

MCG Officer Reports 2020

It's been a very odd year and this is no ordinary AGM – 6 months late probably for the first time in the history of the MCG. Some of the committee had prepared their annual report in time for an AGM in April. Since April we have had a co-opted Cottage Warden, Jason Kirby, to replace Doug Harris and Librarian, Tanya Sparey to replace Miranda Litchfield. Tanya Sparey has now resigned her post which currently remains vacant though we have a nomination.

Secretary

Well where to start!

Until March Things were ticking over fairly well at MCG with the committee and a working party doing a lot of work on modernising our constitution to enable us to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO. We held an EGM about the constitution in November which highlighted that there was still more work to do. By February, after several face to face meetings, we were getting close to a finishing it; then came Covid. From March, the committee have had to attend to more pressing matters regarding the running of the group and its cottage during the pandemic.

Early in the year it became apparent that we needed a new Cottage Warden and Librarian so Jason Kirby was co-opted as Cottage Warden and Tanya Sparey as librarian. Both have worked hard, along with the rest of the committee, and helped us get the cottage ready for re-opening after lockdown as soon as was practical. Since then Tanya has resigned after disagreeing with the committee's handling of some donated material.

At the start of lockdown, we were a little concerned about the financial wellbeing of the MCG, but thought that we would be OK with reduced income till say September. In April we were awarded a significant local government grant which has removed, for the next few years at least, any financial worries due to reduced income.

One of the major issues addressed by the committee has been the need to update our soft furnishings (mattresses and sofas) to meet modern fire safety standards. This is a requirement of our building's insurance. It turns out that our bunks are a non-standard size, but after some hunting around, we obtained a sample mattress from two different suppliers. To help with hygiene after re-opening in July, we purchased fourteen of the more expensive, wipeable mattresses and are now replacing the remainder with the hopefully softer, cheaper, fabric covered type. We have also now purchased some new lounge seating. Fifteen modular seats, in a mixture of charcoal and blue fabrics with a five-year warranty. That will put us in a good position to accept guest booking from e.g. Scout groups as soon as we can.

The committee are still considering the purpose to which the rest of the grant money (and other MCG funds) should be put. High on the list are replacements for ageing windows and doors as well as a second shower room.

We have little choice but to continue with a diverse selection of communication methods – Yahoo Group, Web Site, Facebook and emailing. We have done our best to keep the group

up to date with news and events throughout the pandemic. Just before lockdown we had some excitement about a mineshaft opening up at Manor Farm. This turned out to require some careful stabilisation and highlighted how important good, open and rapid communications between all club members are. Post lockdown, digging has resumed at Sandford, Ubley, Upper Flood and elsewhere.

As these notes cover back to April 2019, I would like to record what a pleasure it was to host our guests from Belgium in August – beware their strong beer. Sadly, we have been unable to accept their invite for a trip overseas this year.

Bill Chadwick Sep 2020

Treasurer

These are Tom's words from March 2020.

Treasurer's Report to the Mendip Caving Group for the 2020 AGM

(Subject to Accounts Examination)

Summary

Although on the face of it receipts for 2019 were down on 2018, this is mostly due to the way that membership renewals fall over the end of the accounting period. By just taking into account 2019 subs payments (those received in both end of 2018 and early 2019) and removing 2020 sub payments, receipts are up £1,400. Guest bed fees were down on the previous year, but with plans to add individual showers, hopefully this trend will be reversed in 2021 and beyond.

Expenditure on the year was significantly lower with the Kitchen and Shed projects concluding.

Obviously, the Coronavirus pandemic will have a serious effect on member and guest fees for the year, and I expect a loss of income of up to £3,000.

Fortunately, we have a healthy cash balance of approximately £15,000, of unrestricted funds, which will provide a useful buffer should the crisis last for a significant period of time.

Receipts

Member's Bed nights were up by 24, with fees slightly up. £46 was owed by members and guests for nights stayed at the year-end cut off.

Guest's Bed nights were down by 60, and consideration should be given to why this has occurred and what we can do to improve this situation in the coming years.

Member numbers were up again to the highest number since at least 2013. Well done to all those involved in getting, welcoming, and engaging new members, and I would encourage

all members to help where they can to keep this up! Membership subs rose again by nearly £200, due to the extra 7 members on 2018.

Day fees were down, and when caving restarts, can I ask those members that use the facilities without staying, that a small day fee donation, is very much appreciated to help with the costs of light, heat, waste, maintenance, and improvements.

We have also made a modest amount of money from those who have borrowed kit but haven't yet joined the club. Some of this has been used to purchase new kit and helps to replace some kit which has sadly gone missing from the tackle store.

Thanks also to those who have made donations during and this year particularly to Tim Francis who gave a talk as part of an exhibition in London, which resulted in a donation of £200 to the club.

Expenses

Light and Heat costs were down on 2018 due to the timings of the Calor Gas deliveries. As stated above, the Kitchen and Shed projects resulted in a 57% reduction in maintenance and improvement costs. Telephone and Internet costs are up due to a year's worth of internet hosting on 1&1, the end of a very good broadband discounted deal on EE and two payments for Anti-Virus software that fell in 2019 accounts. The broadband deal has now been renegotiated to a reduced rate of £15 pcm, plus on peak call charges.

£464 was spent on new equipment in 2019.

And here is a current update from Tom.

2020 Interim Treasurer's Report

Further to my original AGM report from March, I would also like to submit this interim report to the AGM.

Income

At current membership levels we get just over £4,000 per year from subs, £2,000 from member guest nights and £1,800 from guest fees, and £1,500 return from our investments. Approximately £9,300 in total.

Current Expenditure

Our fixed expenditure comes to around £7,000 but that does not include unplanned for maintenance costs which can take expenditure to £9,000 or more. We have also spent over £1,000 in new kit this year, as well as over £2,000 on new mattresses.

Effects of Lockdown

The Coronavirus pandemic has clearly had a serious effect on member and guest fees for the year. I had initial forecast a loss of income of up to £3,000. However, with the measures

taken to reopen the cottage to members we have reduced this loss by almost £1,000. Guest nights are 72% down, which is most of the shortfall, but more members are also only visiting for the day and not staying. On that note, may I gently remind members, that if you are not staying at the cottage but are using the facilities, a day fee or small donation is greatly appreciated!

With the reduced opportunity for members to go caving and concerns about taking new potential members underground, we may see also see a reduction in member numbers going into next year.

Forecast Deficit

With these things issues we could be looking at over £2,000 a year deficit should this situation continue in the long term and any unplanned expenditure could worsen this situation. We also have a large bill shortly for the remaining new mattresses and new lounge furniture.

Government Grant

On the positive side, I am sure that most of you are aware, we were recipients of a £25,000 grant earlier this year. Thanks to this we have approximately £34,000 in the non-investment accounts.

I would propose that we keep at least £14,000 of this amount to ensure that we can ride out the current storm (£4,000 of which will cover the new furniture and Covid costs) and look at how we can use the remainder of this money to invest in long term improvements to the facilities to make them more attractive to members and guests in the future.

Other Items

Electronic Payments

At the suggestion of the committee, and with the assistance of Bill and Jason, we have added the option for making card payments at the cottage. There is a small transaction cost to this of 1.6% or 8p per member night. This will help to make paying easier for those who don't bring cash, as well as the admin benefits and security of having less cash left at the cottage. Day fees and donations can also be made using this method of payment.

Bank Accounts

This last year we have been looking at how to better safeguard the current accounts, while ensuring that the administration is not anymore of a burden! To help to achieve this we have a 2-person authorisation system set up to allow payments of over £100 to be made electronically.

Finally, to further aid in administration, I would like to propose rationalising the existing bank accounts. We currently have a current and savings HSBC account, a Santander account, and a dormant Alliance & Leicester Account, as well as a Charity Account. I propose closing the Santander and A&L accounts and keeping the current and savings accounts at HSBC.

Tom Harrison

Investments

Ben Cooper has recently provided the following report.

Custodian Trustees Report 2020 for year ending 31st December 2019 v1.0**Ben Cooper**

2019 was a fabulous year for the stock market, with an 18.6% gain and all losses from 2018 recovered in 2019. Since then COVID has had a devastating impact on investments. At its lowest in March, investments were about 30% down. Current valuation, shown on the next page has recovered slightly since March, at £48,900.

Investment Valuation and historic comparison

	31-12-2012	31-12-2013	31/12/2014	31/12/2015	31/12/2016	31/12/2017	31/12/2018	31/12/2019
Henderson Gbl Equity	£2,405.44	£3,004.31	£3,193.62	£3,366.79	£5,731.31	£4,522.86	£4,157.18	£4,815.52
Henderson UK Resp...	£3,629.82	£4,750.00	£5,064.33	£5,483.02	£4,104.29	£6,311.40	£5,592.09	£7,120.08
M&G Charifund Inc	£15,008.57	£18,002.48	£17,990.22	£17,936.31	£19,206.60	£20,548.32	£17,813.22	£20,773.60
Premier (Credit Suisse)	£5,969.29	£7,352.03	£7,187.52	£7,473.13	£7,685.25	£8,149.46	£6,511.95	£7,782.73
Rathbone Income Fund	£3,112.24	£3,852.08	£4,076.24	£4,419.74	£4,756.34	£5,107.01	£4,635.29	£5,314.36
SVS Brown-Shipley	£1,938.47	£2,216.34	£2,196.20	£2,244.32	£2,489.94	£2,767.03	£2,520.22	£2,961.63
Total funds	£32,063.83	£39,177.24	£39,708.13	£40,923.31	£43,973.73	£47,406.08	£41,229.95	£48,767.92
COIF	£5,562.21	£5,589.42	£5,613.11	£5,638.41	£5,662.42	£5,675.63	£5,701.42	£5,733.88
Total investment value	£37,626.04	£44,766.66	£45,321.24	£46,561.72	£49,636.15	£53,081.71	£46,931.37	£54,501.80

Unit Prices and historic comparison

Investment	Unit Price 31/12/2018	Unit Price 31/12/2019	Unit Price Growth
Henderson Global Equity ...	£0.5582	£0.6240	11.8%

Henderson UK Responsible ...	£1.1480	£1.4000	22.0%
M&G Charifund Income	£14.2403	£16.6069	16.6%
Premier (CS) Monthly Income Fund	£1.7100	£2.0437	19.5%
Rathbone Income Fund	£8.0506	£9.7766	21.4%
SVS Brown Shipley*	£2.3466	£2.7576	17.5%
TOTAL Investments			18.6%

Mid-year valuation as at 28th September 2020

Security	Balance
Henderson Global Equity Income Class E	4,815.52
Henderson UK Responsible Income E Inc	7,135.34
M&G Charifund Income	20,773.60
Premier Monthly Income Fund Class R	7,782.73
Rathbone Income Fund	0
Rathbone Income Institutional Fund	5,469.23
SVS Brown Shipley Dynamic A Inc	2,961.63
TOTAL Investments	48,938.05

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-%
COIF	£5,701.42	£5,733.88	0.6%		£32.46	0.6%	£5,733.88	£32.46	1%
Henderson Global Equity...	£4,157.18	£4,815.52	15.8%		£174.61	4.2%	£4,815.52	£658.34	16%
Henderson UK Responsible ...	£5,592.09	£7,120.08	27.3%		£282.69	5.1%	£7,120.08	£1,527.99	27%
M&G Charifund Income	£17,813.22	£20,773.60	16.6%	£1,038.26		5.8%	£21,811.86	£3,998.64	22%

Premier Monthly Income	£6,511.95	£7,782.73	19.5%	£386.88		5.9%	£8,169.61	£1,657.66	25%
Rathbone Income Fund	£4,635.29	£5,314.36	14.7%		£220.48	4.8%	£5,314.36	£679.07	15%
SVS Brown Shipley (Solus)	£2,520.22	£2,961.63	17.5%	£37.33		1.5%	£2,998.96	£478.74	19%
TOTAL Investments	£46,931.37	£54,501.80	16.1%	£1,462.47	£710.24	4.6%	£55,964.27	£9,032.90	19.2%

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

These are Dan's words from September 2020.

2020 has been an odd year but over the last year I have cleared all the old SRT and lifeline ropes out as they were 10 years old and with manufactures advice it was time for them to be retired. We now have Petzl club for lifeline and SRT all the ropes are marked as lifeline or SRT so please use them for the correct use.

I have also purchased 6 new tackle bags and 3 new headlamps these are Fenix and take 18650s of which the club now has 12.

We also have some new rope slings.

Unfortunately, we have had some tackle go missing in the last year 2 helmets with lights and some pulleys.

Can I please ask that everyone books out and returns the correct tackle clean. We have a rope sling missing if you could check for it.

Thanks Dan.

Cottage Warden

These are Jason's words from September 2020.

On taking over as hut warden back in April 2020 I began forming a plan of improvements and upgrades starting with the toilets which was progressing well. Sadly the situation developed over the past few months with covid 19 and this meant shifting plans to a more dynamic role - formulating a plan to reopen the hut. This has been a monumental task, but I feel we have done extremely well as a team. I have listed below all the key work done and work outstanding.

1. New supplier of cleaning supplies and products. I was able to use Fusion Supplies, the company I use at work. I have set up an account that will give use a competitive price and good discount for all the new products that help keep us Covid safe.
2. I have fitted soap dispensers in key parts of the hut and sourced and placed appropriate signage to compliment them. Supplies have been sourced to help with

Covid such as wipes, food safe sprays, face masks and a face shield for the first aid box. The First-aid box has also been replenished. All items sourced from Fusion Supplies.

3. The hardest task was deep-cleaning the hut in readiness for re-opening. This was a full cleaning process starting with the downstairs floor. It was a challenging process scrubbing away the many years of grime and took 3 days to complete. After cleaning, all downstairs tiles were sealed.
4. As new guidance was published, we had to remain dynamic and keep updating, eg adding new paper towel dispensers to the kitchen, toilet and changing room
5. A Covid risk assessment has been produced, also Fire Risk and COSH assessments.
 - a. A risk assessment was created for the reopening of the hut bringing use in line with Covid guidelines. It provides a useful guide for hut users.
 - b. A fire risk assessment was carried out 13 months ago that I had not been aware of. Consequently, I did one myself. Shortly after I found the one that had been done by a professional company. This created greater urgency to address the issues it highlighted. My focus switched to fire safety as the Committee agreed this was a priority. We had to retire the old mattress and all the hut furniture as it did not meet fire regs, We are replacing the furniture with new modular systems which will hopefully be at the hut for the AGM. A fire management plan was created together with fire safety equipment. I would be good to offer fire-marshal duties to members as well as myself so that testing can be carried out in accordance with fire safety guidelines. This will bring MCG up to Code. There are 2 outstanding items:- a light needs to be fitted by the back door and a new CO2 fire extinguisher needs to be installed in the Device Charging Area.
6. Rope cleaning station outside needed a bit of TLC so I replace this with a modified version that seems to work well
7. The toilet door is repaired but I still need to put a lock on it - so please knock before entering!
8. Brian has removed the top plate in the log fire which has made a significant difference in the way it works, a definite improvement on heat output - so thank you Brian.
9. Thank you to all that have helped me to get bits done around the hut such as cutting crass and sorting the log shelter. This was a big help to me

10. All the external doors to be replaced soon, together with the windows down stairs.
This will help insulation and save on costs

11. Re-painting the hall is on my agenda

12. Building a new shower is also on my agenda. First the Tackle store needs moving to the shed after appropriate measures have been made to make the shed secure.

There are of course a myriad of other ongoing general maintenance issues.

I am happy to continue as Hut Warden.

Social Secretary

Below is Nicky's report from March 2020.

Last year's events included the hilarious assault course with the competitive Belgians; the very well attended veteran weekend and treasure hunt, the exceptionally well attended Christmas do- managed to squeeze in 33 people into the room, with the laugh a minute secret santa presents - Graham's T Shirt "I can keep going all night", was one such highlight, as well as the various themed evenings.

In recognition that most of our new members are coming through the Tuesday nights at the moment, this year's intention is to hold 2 Christmas dinners, one on members weekend and one on the Tuesday evening. Other events had been organised like foraging weekend and porterhouse fest, though presently on hold while the Corvid-19 virus controls our lives.

Always open to new ideas on events, just ask everyone to give a few days notice of whether they are coming, to get the supplies in.

Nicky

Caving Secretary

Below is Dave's report from March 2020. We have adopted the use of his new member check list.

Caving Secretary Report 2019/2020

1. New members

In the last 3 years there have been about 50 new members. Most of these new people have been local and tend to cave on Tuesdays only. The use of gear and the transition to Full Membership has raised issues which need addressing

There are a lot of things to teach new people, and they can be broadly categorised into:-

1. Basic caving skills
2. Basic kit requirements
3. Use of the cottage
4. Looking after kit
5. Basic ropework skills.
6. Basic laddering skills
7. Belaying skills
8. Club history
9. Cave conservation and access
10. How to explore caves safely
11. Becoming a Full Member

Initially I did all of these things with every new member as the Tuesday group had no full members.

For the first year, if I didn't organise and lead a Tuesday trip, no caving would happen. I also used to take care of all the kit washing as I visit the club more often than most.

The effort paid off as nowadays up to 20 people on 4 trips take place on a Tuesday.

It is good to see that a lot of the probationary members have progressed to full membership and many have also joined in the weekend meets. Tanya Sparey is a good example of a new member who has embraced full membership very quickly.

There are some questions about new members that keep cropping up and I would like to address these:

- a. "Many of the new members don't contribute financially to the Club, other than membership fees". This obviously applies to members who only cave on Tuesdays. On a Tuesday members meet at the cottage to collect gear, cave, then go to the pub until 11pm. We then they go straight home. No use is made of the Cottage heating, showers, hot water or kitchen facilities. I have brought up the question of additional payments more than once during Brians tenure as Sec, and the Committee response has always been that they don't think additional

charging for the Tuesday group would be appropriate. If anyone thinks that has now changed, please address suggestions to the Committee.

- b. "Gear is not always returned to the cottage directly after a Tuesday trip". Most trips end up at the Hunters until 11pm, and most people have work the following morning, so gear is not always returned the same day. On some evenings we have members whose journey home is via the club, and they offer to return gear. Most of the time people return gear after a Tuesday trip if possible (Usually Chris Barrington or Robin Harris)
- c. "The Tuesday cavers leave the cottage dirty" This is simply untrue as they only use the cottage to collect gear. No-one "uses" the cottage.
- d. "The Tuesday group leave gear dirty" When there are several trips running I cannot monitor who returns the gear for each trip, and I haven't myself seen dirty gear on the racks. However I know Ben has noted the return of dirty gear.

How should we respond to this? My feeling is that getting 50 people fully trained up on all the club expectations and routines is too much without a structure. A new Full Member may well have returned gear late one evening when the stop cock was turned off, and had no idea where the stopcock is (as once happened to me during my early membership). Or maybe they just hadn't been shown how to wash gear – Its not on the list requirements for becoming a full member.

The opportunity for "training by assimilation" is a greater on weekend meets when people have more time to chat through issues and "show and tell" different skills and routines to new members. I have a proposal below.

- e. "Are all New Members trustworthy as gear has gone missing?". There are some key issues to note: 1. There had been no stocktaking of tackle for 3 years. Dan has now done this, and it can form the basis of monitoring tackle in the future. 2. The tackle store is not suited to easy organisation allowing quick visual checks. Perhaps Ladders and ropes could be put on hooks labelled with their ref number in the new kit store. 3. Most of the gear that was "missing seems to have eventually returned. 4. Missing helmets have always been a problem, Borrowed by far flung (long term) members and accidentally taken home or lent out to an event, and took an age to get back are 2 examples (neither related to the Tuesday group)
- f. "Some members have not been in the club for 6 months before becoming full members" I think the 6 month rule was designed to give new members enough time to absorb the skills, processes and expectations of becoming a full member. However, from my comments above, those who only cave on a Tuesday may not be picking up things like where the broom cupboard is, or location of the stopcock, or purpose of the CSCC permits, or the rich history of the club, even after 6 months

- g. PROPOSAL . To make the 6 month rule effective in the busy Tuesday caving environment I would propose a Skills and Expectations list. I have attached a draft for discussion. This would make the expectations of full membership explicit, as currently most of it is “subliminal”.

BCA Insurance

BCA rules state that prospective members are covered for four initial trips.

- a. To make sure that this is tracked with prospective members Tanya Sparey has created a folder to be kept in the club which has a record sheet for each prospective member.
- b. I will add this information to the website
- c. I will include BCA information in the email I send to enquiries.
- d. All club members need to be aware of the rule and the new procedures – I will add an article in the next Bulletin.

Upper Flood Wardens.

It is difficult to get Upper Flood Wardens for guest trips. There is usually no response to requests. Part of the problem is that many wardens live some distance away. I have therefore put together an intensive Warden Training programme to get at least 4 local people trained as quickly as possible. To ensure the training is done properly I propose a record sheet attached.

Monthly Bulletin

This was primarily designed to keep Associate Members in touch with the club. I have received several emails of thanks from non-caving members, which makes me feel it has achieved its purpose.

Online Log

Tim Francis pointed out over a year ago that the log book was not being used to record trips. I started an online log. As some members felt it should be printed out there is a hard copy folder in the members lounge. To date there have been about 200 trip

reports. I would like to thank Tanya Sparey who has taken on the job of printing out the reports monthly.

Communication

It is difficult to make sure that information on Yahoo is posted in the Facebook group and vice versa. Brian added me to the Yahoo group when I joined, but over the years my ability to post keeps dropping, so Tania Sparey offered to update Yahoo. Brian has now added me to the Yahoo group again so at Eds request I will now add as many posts as I can from fb to Yahoo. It would be appreciated if someone on the Yahoo group would do the same for the fb group.

It would seem that Yahoo is likely to have a limited shelf life, and Bill and myself have trialled several alternatives. None have so far been suitable

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION	
MCG -A list of things new members need to learn in their first 6 months of membership	Tick when done
1. Cottage	
Where are cottage cleaning materials	
How does the heating work	
Where is firewood stored	
Where are keys for the wood store/drying room and tackle store	
Where are lamps and portable devices charged	
Where is the water stop tap	
Where is the gas stop tap	
Where is the dirty gear wash down	
Section 1 signed off by a full Member	
2. Keeping gear clean	

Why is important to wash down ropes	
Why is it important to wash down ladders and metal gear	
Why should batteries be removed from club helmets	
Where should dirty gear not be washed	
If gear is defective or worn what should you do	
Section 2 signed off by a full Member	
3. The club committee	
Find out who is on the committee	
When is the AGM held	
Who should you report any concerns to about safety, membership or any other club issue	
when is the AGM held	
Section 3 signed off by a full Member	
4. The website	
Where are minutes of meetings, AGMs and EGMs available to read	
Where are online trip reports entered	
Where on the website can you find a link to archive data	
Section 4 signed off by a full Member	
5. Club History	
When was the MCG founded	
Where did most of the founding members live	
What is the most significant cave on Mendip that has been opened up by MCG	
Section 5 signed off by a full Member	
6. Using Kit	
Tie a Bowline knot	
Tie a Figure of 8 knot	

Belay and abseil with an Italian Hitch	
Learn how to clean and coil ropes	
Learn how to clean and coil ladders	
Learn how spreaders are used	
Learn how to rig the ladder pitch in Swildons	
Learn how to belay someone on a pitch safely	
Learn how to use slings on pitches, and as emergency sit-harneses	
Know how to stuff kit bags	
Emergency rations	
Who is responsible for keeping kit clean	
Section 6 signed off by a full Member	
7. Personal gear - aim to get..	
Helmet	
Lamp	
Undersuit	
Oversuit	
Wellies	
Gloves	
At least one long sling	
At least 2 HMS carrabiners (These are large, pear shaped, locking carabiners)	
Section 7 signed off by a full Member	
8. Going on trips	
Use of Call Out Cards or other Call Outs	
Use of the Tackle Log	
Understand Cave Conservation	
Know how to call out the emergency services	
Know where to look online for Cave Access details	

What are CSCC permits and where are they stored	
Read the Cave Access page in the Club Website	
Section 8 signed off by a full Member	
9. Understanding the club	
Who uses the club	
Who cleans the club	
Who maintains the club	
Who decides club policy	
Can you bring friends to the club	
Why are there donation boxes	
What is the WIFI code	
Section 9 signed off by a full Member	
Section 10 Caving Log	
To become a full member you should have completed at least 10 trips	
1 Cave/Date	
2 Cave/Date	
3 Cave/Date	
4 Cave/Date	
5 Cave/Date	
6 Cave/Date	
7 Cave/Date	
8 Cave/Date	
9 Cave/Date	
10 Cave/Date	
Section 10 signed off by a full Member	
Section 11 Members weekend	

To become a full member you should have attended at least one members weekend	
Date attended	
11. Full Membership	
Become familiar enough to lead a trip in Goatchurch Cavern and to Sump 1 in Swildons	
Section 11 signed off by 2 Full Members	
Name	date
Signed	
Name	date
Once sections 1 to 11 are signed off pass this log to the Committee for approval for full membership	
Date of committee approval:	

Upper Flood Trainee Warden Log

Trainee Name		
Trip Description	Date	Warden leading

Requirements

1. Complete 5 trips, leading at least one trip.
2. Understand how to assess a group for appropriate gear.
3. Be aware of fatigue and chill in groups and know when to turn back
4. Understand how to lead a trip with conservation of the cave as the main objective.
5. Understand some of the cave history, and have explored some of the non tourist parts of the cave.
6. Be aware of what needs to be taken on a trip in a kit bag.

Trainee has met the criteria above and is recommended as an Upper Flood Warden to be ratified by the Committee, verified by 2 UF Wardens.

Warden 1Signature.....Date.....

Warden 2Signature.....Date.....

Editor

Below is Andy's report from April.

Mendip Caving Group Annual General Meeting 2020 Club Magazine 'The News' - Editor's Report

Editor – Andrew Horeckyj

Summary of the year-ending

Only one copy of the News has gone to print since the last AGM, which is short of the stated aim of three copies in a year.

The editor has received no articles for inclusion in future copy since this edition came out.

The Yahoo Group- which was reported to be waning last year, has ceased to function as a repository of club information due to the changing operational terms of Yahoo as an entity - something which appears to be entering its death-throes: increasingly few people use it and it becomes progressively unreliable as a platform for communication.

Looking ahead

Much of this section is copied from last year's account- my views on the News and its place have not changed, but see the final section of further discussion.

If the AGM votes for me to continue as NEWS editor, I would like to see the magazine carry-on broadly to the publication standard that has been established. It has been suggested in conversation, that the role of the editor might become a shared position.

The NEWS does still require members to continue to send articles and photographs for inclusion. If the club wants to have more copies per year, the editor needs material: no articles- no NEWS copies.

I'm all for the notion of regular columnists...they don't always have to have pages and pages to say, but a regular contribution is welcomed.

After much discussion and floating of alternative ideas for the print production, the existing arrangements have been retained for the current period.

A bound paper Newsletter is still a very good way of collating and preserving group activities, as well as distributing it to other societies and repositories. A written paper logbook is also a good permanent record of certain club activities.

Further Discussion

The editor has been part of a small team engaged in preparing the club's archive of old newsletters and bulletins, for inclusion in a section of the website- for ease of access for the membership. This has required certain elements of the newsletters to be *redacted*- edited out – to comply with the legislation requirements for privacy: addresses, phone numbers, email addresses etc.

As tedious as this exercise sounds- and indeed is, when sitting there blocking-out text in Adobe Acrobat, it was a highly informative process in demonstrating the changing way the MCG as a group, communicates *within* itself. It was enlightening for the current editor in a number of ways.

I redacted the entire 1990s editions of the News. At the dawn of the 1990s there was no internet (as we know it today), that was still in its academic infancy. Email was almost absent from the membership; many members did not have a fixed telephone land-line and mobile phones did not exist. The News was the primary method by which the club communicated with the membership and the membership announced their changing addresses and numbers, to enable them to keep in touch with each other.

Apart from these *administrative details*, the News contained a mixture of club property news, trip reports, personal '*journey-statements*', chit-chat, jokes, news from digs and exploration, up-coming social events and snippets of cave-related material from the wider National media.

Read that last paragraph again- and this time think of how the membership – *as a whole*- produces and consumes these separate items, at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century. The answer is social media and direct electronic communication, in every single category – bar- perhaps, the announcement of new finds and discoveries, which tend to find themselves in print in journals.

The *stuff* of journals-past is now despatched direct to an email list, or posted on facebook- either on the club's own pages, or in the case of individual members' activities, journeys, expeditions, on their own pages and then often linked to the club's pages.

The journal of the 1990s has been replaced by social media in virtually every category of included content in the present day; it is largely redundant in the way it was originally intended- *to allow the membership to keep in touch with each other*.

The *News* – as a journal – does have other purposes however, it is used as the method to communicate information to different organisations – some local, some national and some abroad. In this regard it still has some importance and its particular qualities arguably set it above electronic and social media in many respects. Let's take the discovery of a new cave – The Unexpected Level in Pearl Mine, or new passages in Bone Hole. Here, well written prose supported by high-quality photographs on quality print copy are a very good form for archiving long-term – exactly the sort of things the Mendip Cave Registry or the BCA archives might want to do. Speak to any professional archivist on the subject of “*making digital copies*” as a long-term solution to any form of storage...and be prepared for a serious lecture on why this is not going to replace printed originals.


So, to return to the present decade of the present century- one possible reason the membership has not supplied material to the editor for print – and the editor has not produced anything for several months, is that the club has done *nothing* worth putting-down on paper? Controversial? Ok...yes, I'll go with that. Inaccurate? Hmm....go on then – let's hear your argument.

Club social events for the next few months- all notified by direct mail from the social secretary and posted on social media – *and very effectively I might add*. Precisely what is required. A paper journal several months after the event- utterly redundant.

A member's change of personal circumstances / change of address / production of offspring / recent holiday rental of a gîte in the Dordogne....which just happened to involve walking the dog past a cave...all now catered-for on social media, where the interested can be copied-in, and the rest can – *mercifully*- opt out.

When wanting to bring to the attention of the membership something new, or unusual – like the recent cave related art installation, or the trip to the cold war bunkers, or a foreign caving trip, then I think the Journal is a good way to do this. And as a long term record of club activity, it has a place.

In short- having been through ten years of editions of the News from the 1990s, I could probably count the articles of interest and relevance today on the fingers of one hand- stuff that *really is* worth archiving- discovery stuff. The vast majority of the social stuff may be relevant to those that were there at the time, or it may not. Two pages of prose detailing where a member went for a walk around the new locale, having just moved house- irrelevant today- and arguably might not even have been worth reading at the time it was written: in today's facebook terms – if it popped-up on your newsfeed occasionally you'd ignore it, more frequently and you'd *sleep* the member for 30-days, and if arriving at *pestilential rates*- unfollow.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Horecky". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "y" at the end.

Andrew Horecky, 07-03-20

Librarian

We have no librarians' report.