

MCG Officer's Reports 2021

It's been another very unusual year. We had to postpone our AGM originally planned for May due to pandemic restrictions. This AGM is being held some 11 months or so after last year's meeting. Hopefully, in 2022 we will get back on track for a Spring AGM.

Please find herein the reports of the various club officers.

Secretary's report

Needless to say, the pandemic has resulted in a substantial reduction in the activities of the MCG. We had a brief reprieve starting in August 2020 but by Christmas we were all locked down again till May. The committee worked very hard through the winter and spring to try and keep up with the changing government restrictions and guidance. Sometimes our carefully made arrangements for access to the MCG only lasted a few days. We much appreciated the way in which the membership went along with our plans. Meeting by Zoom was essential to enable our responsiveness. We intend to continue holding our committee meetings virtually – freeing up more weekend time for caving.

We have taken the opportunity offered by Lockdown to carry out some significant improvements at our cottage. Jason Kirby will describe them in detail in his report. Many thanks go to Jason and his helpers. Dan Mathews has reorganised our Tackle Store in its new home. These improvements have been funded by significant local government business rate payer's pandemic grant monies and also a Covid restart grant provided by Sport England – well done to Tom Harrison for applying for that on our behalf. There are still significant surplus funds available to us from these grant monies. They have more than made up for our loss of income due to the pandemic so that MCG remains on a sound financial footing.

Another task that we managed to get on with during Lockdown was the production of our draft constitution as a Charitable Incorporated organisation. Conversion to a CIO will serve to modernise our governance. Again, this was only possible because we could hold weekly meetings, lasting several hours each, by Zoom. This has been a major effort by Steve Porter, Brian Snell, Ben Cooper, Tim Francis, Tom Harrison and myself. Our thanks go to Roy Kempston who did a great proof-reading job for us. The draft CIO constitution has been open for comment by members during June and July. We believe that it is now in a very good state so that you will be able to vote it through at this AGM and set in progress our conversion to a CIO.

As the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, we have managed to get caving and digging again. We have had a surge of new members admirably supported by our caving secretary Mark Edwards and helpers. In August it was great to be back at the cottage for our first post-pandemic social organised by Nicky Pearce (despite the unseasonal weather).

Our Editor Richard Carey has produced several great News letters. I am sure you would all echo my thanks to him for that work. Sadly, Richard has recently opted to stand down, so we are looking for a new person to take on this important and rewarding role. Dave Lossel has made a start on streamlining the library and has been a most effective minute taker for our committee meetings in his role as Recorder.

Bill Chadwick

Treasurer's report

Tom Harrison writes:

An exceptional year has resulted in a somewhat unusual set of accounts. Although unsurprisingly the cottage income was down over 50%, grants received have exceeded this loss of income and allowed the group to reopen in a Covid secure manner when lockdowns ceased.

Income

At the 2020 delayed AGM I provided a breakdown of the effects of lockdown to September 2020 and I forecasted an overall loss in bed nights income of approximately £2,000. This turned out to be fairly accurate, and even with the very restricted number of members able to use the facilities, and the end of year lockdown, we still managed an annual cottage income of £1,956.

We also had some concern that membership numbers might also be affected with members unable to cave or to attend social functions, however your loyalty is to be commended, along with the work of our caving secretary to get more people along when lockdown restrictions were lifted and we currently have 129 members as at 31/7/2021 (slightly down from 2020's membership of 133).

Income for other items such as for the AGM and XMAS dinners, as well as away trip payments were nil, however income for these is usually equal to the event's cost, so have little impact on the MCG's overall finances.

Government Grant Receipt and Expenditure

As discussed at the last AGM, we received a grant for £25,000 in April and a further £2,000 in December. As a committee we had some lengthy discussions about how this money should be used. At the AGM it was requested that all spending of this money was recorded separately.

Our first concern was that a long period of reduced activity at the club, as well as a reduction in membership numbers (as discussed above) would damage our financial stability, so it was decided to ringfence a large proportion of the grant money to help to mitigate any financial loss, should this occur.

Our second consideration was how we could use some of this money to make the club "Covid Secure." This involved spending on cleaning products and items such as hand sanitisers, soap and signage. Spending on these items totalled £418.

Our next consideration was how we could spend the grant on maintenance, replacement of older furniture and general improvements to ensure the future of the group. This included new windows, which have made a real difference to the insulating the property and should save on heating costs, new mattresses, and new chairs, replacing items that no longer satisfied fire safety requirements. Spending on these items totalled £13,389.

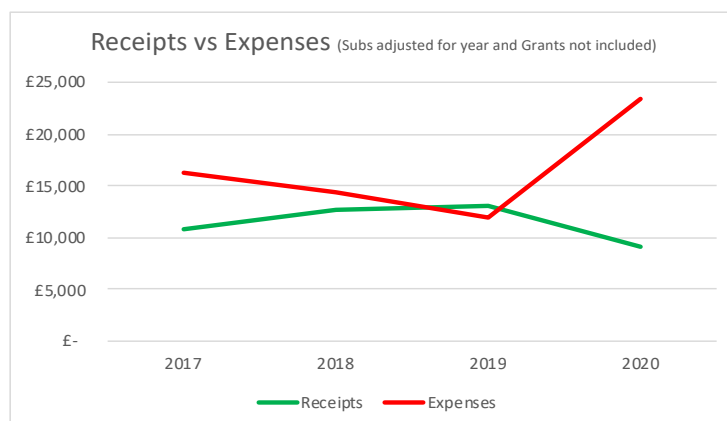
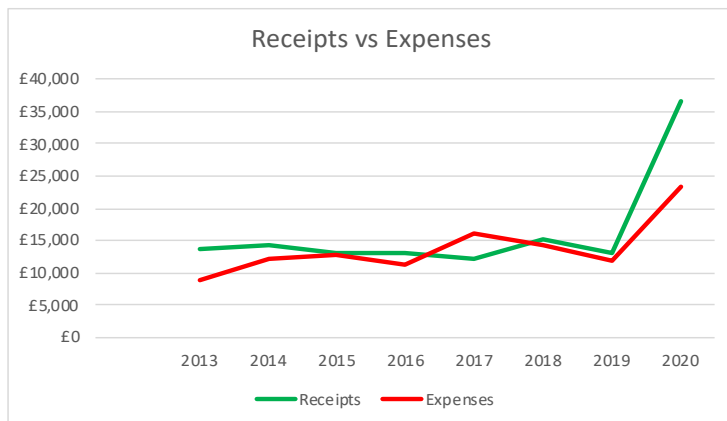
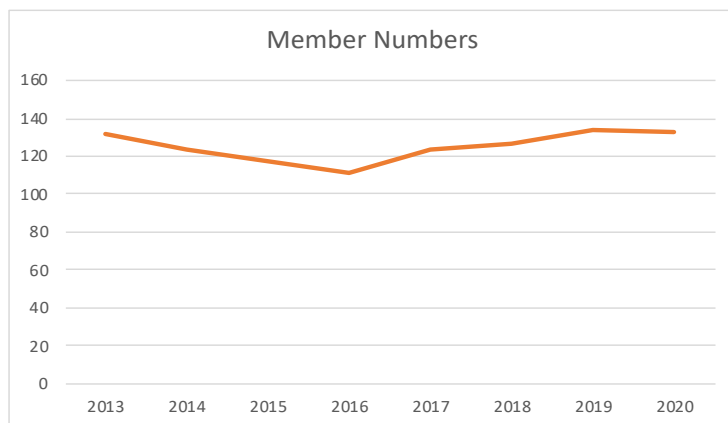
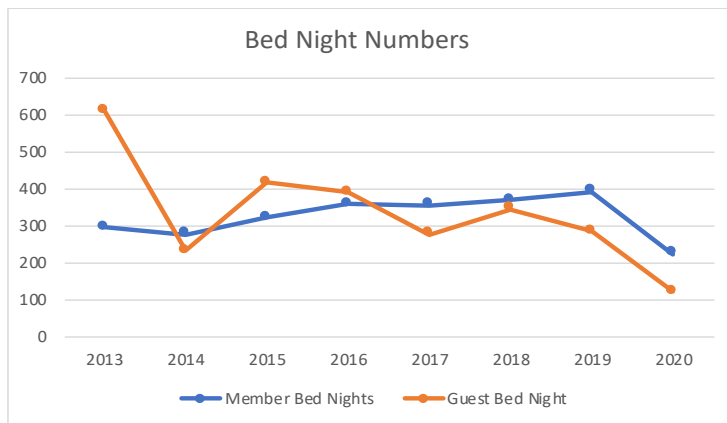
Our cottage warden was also able to complete a number of other maintenance tasks, repair works and improvements and these expenses totalled £1068.

The committee also agreed to purchase caving equipment to the cost of £1208. Other points to note from the expenditure listed below is that we received rate relief from April onwards, resulting in a reduction in rates, water & refuse spending of ~£1500.

Charity Name Mendip Caving Group			No (if any) 270088		
Receipts and payments accounts					
For the period from		Period start date 01/01/2020	To	Period end date 31/12/2020	
Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2019	VAR %
	£	£	£	£	
Receipts					
Cottage Income	-	-	-		
Day fees	7	-	7	99	-93%
Guest Fees	565	-	565	1,713	-67%
Members Fees	1,098	-	1,098	1,970	-44%
Other Income (incl deposits)	27,322	-	27,322	222	12207%
General income		-	-	-	
Annual dinner	-	-	-	766	-100%
CCC 14 day permits	4	-	4	21	-81%
Donations	12	-	12	412	-97%
Subs & BCA 2020	1,841	804	2,645	1,980	n/a
Subs & BCA 2021	2,636	971	3,607	3,116	n/a
Shop & Social	34	-	34	447	-92%
Away Meets Deposits	-	-	-	-	
XMAS Dinner	-	-	-	500	n/a
Other Income	60	-	60	282	-79%
Investment Income	1,186	-	1,186	1,521	-22%
Total receipts	34,764	1,775	36,539	13,048	180%
Payments					
Cottage Expenditure	-		-		
Insurance	1,221	-	1,221	1,114	10%
Light & Heat	1,922	-	1,922	2,412	-20%
Maintenance & Improvements COVID Direct	418	-	418		
Maintenance & Improvements COVID Indirect (Seating, Matress, Windows)	13,389	-	13,389		
Maintenance & Improvements Other	1,068	-	1,068	3,709	301%
Telephone & Internet & Computer costs	425	-	425	225	89%
Rates, Water & Refuse	1,282	-	1,282	2,830	-55%
Other expenditure	113		113	-	N/A
General Expenditure					
AGM Dinner	-	-	-	1,205	-100%
BCA Membership	130	-	130	130	0%
Caving equipment & permits	1,208	-	1,208	534	126%
Library	225	-	225	22	923%
Other expenditure	100	-	100	82	22%
Newsletter	221	-	221	215	3%
Shop & Social	-	-	-	106	-100%
Away Meets Costs	-	-	-	-	N/A
XMAS Dinner Cpsts	-	-	-	300	-100%
BCA	-	1,646	1,646	1,658	-1%
Investments	-	-	-		
Sub total	21,723	1,646	23,369	14,541	61%
Total payments	21,723	1,646	23,369	14,541	
Net of receipts/(payments)	13,041	129	13,170	(1,494)	
Cash funds last year end	15,157	1,799	16,956	16,956	
Cash funds this year end	28,198	1,928	30,127	15,463	
Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period					
Categories	Details		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted/ Designated to nearest £	
Cash funds	Santander		8,850	-	
	HSBC Current		15,600	1,328	
	Petty Cash		137	-	
	COIF Deposit		1,711	-	
	HSBC Savings		1,900	600	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
	Total cash		28,198	1,928	

Year by Year Comparisons

		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Member Bed Nights		296	277	322	358	356	370	394	226
Guest Bed Night		612	234	416	390	277	345	285	122
Member Bed Night Donations	£	984	£ 977	£ 1,125	£ 1,261	£ 1,780	£ 1,815	£ 1,970	£ 1,098
Guest Hut Night Donations	£	3,377	£ 2,121	£ 2,489	£ 2,170	£ 1,941	£ 2,190	£ 1,713	£ 565
Day Use Donation	£	271	£ 163	£ 207	£ 121	£ 169	£ 136	£ 99	£ 7
Member Subs	£	3,480	£ 3,320	£ 3,089	£ 2,895	£ 3,735	£ 3,935	£ 4,117	£ 4,137
Member Numbers		132	124	117	111	124	127	134	133
Receipts	£	13,616	£ 14,412	£ 12,989	£ 13,099	£ 12,295	£ 15,265	£ 13,048	£ 36,539
Expenses	£	8,811	£ 12,055	£ 12,822	£ 11,406	£ 16,178	£ 14,376	£ 11,942	£ 23,369
Difference	£	4,805	£ 2,357	£ 167	£ 1,693	£ (3,883)	£ 889	£ 1,106	£ 13,170
Receipts - Post Subs and Grants Adjustment (= receipts for the year - all subs and BCA received that year + subs and BCA that was actually for that year)					£ 10,871	£ 12,765	£ 13,048	£ 9,048	



Investment report

Ben Cooper has provided the following report.

Custodian Trustees Report 2020 for year ending 31st December 2020 v1.0

Ben Cooper

2020 was a terrible year for the stock market, though with some recovery at the end of the year total losses were -16%, but once interest and re-investment are taken into account this reduces to -9.5%. Further recovery has happened since then, and 2021 is on track to be a good year financially.

Investment Valuation and historic comparison

	31-12-2013	31/12/2014	31/12/2015	31/12/2016	31/12/2017	31/12/2018	31/12/2019	31/12/2020
Henderson Gbl Equity	£3,004.31	£3,193.62	£3,366.79	£5,731.31	£4,522.86	£4,157.18	£4,815.52	£4,858.32
Henderson UK Resp...	£4,750.00	£5,064.33	£5,483.02	£4,104.29	£6,311.40	£5,592.09	£7,120.08	£6,619.49
M&G Charifund Inc	£18,002.48	£17,990.22	£17,936.31	£19,206.60	£20,548.32	£17,813.22	£20,773.60	£17,169.51
Premier (Credit Suisse)	£7,352.03	£7,187.52	£7,473.13	£7,685.25	£8,149.46	£6,511.95	£7,782.73	£5,577.43
Rathbone Income Fund	£3,852.08	£4,076.24	£4,419.74	£4,756.34	£5,107.01	£4,635.29	£5,314.36	£4,873.99
SVS Brown-Shipley	£2,216.34	£2,196.20	£2,244.32	£2,489.94	£2,767.03	£2,520.22	£2,961.63	£3,317.77
Total funds	£39,177.24	£39,708.13	£40,923.31	£43,973.73	£47,406.08	£41,229.95	£48,767.92	£42,416.51
COIF	£5,589.42	£5,613.11	£5,638.41	£5,662.42	£5,675.63	£5,701.42	£5,733.88	£5,733.88
Total investment value	£44,766.66	£45,321.24	£46,561.72	£49,636.15	£53,081.71	£46,931.37	£54,501.80	£48,150.39

Unit Prices and historic comparison

Investment	Unit Price 31/12/2019	Unit Price 31/12/2020	Unit Price Growth
Henderson Global Equity ...	£0.6240	£0.6085	-2.5%
Henderson UK Responsible ...	£1.4000	£1.2520	-10.6%

M&G Charifund Income	£16.6069	£13.7257	-17.3%
Premier (CS) Monthly Income Fund	£2.0437	£1.4646	-28.3%
Rathbone Income Fund	£9.7766	£8.3642	-14.4%
SVS Brown Shipley*	£2.7576	£3.0892	12.0%
TOTAL Investments			-15.9%

Investment Analysis

Investment	Valuation			Realised Income ²	Re- investment ³	Yield ⁴	Performance ⁵		
	31/12/2017	31/12/2018	Growth ¹				Value	Gain	Gain-%
Henderson Global Equity...	£4,815.52	£4,858.32	0.9%		£155.87	3.2%	£4,858.32	£42.80	1%
Henderson UK Responsible ...	£7,120.08	£6,619.49	-7.0%		£236.36	3.3%	£6,619.49	-£500.59	-7%
M&G Charifund Income	£20,773.60	£17,169.51	-17.3%	£838.10		4.0%	£18,007.61	-£2,765.99	-13%
Premier Monthly Income	£7,782.73	£5,577.43	-28.3%	£297.32		3.8%	£5,874.75	-£1,907.98	-25%
Rathbone Income Fund	£5,314.36	£4,873.99	-8.3%		£182.56	3.4%	£4,873.99	-£440.37	-8%
SVS Brown Shipley (Solus)	£2,961.63	£3,317.77	12.0%	£17.62		0.6%	£3,335.39	£373.76	13%
TOTAL Funds	£48,767.92	£42,416.51	-13.0%	£1,153.04	£574.79	3.5%	£43,569.55	-£5,198.37	-10.7%
COIF	£5,733.88	£5,748.96	0.3%		£15.08	0.3%	£5,748.96	£15.08	0%
TOTAL Investments	£54,501.80	£48,165.47	-11.6%	£1,153.04	£589.87			-£5,183.29	-9.5%

1. Valuation Growth is simply the valuation of the current holding compared to last years, including any increased stock holding.
2. Realised Income is the income received into the Group's current account; effectively withdrawals from the investment funds.
3. Re-investment is the income re-invested in the investment funds. The re-investment amount is already included in Valuation.
4. Yield is the income as a percentage of the invested value (i.e. the value at the start of the year)
5. Performance is overall gain, taking into account the capital growth and income.

Tackle Master

Dan Matthews writes:

As you all know the last year has been a bit of a challenge but we have used it to our advantage and progressed with things to be done. Jason has kindly moved the tackle store to the shed and I have replaced all the old ropes for shiny new ones, SRT included.

The SRT ropes are no longer under lock and key and are available for people with the necessary skills to use them. The tackle log has gone digital and we now have a tablet and use an app called Gearlog this makes life easier for annual kit inspection and rope life and so on although if you are not confident in using this the paper version is still there.

An oversight pointed out to me on the new tagging system is that you are unable to identify ropes underground as there is no length on them. This will be rectified shortly as soon as we get hold of a label printer then every rope will have its length tagged.

We have also purchased some new headlamps for the club helmets they now have Fenix lamps on them so beginners and cavers alike can get a better experience underground. And finally, we have recently purchased some new club over-suits as we are getting an influx of new members and some new spreaders, as we are running short.

Cottage Warden

Jason Kirby writes:

It has been a difficult year for many, but at the M.C.G we have improved the way the club looks and feels.

We have:

- improved our facilities with a brand-new shower and toilet and small changing room.
- fitted and installed new windows and doors
- improved the safety of our log burner with additional upgrades to improve efficiency
- decorated downstairs
- installed a card payment system so we can now pay our subs by card and improve our record keeping of who's stayed.
- installed two E.V points outside on the library wall. Both of these have their own meters, so that our electric car users can pay for what they use.
- installed some LED lighting in the shower room, outside sink and charging lobby
- improved our fire safety with a fire management plan

- installed the kit room into the shed next to the drying room and installed the data entry system similar to the one by the front door and library
- purchased new mattresses to comply with modern fire regulations
- purchased new, long-lasting and robust garden furniture to improve social distancing and give a tidy impression
- improved the kitchen safety by removing the scorched wooden plinth from behind the burners and replacing it with ceramic tiles using leftover materials from the shower room

Most of this work has been completed over the last six months. We have worked tirelessly on improving the compliance of M.C.G with health and safety regulations etc. utilising technology whenever possible.

All of the work at the hut has not solely been done by myself. There have been an army of people in the background working just as hard, to achieve our goals, so big thanks go to:

Wilfred Harrison, James Major, Ryan Kirby, Mark Edwards and Steve Church.

The biggest shout will go out to **Russ Porter** for very kindly purchasing all of the supplies needed to do the shower room

Dan Matthews has installed a tablet in to the Tackle Store which can be used for logging equipment in and out.

Replacing the downstairs windows and doors has made a noticeable difference to the temperature in the hut. It now sits at a comfortable 21 degrees. Together with the improvements to the fire, the temperature has exceeded 24 degrees without the need for the central heating system. This should help reduce our heating costs. I feel it prudent that we should enlist a company to do an EPC to see if there's any other improvements we can make as I believe our running costs are still very high. There's always something we can do to improve things like turning off lights, resisting the need to press the boost button on the heating system and genuinely being prudent when it comes to energy saving.

Though initially to help with Covid compliance, installation of paper towels has proven to be very popular and the hand soaps too. I'm pleased to announce that these will remain and we will continue to keep them stocked.

One of the biggest problems we have at M.C.G is the driveway. This has been a real thorn in my side. What to do? How to fix the problem? The current driveway has been so impacted that it no longer allows water to drain freely so it tends to pool around the front door. This has the potential to damage the property and cause ongoing issues for many years after if not addressed. The leaf matter that annually falls onto the driveway is compounding the problem. Members are constantly having to clean the floors after folk have traipsed muddy feet through the hut.

So, I've come up a viable plan which should hopefully resolve this problem. My proposal to the membership is that we enlist a company to:

- install soak-away and French drains around the building
- scrape and remove the old hardcore
- install a new driveway with a three-layer gravel system.

This should improve drainage far beyond where it is now. The soak-away and French drains will help to manage run off from the road thus massively improving rainwater management.

At the same time installing a pipe to the rear of the property with access points to remove build- up of silt and a new soak-away will enable removal of the trench so improving the safety of our members and guests.

This work will come at a price but I believe it is essential to protect the hut and improve its aesthetics. I have only found one local company which is willing to undertake such a huge task and their quote is around £10K. This price is indeed high but reflects the work needed to fix our ongoing problems. What I propose will improve our parking space and the way our hut looks from the outside. It will also improve waste management of runoff from the road so that it no longer leads to flooded pools of water which members have to walk through. Also removing the old compacted leaf matter which turns into a quagmire every year around winter and then is trampled into the cottage. The work that would be carried out by this company would be guaranteed for a minimum of 25 to 50 years meaning that our cost of maintenance of the of the driveway will be minimal after such a huge expense in comparison to us doing the work ourselves and the cost being ongoing for many years.

In the shorter term ...

Cottage work weekend 15-16th October 2021

Lists of jobs to be completed

- . Deep clean of kitchen, tidy up and clean the floor
- . Reorganise cleaning cupboard
- . Clear out gully on the back of the cottage
- . Clean windows in and out and window frames and doors
- . Gardening, tidy up the garden and cut back overgrown bushes at the back of the cottage
- . Remove bat droppings from loft
- . Hoover all carpets thoroughly
- . Clean and tidy wash areas
- . Tidy up sheds as well as remove all unnecessary or discarded items
- . Painting of the rooms upstairs - all rooms will need a coat of paint including ceilings
- . New shower room downstairs, needs to have a coat of paint on the ceiling
- . Charging area will need to be repainted, walls and ceiling
- . Floors to be re sealed in the hallway and toilets
- . Toilets to be painted and cleaned thoroughly
- . Staircase and ceilings to be painted and top landing will need painting too

- . Clear out all brush mats front and back door
- . Treat all wooden window frames upstairs with preservative
- . Clear out all guttering above dormer windows and downstairs around the building
- . Strim and cut all overgrown foliage from around the walls

All those that participate in the club weekend will be rewarded with food and drink for their hard work. The cottage warden will ensure that everyone who helps at the weekend will be provided with a meal and drink. A budget of £10 per head, from MCG funds, has been granted by the committee. We encourage that the work will be carried out before eating and drinking begins, so we will start early. The hut warden will assign your task and inspect your progress to ensure a satisfactory result!

Social Secretary

Nicky Pearce writes:

With the Covid pandemic the only normal social to run was Aug 2021, where we had a BBQ and games, which was well attended. Otherwise, there were virtual socials where we heard from a diverse range of speakers on various topics from kayaking the unknown in India, to the history of Cornish Mines. The later caused so many questions, over an hour, that when permitted, I plan to organise and hold an event in Cornwall next spring/summer- probably June to visit some of those mines.

Caving Secretary

Mark Edwards writes:

Needless to say, there have been some negative factors at play in the last year which have cast a shadow over caving and club activities, The word unprecedented has been in the air. But every cloud has a silver lining; and this cloud seems to have spurred on an upsurge of interest in caving.

The year 2021 has seen the largest number of new members joining the club since its inception.

Presumably this has been caused by people wanting to get out and experience something new and exciting, now, while they can!

The M.C.G is in a great position to Hoover up this interest coming as we do at or near the top of a google search for Mendip caving, backed up by Dave Lossel's excellent website which to my mind is one of the best on Mendip.

I would like to thank all those who have helped taking new member trips it really has been a team effort.

So hopefully this upward trend will continue leading to lots more caving fun!

Editor

Richard Carey resigned from the role of Editor on the 1st June 2021. He has recently submitted the following report:

Firstly, I would like to dispel any notion that I stood down over whether dogs should be allowed to stay in the bedrooms. This simply isn't the case. 2020 was a very quiet time for me and with the outbreak of Covid I had no work so had plenty of spare time on my hands. In May of this year, I started working again and quite simply no longer have the time to produce the newsletter.

In my brief tenure however I have produced three high quality publications being two Newsletters and a journal of the MCG in Argentina which I had been thinking about for 15 years or so since our last visit. I would like to thank all contributors and a special thanks to Joan Goddard for the proof reading.

Librarian

Dave Lossl writes:

Key issues:

1. Space. There is no room for new books and to archive periodicals and other materials.
2. Clutter. The library is full of materials that take up lots of space but serve little purpose e.g. the desk and the safe
3. Access. There is no search facility for members to look for topics/authors/books/surveys etc.

With Committee Approval:

The large desk has been emptied and will be removed. All stationary is now in the drawers to the right of the PC.

A new, small safe will be purchased to accommodate the very small number of items in the current safe.

I will work through various boxes and bags that are stashed away and rationalise

I will construct some additional shelving to go where the old desk is. This can be on wheels to make the space more adaptable.

Joan had created a spreadsheet of the 850 books in the library. I am using this as a basis to create a searchable booklist to be available to members online. To facilitate this I am numbering the books from 0001 to 0850. When the numbering and listing is complete the borrowing of books will be via an online form simply requiring the borrowers name and the book number. As usual a written system will be available for those members who have no access to IT. I expect this to take up to a year.

Surveys will get similar treatment. Lots of the surveys are getting damaged through poor storage. Most members probably have little idea of the amazing range of large-scale surveys we have. A searchable, online list will make this material much more accessible.

Many thanks to James Major for his ongoing help in the library.

David Lossl August 2021