



MCG NEWS

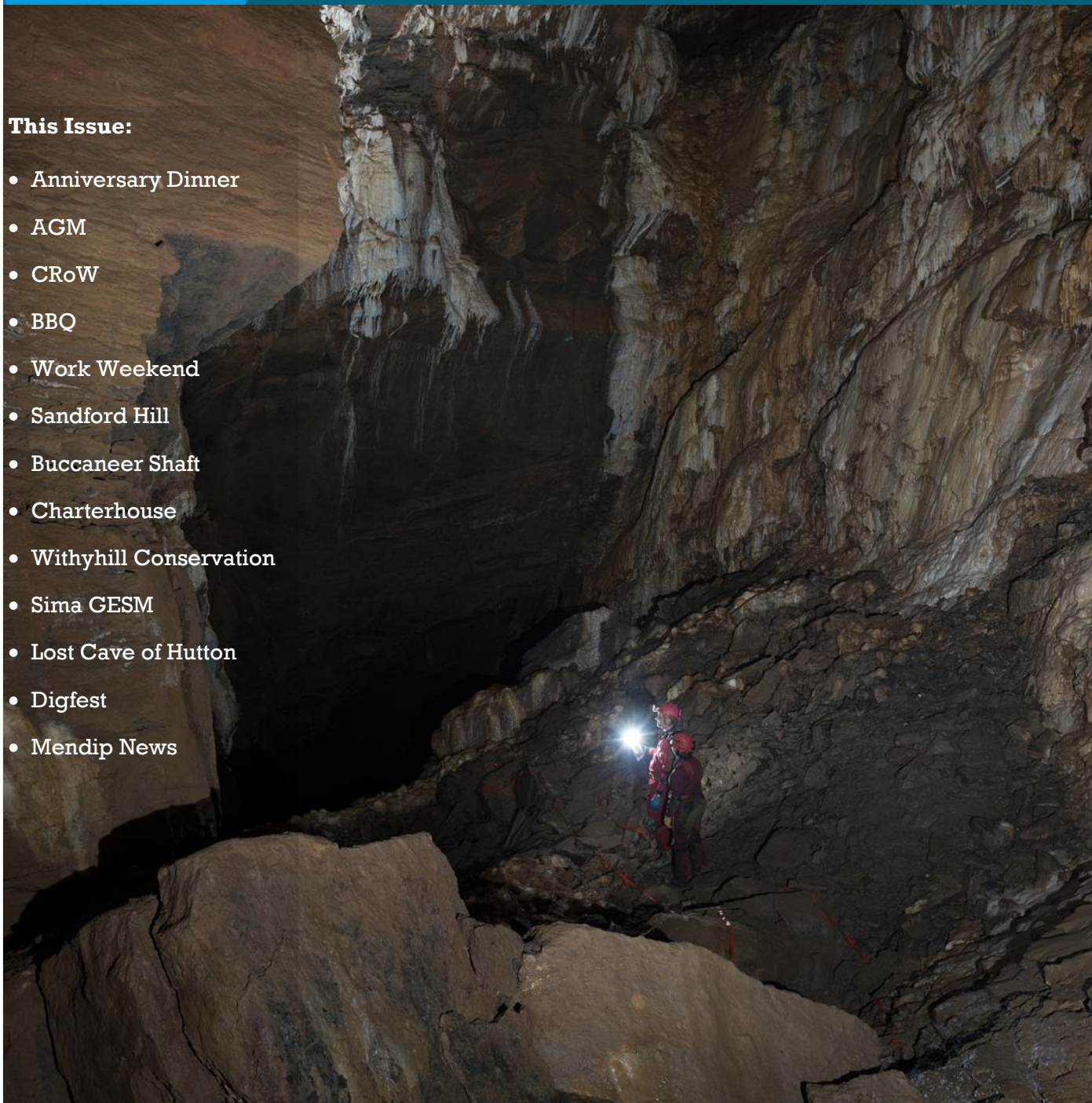
Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group

Number 375

October 2014

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The Citadel, Charterhouse Cave
Andrew Horeckyj

SUMMER/ AUTUMN 2014

EDITORIAL

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Summer on the Rakes by TH

If caving becomes a permitted activity under CRoW how will access to Caves, and liability be affected?

First of all I'd like to apologise for the length of time it has been since the last edition of MCG News. After putting together the bumper anniversary edition I had planned to have this one completed by the middle of September, but with various other events arising, I have been unable to keep to this plan.

Therefore, this Autumn edition of MCG news has 5 months worth of happenings to get through.

It seems a long time ago now but we start this edition with some photos from the 60th Anniversary dinner. A dedicated few put a lot of effort into making this event a success and in my opinion it really was. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole evening, and the selection of photos I have included, hopefully give a flavour of the celebration and the good time that was had.

The AGM also took place that day and the draft is attached at the end of the newsletter.

In Club news, we have reports and photos from one very successful members' weekend and from one sadly not quite so successful. We've still enjoyed BBQs, impromptu curries, a rock night and more but it was very disappointing that this year's barn dance had to be cancelled, especially when

the previous year's was so well attended.

Even with the cancellation, the cottage at the work weekend was still a hive of activity. Keith reports on the list of tasks completed over the weekend and thanks everyone for their huge effort. Keith deserves a lot of thanks too, for working dawn till dusk on both days and especially for his work, retiling in the kitchen.

There is also a new, "To Do" list..... If you are at the cottage reading this and there is anything you can do to help it would be most appreciated!

Plenty of trip reports, and news of another chance to win some cash if you can make more appearances in the logbook than Ed or Hayley before the next AGM.

Plus we take a brief look at CRoW (Countryside Rights of Way Act) and how the MCG might be affected in the future.

Hope to see you at Nordrach !

Tom Harrison October 2014
editor@mendipcavinggroup.co.uk

MCG 60th Anniversary Dinner



The Dinner

TH

The 60th Anniversary Dinner at The Batch Country House Lymsham, was an overwhelming success. 109 guests attended an evening of joyous celebration of this important anniversary of the Mendip Caving Group. It was wonderful to see so many there.

A number of us travelled by coach from the cottage to arrive at the beautifully decorated venue, which was truly befitting of this very special occasion.

The food from the Goat cheese or the Caesar Salad starter to the delicious main of Pork or Steak Pie or Aubergine bake through to the sweet desserts went down very well with everyone that I spoke to.

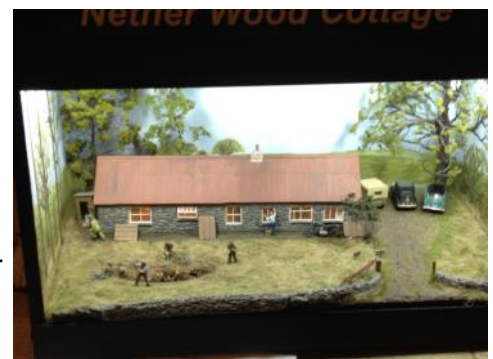
Richard Carey, who had done such a splendid job of organising the event, then introduced our guest speaker; cave diver Duncan Price. Duncan regaled us with tales of doom and daring, underground and underwater.

We had Logbook awards from Joan Goddard and Ed Waters. Ed and Joan had offered prizes at last years AGM and awarded their prizes during the event. Ed offering £50 to the person who had completed the most logbook recorded trips and Joan offered £25 to the person who, according to a panel of 3 judges, had written the best report. Having combed the logbook, Ed found that he was the winner of most completed trips, so decided that the prize should go to 2nd place, which turned out to be his partner Hayley, so decided to give the prize to 3rd most trips: Mike Moxon! Joan's prize went to Richard Carey for his trip report about Eastwater.

We also had the first award of the Titanium Crowbar, which was paid for by Tony Jarrett using funds he left to the club. This award recognises a members contribution to Digging and Exploration within the club and the well deserved inaugural winner was **Ben Cooper**.

There was also a raffle and another chance to see Ian McKechnie's amazing re-creation of the Netherwood cottage, with it's working lights and wonderful detail.

The next few pages contain a selection of pictures taken by **Bernard Reeves**, with quotes taken from the Yahoo! newsgroup. The rest of the photos from his collection are available on a disc at the cottage and hopefully online shortly too. If you haven't seen them already, **Charlie Allison** has added the photos he had taken to the Yahoo! Newsgroup.



Ian McKechnie's Netherwood Cottage

TH



“The food was very good indeed – way better than I’d expected for such a large venue. The boys loved it too and have said they’d like to come next year again. Thanks to Richard and Russ for organising such a successful event.” Ben



“We second that, a brilliant evening in every respect and well worth travelling many miles for. Well done.”
Yvonne and Martin





“Was good to see everyone at the dinner. Thanks & well done to Richard for organising the event. And thanks as well to Russ for sorting out the T shirts, the orders were pouring in! Also to everyone else involved in making awards, organising the raffle etc.” Ang & J



“A very fine evening and good to see so many people there. Thanks to Richard & co. for organizing and commentating - was wondering if at any moment a bit of Frank Sinatra / Dean Martin karaoke would happen... Food was way better than I expected, the place is clearly well geared up for large events - a return visit perhaps? The guest speaker also eloquently confirmed my suspicions that cave diving is not for the sane (well, relatively speaking). “
Charlie





"I just wanted to thank all involved with this year's events and say a massive thank you to Richard and Andrea. What a fantastic evening!"
Russ



"I too would like to thank everyone involved with organizing the Dinner, especially Richard. Also Ed for his chairmanship of the AGM, which was one of the most civilized I have attended."
Joan



MCG CLUB NEWS

Summer BBQ

Linda Mine did an excellent job in co-ordinating a BBQ at the July members' weekend. With assistance from various people, we had a feast of meats, fresh salads, and even marshmallows as the sun went down.

Almost 30 members' meant that there was barely enough space to cook on the BBQ! We had a few loud shirts and a flying display put on by the local Bat population to enjoy.



AGM 2014



Ed Waters chaired this year's AGM at the Hunters Lodge Inn before the 60th Anniversary Dinner with 24 members present.

Ed kept a firm and fair grip on proceedings ensuring that while

all were able to have their say, matters arising were dealt with succinctly and no issues bogged down the agenda. The full draft minutes from Bob Templeman can be found at the end of this edition of MCG News.

AGM 2014 TH

60th Anniversary Clothing

It is not too late to get yourself or a friend an MCG Anniversary T-Shirt or Polo Shirt. Available in Blue or Black, in small, medium or large, they are £10 for a T Shirt and £15 for the Polo Shirt!

All of the Hoodies, zip up hoodies, and sweatshirts have now sold out, however if enough orders are received then another batch might be produced. Please Contact either Russ Porter or Karen Fendley to order a T-Shirt or polo or to enquire about any of the other items.



Russ shows off a 60th Polo Charlie Allison

October 2014 Work Weekend by Keith Knight

Another MCG work weekend over and so much achieved. Almost all of Brian's job list was completed and some extras too, Saturday was a very busy day.

I was busy in the kitchen knocking seven bells out of the tiles over the sink so I may not have got all the following thanks quite right so apologies now if I have over looked anybody.

Saturday

- Roy, on gutters, curtains and ladder safety man for Linda
- Mike M, weeding, shed tidy, and the mucky job of silt trap cleaning
- Linda, hardwood window oiling and other very important stuff organising the curry and fetching it.
- Hayley, Dave, Fiona, Linda, Bernard, kitchen cleaning, sorting pot and pans, and cleaning the gas stove.
- Bill, nice bright lighting, stove glass cleaning and most impressive the repair and painting of the front, side and gas store doors all in one day.
- Leonie for supplying the chimney brushes and sweeping the chimney assisted by Mike M.
- Mike R repair of all lounge soft furnishings and log splitting.
- Biff, Tom, Ed, and others, tidy log store and splitting logs.
- Biff, for supplying about a ton of logs and the music
- Karen, When she was not doing the accounts, Hoover the 8 and Foreman's bunk rooms and any mattresses not occupied [the 6 room was too crowded to do, so a job for later]
- Ben, for the loan of the big orange vacuum cleaner
- Joan, the lunch time pasty run. And odorous job of toilet cleaning and other stuff.
- Bob replace light sensor by front door and other stuff.
- Charlie video to CD transfer library.
- AND ANYBODY THAT MADE ME TEA ALL DAY.

Sunday

- Keith tile grouting and silicone around sink plus other odds and ends
- Linda hardwood window oiling plus a final sweep through and washing / scrubbing of all down stairs floors plus other odds and ends.
- I know it's not work but thanks to Tom for making time to take Matt and Heather our American visitors on a quick Swildons upper series trip Sunday afternoon.

Jobs for the future

- Hoover 6 room and mattresses.
 - Oil hard wood windows at the back Linda only had drying time to do the sills and lower beading on them.
 - Remove the mould on the shower ceiling and walls. Paint ceiling.
 - A general decorating spree on the bunk rooms, there are areas around the replaced windows and the areas where the old storage heaters came out that need painting so a complete paint job on each bunk room looks the best option. Clean up and painting weekend maybe, when nobody is booked in.
 - Front door mats are falling apart and need replacing. [Karen will get new mats]
 - Window latch front window 8 room broken needs replacement. [Keith will get replacement]
 - Small windows of the 6 & 8 room outside need some TLC when the weather gets better.
- Changing room water proof switch needs replacing the membrane over the switch is burred. [Keith will get replacement]
- Bulkhead light in the hall needs a low power lamp to replace existing one.



Linda and Roy ladder-work by Charlie Allison

Again if I have overlooked a job or somebody, then apologies. All of you worked very hard for the club and I thank you.

Work Weekend Evening Social

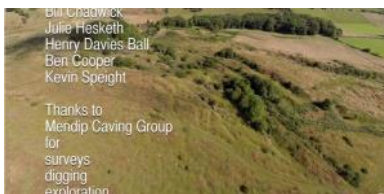
After the success of the BBQ, it was very disappointing that the Barn Dance had to be cancelled in the end as there was not enough interest to make it financially viable, a real shame after the work Richard had put into organising the event and after the success of last year's.

We were still determined to enjoy the evening after all the hard work and a little caving during the day, so an impromptu cottage curry was held instead. With Biff as head DJ and the glitter ball lit up with various headlights torches and phones a full on rock concert took place with some proper headbanging going on too!



Work Weekend Curry by Charlie Allison

Upper Flood Swallet Film wins at Hidden Earth



In August, Andy and Antonia Freem came to the MCG to film in Upper Flood for the video media salon at Hidden Earth. Bill Chadwick, Julie Hesketh and Henry Davies Ball assisted Andy and Antonia with this endeavour with Ben Cooper and Kevin Speight also helping on the way in. Andy flew his quadcopter over the location of the cave and surveys and photos were provided by other mem-

bers for use in the film. At Hidden Earth 2014 the film was on display at the Video Media Salon and was the winning video!

The video can be viewed here <http://youtu.be/ZMulwo1EexM> and extra footage that didn't make the film is being made available for the MCG archive.



Spoof Training Video

And on the subject of films, check out Chris Binding's excellent spoof produced for Hidden Earth. Well worth a watch if you fancy a giggle!

<http://youtu.be/ih9UjEfr7Yw> or search Descent: Spoof Training Video on YouTube

From the Archive

Having a personal, close link with Devon and particularly Brixham, I found this Archive snippet particularly interesting:

MCG News No. 23 : An interesting "WEEGY" Bone Hole type Brixham cavern

While on holiday this year we came into Brixham. During this stay Mike Brace and I walked up the steep steps to a house showing a placard 'Brixham Cavern Below' having paid 1/6d we proceeded into the large opening beneath the house. The length of the main passage which has electric lighting is about 200 feet and ends in a boulder choke. There are about five smaller side passages and all seem to go downwards. Throughout the main passage a white line is noticeable, this was the height of the floor when the cave was first discovered in 1858. Throughout the cave can be seen the bones and teeth of many animals and there are showcases with flints, teeth and bones of hyena, Cave Lion, Cave Bear, Mammoth, Reindeer and various Rodents. The Cavern was discovered by workmen digging foundations for the houses, when inevitably a Pick disappeared through a small crack in the ground. The cave was then excavated and explored by the geological Society who named the galleries and chambers. On our way out we stopped to talk to the lady at the entrance who turned out to be on the board of the Pengelly research organisation. It was quite a change to come out of the bright cave into the gloom outside. T.F.



Upcoming Trips and Events

7/8/9	November	Members' Weekend	Meet at Nordrach Cottage
9	November	Mine shafts on the Rakes Walk	
22	November	JRat Digging Awards	The Hunters Inn
27	November	The Lost Cave of Hutton	Wells Museum
5/6/7	December	Members' Weekend	Meet at Nordrach Cottage
8	December	Christmas Party	
2/3/4	January	Member's Weekend	Meet at Nordrach Cottage

The MCG
Newsgroup is
another place to
hear about future
trips:

[http://
uk.groups.yahoo.c
om/group/mendip-
caving-group/](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/mendip-caving-group/)

MCG Christmas

Although not finalised yet, the Group will be holding it's Christmas celebration at the December Members weekend, keep an eye on the newsgroup for updates!

Mine Shafts on the Rakes Walk

If the weather is good enough a group of us are talking about taking a walk on the Rakes on Sunday 9th November to have a look at the mines on the Rakes. We might even stumble across Charnel Shaft!

Logbook Award - £100 now up for grabs!!

Mike Moxon won the award for most logged caving trips between 1st March 2013 and 1st March 2014. However, I have to point out that in fact I had the most logged trips and Hayley was second, so the £50 was given to Mike who was in third place to ensure that the

money left our house! Given that no one beat me last year, I have put the prize up to £100 for the most trips logged in the log book, but note that I will only award the money if that person exceeds my total.

Ed Waters

A very warm welcome to the following new MCG members :

Tabitha Oosterhouse (joined Aug 14), Christian and Joshua Richards (joined April 14), Dave Cook (joined July 14), Henry Davies- Ball (joined May 14), Damien Hemsworth (joined Jun 14), and Carl Ruxton (BDCC - rejoined May 14).

We have received sad news that Trish Wallington died in early October after a brave fight against cancer. We send our sincere condolences to husband Roger and brother John.

A TOUR OF THE MINER (SIC) SITES OF SANDFORD HILL

By Mike Moxon

Whilst King Mine, Sandford Levvy, Mangle Hole and Triple Hole all appear in the latest edition of Mendip Underground and many of the other shafts, such as Pearl Mine, have been filled in, blocked or quarried away, there are still numerous short visits that can enjoyably fill a day. Robin Taviner, Matt & Mandy Voysey and myself have been checking out the hill to improve the info on the Mendip Cave Registry and Archive www.mcra.org.uk as there is much confusion and duplication of past reports. Many of these holes are covered in Ed Waters' write up "Of Caves, Mines & Legendary Gulfs" in the SMCC Journal 12 (1) Spring 2007 and it includes a map and descriptions / surveys, but the grid references have been revised.

After checking in at the Ski Centre (so they know your car has been left in their car park) you can walk up the road towards the Hotel and join the footpath that contours around the north side of the hill from the bend by the garage. This path continues over a stile and starts to gradually drop down the hillside until you find a small cutting heading up the hill. Part way up the cutting a small hole can be found which is one end of Pseudo Udders Hole (ST 4299 5933), a short through trip in a rift that emerges nearer the ski slope. The location of the original Udders Hole is still a bit of a mystery.

Returning to the path, you'll reach the bottom of the hill near the bigger cutting of Sandford Levvy (which was equipped as a secret base for operations against the Germans should they have invaded during World War 2). Level with the entrance, but about 20m beyond it, is another short through trip in a rift (ST 4287 5935), although it may well require a bit of clearing to get through. Further along the path you pass a 2m shaft and about the same distance again there's an obvious entrance on your left – Bat Hole (ST 4277 5934) is a short natural cave that is horizontal apart from the sloping entrance.

When looking at the entrance, a large man-made platform can be seen up to the right and Mangle Hole can be found just at the far end of it. On the other side of several downed trees an area of workings includes 2 large 5m deep pits - the Holly Shafts (ST 4267 5931) that apparently connect, but the bottoms are full of debris. Just up from these a nice 8m shaft to a choke (ST 4268 5925) can be found and further up and right, an obvious spoil heap marks a 4m shaft to a small chamber (ST 4264 5927). Back at the lower of the Holly Shafts following the rake along the hill brings you to a 7m shaft (ST 4265 5931) into an interesting short forked rift.

Beyond here there is more gruffy ground with a couple of open rifts and the footpath continues to Sandford Quarry, the other side of which can be found the remains of a toilet block built for Italian prisoners of war who were working around the quarry in 1941. Heading up the hill from the Holly Shafts will bring you eventually to the top footpath (fenced on both sides) where turning left, back towards the Ski Centre, will pass more filled shafts, including Pearl Mine. 100m past Pearl Mine is an open hole covered with a sheet of metal in a small clearance (ST 4291 5918), this is an unstable 4m shaft (not recommended). Walking downhill and then following the other side of the old wall, in the same direction as before, will bring you to the Saville Row Shafts (ST 4303 5918), surrounded by warning tape, near the wall / fence junction. The first of these is Shaft 120 (although only 95ft deep – the ladders were assumed to be 1 foot spacing when they were probably only 9 inches!). It is currently 23m deep, so the lower passages cannot be reached without digging. The next hole is a 15m blind shaft with a large tree collapsing in to it. The beautifully ginged hole is Whispering Gallery, which joins the final sloping entrance at depth and then heads underneath the blind shaft towards Shaft 120, although only a voice connection can be made.

Following this line of depressions and pits brings you to 2 fenced holes (ST 4315 5922), assumed to be Gran's Discovery (7m deep) and Ellis' Wonder (13m deep) these are just beside a footpath that heads downhill. Turning left at the junction (away from the Ski Centre), it curves back on itself to rejoin the road at the bend with the garage where we started. Feel free to have a beer or a meal in the Cafe/Bar on the top floor of the Ski Centre after a thoroughly worthwhile walk..

COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT

By Ed Waters and Tom Harrison

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW), is legislation that came into effect on 30 November 2000, to help to enable a "right to roam", and open up private land that can be classified as "mountain, moor, heath or down" to allow access to the general public. At the time the act came into force, the official line was that this would have no effect on access to caves located on Access Land (as areas covered by this act are termed) as caving was not included in the list of permitted activities. However, it is also true that caving is not listed as one of those activities specifically not covered by the act.

This ambiguity, along with some well publicised issues with regard to access to some caves located on access land, have led to a number of cavers questioning the official position. This has culminated in an opinion being obtained by a Queens Council that also challenges the accepted position of the BCA and DEFRA. If the QC's opinion became accepted by DEFRA, or a case came to court that changed the current interpretation, then cavers would have the right to enter any cave entrance located on access land. In turn this has caused a bit of a furore between those who wish to see easier access to the 2000 or so caves located on access land, as those who are opposed on grounds such as cave conservation, land owner relations and likely impact on the ability to gain permission for surface digging. Frantic and heated discussions have taken place across the caving community as the implications of this legislation in regards to caving have been digested. For instance UKCaving have a number of threads on the topic, Descent has run pieces on this and debate has taken place on our newsgroup on Yahoo!. The matter has also been discussed in a more official way by the BCA conservation and access committee with input from the various regional bodies such as our own Council of Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC).

The direct effects of the re-interpretation of this legislation on caving are two fold. Does (and if not should) CRoW apply to caving? Thus allowing free access to any cave on designated access land in England and Wales. If this is the case, what measures can be applied to restrict access to particularly vulnerable sites and how would these be achieved, noting that the CROW act states that anything that restricts access is illegal unless carried out under a statutory process. Fortunately for caving, Section 26 of the act provides a mechanism to restrict access to protect vulnerable sites on access land, noting that any controls must provide the minimum restriction on access commensurate with protection of the site.

The CSCC have identified four sites on Mendip which are likely to be of concern should the law be reinterpreted and caving become a permitted activity under CRoW. Bone Hole and Upper Flood are two of these caves which lie on access land, currently have restricted access and have vulnerable features that could be put at considerable risk should uncontrolled access to them be allowed. It is therefore likely that access to these caves could be directly affected by the results of the decisions made in the coming months, making the issues very pertinent to the MCG.

The British Caving Association's (BCA) website reports that in September the BCA's chairman, Andy Eavis, met with DEFRA and Natural England representatives. This was an informal initial meeting and a request was made to channel all communications with those bodies through the BCA. In the October meeting of the BCA's council, it was decided to consult the members of the BCA to help to construct the official position of the Association.

All members of the MCG are members of the BCA, and as such in the coming weeks you should receive a ballot form which will give you the opportunity to let the BCA have your opinion. The question to be asked is not yet known, but would be setting the BCA's stance as to whether a push is made to have Caving listed as a permitted activity on CRoW affected land. I believe the current issue of Descent carries a piece listing the pros and cons of Caving becoming a permitted activity.

In the meantime Hayley Clarke our CSCC representative has asked if anyone in the Club can spare a little of their time to familiarise themselves with chapter 2 of the CRoW legislation found at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>, which lists the exclusions to the act for nature preservation and heritage protection. Additionally if Upper Flood and Bone Hole are to be protected if caving becomes included in CRoW, then inevitably the MCG will have to be heavily involved in creating the Section 26 submissions to justify why these caves need protecting and how this is best done within the constraints of the need for as open access as possible within the CRoW act. **It is suggested that this is a process that needs to start urgently, so if you have the time and inclination to help the committee would love to hear from you!**

BUCCANEER SHAFT ON UBLEY

By Mike Moxon



Spoil heap around the Shaft

Mike Moxon

This 85ft shaft opened up in March 2014 and can be found about half way along the fence that is almost opposite the track to Charterhouse Warren Farm.

There is an obvious spoil heap around the shaft that raises the entrance above the surrounding land and it is lined with about 10ft of ginging.



The New Lid

MM

The covering of earth and stones collapsed after the heavy rain of last winter, it is not clear whether there was a wooden lid supporting this (that has rotted away), but the stones weren't large enough to bridge the gap by themselves.



Ginging

MM

Amongst the ginging is a smooth hollow made of clay, although the reason for this is not obvious. The shaft enters a natural rift that has been worked on by the miners, which is mostly 6 foot across and 2 foot wide, although it reaches 10 foot across just below the ginging and narrows down for the next 20 feet. At this point it changes angle slightly so there is a rub point with ancient rope marks in the rock from past hauling. There are also drill marks and signs of ochre amongst the calcite, plus some large dog tooth crystals. The bottom of the shaft is still narrowing down with earth from the entrance collapse covering loose rocks and doesn't look as though there are any side passages.



Key Stone for Ginging
MM



The Bottom

MM



Key Stone for Ginging

MM

CHARTERHOUSE CAVE

by Andrew Horeckyj

Date: Sat 5th July 2014 (Barbecue day)
Participants: Jeremy Gilson (leader), Karen Fendley, Andrew Horeckyj.

This was a short trip around the upper *classic* section of Charterhouse Cave- the yellow bit in the Mendip Underground book. Jeremy wanted to do a camera trip to record some of its impressive sights and neither Karen nor I had visited it before, so were happy to make-up the group.



Andrew in Singing Stal chamber Jeremy Gilson

I wouldn't normally take a camera on a first trip through, since I wouldn't know where I wanted to use it, but Jeremy had his shots and angles worked-out for a couple of locations. I had a slight concern over the camera Pelicase in what was expected to be a fairly tight cave, but Jeremy said that it would go ok and would just be awkward.

I was a bit of a last minute addition- given my return from Norway the previous night and had to drive down early in the morning. Jeremy – it transpired, decided he didn't want to lug the camera around so left it at home, but I'd thrown mine into the back of the Land rover anyway and so by a slightly random fashion, the original intent was realised.



Karen in Midsummer Chamber Andrew Horeckyj



"The Blobs" formation in the Citadel AH

Approaching the cave, I was more than a little apprehensive about the trip into what I seemed to think would be an exceptionally challenging hole from what I'd read in Mendip Underground, but I think I must have been tired and stressed from the journey, because I was confusing Charterhouse with the write-up for *Eastwater Cavern*- a cave for ferrets and weasels only. So, once inside the entrance we came to the top of the initial rift and I thought 'strewth, this is going to be tight!' Once at the bottom it became clear that there was a slightly wider section that would allow you to pass without jamming your helmet fast, so it was only an awkward crawl – with hissing and spitting to the cross-rift. The old gated tube was not exactly roomy- but well-polished, so not an issue and it's interesting to read that it is supposed to be

a good gauge of the accessibility of the rest of the extensive system.



The Curly Wurly Stal formation, seen down a narrow side rift and illuminated by Jeremy's helmet light, from a second rift. AH

The first "grand view" location was Midsummer chamber, which is beautifully decorated and would be reason enough to bring a camera the short distance from the entrance to record it. The passage becomes a bit more roomy before the climb up to the great expanse of The Citadel. This was going to take a bit of work to try to capture it on a fixed focal length compact camera, which has – in old-



A detail view of the Singing Stal formation- you can see the network of fine channels eroded into the formation, which produces the sound as water percolates through it AH

fashioned 35mm speak- a fixed 35mm semi-wide lens, albeit a very well made one. There was some issue getting the Firefly units to trigger, possibly due to the weak flash on the camera, despite turning-off helmet LED lamps, which can interfere with flash recognition because of their strobe-light behaviour. Anyway, I did manage to get a three-frame montage of the main chamber, which does just about capture the sense of the space and a couple of shots of *The Blobs*, which look weirder and more alien the closer you get.

Our final stop was the *Grotto of the Singing Stal*, where a few more pics were taken. The stal was even singing for us- the water percolating down through the network of criss-crossing channels in the formation, which is being eroded away, produces the sound.

The return is a reversal of the way-in, so the initial tight rift had to be negotiated in reverse, after the awkward crawl. For the taller caver, pulling up by the arms to achieve some useful footholds makes this a straightforward affair- with a fair bit of huffing and puffing, but for those of more average height, simply reaching these useful handholds with enough elbow-leverage is a challenge. So it is then and *only then* that you realize that dragging around a portable step in the form of a Pelicase is something that everyone might consider!



Karen observing the Blobs in The Citadel Andrew Horeckj



Jeremy and Karen in the grotto of the Singing Stal

AH

FETCH ME MY BROWN PANTS!

By Richard Carey

22/7/2014 Sima Gesm. Chris and Richard's most excellent adventure to Andalucía

The road from La Nava to the Ranger station is in places precipitous, winding with steep hairpins, virtually no passing spaces and for the most part unmade. The views are amazing and you can see all the way to the coast. Eyes on the road driver! The level of concentration required is not quite as bad as the road to Tolox, which clings vertiginously to the mountainside with drops of up to 500 feet, but that was another pair of pants.

After that the 30 minute walk to the cave entrance was quite tame. Kitted up and descended the 5M entrance pitch. Sit harness only as a short crawl leads to the infamous Gatera Puta. Just a little tight not Eastwater. This was followed by a step ledge, then some short climbs to short pitch with a devi-



The entrance to Sima Gesm

Chris Binding

ation. Another short step climb and then the head of P115. My Lupine could not see the bottom even on full power. Although seeing the lights of others below gave a sense of grandeur. Awesome pitch broken up into very manageable rebelays. Just focus on the job in hand. They were mostly right-handed except for one. Almost abseiled into the loop but got away with it. From here there was some awkward traversing and little pitches over the almost dry streamway soon arriving at Vivac -300 m.

The return journey was hard as the traverse pitches were difficult. This is a very warm cave and I was over-dressed in my MTDE undersuit and despite carrying 2 1/2 litres of liquid became dehydrated. The 115 was relentless but straightforward although quite strenuous. Gatera Puta appeared to have shrunk on the way probably because I was quite pumped up. This was not the sports trip I had expected. Time underground 5 1/2 hours



Richard in Sima Gesm

Chris Binding

CAVE CONSERVATION AT WITHYHILL

By Tom Harrison



Withyhill Formations TH

Having arrived on Mendip early, before an evening digging session in Grebe, I found myself at a bit of a loose end. I contacted Chris Binding to see what his daytime plans were and he invited me to go to a cave I hadn't yet visited in Fairy Quarry, called Withyhill. His intention was for a conservation session: taping and retaping formations, which I was only too happy to assist with!

Mendip Underground 5, describes Withyhill as "one of the most beautifully decorated caves in the country" and I would heartily agree with this view. The book also adds, "the passages are generally fairly narrow and many of these formations are in extremely vulnerable locations." This is why it is so imperative that the taping is maintained and properly positioned so that many more can enjoy this beautiful cave.



Chris B taping off curtains TH

Climbing down the entrance concrete pipe, over boulders and into a rift, Chris pointed out the flood marks a few feet above, making me wish I'd taken a longer look at the forecast for the day, but I soon forgot about this as we went further into the cave to see the beautiful Gour, Helictites, and other pretties, as well as some fairly large fossils.

This wasn't a tourist trip though so we got down to some work and I assisted Chris in retaping. Chris used electrical fencing tape. This is both strong and hardwearing and has the added benefit of the metal in the tape being reflective so becoming more obvious, yet, in my opinion, less intrusive than the orange tape often used.



Fossil with a finger for scale! TH

After a few hours work we left the cave but I hope to visit again in the future to see the Glistening Pool Series area of the cave. I believe Chris has subsequently returned to the cave to finish off the conservation work.

My camera and photography skills do not do this cave justice, but I have included a few photos so you are able to get an idea anyway!



MENDIP NEWS



J'Rat digging awards, 22nd Nov. 2014

The annual digging awards take place at the Hunters on the 22nd November.

After recent Mendip successes, rumour has it that this year's award may go to a team in the north, unless

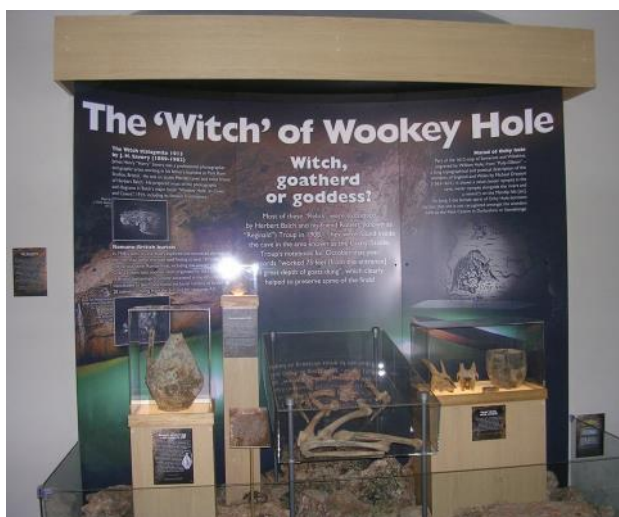
someone has been very good at keeping a secret.

Although the club has, as always, been very actively digging throughout the last 12 months, it would appear that the MCG are saving up to make some big breakthroughs in the coming 12 months instead!

New Display at Wells Museum

If you are in Wells in the coming weeks, be sure to check out the new Balch Room Centerpiece, "Witch, goatherd or goddess?" a display of bones and associated finds from Wookey Hole Cave. The owners of Wookey Hole Caves provided generous funding for this display and the Mendip Hills AONB Sustainability Fund also gave financial assistance towards the remaining cabinet displays.

While you are at the museum check out the artifacts from Bone Hole, the pot and skulls were found by MCG members Bernard Reeves and Arthur Cox in the 1970s.



Wells Museum photos by Joan Goddard

Pig's Hole

You may have recently noticed some activity going on by the road as you drive down Cheddar gorge. This may well be the digging at Pig's Hole. Andrew Atkinson of the WCC was approached to dig the cave by Cheddar Caves Ltd., to fill in the gap in the survey in this area of the gorge. Andrew reports he and his team

are currently digging down through calcite in rocks. Steady progress is being made and a blog is kept at www.wotcc.org.uk/pigs for anyone who wants more information on how they are getting on.

Digfest 2014

During the same weekend as the MCG June members weekend, the 1st ever Mendip Digfest was also taking place.

Friday

A group of us from the MCG headed over to the Hunters in the evening to see what all the fuss was about and to have a free drink or two!

In the long room at the Hunters several different dig teams displayed their efforts and most had sign up sheets to offer the chance for volunteers to come and see the work and to lend a hand the following day.



Digfest at the Hunters Graham Price



The Long Room with Dig Displays Graham Price

Ed Waters would be leading a team into Grebe and despite Chris Binding's essay on the risks of digging and sign up sheet asking for 'victims' blood types, Ed still got a full party. Having enjoyed reading Joan Goddard's interesting accounts of all the work going on in Longwood Valley, in MCG News, I decided to sign up for a trip with the diggers at Longwood Valley Sink.

Later in the evening Roger and Jackie Dors were presented with a gift for their Golden Wedding Anniversary which many cavers and caving clubs including the MCG had contributed to.

Saturday

After a hearty breakfast various different digging groups met up and headed off to different parts of Mendip. I got changed and headed to Longwood Valley, parking up and then walking off down the Valley floor past Longwood Swallet to the new entrance to Longwood Valley Sink. Water only flows here when Longwood Swallet cannot take enough water, so I was able to see the dug channel and the wonderful stone walling which prevents the bank and new concrete shaft being undermined.



Roger and Jackie Dors Golden Wedding Presentation TH



Longwood Valley Sink entrance and it's rift when taking water

Joan Goddard

Alison Moody

The rift inside the cave was dug in the 70's but has since been partially backfilled and partially just silted up with all the debris from flood events which had caused flooding in the gorge deluges in recent winters.

It is an interesting site as it has either been the overflow for Longwood Swallet for a long time or possibly was the original Valley Sink. It takes a lot of water when it has to and when it isn't choked, so there is a fair amount of expectation surrounding the dig. My job during the visit was to load buckets and rocks from the rifts current floor and to assist with the hauling up the

8m rift and then through the concrete shaft with the aid of a winch. A hard days work but no breakthrough!

I believe that since Digfest, work has concentrated away from the rift in a phreatic tube which is just below the exit from the concrete shaft.

On Saturday evening there was a BBQ and a Sofa race for people who still had the energy after a long days digging.

I've heard the planning for Digfest 2015 is already underway, I'm looking forward to it!

Has the 'The Lost Cave of Hutton' been found?

Find out at Wells Museum on Thursday 27th November at 7.30pm. • **ENTRY FREE** • **BAR (not free!!)**

In **1757** the Reverend Catcott entered a cave near Hutton containing many bones of African animals.



The Excavation in 2014 Photo Joan Goddard

He based his "Treaty of the Deluge" on this and other bone caves. The cave was subsequently "lost" but rediscovered in **1828** by David Williams, Vicar of Bleadon, who found more bones - after which the cave was again lost.

In **1970** Axbridge Caving Group began searching for it and a few small entrances were found in an area of old ochre mines. In **2005** Upper Canada Cave (77m long) was discovered.

Digging resumed in **2010** and after much laborious hand digging a 12 ton excavator was brought in - with Biff Frith as the driver. The 1970s cave entrances were re-located and linked to the Upper Canada Cave system increasing its length to 103m.

Current diggers at the site are convinced they have found the Lost Cave of Hutton; the presentation at Wells Museum will consider the evidence and a Jury will decide whether or not they are right!

Joan Goddard

The Axbridge Caving Group present :

HUTTON CAVERN REDISCOVERED? THE EVIDENCE.

The talks :

Chris Richards - Catcott & Williams explorations 1767 & 1823 and the digs in the 1970's

Alan Gray - The discovery of Upper Canada Cave in 2007 and the ACG digs 2010 to 2014.

Professor Danielle Schreve - Discussing the bones found by Williams in 1823.

Alan Gray presents the case that the Lost Cave of Hutton has been rediscovered by the ACG diggers to a jury of three

Professor Danielle Schreve - A comparison of the 1823 bones with those excavated by the ACG in 2013/14

FREE

Venue - Wells & Mendip Museum Date - 27 November 2014
Time 7:30pm

FREE

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

By Joan Goddard

Light into Darkness: 30 years as an Adventure Cameraman, by Sid Perou, 2013. I think everyone knows of Sid Perou. Many will have seen his films on television, at Hidden Earth and also listened to his talks on the subject. A review in Descent 235 points out that the book is self-published and is prone to typographical errors and suchlike, but also recommends you should not be put off. I agree. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book and was either holding my breath at the escapades Sid and his associates got themselves into, or laughing out loud at hilarious incidents, caving and otherwise. An added bonus is a 45 min DVD showing clips from the films mentioned in the text. The book is printed on demand and to obtain a copy (£18) email Sid at sidperou@bopenworld.com

Exploring the Archaeological Sites of the Dordogne, France, Clifton Antiquarian Club, 2008. 32pp booklet giving a brief description of 19 sites including caves (*donated*).



Gouffre Berger: L'esprit d'équipe, by Mark Wright, Robbie Shone & others, 2014. This book was launched at Hidden Earth 2014, the result of seven photographic expeditions and four years of work. It is a high quality, large format, 'coffee-table' type book with 256 pages, most of them displaying superb photographs. Text is English and French. There are four parts; Section 1 is the environs and route to the cave, Section 2 is a history of exploration, Section 3 is about organising an expedition and Section 4 is a description of the cave accompanied by photos and rigging guides. This book is a must-buy for anyone who has been down the Berger and at £40 is good value. Even if you haven't descended the cave it is a lovely book to have. All profits go to the Ghar Parau Foundation (providing grants to British Caving expeditions) and the Nicola Association (development of a 'through-rock' communications system to assist in cave rescue). Treat yourself or add it to your Christmas list!

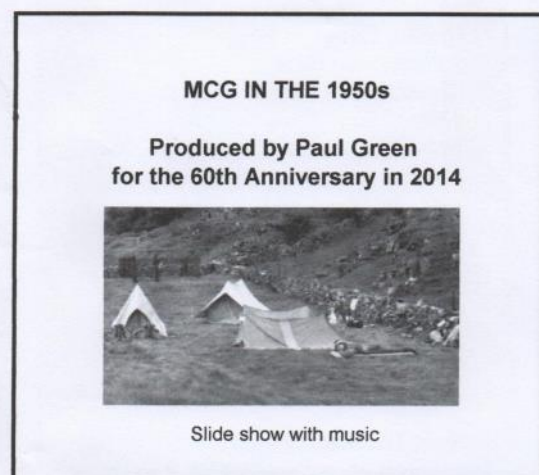
"A must buy for anyone who has been down the Berger"

Exploring the Limestones of South Devon - a guide to walks that discover the limestone and caves of the county, by J Wilmut, C Proctor & D Jean, 2014. Published by William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust. A nicely presented and well written little A5 book, 121pp with a useful introduction to the geology, details of 13 walks and 'information panels' on selected subjects. Each walk has a clear map with numbered points of interest which are described in the text. Caves, many of them small but often historically important, are located and described. This is not a guide to recreational caving so may be of more interest to 'retired' cavers on a short break to the English Riviera . . .

MCG in the 1950s

A DVD of slides of the MCG in the 1950s has been donated to the library by Paul Green who was a member between 1957 and 1962.

Although he and Jack Green left the Group in the early 1960s they have travelled from Canada for both the 50th and 60th dinners.



MENDIP CAVING GROUP

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Mendip Caving Group is a registered Charity
No. 270088
Email
secretary@mendipcavinggroup.org.uk

Thanks to all the contributors.

Special Thanks to;

Joan Goddard
Mike Moxon
Richard Carey
Chris Binding
Bernard Reeves
Andrew Horeckyj

And to all the photographers' contributions, as acknowledged.

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Mendipcavinggroup.org.uk



Founded 1954

Please send any submissions, photos, comments, letters to Tom Harrison

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Dorset
BH4 9LT

The Mendip Caving Group consists of some 120+ members of all abilities who have banded together to share resources such as ladders, ropes, caving library and accommodation on Mendip.

The Group is registered as a charity in the UK, and our objectives are: For the benefit of the public, the furtherance of all aspects of the scientific study and conservation of caves and their related features.

Membership is open to anyone over the age of 18 years with an interest in the objects of the Group.

Members have use of the Group's cottage at reduced rates, free use of Group equipment and free access to the library. They also receive the newsletter of the MCG and Occasional Publications (a journal-type document published infrequently.)

MCG Committee

Secretary	Brian Snell	secretary@mendipcavinggroup.org.uk
Treasurer	Karen Fendley	treasurer@mendipcavinggroup.org.uk
Social Secretary	Richard Carey	social@mendipcavinggroup.org.uk
Librarian/Recorder	Bob Templeman	recorder@mendipcavinggroup.org.uk
Caving Secretary	Kevin Speight	caving@mendipcavinggroup.org.uk
Tackle Master	Biff Frith	tackle@mendipcavinggroup.org.uk
Cottage Warden	Russ Porter	warden@mendipcavinggroup.org.uk
Editor	Tom Harrison	editor@mendipcavinggroup.co.uk

DRAFT
MINUTES OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON SATURDAY THE 26TH April 2014 AT
The Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy
The Mendip Caving Group is a registered Charity No. 270088
Chairman:
Ed Waters

Full Members present: 21

Others present (non-voting) : 3 (1 probationary, 2 associate members)

Attendance List: Bob Templeman, Linda Milne, Ed Waters, Karen Fendley, Sue Fennell, Hayley Clark, Roy Kempston. Fiona Kempston. Brian Snell, Bill Chadwick, Tim Francis, Yvonne Rowe, Martin Rowe, Bernard Reeves, Peat Bennet, Steve Porter, Russ Porter, Tom Harrison, Kevin Speight, Joan Goddard, Bryan Pitman, Keith Knight, Lewis (Biff) Frith, Richard Carey.

1. Apologies for absence
 - 1.1 Doug Harris, Steve Church, Pat Walsh, Tony Knibbs, Denise Knibbs, Andrea Russe, Mick Norton.
 - 1.2 No requests for postal votes had been received.
2. **Minutes of the previous AGM held on 23rd March 2013**
3. Agreement that the minutes (above) are a true record of that meeting .
 - 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were examined and as there were no comments it was proposed the Chair and seconded by Roy Kempston to accept the AGM minutes as a true and accurate record. Unanimously agreed.
4. **Matters arising .**

10.04 Bed Nights It was agreed that the treasurer's recommendation that the status quo be kept for the time being, as there had been an increase in guest groups staying at the cottage together with contributions from the donation box.

5. Officers reports and matters arising from those reports.

5.1 Secretary's Report 2013-2014- Brian Snell

During the election of officers at last year's AGM, when it appeared that nobody was going to take over the Secretary role, for some reason that I am still trying to fathom out, I said I would stand for the position. It was strange thing to do especially as I had decided to take a break from committee work. Well, I reasoned that it was going to be an important year with 60th anniversary coming up and having spent enough time on the committee I figured that there would probably be just a little more to do than some of the other posts. What was I thinking? I was already in the early planning process to some major alterations to my house, which was going to take up months of my time. Where was I going to find the time for this?

All I can say is it is just as well that I am not working full time these days. Secretarial work seems to occur on a number of occasions every week. Now I understand what a pain in the neck it is when members don't renew their membership in December and leave it until mid-January. Something I admit I have done in the past but it means that ordering BCA cards has to be done twice. I could whinge on about other things but then I would have to justify why, when asked, I am prepared to stand for another year. I guess it is because I believe that you can get a lot out of belonging to a great organisa-

tion like the MCG but equally, as my father once told me, it is only right to give something back. Hopefully this coming year will run a little soother, now I know what the role entails. However, if it has been a desperate ambition for someone else in the MCG to be Secretary, I will gracefully stand aside.

In the mean time I would like to say thanks to Richard Carey who is standing down this year. He has done a great job as Caving Secretary and has certainly helped to expand the membership. I would also like to thank Sue Fennell who has been a great help to me and still continues to be so by making the transition of handing over the Treasurer role to Karen Fendley as smooth as possible.

Finally, some posts will be vacated this year, so I hope that there will be no difficulty in someone being prepared to take over and give a bit back to the group. Sometimes it can be a little onerous being on the committee, but it is equally rewarding in other ways.

Cheers and happy anniversary MCG
Brian Snell

5.2 Treasurer's Report 2013- 2014 – Sue Speight

I have been unable to attend many committee meetings this year but I have continued to maintain the accounts and kept up to date with goings on via email.

As I write this report the accounts have had an initial examination and all being well, will be fully examined by the date of the AGM. I would like to thank Karen for her courier duties in passing the records to Roy and Linda for their time to examine the records.

At present we have 115 members, which has reduced from the 121 that we had this time last year. We had a total of 131 at the end of the year. But despite this the membership income in the accounts has increased. This is due to more income being received in November and December. This helps with the BCA insurance process which I would like to thank Brian for dealing with this year.

We have had an increase in day fees this year. This is the donations made in the shower box and the newly installed kitchen box. I would like to remind members to continue making a contribution based on the facilities of the cottage that is used.

We have also had a good year with income exceeding expenditure. Mostly due to last year including the installation of the LPG tank.

Although I am standing down as treasurer this year I will continue to support Karen and the group in the complex area of charity accounting.

5.3 Caving Secretary's Report 2013- 2014 – Richard Carey

It is with some regret that I have to announce that I am standing down as Caving Secretary. For two years now I have been offering trips to members around the Mendips. Whilst this has been successful in attracting new members; looking at the website it would appear that we are very active; it has failed to encourage existing members to cave more often than the members' weekend. In addition no-one has asked me to arrange trips nor volunteered to lead trips. There is caving going on but this appears to be in distinct groups of members caving together and not sharing. I have better things to do than chase people to go caving. The MCG is only busy once a month. I cave every weekend.

The uptake of guest leaders for Upper Flood Swallet continues although there have not been that many applications. Last year I led 19 tourist trips 9 of which were training trips for guest leaders. It would appear that for the most part majority of members visiting Upper Flood only want to dig. Unfortunately not all of us

share their enthusiasm for digging. There are now 4 from 8 who have completed the requisite number of trips.

I am disappointed by the lack of enthusiasm for caving, perhaps it is just me, but someone else might have more success.

Richard Carey

5.4 Cottage Warden's Report 2013- 2014- Russ Porter

Another busy 12 months has gone by since last year's AGM. Many man hours have seen some much needed improvements to Nordrach Cottage.

Over the 2013 October work weekend, Brian Snell and his team set about stripping back the 8 room dormer cladding, soffit and fascia boards that had begun to rot out. Thanks to their Stirling efforts the dormer has now been re-clad and should stand up to the worst weather Mendip can throw at it.

The wood burner was stripped and cleaned out and the chimney swept, masses of cleaning inside and outside the cottage was also done.

Ben Cooper and his team have installed us a new extractor fan in the shower area, thus is operated by a movement sensor within the cubical so does not require turning on or off for use.

There has been an incident at the cottage where someone received an electric shock from the kitchen sink. This was traced to a faulty electrical circuit and water in the outside light over the lawn area. Obviously this was very dangerous and needed immediate attention. Miguel Tome with myself as his minion, set about replacing the out of date consumer unit and changing all the old night storage heater supplies to some much needed double sockets in the bedrooms and living room. A few other faults were identified during the test and inspection of the installation which have now been rectified. The cottage electrics are now safe.

Keith Knight has kindly installed 2 new LED flood lights to the garden and was down areas, apart from being safer, these lights should help save the group in running costs due to their low energy consumption.

As always, a massive thank you to every member who gives their time and resources to help run the Mendip Caving Group.

Russ Porter
Cottage Warden

- 5.4.1** It was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Linda Milne that the Committee investigate the requirement for an electrical safety certificate ensure that any outstanding work be completed to accomplish this. Motion carried unanimously.
- 5.4.2** It was proposed by Russ Porter and seconded by Kevin Speight that the Committee investigate whether a french door could be installed to replace the lounge side window that met planning requirements. Motion carried with 1 objection.
- 5.4.3** Committee to review the electric power supply as to the most advantageous deal now that the economy 7 radiators were not now the primary heating source.

5.5 Tacklemaster's Report 2013- 2014 - Biff Frith

As tackle master I have only done the bare minimum required during the last year due to other commitments, that said I am happy to stand for another year and will try to do better, but I am also happy if another member would like to have a go at the job.

Over the year we have bought five replacement tackle sacks and sent five more for repair, Also six SRT ropes dated 2007 have been retired, these ropes had their MCG tags removed and were donated to our impoverished Spanish caving friends at the end of the 2013 MCG trip to Andalusia.

The above ropes have been replaced with six new ones of 60, 50, 40, 28, 20, and 15 metres.

During 2014 five more static and six dynamic ropes all dated 2008 will be retired and replaced.

The fixed aids in Bone hole, Pine tree pot and Stainsbys shaft are in order, I have yet to organise a report on the fixed aids in Upper flood swallet.

The tackle store could be kept somewhat tidier, I have to accept some responsibility for this as I can only come down once a month, so I would ask all members who use the store to be as tidy as possible.

I take this opportunity to remind all members to please inform your friendly tackle master as to all loss, damage, or incidents that could unduly stress equipment during its use.

The present rope list is as follows

Dynamic Rope usage			Static Rope usage		
Id.	Length m.	Year	Id.	Length m.	Date
A	20	2011	S8	50	2014
F	15	2011	S5	40	2014
G	24	2011	S14	25	2008
E	15	2011	S7	60	2014
H	18	2011	S9	37	2008
I	20	2008	S11	32	2008
I	21	2011	S10	25	2008
D	12	2008	S2	28	2014
P	35	2008	S3	20	2014
Q	35	2008	S12	15	2014
S	40	2008	S15	23	2008
T	45	2008	S4	91	2012
			S6	89	2012

Lewis (Biff) Frith, Tackle master.

5.1.1 It was raised that the Bone Hole padlock and the 2 at Stainsby Shaft required replacement. Tackmaster to action.

5.6 Recorder/Librarian's Report 2013- 2014 - Bob Templeman

Another year with a number of good acquisitions for the library including the following small selection: **CNCC Rigging Guide Volumes 1 and 2, 2012** – produced by the CNCC Technical Group; **Earth Colours – Mendip and Bristol Ochre Mining** by Marie Clarke, Neville Gregory and Alan Gray, 2012; **Cave Biology – Life in Darkness** by Aldemaro Romero, 2009; **The Sid Perou Story the DVD** by Martin Baines, 2010; **Two surveys: La Cueva del Gato (Sistema Hundidero – Gato)** and **Sistema Re-publicano – Cabito** published by Federación Andaluza de Espeleología; **Speleo Vertical: DVD** by Andy Sparrow & Pete Isaacs; **Mendip Underground 5** by Alan Gray, Rob Taviner and Richard Witcombe. Two copies have

been bought, one strictly for reference and the other for loan issue at some future date when members have had the opportunity to purchase their own copies! Lastly, I bring to your attention **Grebe Swallet Revealed**, by Chris Binding, *Subterranea Issue 34 Dec 2013*, A summary history of Grebe Swallet from its appearance after the 1968 floods to present day. Subterranea Britannica made a grant to Chris for the replacement of the 40-year old rusting lid which had reached the end of its life. All have been fully reviewed in the Group's newsletters.

Bernard Reeves has scanned MCG Journals 5, 6,7 and 8 and I need to establish the best way for members to have access to them, together with other digital records such as the lists for books, periodicals (both UK and foreign) held in the library.

Once again I must give thanks to Joan Goddard, Bernard Reeves and Mike Moxon for their valuable time, ideas and contributions to the running of the library.

Bob Templeman

5.7 Social Secretary's Report 2013- 2014- Andrea Russe

In the absence of Andrea, Richard Carey outlined the year's activities including the Barn Dance, AGM dinner and various spontaneous events such as the successful Spanish Night. It was planned that another Barn Dance would take place on the October members weekend. Members were encouraged to offer to arrange more semi formal events.

5.8 Editor's Report 2013-2014- Tom Harrison

After a relatively short period as a member of the MCG, I found myself at the (2013) AGM being nominated and (semi) volunteering into filling the role of editor which had been vacant for a while. I think I said, well I could give it a go as guest editor and see how it goes!

Well a year and 4 editions of MCG News on, If no one else wishes to take over or has any objections to me continuing, then I would be willing to carry on.

It has been an interesting learning curve! I took inspiration from previous MCG news editions and really just thought about what might be of interest, and having no previous experience of editing or publishing anything at all, I just decided to keep things relatively simple using Microsoft's Publisher and breaking the journal into received articles, trips, digging, future events and general information. By sending the Journal as a PDF file, I was also able to use hyperlinks, so that videos, emails and web address can be accessed simply by clicking on the link.

As I'm sure every previous editor has said before me, the publication is only as good as the articles and content received from the members. Accordingly, I must especially thank Joan Goddard, and Chris Binding, for having something me for each edition published so far. I would also like to thank Mike Moxon, Mark Ward, Ed Waters, Bernard Reeves, Brian Snell, Bill Chadwick, Ben Cooper Karen Fendley, Richard Carey, and Tony Knibbs, for the articles I have received from them and for everyone for the other bits and pieces I have received from them or for allowing their logbook, photos and other pieces to be used.

Please could I ask everyone to try to come up with something in the coming year, for the newsletter. It really doesn't matter how small or what the caving related contribution is, it could lead or assist with a much larger article!

And one more thing I would ask on top of everyone keeping the snippets, news etc coming in, is that I receive some more photos! I know lots of people take cameras underground and to MCG events, I would really like to share some of those photos!

Tom Harrison

5.9- Other Officers' Reports

a. Trustees' Report Year ended 31st December 2013- Ben Cooper

2013 was a fabulous year for our investments with an overall return of just over 22%.

Last year we changed our investment strategy to be predominantly income based rather than growth based. Experience indicates that the net return from income funds is as good if not better than growth funds, with the added flexibility of providing income or increased growth if the income is re-invested. As anticipated, this realised over £1100 income into Group funds.

Investment Valuation and historic comparison

	31-12-2008	31-12-2009	31-12-2010	31-12-2011	31-12-2012	31-12-2013
FD Brown-Shipley	£1,239.35	£1,767.82	£1,969.49	£1,881.92	£1,938.47	£2,216.34
Henderson Global Care	£2,267.33	£2,719.43	£3,124.22	£3,065.30	£3,629.82	£4,750.00
Henderson (New Star)	£1,591.02	£1,900.60	£2,168.09	£2,123.84	£2,405.44	£3,004.31
M&G Charifund Acc	£7,358.47	£8,514.74	£9,633.19	£9,593.56	£0.00	
M&G Charifund Inc	£3,446.45	£3,752.70	£4,027.63	£3,815.35	£15,008.57	£18,002.48
Premier (Credit Suisse)	£1,699.78	£1,920.96	£2,050.89	£1,999.67	£5,969.29	£7,352.03
Rathbone Income Fund	£1,860.13	£2,289.42	£2,717.08	£2,709.13	£3,112.24	£3,852.08
Schroders US	£2,542.69	£3,151.67	£3,955.22	£3,772.52	£0.00	
Total funds	£22,005.22	£26,017.34	£29,645.81	£28,961.29	£32,063.83	£39,177.24
COIF	£5,380.60	£5,439.31	£5,474.62	£5,513.66	£5,562.21	£5,589.42
Total investment value	£27,385.82	£31,456.66	£35,120.43	£34,474.95	£37,626.04	£44,766.66

Unit Prices and historic comparison

Investment	Unit Price 31/12/2012	Unit Price 31/12/2013	Unit Price Growth
FD Brown Shipley (Solus)	£1.3813	£2,216.34	14.3%
Henderson Global Care ...	£0.9313	£4,750.00	26.5%
Henderson Higher Income...	£0.3953	£3,004.31	20.7%
M&G Charifund Income	£11.9982	£18,002.48	19.9%
Premier (CS) Monthly Income Fund	£1.5675	£7,352.03	23.2%
Rathbone Income Fund	£6.7606	£3,852.08	19.3%
TOTAL Investments			21.4%

Investment Analysis

Investment	Valuation			Realised In-	Re-investment ³	Yield ⁴	Performance ⁵		
	31/12/2012	31/12/2013	Growth ¹				Value	Gain	Gain-%
COIF	£5,562.21	£5,589.42	0.5%		£27.21	0.5%	£5,589.42	£27.21	0%
FD Brown Shipley	£1,938.47	£2,216.34	14.3%	£47.71		2.5%	£2,264.05	£325.58	17%
Henderson Global Care ...	£3,629.82	£4,750.00	30.9%		£152.00	4.2%	£4,750.00	£1,120.18	31%
Henderson Higher	£2,405.44	£3,004.31	24.9%		£98.55	4.1%	£3,004.31	£598.87	25%
M&G Charifund Income	£15,008.5	£18,002.48	19.9%	£795.32		5.3%	£18,797.80	£3,789.23	25%
Premier Monthly Income	£5,969.29	£7,352.03	23.2%	£310.55		5.2%	£7,662.58	£1,693.29	28%
Rathbone Income Fund	£3,112.24	£3,852.08	23.8%		£135.78	4.4%	£3,852.08	£739.84	24%
TOTAL Investments	£37,626.04	£44,766.66	19.0%	£1,153.58	£413.54	4.2%	£45,920.24	£8,294.20	22.0%

Valuation Growth is simply the valuation of the current holding compared to last years, including any increased stock holding.

Realised Income is the income received into the Group's current account; effectively withdrawals from the investment funds.

Re-investment is the income re-invested in the investment funds. The re-investment amount is already included in Valuation.

Yield is the income as a percentage of the invested value (i.e. the value at the start of the year)

Performance is overall gain, taking into account the capital growth and income.

5.9.a.i The Trustees recommended that the income, that is approx £3k, be re-invested in the appropriate accounts. Sue Fennell to prepare a expenditure forecast and to re-invest the surplus

£3k less the appropriate deduction to maintain an appropriate bank balance.

b. Conservation and Access Officer's Report 2013- 2014

Post vacant, NTR

c. Rescue Wardens Report 2013- 2014-

Richard Carey reported that he had stopped attending the "exclusive" meetings, but not withstanding, he recommended that the new caving secretary organise a rescue meet weekend.

6. Election of Honorary Officer for 2014- 2015

6.01 A motion that "nominations for election be considered "en bloc" was proposed by the Chair , seconded by Bob Templeman, and passed "nem con".

6.02 A motion to elect the following Officers and Committee for 2013/2014 was proposed by Chair, seconded by Linda Milne and passed "nem con".

Secretary	Brian Snell	Bob Templeman	Bill Chadwick
Treasurer	Karen Fendley	M Tomme	BillChadwick
Caving Secretary	Vacant		
Cottage Warden	Russell Porter	Mark Ward	Karen Dendley
Tackle Master	Lewis (Biff) Frith	Brian Snell	Bob Templeman
Editor	Tom Harrison	Karen Fendley	Bob Templeman
Recorder/Librarian	Robert Templeman	Mike Moxon	Brian Snell
Social Secretary	Richard Carey	Brian Snell	Bob Templeman

The vacant post of Caving Secretary was discussed and Kevin Speight offered, subject to constraints of forthcoming fatherhood, to put himself forward for co-option. Action by Committee.

7. Election of Non-Committee Posts

Rescue Warden – remains vacant

Conservation Officer - Hayley Clark

8. Election of Examiners 2014- 2015 – Roy Kempston and Linda Milne re-appointed.

9. Motions

None received

10. Any other business

10.1 Members Area on the website - Bill Chadwick agreed to take this forward.

10.2 T Shirts – Russ Porter said these would be available that evening at the Annual Dinner.

10.3 Titanium Crowbar – Biff Frith announced that the crowbar had been suitable mounted on a suitable display board.

11. Date and venue of next Annual General Meeting. - It was proposed by Richard Carey and seconded by Linda Milne that next year's AGM be held on Saturday 18th April 2015, Time 10 a.m., venue The Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy (to be confirmed).