for the benefit of the public', eg private schools which are selective. Tony Knibbs asked if the committee was able to say why we remain worthy of our charitable status. The committee pointed out we have guest groups using our facilities who are not necessarily cavers; we have a comprehensive library and have answered the needs of university students requiring information for their dissertations. However, we should investigate this further to ensure we are not caught out.

Cave lids Biff Frith told the floor that Chris Binding informed him that he is going to replace the lids to Grebe and Waterwheel Swallets and did we want the lid to Upper Flood replaced at the same time. He has £150 put by for replacing the lids. Mick Norton is going to liaise with Chris in his capacity as Conservation and Access officer. We don't want to lose access to Waterwheel as we hold a key.

Date & venue of next Annual General Meeting

Date: Saturday 5th April 2008

Time: 10:30am

Venue: Hunters Lodge Inn

Earwig in on the committee meeting held on 04/08/07

Occasional Publication: The 50th Anniversary publication is finally ready and will be available at the September members' weekend and Hidden Earth.

Upper Flood Leaders' Meeting: There was a successful Leaders' Meeting on 08/07/07 and revised guidelines for the leaders are being drawn up. The original conservation policy (produced by Marcus Ward) will be updated.

Cotags and cottage access: Cotag keyfobs are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain in the small numbers that MCG require, and prices are becoming rather expensive (currently about £16.00 each). However, it may be possible to change to a passive system with replacement cards costing less than £5.00. Passive cards have no battery, compared to the keyfobs which are battery operated. We need to find out if our current keyfob programmer unit and card reader are compatible with passive cards. If not, there may be a need for a new card reader (cost - £150.00) or programmer unit (cost about £2000 - far too much!). In the meantime we have purchased 10 new keyfobs which are now available from Doug Harris.



Active keyfob



Passive card

Novice cavers: We have agreed to purchase 2 sets of caving gear comprising lamps, belts and helmets for novices. Peat has found 2 types of Petzl helmet with lamp combined (Petzl Vertex and Petzl Spelios) that use standard AA batteries. He has been given the go-ahead to decide which type is best then purchase two initially, with a view to buying more if novice demand increases. Novices will be asked to bring their own batteries (although we can keep a small supply in the old shop cupboard to sell to them if necessary). Linda has bought a wire cage for the helmets which will allow them to dry after use. It was agreed that for now a combo lock should be purchased and only committee members will have access.



Hidden Earth 21st - 23rd September: A new MCG t-shirt has been designed especially for Hidden Earth. Ben Cooper is up-dating the Upper Flood survey which will be displayed on our stand together with Mark Shinwell's photos. Brian Snell has engineered a squeeze box to simulate the tightest part of the new cave. We will also have a 'guess the weight of the boulder ruckle cake' competition (with cake supplied by Yvonne Rowe). We just need volunteers to take turns to man the stand.



Newsletter: Mike Lovell announced that he is retiring from his job in September so will no longer be able to print the newsletter for us. We need to encourage more members to receive their newsletter by e-mail as the cost of high street printing is about twice that of Mike Lovell's costs. The membership must decide how we will meet the cost of publishing the newsletter after Mike retires and therefore the committee agreed to call an EGM in October to resolve this matter.

Archiving: We need to ensure that the MCG library has a complete set of committee minutes, AGM/EGM minutes, MCG accounts and other relevant documents. We should also consider creating a digital archive (for example, the MCG Log Books). It would be useful to have a volunteer archivist to co-ordinate digital photography or scanning of log books and old minutes (this will be a non-committee post). If anyone is interested in filling this post please contact the committee.

Cave lids: Whilst parties are in Upper Flood the lid is left unlocked for as long as 12hrs. It was agreed that the current system should be changed so that the cave can be locked from the inside but the bar can be released at the base. This would allow escape if say the lock jammed but would ensure that the cave is not left in an unlocked state. One way would be to take the bolt out at the bottom of the bar and replace it with a cotter pin. If cavers find themselves locked in, or if the lock was jammed, they simply remove the cotter pin then remove the lid with the bar attached.

Broadband for MCG computer: We are looking at an offer from Plus.net at £10 per month for broadband if the payphone doesn't cause a connection problem. It was agreed that we should go ahead with this for a trial period and the resulting line check would identify whether it can be used for broadband. An A4 scanner has been donated and is now working. The computer is password protected - if anyone wishes to use the computer they should contact a committee member for the password.

New compass/clino: The combined compass/clinometer kit that Ben has used recently in Upper Flood has turned out to be a big success. It is much easier to use and is more accurate than using traditional instruments but costs about the same. We have agreed to purchase one for the Group.

Upper Flood rescue kit items out of date: The food items in the current Upper Flood rescue dump will be approaching their shelf life date. They need to be replaced.

Waterwheel Swallet

As you may be aware Cheddar Caving Club have adopted Waterwheel Swallet. Four "P" bolts have been installed at the pitch head and lots of work has been done to raise the dams to make the cave a very much wetter experience. There are plans afoot to send a flood pulse through Waterwheel and hopefully into one of the inlets in Upper Flood Swallet, this presumably at a prearranged time and date with the MCG explorers. Giles Martin and Mick Norton recently SRT'd Waterwheel now the "P" bolts have been fitted. Giles rigged and descended first and to his surprise there was a deep lake at the foot of the pitch and a traverse line. Using the line he could almost keep out of the lake, to reach an unfixed ladder leading to a squeeze over the big dam.

On the way back, Mick was first over the big dam; he decided to swim across the lake but was astonished to find he was almost out of his depth and had to clip on to the traverse line before connecting his prussicking equipment.

Beware, this lake is presently five and a half feet deep and could become another foot deeper still.

Netherlands

Please see the link below. We hope to welcome you all at next year's symposium in the Netherlands.

www.beneath-the-lowcountries.nl

Foundation for European Archaeological Mining History

Library additions

Westminster Speleological Group Bulletin, Vol 9, No. 9, Jan 2007 – Covering ten years of activity there are articles on expeditions in 1998 (Jura, Slovenia, Ethiopia), 1999 (Cuba), 2000 (Chartreuse), 2001 (Slovenia, with Imperial College). Also information on building an LED caving light for £25 and a graphic description of the first exploration of some side passages in Swildon's 4 in the days before 'Health and Safety' issues mattered.

Belfry Bulletin No. 527 Winter 2007. Of particular interest to MCG is Tony Jarratt's article "Mindblown in Upper Flood Swallet". Also an update on Rose Cottage dig, and part 1 of "Seventy Years of the BEC in pictures (1935-1950)" by Dave Irwin.

Cave Diving Group Newsletter, No. 163, April 2007 – G.R. Jones' account of his dives in Upper Flood extensions in January. Support for the 11 hour trip was provided by Sonya Cotter.

The Game Goes On by Jim Eyre. This is the promised sequel to 'It's Only a Game' and describes Jim's exploits since 1964. Cartoons and unbelievable stories of caving exploits abound. With over 300 pages, the book could take a long time to read. Fortunately its individual chapters can be 'dipped into' to lift the spirits!

The Butcombe Trail by Sue Gearing. Description of a new long distance walking trail (47 miles) which links the six Butcombe pubs on Mendip, together with two short circular walks from each pub. The book is clearly laid out with attractive sketch maps and clear text, although I should think it would be wise to take the relevant O.S. map with you too. If you complete the whole walk you can even get a free T-shirt!!

Care of Nordrach Cottage



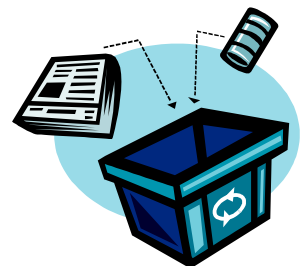
Since moving to Axbridge three years ago Joan has happily spent an afternoon per week at the cottage. Her plan was to spend most of the time in the library, indexing and generally trying to create order from chaos, but lately she has spent much of the time cleaning the cottage - especially after Members' Weekends.

Due to changed family circumstances Joan no longer has the time to do this - which means that all < MEMBERS > will have to make sure the cottage is left clean and tidy after your weekend stay or after caving midweek.

Following the July Members' Weekend the cleanliness of the cottage was worse than usual. The floors (upstairs, downstairs and the stairs) looked as if they hadn't been swept and the cooker and gas hobs had not been cleaned (at least not after the last person(s) used them). If guests find the cottage clean, they leave it clean. If they find it dirty, they leave it dirty – and so begins a downward spiral.

If you are leaving early, do not leave all the work for the last few people. Many of the jobs can be done earlier in the day. Here are a few suggestions but if you don't have to look far to find more:-

- Clean upstairs washbasins
- Empty waste bins upstairs, in library and in changing room
- Load up your car with cans, bottles and plastic containers, recycle at home (or take to Wells)
- Take home cardboard and recycle
- Sweep bedrooms once everyone is up
- Clean cooker and hobs after breakfast – few people cook later in the day. Or better still; clean them each time you use them and then they won't need doing as a specific 'job'
- Take door mats outside and beat hell out of them before replacing them
- Except in high summer(!) make sure there is fuel for the fire for the next guests or members: paper, kindling, cut logs and half a container of coal (currently there is a small amount of coal in the large shed, to be used when first lighting the fire)
- Outside, the open drain from the hose-down area needs regular clearing out and for much of the year there are also leaves to sweep up.



Overleaf are a couple of pages based on information sent out to guest groups but also applicable to members. Please take time to read it; you'll be surprised what you learn!



Guidelines for the use of Nordrach Cottage

ACCESS: You will have been supplied with a Yale type key with a plastic key fob. The fob is actually an electronic key called a Cotag. It looks like a black resin block approximately 2 cm x 3 cm with the Cotag logo etched into it. The Yale type key is stamped 'M' if you are a full member or 'G' if you are a probationary member or guest. You need both of these to open the front door, and it is important to use them in the correct order.

Use the Yale key first. This lock is a traditional deadlock. To unlock, turn the key up to three times clockwise. If the key is stiff, withdraw the key about a millimetre, and try turning it again. Remove the key from the lock (you may have to turn the key through half a rotation to do this).

You can now release the electronic Cotag lock. Hold the Cotag near the release sensor, which is situated to the right of the door, in the bottom left hand corner of the glass window. As you hold the Cotag in the correct position, you should hear the gentle click as the latch releases. The door remains released for a few seconds, which should give you enough time to turn the handle and open the door. If the latch re-connects, simply hold the Cotag by the sensor to re-open it.

Care of the Cotag: Please note that the Cotag is not waterproof. Please protect it from the cave environment.

ACCOMMODATION: Upstairs there are 30 bunks, arranged in three rooms for 16, 8 and 6 persons. Guests are normally booked into the 16 room (Foreman's Lounge) but on non-members' weekends may also require the 6 or 8 rooms. Downstairs is the kitchen (gas cooking, microwave, refrigerator, utensils, crockery and cutlery), reached through a large lounge with open fireplace. A payphone, utility storeroom (under-stairs cupboard), two flush toilets, and substantial changing and washing/showering facilities are also provided. Electric immersion heaters ensure hot water for the kitchen and washing/showering with a boost facility if heavy use of the showers is expected. Off peak electric storage heaters provide background heating in winter. Battery charging racks are available for use by all, but access to the tackle store and library is normally restricted to Full Members only. There is a hosing down area and a drying shed for caving gear. Parking is available on site for about 8 vehicles - further off-road parking is available adjacent to the site.

USING THE COTTAGE: Members may normally use the cottage at any time, and may bring two guests without prior booking except on the AGM weekend (members only). To help the Cottage Warden allocate bookings, it is requested that large parties of members' guests are pre-booked with the bookings clerk, who is Joan Goddard, The Meadows, Cheddar Road, Axbridge, Somerset BS26 2DL. Tel: 01934 732760 Email: pejogoddard@waitrose.com. Advance applications for bookings by guest parties, subject generally to a maximum of 16 persons per visiting group, are welcomed throughout the year, but on Member's weekends will be restricted to small groups. The member's weekend usually starts on the first Friday of the month, and additionally on the AGM and Half-Yearly Meeting weekends.

USER'S RESPONSIBILITIES. Nordrach Cottage is the MCG's major financial asset. Everyone is asked to help keep it in good condition. It is expected that the cottage will be kept clean and tidy, and that consideration will be shown to other users. The MCG committee reserves the right to refuse access to Nordrach Cottage by any persons who are unable to conduct themselves in a responsible manner.

ON FIRST ENTERING the cottage, select your bunk and write your name on the daily cottage booking sheets which are kept on the lectern in the lounge.

ON LEAVING the cottage, even for a short period, lock all outside doors, close all windows, and turn off the gas supply at the kitchen stopcock.

Payment of fees by members. Cottage fees are payable per night, £2.00 per night for members and member's children (unless you have purchased a reduced rate voucher). Please put fees (cheque/cash) into one of the envelopes provided in the lectern, adding relevant details to the front, and place it in the metal 'post box' on the wall.

[Guest fees are £4.00 per night. Guest groups will have been instructed to pay fees directly to the Treasurer, Martin Rowe, using one of the stamped addressed envelopes provided in the lectern (by cheque made out to "Mendip Caving Group" to include everybody's cottage fees for the period). They will have been instructed to post their cottage keys into the postbox in the front door.]



Upper Flood squeeze

Mike Richardson took three people from Swaledale Outdoor Club down recently. One of them subsequently measured his chest at 41.5 inches; he had to strip down to his fleecy to get through the Not Easy Squeeze, but managed the rest, so I guess that confirms it is the tightest bit.



Peat B approaches the squeeze

Upper Flood photos

Bill Chadwick has created a Google Picassa Web Album for Upper Flood. This is a useful shared on-line archive space for all Upper Flood photos. Separate albums can be created for different groups of photos or photographers. Photos can be annotated with a wordy caption. Importantly, full resolution copies can be downloaded. The albums should be kept private - view by invite only. If you wish to access the site or upload photos, please contact Bill Chadwick for full details, as we can not publish them here.

Newsletter archive

The MCG Newsletter has been archived on a new Yahoo group. At present the site contains all issues back to MCG News 310 (Oct 2002) and hopefully more will be added later.

The site is at: http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/MCG_Newsletters which can also be found with this tinyurl link:

<http://tinyurl.com/2dnf3m>

The newsletters are under the files section at <http://tinyurl.com/26j6tg>

Only current MCG members can access the site - to join, follow this link:

http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/MCG_Newsletters/join

or use this tinyurl link:

<http://tinyurl.com/2aw66m>

Hanover Chalk Mine

I have discovered a site relating to Hanover Chalk Mine on YouTube. I don't know when or who shot the film (Ed: it was posted by a Chris Neal age 40, UK) but it shows the old entrance before we changed the complete lid and frame last year.

Follow the link, below, and you will see the two videos that last about 10 minutes each.

<http://tinyurl.com/3a6c4b>

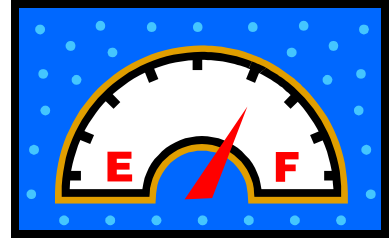
Enjoy with a beer or two!

Geoff Beale

Nordrach Cotage - useful information

ELECTRICITY: There are two consumer units located near the front door above head height. These should be left in the 'ON' position. The electricity is protected by an earth leakage circuit breaker. If this trips, please inform the cottage warden.

GAS: The gas tap is located in the kitchen directly below the left hand hob cooker. Two externally housed propane cylinders have an automatic change-over valve, so access to the gas store is normally unnecessary. A key for the gas store can be found hanging on the gas tap. TURN OFF GAS SUPPLY in kitchen before leaving the cottage or going to bed. If you notice that one of the gas cylinders is empty, please inform the cottage warden immediately.



KITCHEN: Store food tidily on the shelves below the cooking surfaces. Utensils, crockery and cutlery will be found on the shelves, and in cupboards and drawers. Please WASH UP and REPLACE articles used after each meal and CLEAN the cooker and hobs.

RUBBISH AND REFUSE: There is a wheely-bin which MUST be left outside the front gate. It is emptied fortnightly. For the purposes of waste collection, MCG is considered a business and must therefore pay for this service. Please do not leave rubbish beside the wheely bin as it will not be collected – if the bin is full, take excess rubbish home.

CLEANING MATERIALS, TOILET ROLLS AND REFUSE SACKS: These are stored under the sink and in the walk-in cupboard to the right of the stairs. Fire precautions require that the door is kept closed and locked; the key is on a hook on the door, please replace it after use. Should the cottage be short of supplies, the nearest shops are West Harptree Stores (3 miles) or Mendip Heights Camping Site at the west end of Priddy (5 miles). There is a large Tesco in Wells (10 miles).

GEAR/TACKLE CLEANING: A hosepipe, rope washer and hosing-down area are located at the back of the cottage. Please clear out the gulleys leading from the hosing-down area after use. Dispose of the silt sensibly but DO NOT THROW ANYTHING OVER THE FENCE ONTO OUR NEIGHBOUR'S LAND.

CHANGING ROOM AND SHOWERS: Do not bring muddy gear inside, leave it outside. The extractor fan should come on automatically when showering. There is normally enough hot water for showers, but if more is needed a second immersion heater can be switched on: the booster switch with neon indicator is located on the kitchen wall to the right of the cooker. Please switch it off after use.

EXTERNAL LIGHTING: Lights are located above the hosing-down and camping areas. Switches are located inside the side entrance door and front door. Switch off after use as they consume a lot of electricity.

DRYING ROOM / SHED: The shed can be used as a drying room. Dirty caving gear may be stored here BUT NOT in the changing room.

BATTERY CHARGERS: These are located between the side entrance and the changing room. Read instructions carefully and clear up any electrolyte immediately.

COAL: for the open fire (winter only) will be found at the side of the cottage (or in bags in the big shed) and wood is available in the small shed near the road.. If the stock of wood in the wood shed is getting low, please replenish it by chopping more. Use the spark guard provided especially when leaving the fire unattended. Ensure that the fire is out before departing.

LIBRARY AND TACKLE STORE: are available to MCG full members, who hold keys. They will supervise access for guests and probationary members.

CAVE KEYS: are stored in the Tackle Store. These are available to all bone-fide cavers and can be issued by any full member. A deposit will be required from non-members.

RESCUES: If the situation requires expert assistance, then call the MRO. If needed, the MCG rescue kit is stored above the stairwell between the ground and first floors. It consists of a survival bag, blanket, first aid and comfort boxes, hauling rope and pulleys.

PLEASE TAKE ALL REASONABLE CARE of the cottage and its amenities.

LEAVE IT CLEAN AND TIDY for the next persons or group.

REPORT ANY MALFUNCTIONS OR DAMAGE – better still, fix it yourself, if possible.



What the papers say

Descent 197 has another (almost full page) article about progress in Upper Flood - in fact it has now featured in every issue since the Sept 06 breakthrough!

This issue describes the exploration since May, including the discovery of Wall Street by Richard Carey and Tim Francis.

There is also mention of Charterhouse Rakes and MM Mine where other members of MCG are attempting to find a second (easier) entrance to the 2006 series.

The accompanying photos are of the plank (in 'Walk the Plank'), the beginning of Wall Street, and MM Mine.



Welsh Mines Society

In celebration of the late David Bick's contribution to British mining history, the Welsh Mines Society is arranging a two-day meeting on September 29th and 30th, 2007.

On the Saturday there will be a one-day indoor conference at the Melington Hall Hotel, Church Stoke, Powys SY15 6HX. On the Sunday there will be a walk, led by members of the Society, to the Bryntail and Pen-y-clun mines, near Llanidloes. At the latter site the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust has been instrumental in arranging for comprehensive repair work to the 19th century engine-house.

The title of the conference will be: **'The Lode of History'**.

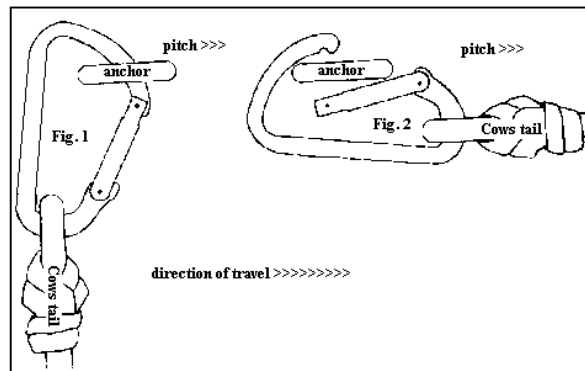
For more information see the Welsh Mines Society website at:

www.welshmines.org

SRT warning from CNCC Technical Group

After a thorough investigation, the CNCC Technical Group is issuing the following warning. It concerns the use of the following permanent anchors: Eco anchors, Lyon safety bolt, Fixe 'glue in', Petzl Collinox & Bat'inox.

In certain locations it has been necessary to locate the anchor placement low or at ground level. This is due to the geological constraints of the entrance, cave passage or pitch head. e.g. Rowten Pot entrance pitch, Cow Pot entrance pitch, Juniper Gulf entrance pitch at the north end, Pillar Holes.



When an anchor is clipped into at ground level, and progression to the entrance drop is made by keeping low, it is possible for the attachment karabiner to become detached from the anchor. Anchors that have been placed below waist height on traverses may produce a similar result. (See diagram above.)

When using anchors placed in rock at ground level, or anchors that have not been placed correctly on traverses (e.g. too low and the wrong alignment), certain extra precautions need to be observed:

- Always clip up and through the anchor so that the karabiner gate is on the outside.
- While manoeuvring, watch the attachment karabiner.
- Always have captive karabiners on cowstails/safety loops.
- If possible, ensure that you have two safety devices connected. (due to the embedment depth of the Eco anchor it may not be possible to insert two karabiners and a rope. An alternative may be to tie the rope directly into the anchor and clip the rope loop).
- Consider using screwgate or twistgate krabs on safety loops/cowstails.
- When belaying/top roping etc. where there is a necessity to move around, it may be desirable to tie into the anchor.
- If rigged, clip into the rope and not the anchor.

Google map of Mendip

On 02/06/07, Google released new detailed (50cm) aerial imagery of the Mendip area.

Follow this link to Bill Chadwick's BDCC website for lovely early morning shadows across the depressions on the Charterhouse Rakes.

<http://tinyurl.com/2zwpdg>

No wonder they had trouble relocating Charnell!

Cow Hole

Does any member know when The Mendip Caving Group undertook their first descent of Cow Hole? It has been described as Mendip's first vertical cave according to Barrington & Stanton. It was open and caveable between 1963-1965.

When I did Cow Hole just over a year ago we rigged off an old iron pin, like a piton but with the hole axis vertical rather than horizontal. This hole's diameter was small and we could not fit a normal krab or mailion in it so Tim threaded a rope sling through.

We discussed it afterwards and thought perhaps you were meant to put the pin of a small shackle pin through. It looked very old, perhaps pre-second world war. We did not see any rawl bolt holes and the spits were useless.

I have heard that Tony & Malcolm used to train beginners in here.

Michael Norton

Mendip weather

Do you want to know what the weather is like on Mendip before leaving home? Perhaps you need to know if it has rained in the past week and whether the Lavatory Trap in Upper Flood has sumped?

You can find the answer at <http://tinyurl.com/2re9z8> or <http://www.mendipweather.org.uk/> thanks to the BEC and WCC

Notice of Extraordinary General Meeting 06/10/07

The half-yearly meeting of the Mendip Caving Group will be held at Nordrach Cottage on **Saturday 6th October 2007 at 10am. This will be a formal EGM.** *An EGM has been called by the committee to resolve the issue of printing the Newsletter, and to make a minor change to the constitution.*

Proposals to change the constitution and rules must be submitted in writing by first class post to the Hon Secretary's home address (Clevelys, Upper Radford, Paulton, Bristol BS39 7PU) with the signatures of full members proposing and seconding at least 25 days before the meeting (11th Sept). The Committee may grant a postal vote to any member who applies in good time to the Secretary.

Mike Richardson, MCG Secretary

Motion 1 - Annual Subscriptions

Preamble For many years, Mike Lovell, through his employers, has provided the group with a cheap source of printing for the Newsletter (for which we are extremely grateful). However, Mike is about to retire and we have not been able to find an alternative source of cheap printing. If no-one comes forward with an offer of help, then our printing costs will increase substantially. For example, a high-street photocopy shop would charge 90p per ten-page issue to which you must add at about 50p for post and packing. Although most members now have email, only 50% have agreed to take the newsletter in electronic format. Out of the Full Member subs of £30 per year, £5.00 is set aside for future cottage work and £10.00 is used for day to day running of the cottage. This leaves £15.00 for all other costs. But printing and posting the newsletter to a member for 1 year will cost about £14.00 (assuming 9 issues per year plus an AGM document).

Proposal All members will continue to receive publications in accordance with Part 4 of the Constitution.

1. From 01/01/08, subscriptions shall be raised by £15.00 for each category of membership (to £45.00 for Full Members and to £30.00 for Associate Members) to cover the cost of producing the Newsletter.
2. Members who receive an email copy of the Newsletter or who waive their right to a printed copy of the Newsletter may be entitled to a reduction of £15.00 on their subscription.

Proposed by Martin Rowe, seconded by Yvonne Rowe

Note This has been drafted so that there is a substantive motion to debate or amend at the meeting. The proposer is willing to consider any sensible amendment to this motion provided the increased cost of printing the Newsletter is taken into account, or any offer to print the newsletter at reduced rates.

Motion 2 - Proposal to amend the constitution

(This motion requires a 4/5ths majority to be carried)

At the end of sentence 2 in para 4, PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP add "Honorary members may have the same privileges as full members" so that it reads:

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. **Honorary members may have the same privileges as full members.** 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.

Proposed by Martin Rowe, seconded by Yvonne Rowe

MENDIP CAVING GROUP HALF YEARLY BASH

Back by popular
demand...



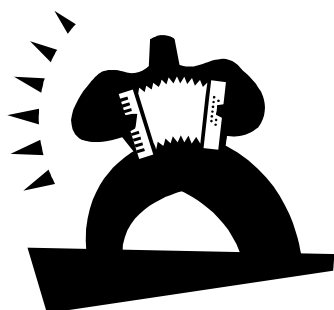
Ceilidh

7.30 pm to Midnight

Saturday 6th October

At Chewton Mendip Village Hall

Live band, Dancing, Hot Food, Bar, Raffle



£7.50



To book tickets contact Linda on 01420 562315

or email linda.milne@btinternet.com

**Group Headquarters**

Nordrach Cottage,
Charterhouse-on-
Mendip, Blagdon,
Bristol BS40 7XW

[Grid Ref ST51475606](#)

**Custodian Trustees**

[Pat Walsh](#)
[Jon Roberts](#)
[Pete Matthews](#)
[Ben Cooper](#)

Rescue Warden

[Keith Knight](#)

Conservation Officer

[Mick Norton](#)

Examiners

[Fiona Kempston](#)
(MCG member)
[Anne Pittman](#)
(External)

Booking the Cottage

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

**GROUP INFORMATION**

Weekly Meeting	At The Hunters Lodge, Somerset, Tuesdays at about 10pm		
Monthly Meeting	At the Group HQ on the first Fri/Sat/Sunday of the month		
On-line Meeting	http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/mendip-caving-group/		
Accommodation	Available at the Group HQ (for members and guests)		
Cottage Fees	MCG members, members' children, SWCC, NPC		£ 2.00
(per night)	Guest clubs and member's guests		£ 4.00
Camping Fees	MCG members, members' children, SWCC, NPC		£ 2.00
(per night)	Guest clubs and member's guests		£ 4.00
Season Ticket	Available to members only		£40.00
Subscription 2007	Full and Probationary (excluding BCA insurance)		£30.00
	Associate Members (excluding BCA insurance)		£15.00
BCA Insurance	Cavers £15.00 Non-cavers £5.00 (all members must have cover)		

CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR 2007

DATE	AREA	EVENT	CONTACT
Sep 1st to 9th	Ardeche	(BDCC meet)	<i>Bill Chadwick</i>
Sep 7/8/9th	Mendip	Members Weekend	
Sep 8th	Mendip	Water Wheel Swallet	<i>Bob Templeman</i>
Sep 8th	Mendip	Curry Night	<i>Linda Milne</i>
Sep 21/22/23	Glos.	BCRA Hidden Earth	
Oct 5/6/7th	Mendip	Members Weekend	
Oct 6th	Mendip	EGM, Nordrach Cottage	
Oct 6th	Mendip	Gough's Cave	<i>Bob Templeman</i>
Oct 6th	Mendip	Ceilidh	<i>Linda Milne</i>
Nov 2/3/4th	Mendip	Members Weekend	
Nov 3rd	Mendip	Charterhouse Cave	<i>Bob Templeman</i>
Nov 3rd	Mendip	Priddy Fireworks	<i>Linda Milne</i>
Dec 7/8/9th	Mendip	Members Weekend	
Dec 8th	Mendip	Swildon's Hole	<i>Bob Templeman</i>
Dec 8th	Mendip	Christmas Dinner	<i>Linda Milne</i>

THE 2007/08 MCG COMMITTEE

Secretary	Mike Richardson
Treasurer	Martin Rowe
Tacklemaster	Peat Bennett
Recorder/Librarian	Brian Snell
Cottage Warden	Doug Harris
Editor	Yvonne Rowe
Caving Secretary	Bob Templeman
Social Secretary	Linda Milne

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

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

Group	Arrive	Depart	Nights	Beds	Rooms
Harley / Crowsley	Fri 31/08/07	Sun 02/09/07	2	8	
C Downing/Scouts	Fri 26/10/07	Sun 28/10/07	2	30	3
C.Downing	Fri 16/11/07	Sun 18/11/07	2	10	