

MCG NEWS

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Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group
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Photo: Helictites in Hagg Gill Pot. Ed Waters

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another bumper edition of MCG News. I guess that the size of this edition means that I should get off my fat backside and get the newsletter out more frequently! However I would also suggest that it reflects just how active the group is at present.

Given the size of this issue, it would be wrong for me to drone on with a long editorial, so it just remains to thank all of the contributors to this edition, and to urge the rest of you to get pen to paper for the next one.

Ed Waters

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

The very fact that you are reading this suggests that you have probably discovered that this issue marks a change to the way that the electronic copy of MCG News is distributed. The previous method of emailing the newsletter to all members was becoming more and more difficult due to my ISP identifying the distribution as spam.

Therefore it was decided that the group would move to a web based system for distribution of the newsletter. From now on the newsletter will be uploaded to the website, and members download it at their leisure. Those on the Yahoo group will be informed when a new edition is uploaded; others will have to keep an eye on the website for updates.

By now you should all have received a user name and password giving you access to the members only area of the website. This will give access to the complete archive of MCG Newsletters as well as other relevant documents such as the membership list.

It is hoped that the new system will be more flexible, and in time allow more efficient distribution of other group information such as AGM agenda and minutes. Members of the committee will be pleased to hear any feedback on these changes.

It should be noted that the above changes will not affect the distribution of the newsletter to the few members who still elect to receive hard copies by post.

Ed Waters

UPPER FLOOD UPDATE

No major discoveries to report, but digging continues at various points in the cave including Walk The Plank (towards the expected link with Stainsby's Shaft), Mud Out Passage and Wall Street. At the latter site, a digging has revealed a superb grotto, named "The Honeypot". Unfortunately this lies in the way of further progress. Visitors are asked not to attempt to pass the grotto yet, to allow it to be photographed and as many people as possible to see it.

Ed Waters



Photos of "The Honeypot" taken on the day of discovery, taken by Neil Rayment of Cheddar Caving Club.

FORGET ABOUT KARATS, GIVE ME PEARLS ANY DAY!

Nuyts Wilderness, Walpole, 26-28 November 2010

Present: Ross (President of CLinc); Jay; Paul (Trip leader); Rhonda; Anne and Peter; Robyn and Geoff; Pippa and Dene; Geordie and Calib; May Yap.

It almost felt like a caving weekend in London as I packed my bag except this time the only caving items I was carrying was a helmet and a light. Caving in the warmth of a Perth's summer certainly had its benefits.

I was travelling down to Walpole from Perth with Pippa and Dene and as we cruised down the coast, I could not help but grin as the kilometres rolled by and the burnt brown of the Australian outback gave way to red sand, bush and eucalyptus lined roads. As the evening sun waned, I'm jolted from my reverie as the car's headlights picked up two eyes to reveal a kangaroo at the side of the road - the grin deepens - you know, you're 'down under'!

We stayed at Shannon campsite on the Friday and continued our journey early Saturday to meet with the rest of the gang just outside Walpole to enter into Nuyts Wilderness. After a 6.8km walk to our campsite near Thompsons Cove, setting up our tents and having lunch, we set off to go caving!

The cave was situated on the coast, beginning as an easy walk in on a sandy track, a bound over granite outcrops and an uphill bush bash through thick bushland. It was at this point that Calib, the youngest member of the group, and I became the first victims to offer our tasty ankles to bull ants. I have subsequently discovered that the natural remedy for these bites is the juice of pigface groundcover.

We reached our first cave along Aldridge Cove, which was not the intended cave but nevertheless provided us with an opportunity to take a group photo. This cave had a large entrance and typically not deep.

The intended cave, which has no name or karst number, we knew was nearby. We then decided to head left, up and around the outcrop and subsequently came to another large cave entrance. This cave was deeper, possessing two chambers to the back and which was separated by stals to the front chamber.

Some stal damage was obvious in this cave, but it was still decorative. Jay searched for the presence of cave life, in particular for pseudoscorpions, but none were present.

This then left an exploration to the right following the outcrop down and indeed, we then successfully located the intended cave. The cave was one large hollowed out cavern and again typically shallow and straight. The centre of the cavern was filled in with broken boulders of soft limestone with two steeply rising sides leading up to the back wall.



The path up the right side of the cave was less traversed. The floor and boulders towards the top were almost fully covered with coral like formations that were extremely fragile. Interestingly, as one went up this side towards the back the cave floor changed composition to soft, unfixed yellow sand effectively stopping climbing any higher.

The sound of water was clearly present in this cave, from the slow plop of water droplets to a faster flow of water found at the bottom of the cave floor, a stream at least a foot wide and about 2 inches deep.

Progress over the boulders in the middle and up the left enabled one to access the back of the cave. It was following this route that led one to discover the real gems to this cave.

We were not disappointed. The gems were its cave pearls and what we saw today, we were enriched beyond measure! The cave had the perfect conditions: moving, though not actively flowing water necessary for the concentric shaping of the calcite crystallisation that becomes a pearl. Pearls of varying sizes, smoothness and lustre could be seen. The largest cave pearl is shown and is easily larger than a golf ball. A quick clamber back down through the bushland took us back to the beach and granite coast. The suns rays were lower on the horizon now gently inviting us to make our way back to camp. A perfect end to a pearl-like day.

May Yap



FROM THE CAVING SECRETARY

Just a quick note to keep everyone up to date on the coming few month's caving activities.

Richard Carey has an excellent program of Mendip classic trips to be run on the 3rd saturday of each month. Sadly, he hasn't had a very positive response so far, but there's still plenty of time to fill them up yet! May's trip is Lionel's hole, led by Andrea Russe. I'll be there. Will you?

Next member's weekend (June) is our club rescue practice. The idea is to give those of us who are new to the techniques and logistics of cave rescue, a useful introduction, while also keeping our more experienced members sharp and on the ball. Two of the MRO's finest will be on hand to provide guidance during the day, and there will be Bangers and Mash, followed by dessert in the evening (£5 per head). Keep an eye on the Yahoo group for updates on the finer details as we get closer to the day.

Also in June is our trip to Co. Fermanagh (24-27 June). Subject to weather, trips will include Noon's Hole, the Marble Arch system, Boho caves and anywhere else that tickles our fancy! There is plenty of spare capacity on this trip, so if anyone would like to do a 'lastminute.com' then please do give me a shout.

In July, we are off to Yorkshire again (15-17 July), armed with Lost John's, Boxhead and Rumbling Hole permits. The permit trips are pretty much fully subscribed now, but anyone else wishing to come along for other trips are welcome. If you're quick, I might even be able to get an extra bunk or two at Greenclose.

We have an over-tide Otter Hole trip booked for August, which is now fully subscribed. If there is sufficient interest, I may well be able to wangle a between tide trip for an alternative date, possibly prior to August. Let me know if you've a fondness for spectacular formations and mud!

Phew! That's enough to be going on with for now I think! That said, I am always looking for an excuse to go caving, and therefore open to your suggestions. You want to go somewhere? Let me know and I'll have a bash at knocking a trip together.

Kev Speight

SRT SELF RESCUE WITH JOHN CROWSLEY

SRT training with John, what a treat and something which I had been looking forward to for what seemed an age. So the gang: Kev, Biff, Jenny and myself headed off to Goughs with John leading the way.

We began with a few words from John on the importance of learning 'self rescue'. Basically, a caver connected to a single rope cannot rely on the help of others so it was important to learn how to 'self-rescue'. Should the caver be unconscious on a rope s/he should be assisted quickly if that is what has been decided is the best course bearing in mind that prolonged suspension will affect the blood flow in the legs.

Kev and Biff's mid rope rescue

Kev and Biff were keen to learn mid-rope rescue. John stressed that this was extremely dangerous that it is easy to get entangled in each other's equipment and rope and that it would not normally be attempted in most rescue situations, the cut rope would be the preferred rescue method (see below).

In this scenario, Kev was the unconscious caver and Biff the rescuer. The rescue was approached from below. Biff therefore first had to pass Kev. The steps here are for long cowstails to be connected to each other first, then short cowstails into each other's central maillon, for Biff to place his top jammer above Kev's, release Kev's top jammer, similarly for Biff to get his chest jammer above Kev's and then get Kev off his chest jammer to hang off Biff. (*Hopefully, I have this right...*)

Despite the hilarity that ensued from the grunts, suggestive positioning, body kneeling and general offers of 'bottom' massaging, it was obvious that this was very difficult. As both men are similarly weighted (*apologies if this is wrong*) it was hard for Biff to negotiate getting over Kev and to unload him. Nevertheless, this was successfully completed and practice underway.

Jen and May's self rescue

Meanwhile Jenny and I were taken to the other side of Goughs to begin our first lesson of rigging up our own descent line. After a quick refresher on a couple of knots, we tied a traverse line to the pitch head and a 'Y' hang from a bolt in an exposed face of rock. All this involved learning the principles of which knot, their loading factors, good principles of keeping the rope taut and tying a knot for on and off pitch approach to safely cows-tail into.

However, before self rescue techniques could be learnt, Jen and I had to demonstrate our proficiency in abseiling, prusicking, reverse prusicking and changing direction on a rope, which we both accomplished satisfactorily.

With a brief break for lunch, our afternoon was spent

learning how to self rescue i.e. what one does when your hand or chest jammer fails. In the case that your hand jammer fails then one has to take a bight of rope and use this to stand in, pulling the slack up in the position of where your hand jammer would normally be. Quite an effective solution to gets you moving again and up the rope.

Should your chest jammer fail then one must use their Stop to pull through the extra rope. The key here is to only thread through the first two bobbins leaving the last empty. This move was slightly more energy expending but efficient nevertheless.

Both well worth noting, should you not have spare jammers on you underground.

May and John's cut rope rescue

We then finished the afternoon with John demonstrating the standard cut rope rescue technique. John came down the rescue (spare) rope to just above me. Cowstails were then connected to each other's central maillon (note: cutting a tensioned rope requires very little pressure, so remember to aim the knife away from the injured caver and yourself) and the rope cut. I must admit the 'jolt' widened my eyes and would make any pretending unconscious caver, instinctively, clutch desperately at their rescuer! Before abseiling down with the victim it is important to remember to tie an overhand knot into the end of the cut rope, someone may decide to follow you down on this.

Sunday - Rigging

Sunday's rigging trip saw us practising in Hunters. Paul, Michelle and myself were asked to rig an approach to the concrete.

Paul took the lead with a rope tied to the tree and a 'Y' hang into the concrete hole. We then discussed ways to eliminate the rope abrasion at the lip of the concrete and an alternative to the 'Y' hang approach. Suggestions raised by us was that the abrasion could be dealt with by the following caver, for us to use a figure 8 instead of the 'Y' hang to act as the central rope drop or a straight rope drop in with a deviation to prevent rope abrasion, we opted to keep the 'Y' hang and to put in a deviation - after all, as John says, there may be many ways to rig but everyone will agree if it's the wrong way.

We then took turns by rigging the following bolts, leap frogging each other after every fourth bolt or so, by the end I believe we were all proficient at tying the alpine butterfly and adjusting rope tension via knot adjusting. Key points to remember from the trip was to leave a bit of slack before using rope to put onto the stop, for ease for the following cavers and in such a way to ensure that there is sufficient rope for them too to place a full lock on their stop as they approach each rebelay section.

A very useful and essential weekend for any caver intending on SRTing.

May Yap

BEGINNER'S WEEKEND APRIL 2011

With a healthy number of requests for beginner's trips furnishing my email inbox, it seemed that a dedicated trip was called for. You just can't beat Swildons for getting people hooked on caving, so a trip to the Upper Series, with a possible extension down the Twenty for the more adventurous, was pencilled in for the April Member's weekend.

From the MCG, Sue and Myself, Russ Porter, Karen Fendley and Andrea Russe were on hand to offer inspiration and guidance. The victims were Jackie Harrington, Steve Tibbert and his pal, Richard, Michael Fendley and Andrew and Benji. (Sincere apologies to those people whose surnames I've forgotten.)

Once everyone had found their way to Nordrach Cottage, kit was issued, tea was consumed and the pre-requisite quantity of faffing was endured, before we headed off in convoy to Priddy. A quick change in the ever opulent barn and we were ready for action. Not caving on this occasion, but offering pre-trip moral support for their friends were May Yap, with her pooch Jess, and Joan Goddard, who joined us on the walk across the fields to the entrance. There, we split into three parties. Sue went in with Karen and Michael and took the Long Dry Way. Andrea took Benji and Andrew down the Wet Way, while Russ and I took Steve, Richard and Jackie down the Short Dry Way. May simply couldn't resist going underground, and even took Jess in with her, but only as far as the entrance chamber.

Russ, Steve, Richard, Jackie and I proceeded at flank speed to the Twenty, where we rigged the ladder in case anyone felt more adventurous. Judging by the way our group were stomping along, it seemed we'd definitely need it; a notion confirmed when we got back to the Water Chamber to find the rest of the gang, all eager for more. Re-united, we headed back to the Twenty, this time descending the ladder, to continue the adventure...

Below are accounts of the trip as written by Steve Tibbert, Michael Fendley and Andrew.

Steve

We set off early to get to MCG ready for the meet up time of 10am. We were warmly welcomed on arrival at the cottage and introduced to other novices like ourselves. We'd both been caving a few times so going underground wasn't new but this time we hadn't a clue where we would be going. After being issued all the relevant kit we followed in convoy to Priddy ready to visit Swildons.

Once kitted out we set off across the fields to the entrance, a small brick house in the middle of a field. Final briefings were given and we were split into groups. Off we went. What a great start, wet already! as you have to enter by sitting in a stream. Clambering down into the first chamber we were underground proper. We were going the short dry way

down Jabobs Ladder and off to the water chamber. A chance to slide, walk and crouch on our way there. After a quick look round we went under the floor of the chamber and onto the bottom of the 40 foot where we descended the small waterfall quickly, thankfully the water level was apparently low. Next we followed the stream on to the 20 foot pitch where we waited while a ladder was rigged ready for later.

Soon we were back off to the water chamber ready to meet the other groups to see who wanted to do more. All agreed this was great fun and doing more was a natural next step. Back to the 20 foot and off down the ladder under the waterfall. A quick regroup and off downstream passing 'double pots' before selecting to take 'Barnes Loop'. This gave us a short period of tranquillity before returning to the steam and the noise of the rushing water.

A further regrouping resulted in three of us opting to travel even further into the cave. Led ably by Russ we set off for 'Sump 1'. Due to low water it wasn't really a sump but still required ducking underwater to pass. Richard flew through on turbo boost, I couldn't let him go on his own could I. Through Sump 1 we opted to go on to take a look at Sump 2. This part of the cave was very different to that experienced before the sump; much flatter and more stooping and crawling. Soon we were at Sump 2 and decided that a free dive was one step too far this trip.

Back out the same way, taking the rift this time instead of Barnes loop. We caught up with the others at the bottom of the 20 foot. We took the wet route out at the top, deciding we couldn't get any wetter than we already were. What an exhilarating three and a half hours underground.

We spent the afternoon chilling before being treated to a fantastic Thai Green Curry, cooked at the cottage from scratch by Benji, Andrew & May. A brilliant meal to end the day, thanks so much. We couldn't stop for the night as Mother's Day fell the next day and our young sons had things planned for us the following morning.

We're already looking forward to another visit in the next few months. Thanks for making us both feel so welcome.

Michael

I'd been looking forward to this trip for a few months after hearing about it and signing up for it through another club member, to be honest I had thought it would be easy, just strolling through some massive caverns, boy was I surprised!

After arriving at the club and sorting my loaned gear out we all packed up, off we went to the cave, after getting there and into the over suits (devilishly handsome, I must say!) we strolled across a couple of fields to a tiny concrete box with a hole in the ground,

after dropping in and shimmying down under some zigzagging slabs, I began to realise caving was a lot more involved than I had thought!

After crawling under and clambering over a series of rocks, all between two very close walls, we came to quite a tricky traverse which required putting our backs against one wall and our feet against the other, having a small amount of rock climbing experience I already knew this was going to be a bit tricky, especially after seeing the drop below! However, the other guys with me were brilliant and were always ready with handy suggestions for making each manoeuvre easier and never shy with congratulations.

After leaving the cave, we spent the evening eating a fantastic meal that another member and some of their friends had cooked for us, chatting and drinking, the guys were all brilliant with the new cavers and made sure we always included. I would definitely recommend the beginners weekend to anyone curious about caving. I had a brilliant time and am sure to go again!

Andrew & Benji

Caving at the Mendips was an amazing experience for the both of us. We knew the challenges ahead, but as the say, you never know until you try it! I fell at least 3 times trying to climb over the little waterfall, and nearly slipped into crevasses now and then. I found the way back a little more difficult! Scary stuff! My wife fared better, and she loved it! Will I do it again? Maybe after losing a couple more stones. Do we recommend it? Hell yeah!

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the MCG for showing us the ropes.

As mentioned above, Andrew, Benji and May provided a veritable feast of Thai Green Curry, with all the trimmings. This made for a truly splendid 'Apres Cave' social evening and I'm sure I'm not alone in offering them my sincere thanks for their sterling efforts.

With new requests for trips steadily trickling in, beginner's trips look to be a regular feature of the club's activities. I for one, look forward to introducing more people to caving sooner rather than later.

Kev Speight

CANOEING ON THE BLACKWOOD RIVER

CLinc Christmas Weekend 11 and 12 December 2010

It was an early start to drive down to Witchcliffe, just beyond the township of Margaret River. It had been arranged that Pippa and Dene were going to meet Vicki just outside Bunbury to pass a package to her - 'me', for what I would like to think as vast amounts of money, I mean it had to be... right? And so the deed

was done, I did not see any money wafting around, but I figured this was down to the Ocean Eleven'ess of my cave diving companions.

We rendezvous at Chapman Pools group campsite and after a quick "g'day", we drove to our starting point, 14kms upriver. Today's canoe would have us passing through some of the majestic Jarrah and Marri Eucalyptus forests characteristic of the south west.

It was a perfect day. A gentle breeze to take the sting out of the sun's heat and only the odd bothersome fly. It was a great canoe so far, a few small rapids, which we all negotiated successfully and enough water to float us over the rocks.

Just after midday, we pulled into a quiet cove to have a refreshing swim and lunch. We then continued our journey for a further hour or so back to the campsite. Thanks very much to Ian and Sharon for organising the canoes and making this trip possible.

After a chillin beer and a sad "see you later eh" to good friends, Sharon and Ian, for their year out in Canada; Peter then opened the last meeting for 2010. Two items on the agenda being the forthcoming canoeing trip in February and the need to find a new club secretary. The first item was despatched with no further ado, however, silence and heavy feet shuffling greeted the second. Sharon had done a fantastic job and it was with much thanks and appreciation for her efforts that the mantle of the purple file now sat waiting to be picked up and carried on.

Dene has kindly volunteered to be the new secretary and we look forward to hearing from Dene in the near future.

With no 'any other business' on the agenda, we then tucked into our hearty BBQ (and curry) and feasted merrily away.

As is fast becoming tradition, our dessert King and Queen (Dene and Pippa) spoilt us all yet again with a Christmas dessert platter - a veritable choice of tantalising chocolate cakes, rocky road, mini santas and lots more chocolate stuff.

Little did we know, but there were more than just our delighted eyes and happy paws enjoying the evening. Perched in a tree nearby, a chubby grey possum boldly sat snacking on his stolen naan bread; no doubt, about to experience some 'delhi belly' from his international forage at our table.

The evening then ended in style with us visiting Terry and Cathy's mobile home to admire its festive face lift - and for the nosier ones of us to check out their heated beds!

As we walked back to our tents under the star filled sky, I look around the faces of my new found friends and can't help but reflect on my two great trips with CLinc. I could not have met a friendlier group of people. It will be with fondest memories that I leave

here and I can't express my thanks enough to everyone for their warm welcome.

UK Caver and honorary CLinc overseas member, May Yap

p.s. For those who've read my write up on Nuyts Wilderness and my encounter with a bull ant, you will know that I'm a city gal at heart (and a wimp) and not that comfortable with Australian wildlife (ok, any wildlife), well... no ants this time only a Wolf spider. I suppose that leaves only a snake for my next trip - naturally, I can't wait! London anyone?

A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY BARREL

1ST/2ND JULY 2011

COME AND CELEBRATE WITH

Keith, Jean-Paul and Linda



ALL
WELCOME!



There also will be a BBQ, usual format – bring your own meat, small charge for the extras.

Linda Milne

A COTTAGE FOR LITTLE CAVERS

I decided earlier this year to fulfil a long-held desire to try my hand at creating a model landscape. Not wanting to be too ambitious for a first attempt, a small building in its immediate surroundings seemed about right. So what better than the MCG's first cottage, in Nether Wood?

To start with, all I had was two photographs, one of it in ruins. I contacted Joan, who sent me more photographs and a dimensioned floor plan. From these I produced a set of working drawings to the chosen scale of 4mm = 1 ft, which is about 1/76 of full size. I also researched construction techniques, and decided on a modular build strategy to allow the future re-use of the cottage and/or other parts of the model in a larger landscape.

The cottage walls were made from "DAS" air-drying modelling clay, using a knife and rolling pin borrowed from the kitchen, and a pointed scribe to scribble the stone texture into the soft clay. The clay was then left to dry at room temperature for a few days before sticking it all together with PVA glue.

For the roof I bought a sheet of plastic with corrugations moulded onto one side. The fun bit was painting it with random shades of rusty brown, streaked with orange, metallic black, and many more to represent the rusting metal. The windows were cut from clear plastic sheet, with fine strips of plastic carefully glued on to represent the frame. The cottage

has furniture, interior lighting, a glowing fire and a smoking chimney.

The ground around the cottage was built up using sheets of polystyrene foam from the DIY shop. This was then covered with brown DIY window sealant, before finishing with various forms of vegetation. The rough grass in front of the cottage, for example, came from the lining of a garden hanging-basket. As it was a caving cottage, I bent the truth slightly to add some interest by including a cave entrance in the front garden.

I used several different techniques for the trees. One was twisted from hundreds of fine copper wires, then covered with window sealant and bits of green foam added to represent foliage. Others were made from a dried water-plant sold in model shops because it makes good trees. The trunks and branches were built up and strengthened using the ubiquitous window sealant, and slightly different shades of green used for each tree's foliage. Throughout, the vegetation was chosen to be appropriate for late spring or early summer.

To populate the cottage, I went to a box in the attic of Airfix figures, dating back to my and my brothers' childhoods. Most were soldiers of various allegiances, and there were also cowboys and indians, railway staff, RAF personnel, and a few ordinary civilians. I selected those who could be adapted into appropriate postures, where necessary with the aid of a sharp knife.

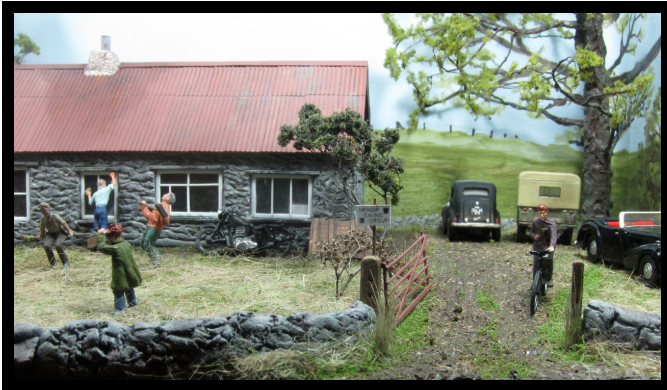
The whole thing was presented in a frame containing lighting, electrical connections, audio speakers for appropriate sound effects, and a painted back-scene based on photographs of the real location.

"What next?" I have been asked. Well, this model was from the start intended to be a trial run to gain some experience in construction techniques before embarking on a larger project. Current thinking is that it will be based on a Mendip landscape, with a few characteristic Mendip buildings, but won't be an accurate model of a real location. When will I start? Well, there's too much else to do in the balmy days of summer, so it will have to wait until the winter. Will it be ready for the next annual dinner? No promises at this stage.

Ian McKechnie

Post script:

This project would have been much more difficult without the information received from Joan Goddard, and from other members via Joan. Joan has done some thorough research into the history of the cottage, of which we were given a taste in her presentation at the dinner. I look forward to hearing the whole story!



The cottage gateway. The windows are being cleaned, and two people are demonstrating the “broom trick” for the club photographer. A local member is heading home on his bike.



The cave entrance. A caver is climbing out, with the support of a lifeline. Another seems to have overdone the curry and is sprinting to the Elsan hut. The reason for the pickaxe and metal detector is not known.

Photos by Ian McKechnie

GEORGE AND CHARLOTTE COPPER MINE, MORWELLHAM

On my way back from Cornwall recently I spent a happy few hours at Morwellham Quay, a tourist attraction I've wanted to visit for many years but have never quite managed. A thousand years ago it was the port for a nearby abbey and in Victorian times it became the most important copper (chalcopryite) ore port in the world, being located at the highest navigable point on the River Tamar and near to the Great Console Mines. One of the attractions is a 45 minute trip into the George and Charlotte Copper Mine which closed in 1868.

The mine has eight levels, Deep Adit being the one the railway follows in a loop from an entrance on the bank of the Tamar to an exit further down valley. This passage was enlarged in the 1970s to take a small electric tourist train but originally it was not much wider than a person's shoulders, becoming wider where the lode was larger. The lodes and levels extend beneath the river. Deep Adit drains naturally and we passed a waterwheel in the side of the passage which was used

to pump water up to this level via a shaft from the lower four levels. The wheel was fed by water from the surface of the hill. Its mechanism has been restored to working order but it is no longer in use and the lower levels are now flooded. When the price of copper plummeted in the 1860s, other minerals were mined including arsenic and manganese which were processed in one of the quayside buildings.

Apart from the mine trip, the industrial archaeology of the port is very interesting, especially the use of waterwheels - for powering trucks up and down an incline to the Tavistock Canal which terminated on the hill above Morwellham, for moving lime and coal up from the quayside to the top of the limekilns and for powering the manganese mill. There was an excellent demonstration of the assayer's job in the Assay Laboratory, plus various educational activities for the kids such as breaking up rock (ore) while dressed in Victorian clothes. They seemed to love this – could be good training for cave digging.

I can recommend Morwellham to anyone interested in industrial archaeology, especially if you have children of about 6 – 12yrs old. (I suppose that just about describes my mental age too!)

Joan Goddard



Views of Morwellham Quay. Photos Joan Goddard.

FROM THE PAST

A quote by Anthony J Knibbs in MCG Occ Pub 2 1995, reviewing krypton bulbs for Oldham type lamps:

“This krypton bulb gives some 40/45 lumens which may represent a sensible light intensity for the caver also. Certainly, users of mining caplamps never seemed short of illumination, and the 68 lumens attributed to the 4.0V halogen equivalent is more than adequate. **My own view is that 50 lumens is totally acceptable and 70 lumens is positively dazzling. Beyond this level, one is entering the realm of special effects.**”

How many lumens does a modern-day Scurion produce? 1450 lumen with a super bright spot!

Martin Rowe

M.C.G. EXPEDITION SOUTHERN SPAIN 2011

Villaluenga del Rosario here we go again. Of course this year we all know that the village will be on Fiestas, last year was a surprise and both years it's our welcome to Andalucía. Our accommodation will be the same than last year with the difference that this year we won't have the whole place just for us, there will be caving instructor courses going on, so we'll have the largest room for us. I will arrange menus for everybody, I need to know who is vegetarian if any.

Like last year our caving trips are going to be split in two or more groups as this year we will be 50% more people taking part in the expedition. We will make the groups up as we go. As the people flying are doing so on Sunday the 4th morning and the expedition's Bus will arrive at Villaluenga del Rosario at 8 AM, there will be a permit to cave in Sima de Villaluenga for those that can't wait.

There will be a permit, for those who can't wait to explore, to do so wherever and whenever you want within Grazalema's National Park in partnership with the Andalusian Caving Federation. So the real caving program will start on Monday the 5th and will be as follow:

Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th we will have permits to Sima de Villaluenga and Sima del Republicano.

Sima de Villaluenga:

Sima de Villaluenga is the cave nearest to our accommodation, situated just a few yards from the main road in the village of our accommodation. A few metres inside the cave is the 50m first pitch, the depth we reach in the cave is going to depend of the state of the sumps, if local cavers are working this summer all sumps will be dry and our trip will go down to -200 m. if not the first sump will stop us at -130 m. New discoveries have been happening since we left last year and if anybody wants, we can collaborate in the digging campaign with the local cavers. Last year MCG visited Sima Villaluenga but only Tim and I have done a through trip Villaluenga-Alta Ruta. There is still a lot of the cave to see for everybody including myself. The latest survey is included below:



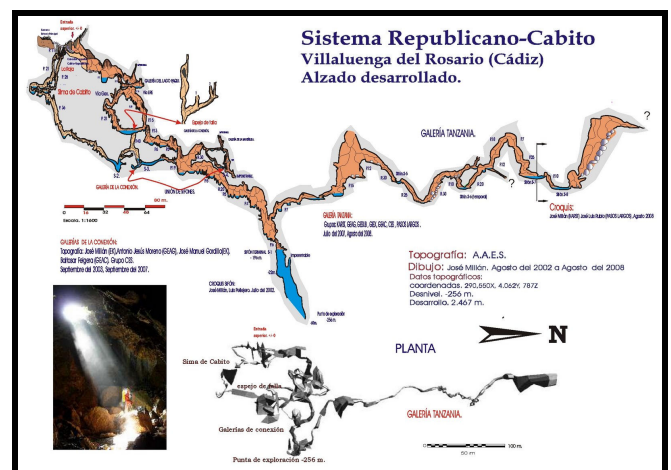
Survey of Sima Villaluenga by Alta Ruta from Jerez



First pitch in Sima Villaluenga. Photo: Ed Waters.

Sima de Republicano:

This cave was last year connected to Sima del Cabito, and during this year the exploration made by local clubs have left an imminent connection to a cave on the other side of the valley called Sima del Tajo Colorao. This is a very sporty trip with steel wire traverse and a steel wire guide abseil, all to avoid some pools and for conservation. The cave has a depth of -200 m. with many short pitches and the access is by car to near the cave. Only a few of us have been beyond the upper series just above the chamber of the Big Sump, a bit wet but well worth a visit. The latest available survey is included below;

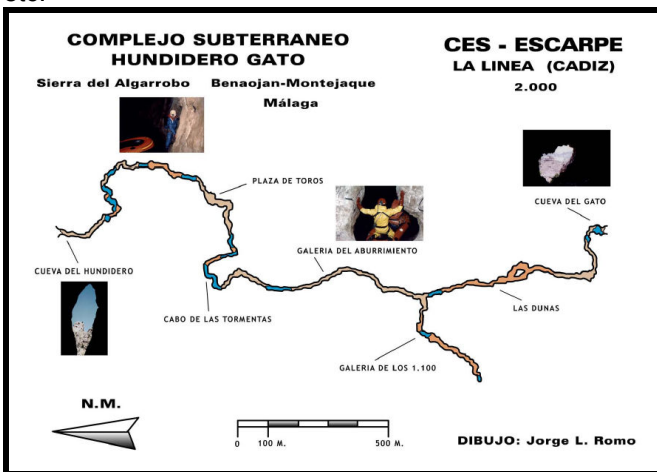


Survey of Sima Republicano-Cabito (After A.A.E.S.).

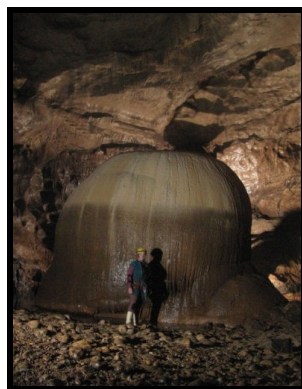
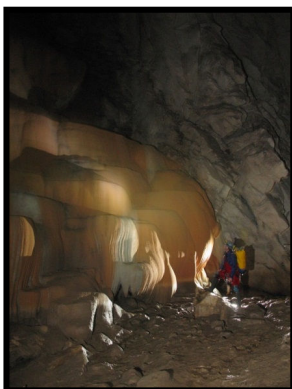


Views of Sima Republicano. Photos: Ed Waters.

Wednesday 7th is our day for the through trip Hundidero-Gato. Our way in is into Cueva de Hundidero based on the verge of a dam. This trip will be great, through trip very wet, many lakes the longest is 1100 m. which we will swim for 600m, massive chambers and large formations as The Great Stalagmite and Gour's Chamber (below). We will see the remains of engineering jobs developed in the cave by the electric supplier company back in the 20's trying to stop the water filtering into the cave, they tried to concrete all the leaks from inside the cave and all was for nothing, nature is nature. Well fun trip but compulsory for everybody Wet Suit, Socks, gloves, etc.



Survey of Complejo Hundidero Gato after Ces-escarpe.



Gour's Chamber (left) and the Great Stalagmite (right). Photos: Ed Waters.

And after our trip of course there will be the Paella waiting for us at Venta Cueva del Gato in the sunshine.



Post through trip relaxation! Photo: Miguel Tome.

Thursday 8th and Friday 9th we'll have permits for caving at Sima CES 1 and Sumidero del Tajo Colorao.

Sima CES 1 :

The access to Sima CES 1 is done by climbing a very steep mountain for about 1.5 hours and then getting into a big closed valley. It's a good SRT trip with some Mendip caving type in the new extensions discovered in the last years.



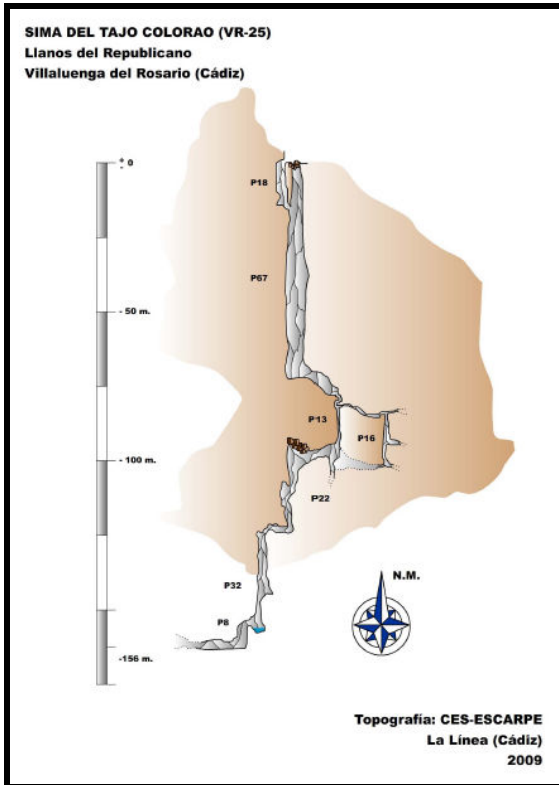
Survey of CES 1 after Ces-escarpe.



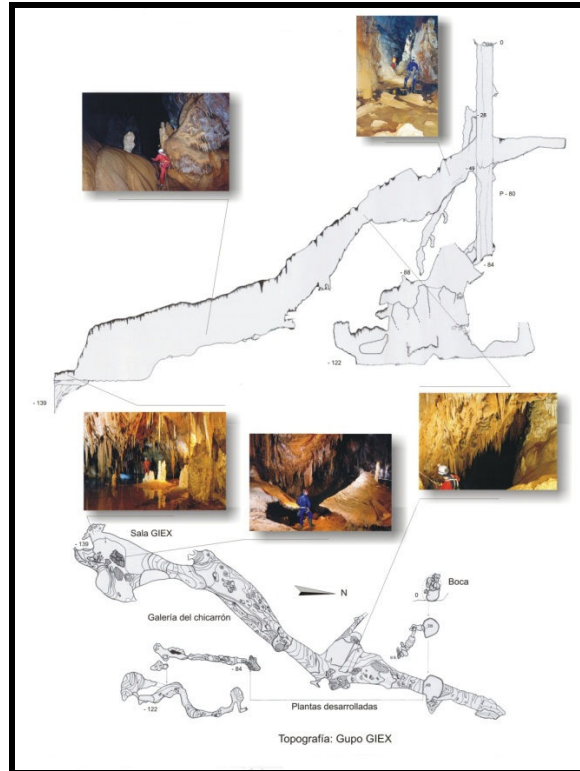
CES 1. Photo: Ces-escarpe

Sima del Tajo Colorao:

This cave is located in the same valley as Sistema del Republicano, a connection between both is due soon. There are groups exploring and trying to make that happen, who knows may be they connect them before we go and we can have another through trip there.



Survey of Sima del Tajo Colorado after Ces-escarpe.



Survey of Sima Cacao after Ixodes La Linea.

Sunday 11th will be a official day off, day to say “Adios” to the one weekers, time to visit the show cave of La Pileta, day to visit the main town of Ronda and/or day of moving our base camp to our second national park. This is obviously going to depend of our progress in the explorations in Grazalemas National Park. I didn’t mention it in the caving trips but we’ll have an exploration permit to dig and explore in the whole National Park of Grazalema. There are thoughts of digging in Cacao in Giex Chamber, there is Sumidero del Guante in the next valley up from CES 1, Sima de las Tormentas is another option and of course there is loads of potential for new discoveries. So if there is enough work for a team to keep working in Grazalema National Park then we would split in two teams and one would move to Sierra de las Nieves National Park where we’ll have another exploration permit but in a limited area which is the closest to our accommodation and possibility to work with local cavers exploring on the top of the Sierra de las Nieves. Bear in mind than there is The Brother’s Dig with an imminent breakthrough and Javi has thoughts of another new entrance to be opened nearby. There is Sumidero de la Escalera (discovered by Ixodes 1999) with imminent breakthrough too with a few hilti caps.

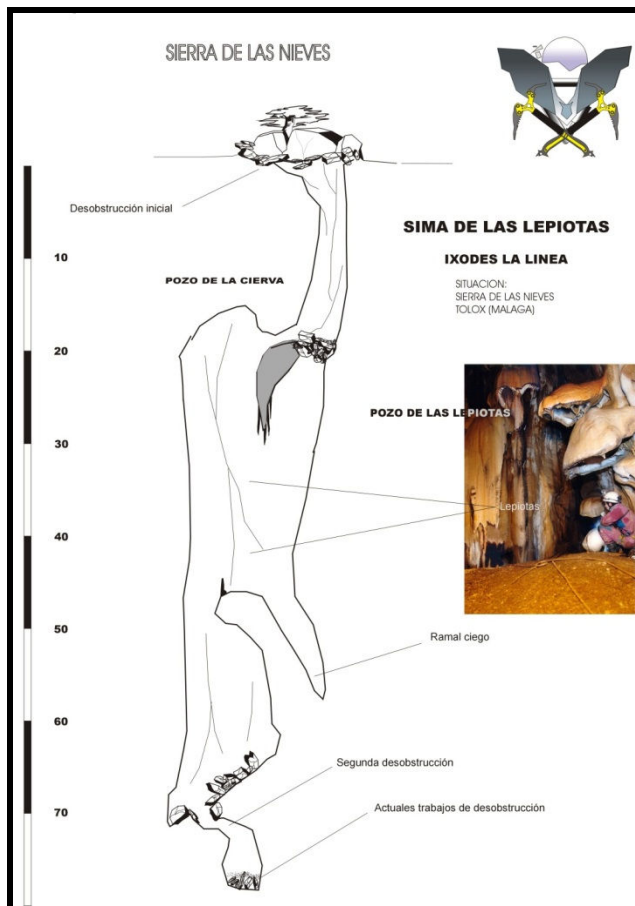
Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th we will have permits for Sima de las Lepiotas and Sima de Calabaza.

Sima de las Lepiotas, access to the cave entrance is 10 minutes walking from the car park on the top of Sierra de las Nieves. It’s almost 80 m deep, quite an easy trip and count with a well decorated second pitch.



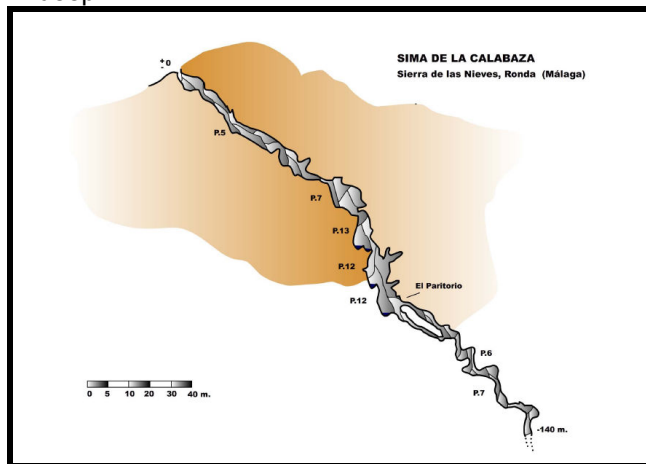
Sima del Tajo Colorado. Photo: Ces-escarpe.

Saturday 10th will be permit to Sima Cacao: Again we’ll have more than 1 hour walk to access to the cave entrance. The entrance of the cave is a great 80 m pitch that we will abseil 40 m until we get through a big window that heads to the main gorge going down to Giex Chamber. The cave will be rigged as our digging teams would have been there working already, so in this trip you will have to only de-rig. The cave is well decorated and count with the biggest and prettiest formations of all the caves in this national park.



Survey of Sima de las Lepiotas after Ixodes La Linea.

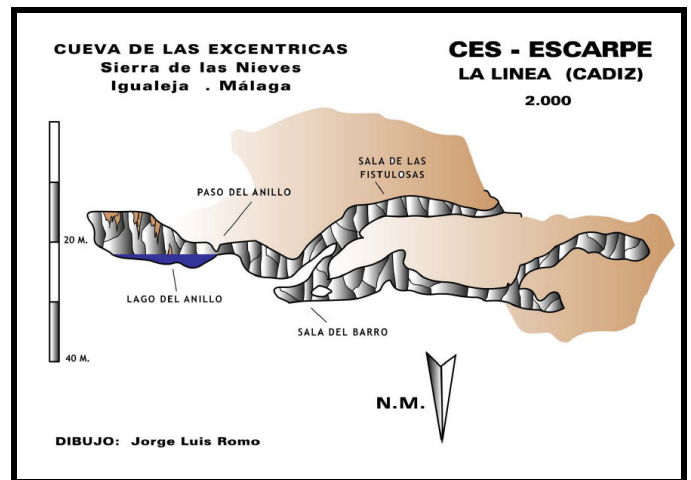
Sima de Calabaza, located on the top of Sierra de las Nieves too and in 2009 was extended from 115 to 140 m deep.



Survey of Sima de la Clabaza after Ces-escarpe.

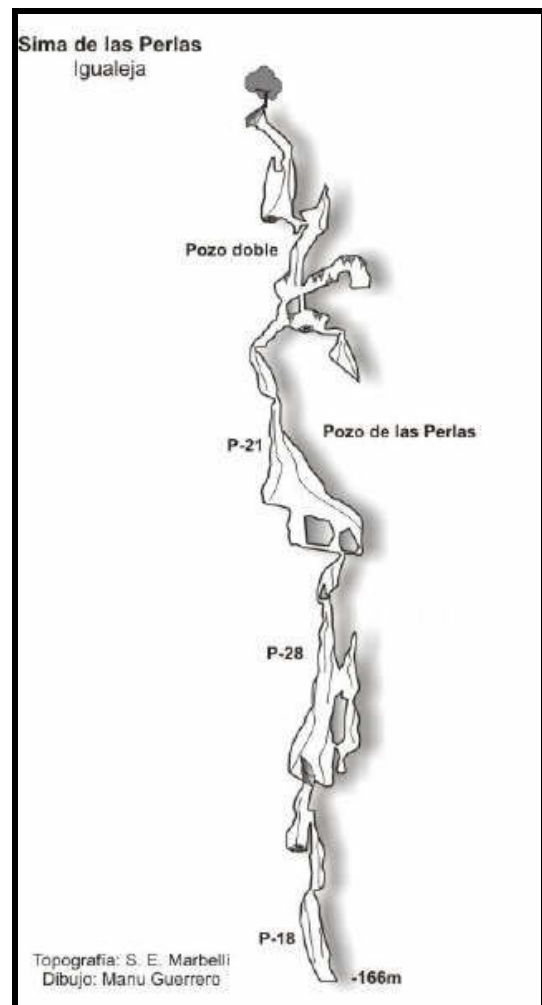
Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th there will be permit for Cueva de las Excentricas (Cave of the Helictites) and Sima de las Perlas.

Cueva de las Excentricas this cave is not very big but the formations are incredible, access to the cave entrance is from the village Igualeja and involves climbing a very steep ramp for 15 minutes. Igualeja is a village with a resurgence and the village is within 30 minutes driving from our second accommodation.



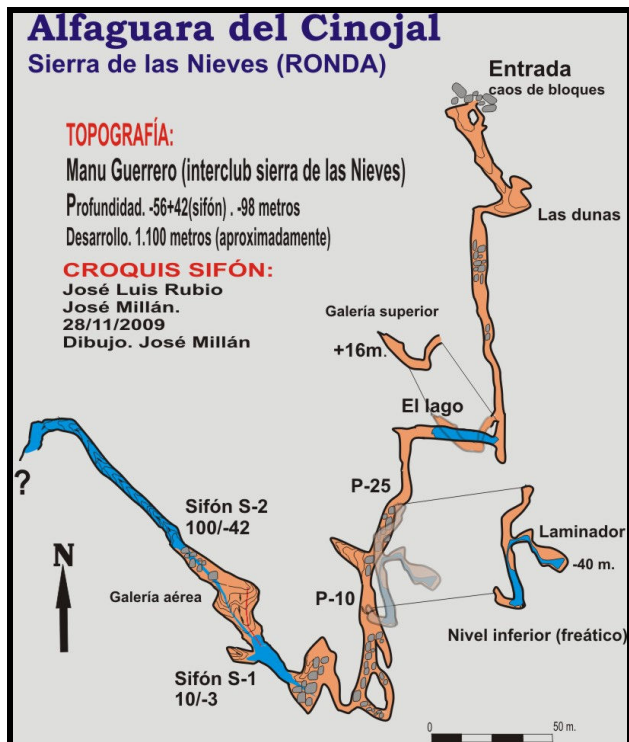
Survey of Cueva de las Excentricas after Ces-escarpe.

Sima de las Perlas, access to the cave is about 1 hour walking from the car parks, the entrance of the cave is very easy to find as there is the only tree for miles around. The cave counts with pearls formations in different banks and be aware that the last pitch can be abseiled and pursiked back up just by one person at a time as the rock dissolves like sand and there would be danger if two people are in the pitch.



Survey of Sima de las Perlas after Guerrero.

Friday 16th visit to the resurgence Alfaguara del Cinojal. This is a seasonal resurgence with an underground river that was discovered in 2004, I was personally involved in the original digging, So far has about 1 km long and about 56 m deep



Survey of Alfaguara del Cinojal after Guerrero.

Well this is all that I have planned so far, if anyone has anything to add just let me know, there will be a couple of permits for other caves as spare, I didn't want to include it here as I think that we have enough with this planning.

I hope that everything is to your expectations and you enjoy your trip.

Miguel Tome

MCG YORKSHIRE WEEKEND – YORDAS – THE WET WAY!

So, who in their right mind would take on an abseil down a cold, raging waterfall for approximately 40 feet on their first full underground SRT trip? Not me – no – never – why would I even consider something so stupid? Well, actually, I confess, yep I did! On Friday April 8th Jeremy, Ed, Hayley, Sue, Karen, Ross, Miguel & I headed to Yordas for an afternoon of rope dangling.

Now, all you seasoned SRT'ers out there may be thinking Yordas is a just an easy peasey trip but for me it was a big thing and I was full of excitement and more than a dash of nervous trepidation! Oh yes, I'd 'done' Yordas before, just walked in, had a wander round, paddled in the chapter house pool and admired the waterfall which didn't look that fierce, but going in from above on a rope, now that was a different thing all together.

We decided it best not to scare me too much the first time and opted for the middle entrance, J and Hayley stayed with me whilst the rest of the party (the braver ones!) went on up to rig the top pitch. J Rigged the first small pitch and waited for me while Hayley helped Ross & I at the top, quite simple, easy to get on the rope and a nice, easy short descent. We moved on to the second pitch, a little bigger and not quite so friendly to get on to the rope, but with Hayley's patient assistance Ross & I negotiated it without problem and then watched Hayley pop down it with ultimate ease! We then met the rest of the group at the top of the chapter house pitch, the waterfall was much more active than the last time I'd seen it and conversation was not easy above its mighty roar! Ed had rigged the dry way and was already on his way, closely followed by Sue & Karen – there was no way I was going to even think about getting on the traverse line for this one, all looked far too scary for me! So, Jeremy rigged the route straight down the waterfall and went on down to wait at the bottom.

Ed gave me excellent advice at the top of the pitch basically to 'get on with it' and lean back as far as possible to keep out of the water! So with plenty of determination to do as I was told, I set off, pretty well for a few feet and then got unceremoniously knocked off course by the full force of the water which as well as amazingly strong was bloody cold and took my breath away! I could hear Ed calling to make sure I was ok but it was difficult to respond so I just hoped that the fact that I was still moving would be good enough as an answer! I managed to get back on track and continued on my way, my descent was not the most elegant but I got to the bottom in one piece where I was met by Jeremy enthusiastically asking me how I was feeling, did I enjoy it, wasn't that fun etc, at this point I was rendered speechless and I think I just looked at Jeremy with a fairly blank expression on my face, once off the rope, out of the water and a few minutes to recover the power of speech I was able to confirm that yes, I had enjoyed it, was very proud of myself but wasn't in any hurry to go and do it again immediately!

Ross made it down fairly quickly after me and he loved every minute! Hayley and Ed being far more sensible opted for a return via the top entrance and after a few challenges, Miguel, Sue and Karen completed their journey!

We were glad to get out into the sunshine to warm up and get changed, and then it was off to the pub for food, wine, beer and the usual analysis of the trip! A great day and thanks to everyone who helped and made it such good fun!

Angela Clulow

RESCUE PRACTICE WEEKEND

Saturday Evening

4th June 2011

8pm

BANGERS and MASH**And Dessert****£5.00****4 varieties of Sausage****Axbridge** (Pork with sage & apple)**Toulouse** (pork with authentic seasoning, smoked bacon & red wine)**Mendip Herb** (Pork with sage & thyme)**Vegetarian** (if pre-ordered)

Served with

Mashed potato, Cabbage, Onion gravy*(Chutneys/pickles NOT provided - please bring along your own favourite for everyone to try!)*

Followed by

Fruit Salad or Strawberries with creamTo book, contact Joan by mid-day.Friday.27th.May.pejogoddard@waitrose.com
01934 732760**NEW MEMBERS**

I am sure that we all wish **Steve Tibbert** a warm welcome to the MCG.

Note that the membership list can be found online in the members area of the website;

<http://www.mendipcavinggroup.org.uk/sections/members/members2.html>

For those who elect to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, a hard copy of the membership list has been included with this issue.

CAVING QUIZ NO.2 – THE ANSWERS

Question 1.Where is Doctor Bannister's Handbasin?

Answer: Upper Long Churn Cave.

Question 2. What is the mineral associated with Pikedaw Caverns?

Answer: Calamine.

Question 3. Who wrote "Pennine Underground"?

Answer: Norman Thornber

Question 4. "Ding, Dong Bell, Pussy and Well are the names of a sequence of pitches leading to "Duke Street"; in what cave?

Answer: Ireby Fell Cavern

Question 5. There is a cave on Newby Moss called "Boggart's Roaring Holes. What is/was a boggart?

Answer: A troll.

Question 6. What cave forms the major component of "The Three Counties System"?

Answer: The Easegill System.

Question 7. In the 'Three Peaks Race'. What are the 'peaks'?

Answer: Penyghent, Ingleborough and Whernside.

Question 8. The stream of Fell Beck falls into which cave system?

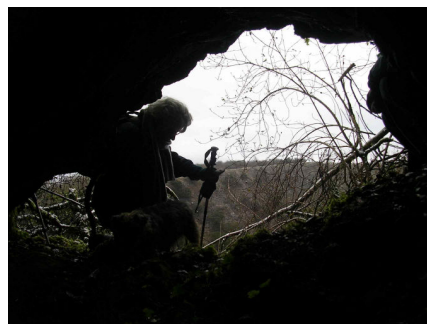
Answer: Gaping Ghyll.

Question 9. Who was the first person to descend the main shaft of Gaping Ghyll and what was his nationality and the year of his descent?

Answer: E. Martell (French). 1895.

Question 10. Geologically, what is Malham Cove ?

Answer: A limestone cirque.

PHOTO COMPETITION – WHICH MENDIP CAVE IS THIS?

The answer is Whitcombe's Hole in Burrington Combe. Many thanks to Joan Goddard for the picture and the question.

STOP PRESS!

As this newsletter is going to press, reports are starting to emerge about a couple of significant finds on Mendip.

Firstly the Wessex diggers have found a 20m pitch and large chamber in their dig at Spider Hole in Cheddar Gorge. Let's hope they leave something for us to find from our dig at Bone Hole, just a little further down the gorge! Recent progress in Bone Hole has been very encouraging.

A few weeks earlier the Axbridge CG found a very large chamber in their dig at Axbridge Hill Cavern.

Fewer details are yet available from Wessex divers Kev Hilton and Claire Cohen who have passed two downstream sumps in Pierre's Pot. To date the only information is that they "walked into something rather amazing". I am sure that like me you are waiting with bated breath for further news!

Isn't it fantastic that significant discoveries continue to be made on the Mendips, especially considering it is probably the most intensively examined piece of karst in the world! If you want to be in on the act why not join in on any one of the promising digs that the MCG is currently pursuing.

Ed Waters

CHARTERHOUSE AREA ACCESS

On Friday 13th May a party breaking many of the CCC Ltd access conditions was seen descending GB. MCG Members are reminded that permission to descend the caves under CCC Ltd control (Including GB, Longwood and Rhino rift amongst others) is dependant upon strict adherence to the conditions listed on the CCC Ltd website (<http://charterhouse-caving-company.ltd.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=start>).

Special care should be taken to ensure that keys and permits are only issued to guest parties meeting these conditions. Members are also reminded to make a note in the tackle log every time a key is used.

Ed Waters