



## **Mendip Caving Group - February 2024 Bulletin**

### **A word from the editor**

It's been an exciting few months with lots to write about and lots happening in this new year. Coming up soon we have the Portland caving weekend, a chance for people to come and visit our humble little isle with some interesting caving. We also

have the AGM approaching on April the 6<sup>th</sup> and the MCG 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner on April the 27<sup>th</sup>.

I would like to finish with a thank you to all who provided some great content for the first mail shot of the year.

Dan.

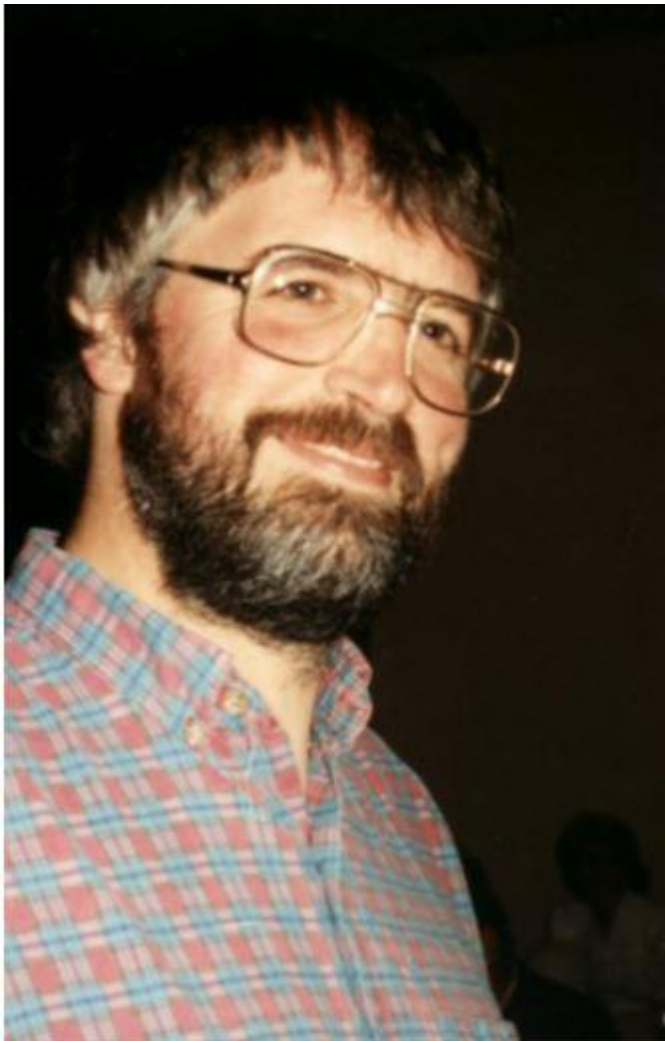
### **In memory of Wayne Hiscox**

by Brian Snell.

It is with a heavy heart that I must report the passing of Wayne Hiscox after a fight lost to cancer. Wayne was a long-standing member of the group. He joined the MCG in 1971 and has been a member ever since.

When I joined the MCG in 1986, it wasn't long before I met Wayne, and I instantly liked him. He always seemed to have a smile on his face, he was very approachable. Wayne was very much involved in the work on the first cottage, and after the unfortunate accident when the first build was blown up, he was also involved in the rebuild of our current building including the Library/Porch extension. He loved social occasions, and he would always lead a sing song on the coach back from past annual dinners.

Martin Rowe has written a piece about Wayne.  
This will be added to the email sent to you.



### **Hunters lodge Inn**

Unfortunately, late last year on 22<sup>nd</sup> November  
Roger's wife, Jackie Dors, passed away. We would  
like to offer our condolences and wish him well.

## **Halloween**

The November Member's weekend last year saw us enjoying Halloween festivities with a ghoulish party. DJ Santa was spinning the tracks and there was lots of brilliant fancy dress. Prizes were given out for best fancy dress and party games were organised by Kat. Fun was had by all.



## **Christmas party**

December Member's weekend saw another very busy and fun Christmas dinner great effort from Jackie and her helpers to make a wonderful and tasty meal. After dinner we played a game of steal

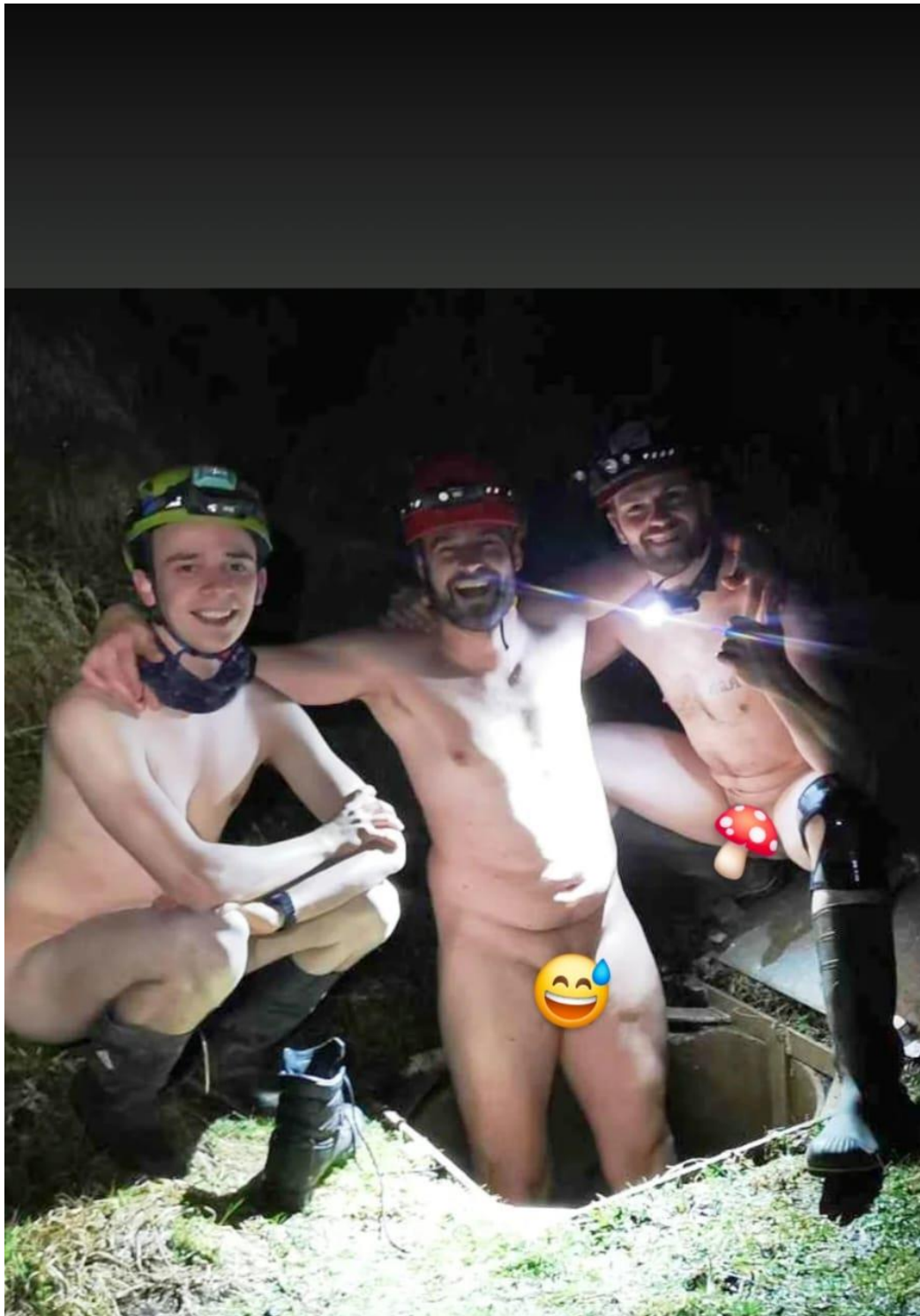
the presents and the Christmas disco with DJ Santa making another appearance.



### **January Member's weekend**

January Member's weekend we played host to cavers that an MCG team had met inside Daren Cilau on their last overnight trip. Dave, Alex and Andy came down to experience what Mendips have to offer. A trip to Eastwater and St Cuthberts were on the list, but the trip of the weekend was a naked trip to Waterwheel at 3am on Sunday morning with Dave, Alex and our very own Greg. Trigger warning! The next picture contains some nudity.





Note from Joan:

## **Wells & Mendip Museum 5<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> March**

### **Witch of Wookey Exhibition by Chris Binding**

“Latest research into the legacy and legend of the eponymous Witch, was she, or they, real rather than hearsay? You decide . . . . ”

Admission charges to the museum have unfortunately just been increased to: Adult: £6, Child (5-16): £3, Family (2 adults + 3 children): £12, Student: £3.... but there is plenty more to see including the Balch Room (local cave archaeology including items from Wookey Hole and Bone Hole), the Geology Gallery (fossils, minerals and Mendip mining) and the newly opened History of Wells galleries.

### **Library Update by Joan Goddard**

From the early days MCG has exchanged publications with numerous other caving clubs. There were not so many clubs in those days, and we were keen to keep in touch to share information, experiences and techniques. The

internet hadn't been invented and communication was by word-of-mouth, telephone, or newsletter. Complimentary copies were distributed which sometimes led to regular exchanges of publications. and formed the basis of many club libraries, including ours. However, many of the smaller groups were short-lived or, for various reasons, the exchanges didn't persist. This has resulted in a box of 'Miscellaneous Caving Club' publications filed in the library, for when we have only a one or two of a club's newsletters. We have, for example, such titles as Northern Boggarts Newsletter, Mann Underground (Manx Mines Research Group), Dodger's Dispatch (Derbyshire Caving Club of Stockport), Elsan Caving Club newsletter, 1970s (don't ask!) and the Speleo Stamp Collector.

Since Lockdown the publications are being gradually re-catalogued, and boxes labelled. Shelves to the left as you enter the library contain the publications of Mendip clubs in roughly alphabetical order, followed by other UK clubs. There are a few exceptions - UBSS, and some Craven Pothole Club and Red Rose Cave & Pothole. Club publications are currently on the



central library unit shelves as their format makes economical use of the space.

We also receive material from organisations such as British Cave Research Association, Charterhouse Caving Committee, Council of Southern Caving Clubs, Cambrian Caving Council and subscribe to Descent, and Subterranea Britannica

Most of the national publications (B.C.R.A, B.C.A. etc) are on shelves above the computer desk. University club material is on the top shelf (but not yet catalogued)

Full members can borrow items from the library but please record details in the LIBRARY LOANS BOOK on the central unit and sign them back in again when you return them. Try not to keep them out for too long as others may be waiting to read them, and please don't leave them lying around in the lounge area as they get tatty!

Publications received (up to Oct 2023):

Chelsea Speleological Society Newsletter Vol 65, Nos 4-6, Apr-Jun 2023 - I always enjoy the Chelsea newsletters as they report visits to caves and

mines all over the UK and elsewhere – so something for everyone.

Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club Newsletter Vol 60 No 2 (Summer 2023)

UBSS Proceedings for 2022 is given over to Fishmongers Swallet in South Gloucestershire where exploration began in 1997. A Time Team excavation followed in 2000.

Wessex Cave Club Journal, November 2022, No. 352 contains a review of “Call-out”, Sid Perou’s films about the history of British cave rescue, which is available on YouTube (links at end of review); also, items on Spider Hole, caves and digs around Priddy, photography, trip and dig reports. Lovely photographs.

Belfry Bulletin, Summer 2022, No 581.

Craven Pothole Club Record July 2023 (No 151) and Oct 2023 (No 152) – full of news of home and away trips, projects, (digging, surveying), club history, interesting extracts from older members’ caving logs, book reviews.

Grampian Speleological Group Bulletin, 5th Series, Vol 4, No 3 (Oct 2022)

MNRC Newsletter 161, May 2023

BCRA Annual Reviews for 2021 and 2023- Very good for an overview of the BCRA, its work. and the special interest groups which include Cave Radio & Electronics, Cave Archaeology, Cave Surveying, Explosive Users, Cave Biology and Cave Archaeology. Field meetings have resumed after Lockdown, resulting in well-illustrated interesting reports.

Caves and Karst Science Vol 69 No 2 Aug 2022, published by BCRA.

Subterranea No. 62, April 2023 – contains short pieces on archaeology, conservation and heritage (including a tunnel built more than a century ago under Niagara Falls – part of the Niagara Parks Power Station tour), articles on Reigate Caves and urban and defence structures.

### **Books Added To The Library**

**Digging Bath Stone**, a quarry and Transport History by David Pollard, 2021. A beautifully produced book researched over a period of nearly forty years.

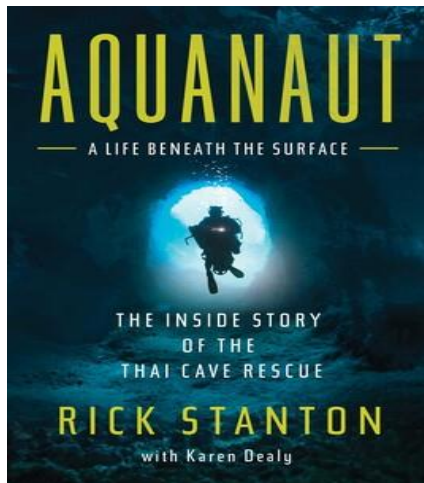
**Somerset Underground Volume 3**, Central and South Mendip by Rob Taviner, 2022–this book is

dedicated to Nick Barrington and Willie Stanton authors of 'Mendip, The Complete Caves and View of the Hills', last published in 1977. As with Volumes 1 and 2 the first part of this volume is an introduction to the area, incorporating history, geology and geomorphology, archaeology and palaeontology, (including useful chronological charts), lead mining and access. Sites are grouped by area, for example 'Cheddar Catchment', 'Wookey Hole Catchment', with useful locations and some interesting aerial photographs. We also have Volumes 1 and 2 in the library. These books list all the bigger caves but also provide additional information about the minor sites of speleological interest which may or may not lead to explorable passage.

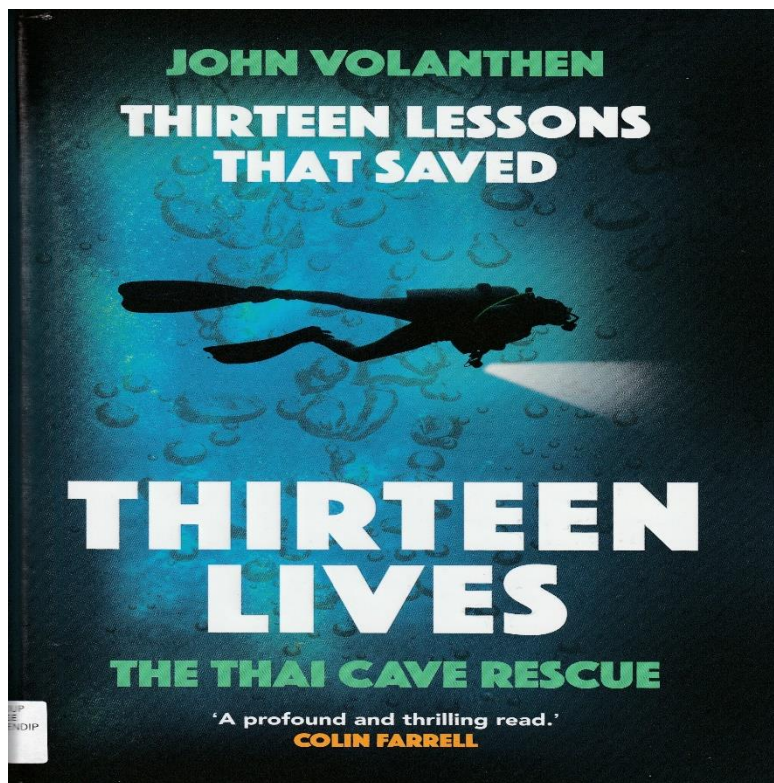
**Aquanaut** – a life beneath the surface by Rick Stanton with Karen Keely

This is the third book I have read about the rescue of thirteen boys from Tham Luang Nang Non cave in 2018. They were all very different, but each one had me on the edge of my seat. I found this one was most interesting from a caver's point of view as Rick looks back over previous incidents in his life, not always rescues, from which he learned

how to make a success of the Thailand rescue. He also recognised the skills and huge input of the whole rescue team.



**Thirteen Lessons that saved Thirteen Lives** by John Volanthen is another Thai Rescue book which I found very interesting because of its thought-provoking analyses of how decisions are made in crisis situations – again applicable to other than cave situations.



**Caves of Assynt** edited by Tim Lawson and Peter Dowdswell of Grampian Speleological Group, 2022. Third Edition. A4 format. First Edition was produced in 1971, second edition in 1988 and this edition is larger and more comprehensive. It's a 'must-read' for anyone thinking of visiting Assynt - beautifully presented with plenty of photos, maps, surveys and useful references. A map indicating the areas described in detail in the main body of the book and an index of cave names makes it easy to use if you don't have time to read every page.

**Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales, Vol 2 The Caves**, edited by Tony Waltham and David Lowe



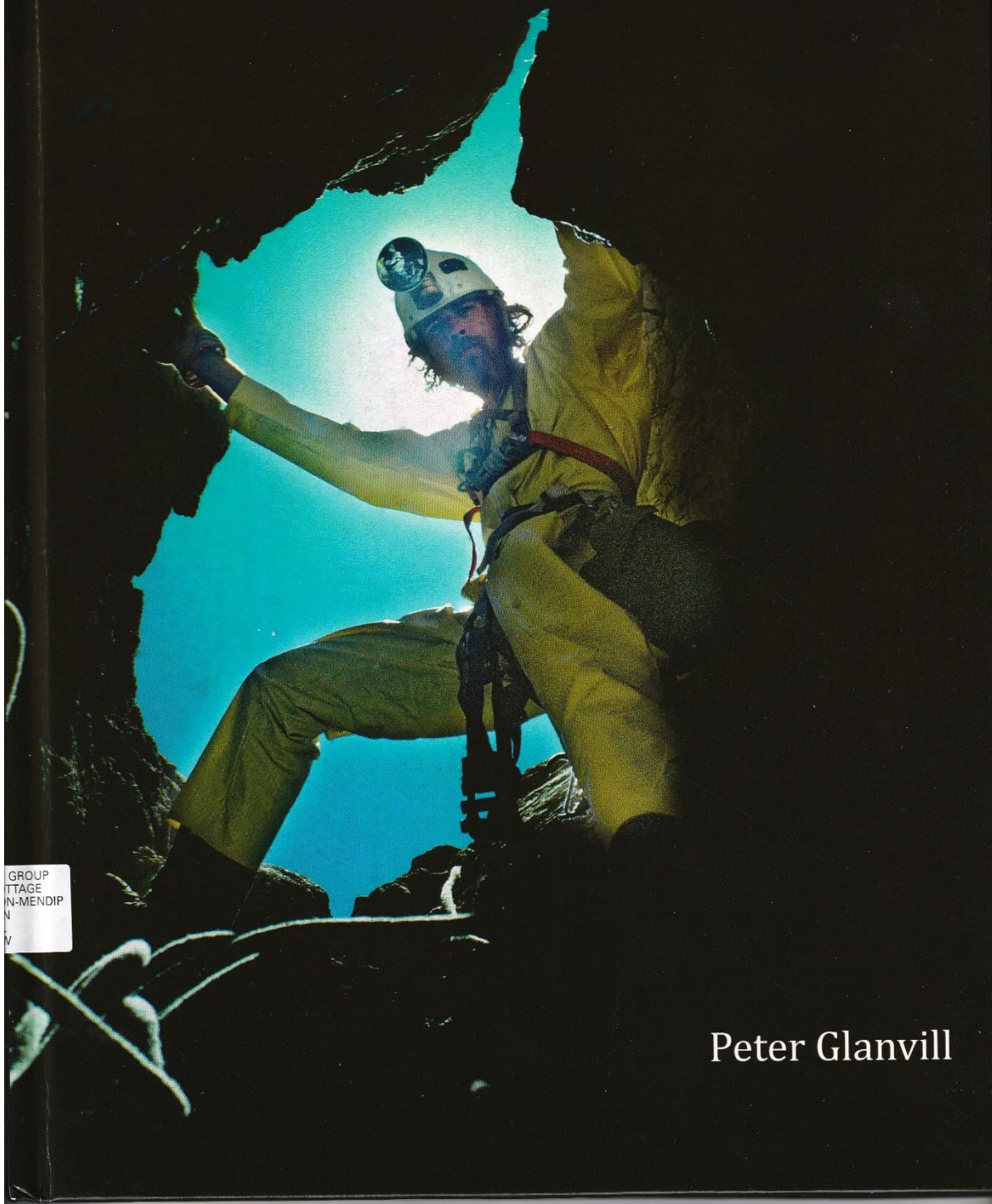
for BCRA, 2017 A4 format. Caves are described by area, each chapter having a map showing relevant cave passages.

**Slovenija** by Bogdan Kladnik, 2003. A picture book of Slovenian caves. A4 format. Coume Ouarnede by Yann Auffret and Sylvestre Clement, 2022. For those of you able to read French this well-illustrated book is about Réseau Felix Trombe/Henne Mort in the Northern Pyrenees - plenty of surveys and photographs.

**Iran '77 by Peter Glanvill**, 2023 The story of an expedition which followed on from the 1971/2 expeditions written up in the book 'Ghar Parau' by Dave Judson. Peter has written it very much as a diary, well-illustrated with photos of the scenery and people, and with photos and surveys of the caves they explored.

Iran '77

The story of an expedition—an illustrated memoir



GROUP  
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Peter Glanvill

To the M.C.G.  
& thanks for Upper Flood Swallow  
Peter Colaninelli

## **Cave Leader Training with John Crowsley**

By Tom Harrison

During the November 2023 Member's Weekend, John Crowsley very kindly put on 2 days of free training for interested MCG members. This covered a number of important points, tips and considerations for leading a trip caving, points equally useful when not leading a group. On Saturday, Kay Matthews, Hannah Blunt, Greg Hawkins, Owen Rutter and myself were the lucky participants. We started the day with a few discussions about what we were looking to learn from the session, and what we could expect. We then went outside to do some rope practise, working on our knots and rigging efficient hauling setups using the garden benches as our natural anchors!

We kitted up and headed off to Burrington Combe to visit Goatchurch cavern, as a classic venue for novice trips and a likely venue to lead such new cavers. On the walk up , John talked about Geology and the formation of the Combe and how we could tell how it had been formed and why; interesting items that we could tell newbies when leading our own trips. We talked about where the leader might be and what instructions they might pass to a group or individual and lots of other considerations about the party we might be leading. Inside we rigged a handline as practice, before we split into two groups to rig a hauling line and an assisted abseil. We had discussions about Radon Gas and CO<sub>2</sub> and about how to make the trips as interesting and exciting for our group!

### **A final word: The MCG 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner.**

Martyn Farr will be doing a talk about his cave diving at Wookey, and we have pre drinks arranged in the cave itself. There will be a raffle and great food. If you haven't booked already, this is one not to be missed. It will be a night to remember!