



Mendip Caving Group Monthly Mail July 2023

Hello from your new editor Daniel Matthews

I apologise for the delay in getting the first newsletter out. Life has been busy. This will be a monthly mail with a larger edition twice a year. The monthly mail will keep you up to date with the basic running of the club; highlighting anything that needs input from the membership, select trip reports, and any special events. If you would like to add any content, please feel free to email me. I hope you enjoy the first mail and look forward to future issues.

MCG AGM

On the 1st of April this year the AGM was held at the cottage with a lot of interesting debate regarding club business. I won't go into details as these are available on our website in the member's section. In the evening Jackie organised a three-course meal at the Castle of Comfort. The turnout was very good, the food was great, and the venue was very accommodating although it wasn't suitable for the talk, so Tom headed to the off licence to stock up on the all-important beer and wine and we all piled back to the cottage for an entertaining talk by Russ and Cye about the cave Cye had found in his back garden. They showed us some footage of the discovery and had brought along a Roman pot that Cye had stuck together. Thanks again to Jackie, Russ and Cye.







Photo credits: Jackie Murch

Cave Fest UK 2023

As some of you may be aware, the MCG, along with the help of the camping field over the road, ended up playing host to this year's Cave Fest. The field was used for camping and the evening entertainment took place inside the hut. This included a quiz, 2 nights of disco, and the premier of a new caving movie due out later this year called A Crack in the Mountain. Our very own Tim Francis did a talk on Upper Flood, which had us on the edge of our seats. Martin Grass was kind enough to show us around the Mendip Cave Rescue's kit store and talk us through the rescue and

communication equipment. All in all, it was very successful with people underground all weekend and we raised £150 in donations to the club and £100 in donations to Cave Rescue.

Cave Fest parachute jump

Neil from Cave Fest had arranged a parachute jump to raise money for Mendip Cave Rescue but unfortunately due to issues beyond his control he was unable to complete the jump so luckily a newer member of the MCG, Matty Dredge, stepped in to save the day. The jump was cancelled on a few occasions but ended up going ahead on 21st May this year and raised £565 for Mendip Cave Rescue.



Photo credit: Neil Maine

Hut driveway

Our hut warden and his team of busy bees have been hard at work and have improved the drainage in the cottage driveway. It now has proper soakaways to prevent water from reaching the cottage, so you no longer require a canoe to get in the front door on a very wet day. This was all completed in a weekend by hiring a digger. I would like to say thank you to Jason Kirby and his crew for a job well done.

Member's wedding

On the 8th of July at Wookey Hole Ed and Kat (who are some of our newer members for those who have not met them) got married. It was a very different wedding as they abseiled into the ceremony inside the Wookey caves and zip-lined out of the cave to the reception. We all ate good food, drank plenty of wine, danced the night away and admired the very well-made cake. Congratulations Ed and Kat.





Photo credit: Jason kirby

Daren Cilau trip

On the 15th and 16th of July a small team of MCG decided to tackle the difficult entrance to Daren Cilau and stay overnight at the Hard Rock Café. The trip report has been written by trip leader Kay Matthews, and can be found on our Facebook page or group email.



Photo credit: Matty Dredge

Stainsby's update

The following is a write-up by Bill Chadwick:

So, Saturday saw Tim F, Peat B, Jason K and myself set off for the morning shift, joined a little bit later by Tom H. Biff's winch is finally well attached. We soon had our first set of 8 drums, dug by Peat flying up the shaft. Emptying them is a bit more time consuming as the spoil is very sticky. We had to pass Peat a section of ladder for the sharp end which is going well and staying fresh. Round 2 was myself I think, another 8 drums. Then back to the shaft for another

emptying session and welcome mugs of Tea. Jason left us for Ed and Kat's wedding in Wookey.

Round 3 was Tim I think, another 8 drums of easy digging. In the afternoon we had a visit from Julie and Eva. Tom did the final 8. More tea whilst we emptied those. I do believe I managed a bit of a nap whilst waiting to haul Tom's drums, despite being a bit chilly and perched on a rock - practising for my retirement!

Tim F did some more walling to hold back our ever-increasing spoil heap. It must be about up to rung 3 of the entrance shaft ladder. Toads and Newts seen in the shaft. A not so lucky rabbit was at the bottom of the old shaft dig and smelt a bit. Mid-afternoon saw heavy showers and quite a splash falling down hauling shaft.

The dig face remains fresh, safe and easy. The fill still includes bits of well weathered rock, minerals and flowstone.

Vale Ken Fry

The following is written by Joan Goddard:

Our neighbour Ken Fry, who lived at The Stirrup Cup with Mary, died recently. He had been ill for a while. Older members will know how indebted MCG is to Ken and to his father Jim; without them we would not have Nordrach Cottage (nor, in fact, our previous wooden cottage which Jim transported for us from Salisbury Plain for us to re-erect). This cottage still stands (just) and can be seen from the current kitchen window.

When we bought the piece of land on which we built Nordrach Cottage. It already had a redundant Axbridge Caving Group cottage on it which needed removing. Ken, with his tractor, was an enormous help with this task and helped to remove a large beech tree which was in the way. He was always helpful in finding some part or other from one of his sheds which would revive a member's

ailing car so that they could get home. He and Mary both kept an eye on the Cottage when no-one was in residence.

Linda Milne recalls chatting to him one time about his Land Rover and “although Ken was a very shy person, he was very much on the ball with all the goings on. He was proud of his cattle, too, white Charolais, breed I think he used to have. And one time he wanted to show us an amazing caterpillar crawling in the yard, I think. It was an elephant hawk moth caterpillar.”

If you were patient Ken would tell you all about our part of Mendip. He moved here a long time ago and attended Charterhouse School (now Charterhouse Centre). He remembered the thousands of military vehicles assembled on Mendip plateau before the Normandy landings and the 1968 floods which gave us Upper Flood Swallet.

Editor's final word

Congratulations to Matty Dredge and Ed Ford on becoming full members and we would like to welcome back Jane Baldwin as a member.

You should have received by email the new log in detail for the members area on the website.

Thank you, and I hope it was an enjoyable read.

Happy caving. Daniel Matthews.