

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP



**GLOUCESTERSHIRE
CAVE RESCUE
GROUP**

50 YEARS OF CAVE RESCUE

1965-2015

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP

50th ANNIVERSARY REVIEW

1965-2015

Compiled/Edited by Jonathan Maisey

Published by the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, 2018

This publication has been produced to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group in 1965. The idea of this review being to try and provide a concise history of how/why the group came to be established and the major events that have been associated with the group since then.

The majority of the information contained here has been obtained from the group's records (where available), personal sources and newspapers. Unfortunately, during the early years of the group there were no official records kept, other than minutes or newsletters (where they exist). This has meant that inevitably some historical details are missing/incomplete.

Acknowledgements and Credits

A big thankyou to those current and former members of GCRG who provided information, photos and newspaper cuttings for this publication. Apologies to anyone who may have offered contributions and which could not be used for reasons of space.

Dedicated to all GCRG members, past and present.

2018

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The initial provision of Cave Rescue for the Forest of Dean area was provided as an extension of the then South Wales Cave Rescue as a number of their members lived within the Forest of Dean. However it was not long before the decision was taken to form the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group back in 1965. This was a few years before I started caving and, subsequently in the early 1970's, joining the group.

Starting out as an ordinary member, progressing to Equipment Officer, Secretary and then Chairman. The latter post being one that I have held for quite a long period; someone needs to be thinking seriously about taking over from me, anyway that's another story.

Over the years, we have as this document portrays, seen many changes within the group, both in equipment, methods and facilities. Much of which has been dictated by the development of the local caving area as a whole.

I was not significantly involved with the obtaining of the current premises and to be total honest with you I felt at the time that it was taking on too much of a responsibility. However, as the years have progressed and those premises have been developed to where they are today, the foresight of those who championed the purchase has borne fruit. A lot of work has been put in (and still is being put in) but what a wonderful location we now have. How different from when we first took it over.

We know that this has not been achieved without a cost but I am very much of the opinion that what we have now is way beyond the wildest dreams at the outset and is somewhere that any of us is not only proud to go to, but would have no problem in inviting others to visit. Holding a large bank balance and not a decent HQ would be bad.

My thanks go out to all who have contributed to this progress over the years and continue to do so. Also, those as well who look after the equipment, run the training days, the Wardens who respond to a rescue call out, all who respond to the Wardens and generally all who keep the group going. None of it would happen without your efforts.

GCRG is not the busiest Cave Rescue Team in the country and to be honest long may this continue. However, we are all aware that our area of responsibility is quite considerable and contains many cave and mine sites. Within this area are some very significant sites that over the years have thrown their own respective spanner-in-the-works when it comes to a rescue.

The group can't sit on its laurels and it is essential that we maintain our skill levels and equipment to the highest standards so that we are ready and able to meet whatever challenges that we are called upon to deal with.

I am particularly honoured to have been part of GCRG and hope that we can see it move forward not just to its 60th year but also on for many, many years into the future.

Paul W Taylor

THE ORIGIN OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP

During the early 1960s the Gloucester Speleological Society (GSS) had been in the process of creating a cave rescue team (CRT) from within the membership of the club. It had been seen that other cave rescue teams had already been established in the UK (*CRO in 1935, Mendip Cave Rescue in 1937, South & Mid-Wales Cave Rescue Team in 1946 and Derbyshire CRO in 1952*) and yet, for Gloucestershire, there was no dedicated rescue capability.

In order to establish a formal cave rescue capability in the county, on the 15th of March 1962 the GSS established its own cave rescue team at the 'Cross Keys', Gloucester.

Notice circulated to GSS members prior to the formation of the club's cave rescue team and highlighting the reasons why a local cave rescue team was needed.

NOTES FOR A GENERAL MEETING TO DISCUSS THE FORMATION OF A F.O.D. CAVE RESCUE TEAM.

A number of club members feel the need for a Cave Rescue Team in the Forest of Dean and the surrounding areas. Although already covered by South Wales Cave Rescue Organization the general opinion is that by reason of our much more detailed knowledge of the Forest and the closer proximity of same, we could operate more efficiently and be on the scene much more quickly than an outside team.

Accidents within our area have been very rare but ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN and we ought to be prepared. Caving is on the increase and we want it to go on increasing, but the more popular our sport becomes the more likely it is that one day a rescue team will be required.
Contingencies to be considered.

1. Perhaps the most likely reason for a call out would be youngsters reported to the police as missing after telling parents that they were going to explore some caves or old mines. Possibly there whereabouts would be completely unknown and therefore the requirement would be for an efficient search system based on an accurate detailed list of all known caves and mines.
2. Body injury caused by a slip or fall, necessitating immediate First Aid and then the quickest and safest transport to the surface.
3. Cavers trapped by a geological changes such as rockfall, floodwater etc. Thorough knowledge of caves or mine might mean use of another route for escape, which was unknown to those trapped.
4. Any combination of above.

Requirements of Team members.

Team members would be required to keep emergency packs, normal caving kit, and two days ration of food, ready to be picked up and moved off at a moments notice. Obviously if it was a long rescue operation, goon suits or exposure suits would be a great advantage. Assistance to other Rescue Organizations.

Being the closest team to South Wales, we would, once recognized as an efficient team, be liable for call out to assist S.W. C.R.O. in the event of a big rescue in that area, which was likely to last for several days.

Listed are but a few notes on the general form of a F.O.D. Cave Rescue Team. What is required now are useful suggestions and criticisms and above all HELP. If you are a reasonably good caver please fill in the accompanying sheet as soon as possible and hand to any committee member.

GSS Cave Rescue Team newsheet

This was distributed shortly after the official GSS cave rescue team was established on the 15th of March 1962.

GLOUCESTER SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
CAVE RESCUE ORGANISATION Mar 62

TO ALL VOLUNTEERS FOR CAVE RESCUE WORK :-

1. You will be notified by the Police or a Warden if your help is required, and instructed where to report.
2. You should keep readily available as much as possible of the following equipment, so that, if called out, you will not have to make a detour to pick it up :-
 Helmet
 Usual saving clothes, plus waterproof
 Lamp
 Either spare batteries and bulbs, or 1 lb. Cartridge, as the case may be
 1 lb. Candles, and matches, in waterproof container
 Food for 48 hours
 Any other useful equipment you have available i.e., spare lamp, small prisms, tent, groundsheet, etc.
3. On arrival, report to the Warden in charge, who will allocate you to some essential duty. Do not imagine that your time is being wasted if you do not actually deal with the casualty, since supporting parties are as important as the stretcher party.
4. Your effectiveness as a rescuer will be much increased if you take part in C. R. C. exercises, and you should try to obtain such practice.
5. If you require any further information, please ask the Organiser or any Warden.

WRITERS

A. ILES, 22 Prince Street, Gloucester.
J. DRYDEN, 124, Hales Road, Cheltenham.

GLOUCESTER SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
RESCUE ORGANISATION
- in conjunction with -
SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB CAVE RESCUE ORGANISATION

TO ALL CAVERS :-

The Cave Rescue Organisation exists to assist people trapped or injured in caves and potholes. The local Police Forces have agreed to co-operate with the Cave Rescue Organisation and all requests for its assistance should be made through them.

(If a request is made through the Gloucestershire or Herefordshire Police they will call out the team from G.S.S. if the South Wales Cave Rescue Organisation is required they are obtainable via the Glamorganshire Police. Phone - BRIDGEND 990).

When a caving accident occurs, this is the procedure to be followed:-

One or two persons should be sent to report the incident. Unless there is only one survivor, at least one person should be left to look after the victim.

The person sent out should make his way to the nearest Telephone and report the incident to the local Police (Dial 999, if possible, or ask for Police).

The following information will be required by the Police :-

Name and Address of caller
 Position and Number of Telephone
 Name and Position of cave
 Nature of accident with fullest possible details
 Position of accident in cave
 Number and ability of Members of party
 Any other useful information

ALL messages should begin with the words "CAVE RESCUE"

Speak slowly and clearly, and make sure your message is accurate and understood.

While waiting for the arrival of a rescue party, those left to look after the casualty should give what First Aid they can, and try to keep the patient warm and, if possible, dry.

In the event of a party being much overdue, the person having knowledge of this should report to the Police, as above.

NORMAL PRECAUTIONS BY THE CAVER ARE FAR MORE EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING ACCIDENTS THAN THE EFFORTS OF THE CAVE RESCUE ORGANISATION CAN EVER BE IN MITIGATING THEIR EFFECTS

The Cave Rescue Organisation is still short of members. If you have not volunteered to assist, and are able to do so, please get in touch with the Organiser or Local Wardens :-

A. ILES, 22 Prince Street, Gloucester.
J. DRYDEN, 124, Hales Road, Cheltenham.

Information sheet produced by the GSS Cave Rescue Team (1962)

Initially, the cave rescue team was composed mainly of GSS members. However, non-GSS cavers, in particular, members of the Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club (RFDCC) were becoming keen to participate. It was felt important to ensure that the team was not associated with any particular club. Unfortunately the team was short-lived through lack of support by club members;. Another effort was made by the GSS at the beginning of 1964 to establish cave rescue on a solid basis, and a meeting for the purpose was called in May of that year.

Much preliminary work was undertaken prior to the meeting to find out the manner in which similar organisations were run, and to gather as much information and as many hints as possible. The meeting was well-attended, and most of the suggestions and recommendations were well-received: a committee was nominated and voted in and help volunteered by all present.

At the inaugural meeting (May 1964) it was decided that the Rescue Team (as it was then called) should be self-supporting and have its own funds. Later in 1964 the team became a separate entity from the GSS.

The team initially comprised the following:

Chairman Les Sherratt

Vice Chairman John Dryden

Secretary Henry Messenger

Wardens Tony Isles, John Dryden

First Aid Officers Dave Parker, S Marsh

Tackle Officer Ted Ryder

During the first year the county police were informed of the existence of the new organisation, its purpose and activities, and provided with all the relevant information to initiate a call-out in case of an emergency.

The secretary of the local branch of the British Medical Association was approached to try and find doctors willing to train with the team and in October two doctors generously volunteered their time and services. About every six weeks they are taken underground to give them an opportunity to see at first hand the sort of difficulties which might be encountered in an actual rescue.

GSS CRT newsletter (September 1964)

In September 1964, the GSS CRT newsletter published an address from the team's Secretary (Anthony Day) to the GSS members

.... 'Since the GSS extra-ordinary General Meeting on the 27th of May, the Cave Rescue Committee have been arranging a callout procedure with the Police. They are now waiting to have an interview with the representative of the Gloucestershire Constabulary to finalise the suggested callout procedure. A temporary procedure has been decided upon and every GSS member should remember it. It is as follows:

If you are called out, by the Police, for cave rescue, assemble at your nearest Central Police Station. These will be either Cheltenham or Gloucester. There you must await transport and instructions.

Cave rescue techniques are not difficult to learn, especially if you are a competent caver. Unfortunately many members are not fully conversant with these techniques and this would hinder the team on a rescue. Because of this, the committee feel that a training programme should be arranged in conjunction with the GSS Meet Secretary and it is hoped that there will be a monthly meet for training CRT personnel.'

The below has been reproduced from the original handwritten newsletter.

GLOUCESTER SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
CAVE RESCUE TEAM NEWSLETTER

9, Priory Street,
Cheltenham,
29th Sept. 1964

Dear Member,

Since the G.S.S. Extra-Ordinary General Meeting, which was held on Wed. 27th May, the Cave Rescue Committee have been arranging a call-out procedure with the Police. They are now waiting to have an interview with the representative of the Gloucestershire Constabulary to finalise the suggested call-out procedure. A temporary procedure has been decided upon and every G.S.S. member should remember it. It is as follows:

"If you are called out, by the Police, for cave rescue, assemble at your nearest Central Police Station. These will be either Cheltenham or Gloucester. There you must await transport and instructions.

Cave rescue techniques are not difficult to learn, especially if you are a competent caver. Unfortunately many members are not fully conversant with these techniques, and this would hinder the team on a rescue. Because of this, the committee feel that a training programme should be arranged in conjunction with the G.S.S. Meet Secretary and it is hoped that there will be a monthly meet for training C.R.T. personnel.

The first meeting will be held on Monday 19th October at the Robinson Hall. It will be for training personnel on the "methods and uses" of knots. I ask everybody to attend this meeting, as we could all do with a refresher course on this subject. Refreshments will be served and the meeting will begin at 7.30pm. Please arrive on time.

In the future the committee hope to hold lectures, outside rescue practices, and visits to other rescue practices arranged by the South Wales Cave Rescue Organisation and Mendip Cave Rescue Organisation.

The C.R.T. will require a person who can give medical supervision, and the committee are corresponding with the British Medical Association (Glos. Branch). The next B.M.A. meeting will be held in October 1964, and it is hoped that a Doctor will volunteer his services to train with the C.R.T.

One of the difficulties of forming a C.R.T. is where to obtain the money to buy the team equipment. Expensive items such as a Carrying Sheet, Ropes, and First Aid equipment are required, initially, for any rescue operation. Raising money for these items could be very difficult especially if G.S.S. members do not help in the organisation, Therefore I appeal to all members to help the committee as much as possible.

On Saturday 17th October 1964 there is a jumble sale for raising money for the C.R.T. It is being held at the Allington Hall, Derby Road, Glos. At 2 pm. Help will be required for collecting jumble and also at the sale. Please lend a hand, it will be needed. Please contact committee members with your offers of assistance.

Fund raisers can be obtained at all times from Les Sherratt, and enquiries are in hand for obtaining Christmas Cards for sale at a very reasonable price and good profits.

I have tried to give you a brief outline of the C.R.T. committee's intentions. There is room for improvement, and if you have any ideas of your own, please put them on paper and send them to me. This C.R.T. cannot succeed without your support, and if you have no intention of helping, then the idea of a C.R.T. may as well be disbanded. Remember that your luck may "run out" and you may require the services of a C.R.T. In this day and age you do not receive something for nothing. Therefore I appeal to you, again, to help the C.R.T. committee in every way possible. This can be done by attending all the activities, which will help you more than it will help the committee.

Yours Speleologically,
A. C. Day
(C.R.T. Hon. Secretary.)

GSS CRT newsletter (November 1964)

In November 1964 the newsletter stated that ...

'A Day reported that the Chairman had had an interview with the police and that they were very helpful and interested the CRT but would not be able to store the CR equipment at the Glos Police Station due to a lack of storage space. The Police were happy to leave the callout procedure to the team and be able to call on any CRT member to form a team.'

Two committee members and two other club members were reported to have attended a rescue practice held in New Dunn by the Cheltenham Civil Defence on the 4th of Oct. The attendees observed that the CD team were not equipped for underground rescue, given that they were operating with standard issue CD equipment.'

1965 to 1970

OFFICIAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GCRG

24th MAY 1965

The first AGM of the Cave Rescue Team (*which until now had existed as part of the GSS*) took place at the Red Lion, Huntley and the name 'Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group' (GCRG) was agreed. The committee was also established from members of both the GSS and RFDCC.

Following its formation and due to the close ties between the former GSS CRT and the South Wales Caving Club Cave Rescue Organisation (SWCCCRO), the new group became affiliated to the SWCCCRO and would be called upon as first backup for rescues in South Wales.

In the early years (up to 1972), the GCRG did not have a fixed Chairman. The position was filled on a yearly basis for the Annual General Meeting by a number of guests (including Derek Appleing, Tony 'Anthony' Day, Gordon Clissold (SWCCCRO), Oliver Lloyd (Mendip Cave Rescue) etc).

CALLOUTS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

The following events involved GCRG in one form or another, whether just being on standby, the involvement of just a small number of group members, or as a full callout.

Oct 1966 GCRG called to rescue a dog stuck in a rift at Fish Hill, near Broadway Tower; GCRG subsequently awarded an RSPCA award.

11 March 1967 Recovery of Rex Keane, Easter iron mine shaft.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS INVOLVING THE GROUP

1965

24 May 1965 (AGM, held at the Red Lion Huntley)

It was agreed that the GSS would allow the GCRG equipment to be stored at the GSS cottage (Bottom Cottage) as an ideal location. It was proposed that the cave rescue group should be renamed as the 'Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group'.

Cave rescue register established, Tony Isles takes on the role as first administrator.

Early GSS CRT newsletter

January 1965

GLOUCESTER SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
CAVE RESCUE NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 1965

Dear Member,

Following a cessation of activities, due to the Christmas Festivities, the committee are attempting to finish the job of forming a useful Cave Rescue Team.

- A small amount of equipment has been bought. It is as follows:-
- 1) A down Exposure Suit.
 - 2) A stock of Gypsons Bandages.
 - 3) A pair of telephones to form the basis of a communication system.

A piece of canvas has been given for making into a carrying sheet and work is in progress on this.

It was mentioned at the C.R.T. Training evening, about the interview that our Warden had with the Gloucestershire Constabulary. From this interview it was evident that the Police were only too pleased to let us carry on with this job but did not wish to have the responsibility of calling out the whole team. Therefore the C.R.T. must be called out by one of several members whose names are listed with the Police. There are six names at the Gloucestershire County Police Headquarters, and in the case of an emergency one of these six will be contacted to form a Rescue Team.

I again remind all persons concerned that the call out procedure is as follows:-

"When called out on a Cave Rescue, go home and collect your equipment. Proceed to the nearest Central Police Station at Gloucester or Cheltenham. Await further orders and transport. If you have transport, please use it".

To save time in an emergency. It is imperative that each person's C.R. kit is packed ready to be collected. Time is a valuable commodity and if it is wasted, while people are trying to find their kit, plus food and cooking equipment, the casualty will suffer. Our object is to save life, please remember that.

The C.R.T. have had offers of service from two Doctors. They are Dr. Pepper and Dr. Rocyn-Jones, and both have already had one familiarisation trip underground. The medical care of the casualty has been a worrying problem up to now. We feel that this problem is well on the way to being solved.

The membership of the G.S.S. is scarcely large enough to cover the amount of personnel required for a C.R.T., and because of this the committee feel that as the C.R.T. is financially independent of the G.S.S. (but still remembering it was sponsored by the G.S.S.), it would be a good idea to throw open the membership of the C.R.T. to any caver in Gloucestershire. This will be the only way in which the C.R.T. will be able to get sufficient volunteers for a large callout. Indeed, the formation of an amalgamated C.R.T. would be more likely to bring cavers of Gloucestershire together than is at present the case; this would be advantageous to the advancement of speleology generally. If any person disagrees, and can suggest a better idea, please write to me with their suggestions and they will be considered by the C.R. Committee.

On the 8th Feb. 8.15 p.m. there will be a demonstration at the St. Johns Ambulance H.Q. in Cheltenham on Mouth to Mouth Artificial Respiration. Following the demonstration everybody will have an opportunity to practise on the life size dummy.

It is hoped in the near future to hold a Cave Rescue exercise in the Forest of Dean. I ask all those who are members of the C.R.T. to try and attend this exercise. The date will be circulated at a later date.

Attached to this newsletter you will find a C.R.T. information sheet. You have probably already filled one of these in before. We ask you to fill it in again so that our records can be kept up to date. Please return them to me as soon as possible. If they are not returned we shall assume that you do not wish to be a member of the C.R.T. Please do not make this decision, the C.R.T. requires you desperately.

Yours Speleologically,

A.C. Day.
 (Cave Rescue Hon. Secretary).

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE TEAM
MAY NEWSLETTER (1965)**

40 Brunswick Road,
Gloucester

Dear Member,

The heading of the last newsletter was incorrect and it should be read as above. We are not an organisation but a Rescue Team.

The most important future part of the C.R.T. will be the Annual General Meeting, which is to be held on Monday 24th May, 1965. It will be held at the Red Lion Inn, Huntley, and will commence at 7.45pm. Please try and attend this meeting. All nominations for officers and members of the Committee should be sent to me, at the above address.

A.G.M Agenda

Apologies
Minutes of Previous A.G.M.
Matters Arising from minutes
Wardens report for 1964/65
Treasurers report
Election of Officers for 1965/66
Team kit storage
Any other business

The practice call-out of members of the C.R.T. which occurred at the end of April, was very successful and I would like to thank all of you for turning out. I apologise for any inconvenience that it may have caused. Please remember, it might have been the real thing and this practice proved that we can form a Team within an hour of initiating a call-out.

At the end of the newsletter you will find a personal kit list. I advise everyone to take note of this list and try to collect all the equipment on it and keep in one place. It is imperative that you have your kit ready in case of emergency, this list is only a guide.

Practice Rescue

There will be a practice rescue on Sunday 23rd May, 1965 it will be held in the Forest of Dean. The trip will leave at 9.45 on Sunday morning from Westgate Bridge. I hope to see you all there. Please try to attend and remember it will be a day trip.

Personal Kit

Pack of food to consume on journey to Rescue (Chocolate, Biscuits, Barley sugar etc.)
A pack to carry any equipment required under ground (light spares, blankets, stimulating food etc.)
A pack to contain any equipment required for above ground (food, cookery utensils, sleeping bag etc.).

Personal Underground Equipment

Carbide, Water, Prickers, Spare jets, First Aid (Triangular bandages, bottle of diluter Antiseptic, Cotton Wool, Plasters, lint, mine dressings and scissors), waterproof matches.

Additional

Anything which may be useful (wet suits, tents, cooking stoves, etc.)

Yours Speleologically,
A.C. Day

A.C. Day
(G.C.R.T. Hon. Sec)

The below has been reproduced from the original handwritten newsletter

Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group

July newsletter 1965

Dear member,

Another year of the GCRG has commenced and it is hoped that it will have increasing success, this however depends upon your support and co-operation.

I would like to thank all the members of the Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club for volunteering their services for the GCRG. As there are so many of you it has been decided that general training and callout procedure should be organised by your club. However, practices will be organised for all members of the group at frequent intervals.

The committee decided at the last meeting that a record should be kept of any activities of the GCRG and I ask you to put pen to paper on any training meet or practice rescue meet. This is so that we can refer to them and record our mistakes. Also at this meeting it was agreed upon that the mine shafts and outcrop workings and natural caves should be recorded with notes on their depth etc. The following will be published in the newsletters. I ask all of you to help in this and to let me have the details. The reason for publishing them is to save people looking at something that has already been recorded.

The following will give you examples of the information required (these are genuine):-

- 1) *New Dun Iron Mine Pit – SO 50NE GRID REF. 58170836.
Filled to surface with rubbish – on private land and watched by Police.*
- 2) *Old Ham Iron Mine Pit Shaft – SO 50NE GRID REF. 57980831
Filled at surface with rubbish.*
- 3) *Red Ham Pit Shaft – SO 50NE GRID REF. 5807 0907
Filled at surface with rubbish – undetectable.*
- 4) *Name Unknown – SO 50NE GRID REF. 5816 0893
Partially filled with rubbish – Depth 30ft approx. – stone lined, well fenced – Requires no equipment in search as bottom can be seen from surface.*
- 5) *Easter Iron Mine Pit Shaft No.1 – SO 50NE GRID REF. 5822 0903
Completely capped with concrete.*
- 6) *Easter Iron Mine Pit Shaft No.2 – SO 50NE GRID REF. 5839 0903
Partially filled with rubbish – Depth 30ft approx. – stone lined – Stone wall around shaft at surface but one side missing, therefore easily accessible – Dangerous – Requires no equipment in search as bottom can be seen from surface – used as rubbish waste dump.*
- 7) *Easter Iron Mine Pit Shaft No.3 – SO 50NE Grid Ref. 5849 0915
Undetectable, presumably filled in.*
- 8) *Easter Iron Mine Pit Shaft No.4 – SO 50NE Grid Ref. 5858 0915
Completely enclosed by a stone, locked up, well-kept building.
Top of shaft (assumed) is 20ft above ground capped with a steel plate – Have reason to believe local firm use it to pump water to obtain iron oxide.*

The finances of the group require boosting and all members are requested to help by selling some of the fundraisers and Christmas cards. For more information please contact me and I will forward details to you.

It is hoped that the GCRG will hold a Speleologist Christmas Dinner and we would like to know who would be interested so that we can assess for organising a dinner, again please inform your committee members of your views as you will make it a success.

Yours Speleologically,

AC Day

(Hon Secretary)

Early GCRG newsletter

August 1965

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP

AUGUST NEWSLETTER 1965

40, Brunswick Road,
Gloucester.

Gloucester 27940 Room 7

Dear Member,

Another year of the G.C.R.G. has commenced and it is hoped that it will have increasing success. This however depends upon your support and co-operation.

I would like to thank all members of the Royal Forest of Dean Caving club for volunteering their services for the G.C.R.G. As there are so many of you, it has been decided that general training and call out procedure should be organised on a club basis, and then complete practice meets arranged at fairly frequent intervals for all clubs and individual members.

The committee has decided that a record should be kept of all activities of the G.C.R.G. and I ask you to put pen to paper on any training meet or practice rescue meet. This is so that we have a complete record of all events, and each club or section by referring to others records, can avoid making the same mistakes and learn by others experience.

It was also agreed upon the importance of compiling a full and accurate list of all known mines, caves, digs, shafts etc. Along with exact location shall be recorded known depth, any other entrances, accessibility by vehicles location of nearest telephone and so on. Mr. A. Iles, 68, Goodmoor Crescent, Churchdown, Glos. has agreed to act as Registrar, and the attached form shows the information required. To avoid duplication of effort the latest additions to the list will be included in the newsletters together with their Grid References.

A familiarisation trip for the doctors has been arranged for Thursday evening Sept. 9th. It has been arranged to meet at The George, Mitcheldean, at 7.30 p.m.

The afternoon of Saturday 18th Sept. must be kept free as this is the date of the next general practice meet. Kick-off is 2.30 p.m. at Clearwell.

The finances of the Group require boosting and all members are requested to help by selling Fund raisers and Christmas cards. For further information, please contact me and I will forward details to you.

Please note NOW that a Dinner-dance has been arranged for Friday 26th Nov. at the White Hart, Cinderford. The venue has been thoroughly recommended for both atmosphere and cuisine, and it is hoped that everyone will do their best to attend. Tickets will be available shortly from committee members and will cost 15/6d. Please come, and why not persuade a friend to come as well - he might be agreeably surprised to find out what a sociable crowd cavers can be.

In the early years of the GCRG it was recognised that some form of record/registry ought to be made to formally record underground sites in the GCRG region

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP

REGISTER OF CAVE AND MINE IN THE COUNTY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

If you think you know of a cave or mine entrance (or entrances) which have not been previously recorded in the G.C.R.G. register, please fill in the form below. To be of real practical use, from a rescue point of view, the details of vehicle access, nearest telephone etc., should also be completed.

(1) Name of cave or mine (if known).....

(2) Suggested name, if certain none exists.....

(3) Grid reference (give O.S. map no.).....

(4) Nearest point to which vehicle may be driven (G.R.).....

(5) If (4) is along a track, marked on a map or otherwise, give best means of approach.....

(6) Brief details of cave or mine: approximate depth, extent, no. of means of entry, possibility of falls, etc.....

(7) Location of nearest telephone.....

(8) Location of nearest Police.....

(9) Location of nearest hospital.....

(10) Location of nearest fire station.....

(11) Location of nearest scaffold poles.....

(12) Any other details which might be of use.....

Return this form when completed to: Mr A. Day, 68, Goodmoor Cres.
Churchdown, Glos.

An early attempt to provide a means to transport the cave rescue equipment to a practice or rescue

Points have been made concerning the desirability of having all Rescue equipment stored in one place, and if possible for the whole store to be mobile. The ideal sort of thing would be of about the size of a small horsebox which could be towed without difficulty. Anybody coming across a very small caravan lying derelict (we hate paying for anything) or even a chassis on which to build, please contact myself or any committee member.

(1) Name of cave or mine (if known).....

(2) Suggested name, if certain none exists.....

(3) Grid reference (give O.S. map no.).....

(4) Nearest point to which vehicle may be driven (G.R.).....

(5) If (4) is along a track, marked on a map or otherwise, give best means of approach.....

Yours, Speleologically,

A.C. Day

18 September 1965 [Training] British Mine.

12 December 1965 [Training] King Arthur's Cave.

1966

21 January 1966 [Training] New Dun.

August 1966 newsletter Secretary reports that in 1965 much of the group's limited income came from the selling of Christmas cards.

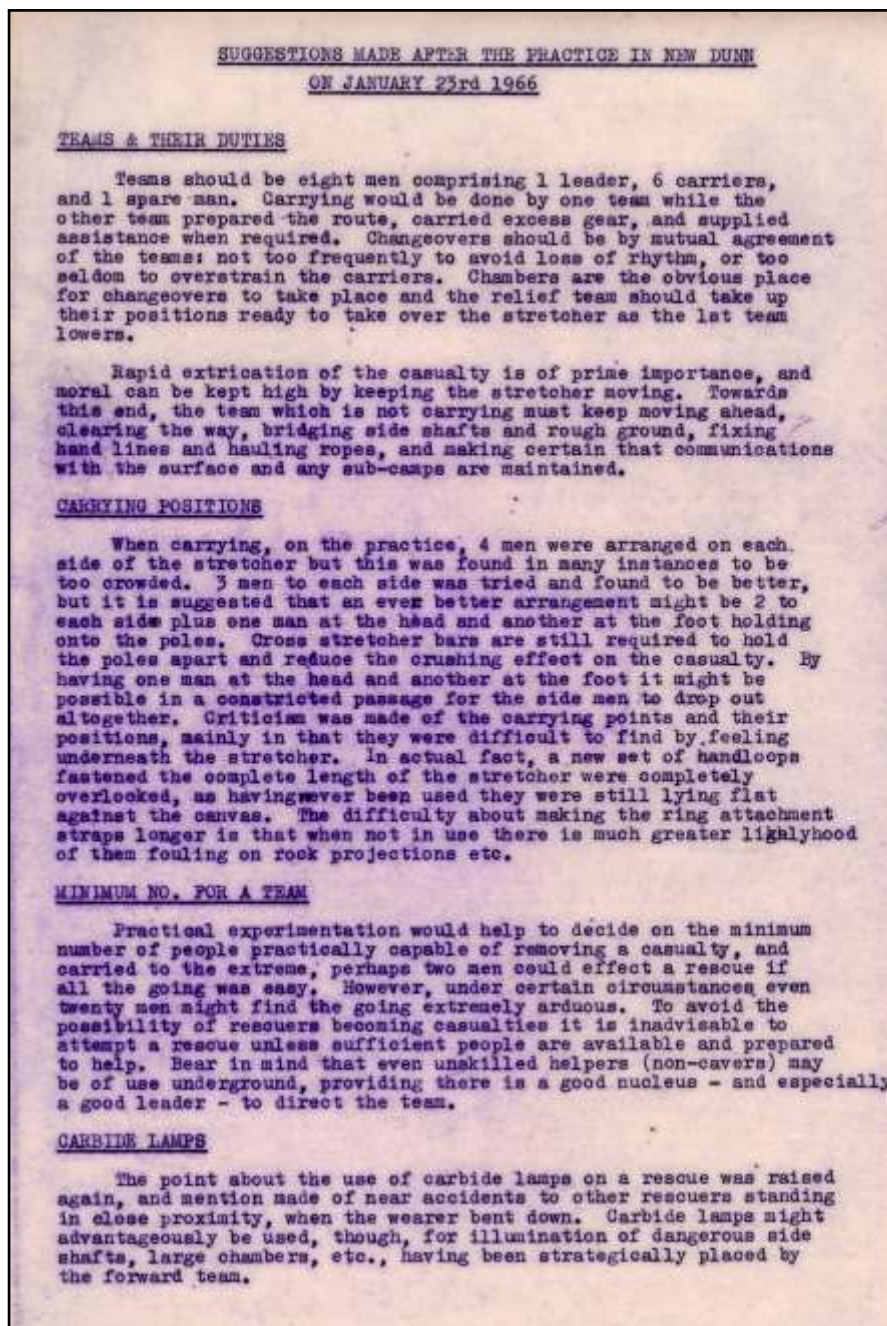
4 September 1966 [Training] Speech House Quarry.

20 October 1966 Halloween party held at British Mine.

23 October 1966 [Training] Wigpool.

25 November 1966 Buffet and dance held at White Hart, Cinderford.

Observations made from an early practice in New Dunn



First Constitution of the group

25th May 1966

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP.

CONSTITUTION.

1. NAME. The group shall be called the GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP. Hereinafter called the G.C.R.G.
2. OBJECT. The object of the G.C.R.G. shall be primarily:-
 - a) The preservation of life of persons injured underground.
 - b) The rapid extrication of any such persons from caves, mines, or similar environment.
 - c) To circulate information arising from experience gained, to interested parties.
- 3) MEMBERSHIP. Membership shall be open to all cavers who feel competent to deal with the envisaged situations, above or below ground, and who are prepared to take further training. Such persons shall have reached the age of 16 years.
- 4) OFFICERS. The management of the G.C.R.G. shall be vested in a committee comprising:-
 - a) Secretary (warden).
 - b) Treasurer.
 - c) Information Officer.
 - d) Equipment Officer.
 - e) 5 Ordinary Members.
 which shall have power to accept or co-opt other persons into the committee.
 The election of the committee shall be held at the Annual General Meeting. The committee assuming office after election.
- 5) FUNDS AND EQUIPMENT. The funds shall be used at the discretion of the committee, providing they do not violate any clause of this Constitution.
 The Treasurer shall keep a proper account book, which may be inspected by any G.C.R.G. member, and shall submit a Statement of Account at Committee Meeting, and an audited Balance Sheet at the Annual General Meeting. The Balance Sheet to be audited by some reputable person not a member of the G.C.R.G.
 In the event of the G.C.R.G. ceasing to exist, all funds, accounts, records, equipment and other material, shall be passed to the South Wales Cave Rescue Organization for safe keeping, and placed in bond. If, after three years, the G.C.R.G. has not been reformed to the satisfaction of the S.W.C.R.O., they may absorb such items as they hold into their own store and funds.
- 6) MEETINGS.
 - (a) The Annual General Meeting shall be called within one week of the 27th May, at least 14 days notice being given to all members.
 - (b) Extraordinary General Meetings shall be called at the discretion of the Committee, at least 14 days notice being given to all members.
 - (c) A quorum shall comprise of three members.
 - (d) Practice Rescue and Training meetings shall be held as decided by the Committee.

7) MATTERS NOT COVERED BY THE CONSTITUTION.

- a) The constitution may only be amended at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. Any proposal of motion, signed by two or more members, received by the Hon. Secretary at least one month before a meeting, must be included in the agenda. Prior notice of proposed amendments to the constitution must be circulated to all members two weeks before that meeting, at which it is proposed to consider them.
- a) The Committee shall have full power to deal with any matter not provided for in this Constitution. Their decision shall at all times be final.

25th May 1966.

1967

[CALLOUT] 11 March 1967, Rex Keane (GCRG member) was fatally injured while abseiling Easter iron mine shaft.

CAVER FELL TO HIS DEATH IN DISUSED IRON ORE SHAFT



The rescue party at the pit top.

R.S.P.C.A. CERTIFICATE

In 1967 the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group were awarded the certificate of merit by the R.S.P.C.A. for successfully rescuing a fox terrier from a crevice at Fish Hill, Broadway. The operation lasted nearly three hours.

The first accident the group were called to deal with was in March, 1967, when Mr. Rex Keane, of Coalway, was pot-holing with members of the Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club and fell 200 feet to his death down a mine shaft, when his safety rope broke.

Mr. Derek Appleby, warden secretary, and Mr. Jim Hay made the difficult descent down the mine — officially sealed and closed 50 years ago — to recover the body.

Caving as a sport is on the increase and, although accidents in the area are rare, it is reassuring to know that an efficient rescue organisation is at hand.

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 1967

Rope broke and he fell well over 200 feet 'ALMOST INSTANT' DEATH

AN experienced caver lost his life at the No. 1 Easter iron ore mine at Milkwall on Saturday afternoon when the rope broke on which he was descending the shaft to join a companion who had gone down earlier in the day.

Five members of the Forest Caving Club, under the leadership of Mr. Rod Stewart, undertook the exploration of the workings of an old disused mine. The pit was closed in 1868 and sealed over. The caving party, however, had obtained permission from the Forestry Commission to explore old shafts and caves in the Forest at their own risk.

The boss of the pit was broken open by the Club members on Saturday morning and the leader, Mr. Rod Stewart, went down the 208 ft. shaft, which was staked-out, by using a rope and a steel wire ladder. He tested for black damp during his descent and at the bottom of the shaft. He also checked the condition of the stakelink of the shaft.

At about 5.45 p.m. a second member of the Club, Mr. Rex Keane, 320, of New Road, Coalway, father of three small children, went down the shaft and was killed.

Mr. Stewart, of 18, Nash and Cox Caravan Site, Milkwall, had gone down at about ten o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Stewart cleared a way through the rubbish at the bottom to allow the cavers to carry out an exploration of some of the old workings and possibly to connect up with others.

Mr. Keane went down the shaft by the abseiling method—that is, a controlled sliding down the rope which is often adopted in caving and increasingly so in caving.

This method involves the use of harness and the person descending can control the speed of his descent on the rope.

Mr. Keane, however, had descended a distance of 66 ft. when the rope snapped and he fell to the bottom of the shaft, a distance of 242 ft.

Mr. Stewart, who was still at the bottom, went immediately to his assistance, but Mr. Keane had sustained fatal injuries, and it is believed that he died almost immediately.

HAED BUMP

At the time Mr. Stewart was in one of the workings trending out from the bottom of the shaft taking to the surface on the telephone and heard a bump. He said later: "At first I thought it must have been a stone or piece of coal falling, as so often happens on these occasions."

"When I got back to the bottom of the shaft I found Rex's body lying there."

Previously Mr. Stewart had been in touch by telephone with Mr. G. I. Clivell, of Blacourt, a member of the South Wales Caving Club and Rescue Warden for South Wales and the Forest of Dean, but when the fall occurred the telephone went dead as the wires snapped.

Mr. Clivell and others then began hauling Mr. Stewart back to the surface. He had descended on a series of wire ladders, which is



MR. REX KEANE

and it was another two and a half hours before the two rescuers were back on the surface.

The operation ended at about 1 a.m.

Inspector E. J. Bradbeer, of Cinderford, was in overall command of the rescue operations and he was later relieved by Inspector R. H. S. Parson, of Coleford.

When Mr. Keane's body was eventually brought to the surface at 10.30 p.m., death was certified by Dr. W. H. Tandy, of Coleford, and the body conveyed to Gloucester City Mortuary.

ROPE DIFFICULTY

Mr. Clivell explained that the events of that tragic afternoon had caused considerable difficulty with the ropes that had been placed out from the shaft aperture at the top of the shaft through which men, rope and cables had had to pass.

An darkness fell the police called the fire brigade to provide lighting. Sgt. Blake had to call in for some special ropes from Senior Inspector W. J. Adams, of the R.S.P.C.A., Cinderford and county ambulances stood by until it was found that they would not be needed.

ENTRUSTED

Mr. Keane was born on October 27, 1935, the only son of Mr. William Patrick Keane, well known retired Coal Board official who has held managerial posts at Northern United and Princess Royal collieries, and Mrs. Keane, of New Road, Coalway. They also

have a daughter, Mrs. Eric Boddy, of Yorkley. Rex went to Broadwell Primary School, Borey Hill Secondary School, the Technical College at Cinderford and then for five years apprentice draughtsman with the G.E.C. at Birmingham.

He spent two years in the army on National Service. He joined the Bank Organisation as an inspector in the Xerox department, but was then transferred to work as an electronics technician.

Five or six years ago, his parents-in-law on Sunday, he took up caving and pot-holing and became extremely keen. He and other members of the Forest of Dean Caving Club have done a lot of exploration in the Forest and South Wales. They were praised for their assistance in carrying out underground surveys in preparation for the proposed Shalesmoor water scheme in East Dean.

Most of the underground workings in this part of the Forest and at Cinderford, Llanegway and Sling have been explored by Mr. Keane and other enthusiasts.

EXPERIENCED

Discussing their work Mr. Clivell said: "Don't let people think that this was a young man sliding down a rope into unknown depths for the sheer fun of it."

"Mr. Keane was an experienced caver and the work that he and others were doing in their spare time has been of considerable scientific value. When his rope broke Mr. Keane was using a perfectly normal technique for climbing which is now finding favour in descending a shaft. I know that Mr. Keane had been practising it with considerable interest."

MAPS—SOUVENIRS

At Mr. Keane's home next door to his parents at Coalway there is a huge map of underground systems in the Forest of Dean and both families have mementoes in the shape of some lovely stone and rock formations of his many underground expeditions.

Ten years ago Mr. Keane married Miss Edna Mann, of Birmingham, and they have three children, July (8), Derek (5) and Martin (4).

The old iron ore shaft had been sealed, pipes laid across the mouth, and a concrete cap provided. The cavers had made a hole in the side of the shaft large enough to allow them and their ropes to get through when they were making the descent.

The Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club would like to thank all who assisted in the operation.

Council may fit new sink unit

Mr. H. Hasley asked the Rector Sub-committee of Lymington Rural District Council on Thursday of last week whether a sink unit could be fitted for a Council house tenant who wanted to make a replacement.

This was a matter of policy, he said, and he would like a ruling confirming that it was worth the Council's while expending some labour on fitting the sink unit which would enhance their property.

The Surveyor was asked to do the work and to judge similar applications on their merits and the extent to which they would enhance the value of the house. The Council will be recommended accordingly.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP.

MEMORANDUM APRIL 1967.

25, Chelmsford Avenue,
Warden Hill,
Cheltenham.

Dear Member,

Many months have elapsed since the publication of the last newsletter, but activities seem to slacken off around Christmas time and then take some considerable time to get going again.

The end of 1966 realised a small profit with an income of £15. 8. 10d from the sale of Christmas Cards, and £2. 19. 8d from the Dinner Dance. Many thanks to all who put so much effort into both these ventures.

It is with deep regret that we record the fatal mishap to Rex Keane on Saturday 11th March. This was the first time that the G.C.R.G. had been called to an accident involving a person, and was necessitated by an accident more tragic than any had ever envisaged. The more so in that he was one of our own members.

We extend to Rex's family our sincerest sympathy at this time, and hope that some of us can be of more practical help in the time ahead.

A full report of the accident with notes of points arising will be issued after the inquest.

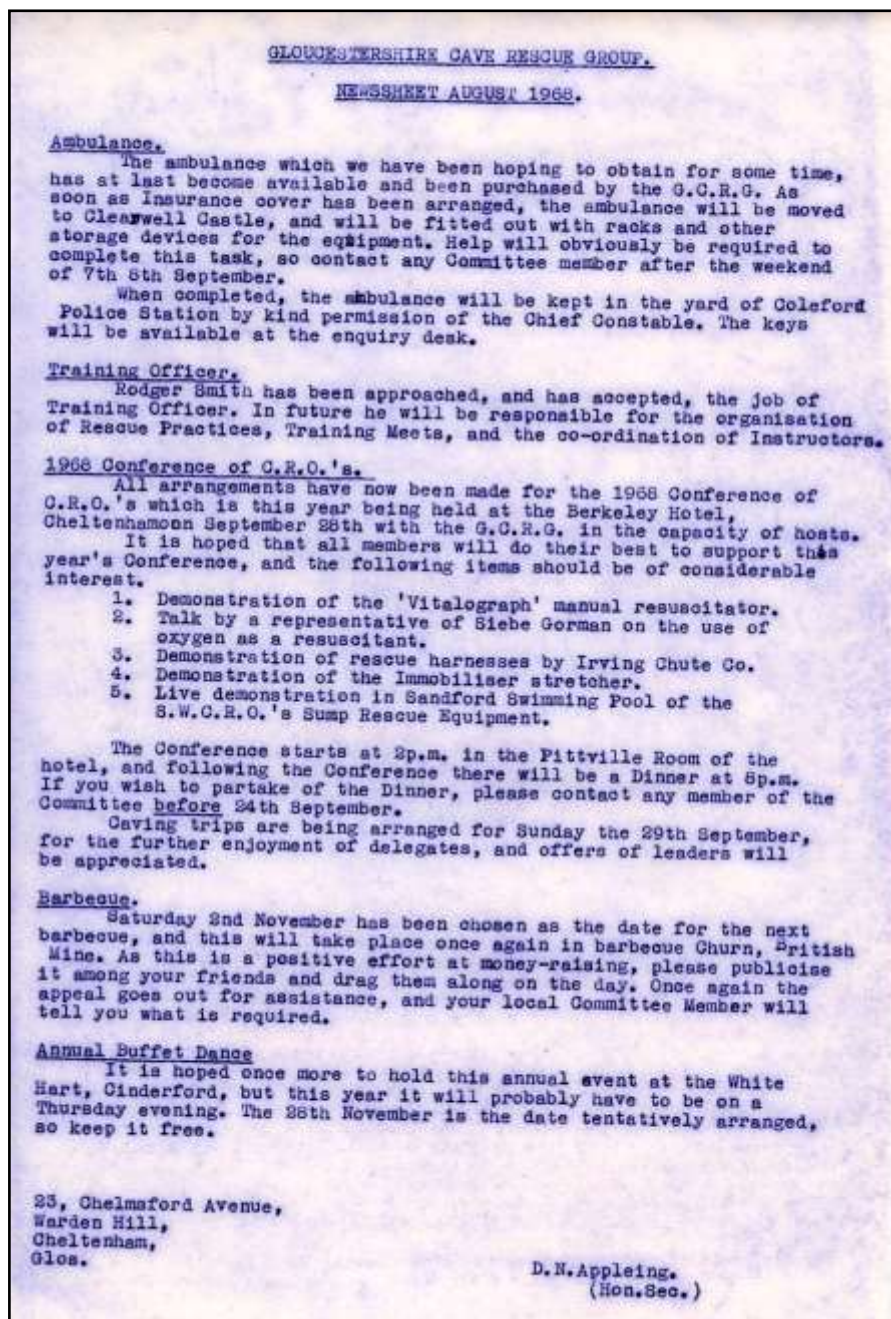
16 April 1967 [Training] Wigpool.

1968

1968 Landrover/Ambulance became available, bought and moved to Clearwell Castle and fitted out with racking etc for equipment storage ... subsequently stored at Coleford police station.

28th September 1968 GCRG hosts the National Cave Rescue Conference at the Berkeley Hotel, Cheltenham
[An impressive feat to organise an event of this nature considering that GCRG had only existed for 3 years at this point, Ed].

GCRG newsheet



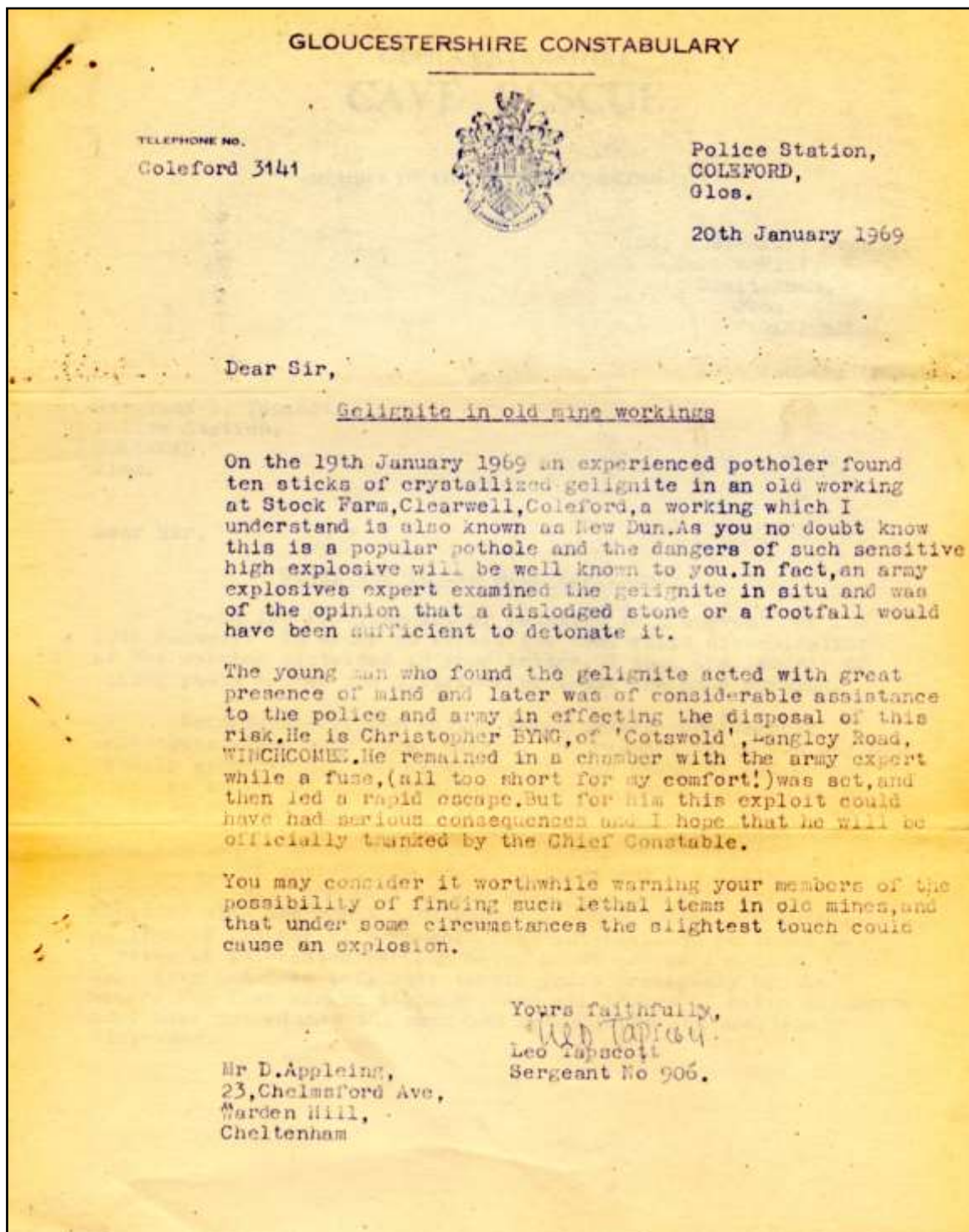
15 December 1968 [Training] Buckshaft.

1969

At the AGM of 31 May 1969, the Hon Secretary (Derek Appleing) proposed an annual subscription of 5/ to [1] show those who were serious about cave rescue and [2] to raise much needed funds. At the 1970 AGM this as cancelled & replaced with voluntary donations.

'GELINITE IN OLD MINE WORKINGS'

On 20th January 1969 GCRG was contacted by the Coleford police to report that ten sticks of gelignite had been found in New Dun by a caver and had been subsequently blown up by the army. The police representative then went on to suggest that it would be good for GCRG to warn its members of the dangers of finding further explosives which "under some circumstances the slightest touch could cause an explosion."



GLOUCESTERSHIRE
CAVE RESCUE
GROUP

(MEMBER OF THE CAVE RESCUE COUNCIL)

23, Chelmsford Avenue,
Warden Hill,
Cheltenham,
Glos.
GL51 5DL.

28th January 1969.

Sergeant L. Tapscott,
Police Station,
COLEFORD,
Glos.

Dear Sir,

Gelignite in old mine workings.

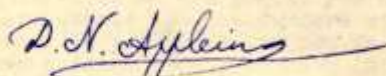
Thank you for your letter relating to the events of the 19th January. In order to effect the most rapid dissemination of the warning contained in your letter, I took the liberty of taking photo copies and distributing these the same evening.

Unfortunately, the action taken caused considerable resentment among some local cavers, for reasons which you may not readily appreciate. The existence of this cache of gelignite had been known for some considerable time, and steps had been taken by persons experienced in the handling of the substance to ensure that it was not dangerous. Some of the sticks had been removed from the mine and all efforts at detonation (including, of course, the use of detonators) had failed. Because of this, the rest of the gelignite had been left, together with the small tins containing detonators and fuses, as an item of industrial archaeological interest, to be shown to parties of interested persons being shown around the mine. The explosive had been left over twenty years previously by the miners who last worked the mine, and all traces of nitro glycerine must have soaked into the rock and sandy floor and completely dispersed.

In order to ensure that the explosive found was in fact the self same gelignite as was already known to us, I contacted Mr. Byng, and in company with three other cavers, retraced the steps trodden by yourself earlier in the week. It was indeed the same location, and we quickly found the results of the army plastic explosive. The majority of the old gelignite was forced - with the appearance of so much mashed potato - into the back of the hole where it had lain for so long. The rest of it, in lengths of 1-1½ inches, was found scattered around the chamber.

In view of these findings, I feel the risk is not as great as at first feared, but hasten to assure you that all such finds will be treated with caution and respect.

Yours faithfully,



D.N. Appleing.
(Hon. Sec.)

4 May 1969 [Training] Old Bow iron mine.

Local newspaper cutting (probably dates from 1969)



1969, GCRG at Symonds Yat

Photo: Tony Day



1969, inside GCRG's first ambulance

Photo: Tony Day

POTHOLERS SHOULD LEARN FIRST AID, RESCUE PRACTICE

"ONE of the best things a caver can do is to learn first aid thoroughly as well as cave rescue practices, for the two go hand-in-hand," emphasised Mr. W. Little, of the South Wales Cave Rescue Organisation, speaking at the annual meeting of the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group at the Butcher's Arms, Clearwall, near Lydney. Mr. Little chaired the meeting.

In his report, Mr. Derek Appleing, hon. secretary, reviewed the activities of the group in the past year. There had been two rescue practices, and the most important acquisition had been an ambulance which, although it had

needed work on it, had been well worth purchasing.

The treasurer, Mr. Jim Hay, gave a satisfactory financial statement.

In the election of officers Mr. Appleing was re-elected hon. secretary; Mr. Jim Hay, hon. treasurer; Mr. Tony Day, hon. information officer; and Mr. Lawrence Bailey, hon. tackle officer. Ordinary members are Roger Bailey, Colin Graham and J. Elliott.

A proposition by Mr. Appleing that an annual membership fee of 5s. per head be paid was carried.

After refreshments, a safety film entitled "Hazard", was enjoyed.

RESCUE TEAM

It was in May, 1964, that the Gloucester Speleological Society met to discuss the formation of a G.S.S. cave rescue team. By May, 1965, the Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club had been formed and many of its members wished to join the activities of the G.S.S. cave rescue team.

It was then decided to form an independent organisation which was to be called the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, which aimed to be able to cope at any time with underground emergencies in an area covering the whole of Gloucestershire and its fringes.

This is a voluntary organisation and equipment so far has been purchased solely by money raised by members or out of their own pockets. They aim for more equipment but money is short. Items like stretchers and communication equipment have been designed and made by members.

The system by which the group operates is an effective one. Notices are placed at the entrance to principal caves and mines in the Forest of Dean. These give detail of how to start a cave rescue call out: simply dial 999 and ask for the cave rescue group.

The police then get in touch with people on the short list and as soon as they make contact, the rest of the call-out is the responsibility of the cave rescue members.

The cave rescue ambulance is kept at Coleford Police Station ready for instant action. This is given weekly servicing by members to ensure readiness for action.

B.S.P.C.A. CERTIFICATE



1969, cave rescue training at
Symonds Yat

Photo: Tony Day



1969, cave rescue training at

Symonds Yat

Photo: Tony Day

1970

18 April 1970 [Training] Buckshaft scowle hole.

9 June 1970 one of a series of rescue-associated lectures
is held at the Red Lion, Huntley.

12 July 1970 [Training] Bream scowles.

Will you help in the event of a Cave Rescue Call out? If you are willing to do so, even if you have already volunteered, still you please answer the following questions and return to J.C. 245, Gloucester. This is IMPORTANT. Thank you.

131. BUCKSHAFT SCOWLE HOLE

1. Name Christiana Homan

2. Home Address

3. Telephone No. (state own or neighbours)

4. Employer and Business Address

5. Telephone Number

6. Any other address at which you might be found (lodgings etc).

7. Telephone Number (state own or neighbours)

8. Nearest Police Station

9. Telephone Number

10. Have you your own transport? Give type, colour, registration number

11. If you have, will you be prepared to assist in carrying other personnel or equipment?

12. If you have not, have you arranged for anyone else to pick you up?

13. Have you permission to be absented from your employment?

14. Will you be prepared to assist inside or outside the cave?

15. Have you any knowledge of First Aid?

16. Do you hold an Explosive Licence?

17. Have you any Special Equipment you would bring with you? (ropes, ladders, tools, lamps etc).

18. Have you an occupation or pastime which might be of use?

19. Have you any knowledge of Cave Rescue work?

20. Do you have your personal equipment assembled ready for an emergency?

21. Will you be prepared to go to and assist in another caving area if required? (Possibly South Wales)

22. Any other information?

If you have any queries about the cave rescue organisation please contact the Cave Rescue Organiser, J.C. 245, Gloucester. At the bottom of the page.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP

A
SERIES OF LECTURES
AND
DEMONSTRATIONS
ON
FIRST-AID
FOR
CAVING & CLIMBING
AT
THE RED LION, HUNTLEY

NEXT LECTURE WILL BE HELD:-
TUESDAY, 9th JUNE,
AT
5 P.M.
MR. WORSWICK, OF VICKERS MEDICAL SUPPLIES
WILL DEMONSTRATE
INFLATABLE SPARKS & OTHER EQUIPMENT

An early example of a GCRG membership form
(dates from 1966 to 1971)

1971 to 1980

CALLOUTS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

The following events involved GCRG in one form or another, whether just being on standby, the involvement of just a small number of group members, or as a full callout.

5 March 1972 OFD (1-2), only GCRG members with wetsuits were put on standby. In the end not needed due to the use of application of a plaster cast to the casualty's damaged ankle.

12 August 1973 Old Ham search, lost party.

20 January 1974 Lost party in Old Ham/Old Bow.

7 October 1974 Lost party in Old Ham.

8 March 1975 Old Ham, search for possible missing cavers (found camping in Railway Churn).

5 July 1976 Lost party in Old Ham, found ok.

31 May 1979 Otter Hole, party (Bath University) trapped by sump not opening.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS INVOLVING THE GROUP

1971

1971 Article on GCRG in 'Gloucestershire Life'.

10 January 1971 [Training] New Dun (near shaft, beyond Gelignite Chamber).

18 April 1971 [Training] Old Bow.

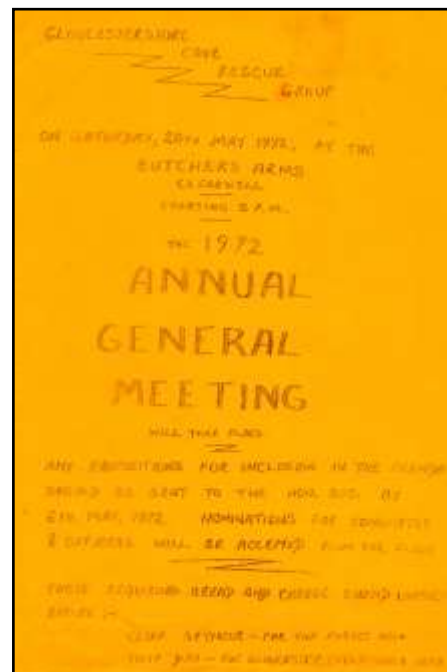
1971 (AGM) The Constitution was amended so that the group now has a permanent Chairman as part of the committee. This negates the need to have a guest Chairman attending from South Wales, Mendips etc.

11 July 1971 [Training] Old Bow.

26 September 1971 [Training] Westbury Brook.

10 October 1971 [Training] Worcester/Bixslade Quarries.

December 1971 (Committee Meeting) Treasurer, staggered at the high cost of running the ambulance per year (£11, petrol & insurance), suggested the use of a horsebox which could instead be towed at no expense.



Early 1970s examples of advertising for forthcoming events.

1972

9 January 1972 [Training] Yew Tree Pit/New Dun.

[CALLOUT] 5 March 1972, OFD (1-2), only GCRG members with wetsuits were put on standby. In the end not needed due to the use of application of a plaster cast to the casualty's damaged ankle.

9 April 1972 [Training] Symonds Yat/C Caves.

9 July 1972 [Training] Lambsquay to Old Ham, casualty carry.

1972 (October Newsletter) Ambulance recorded as being in a sorry state but still just about usable – decision made to obtain a caravan approx. 12-15 ft in length which could then be converted into a mobile store, GCRG office and HQ. Consequently, the heavier rescue items are held at the RFDCC tackle store at the Butchers Arms, Clearwell.

1972 Rota for ambulance drivers for January and February (D Appleing, M Sterry, I Standing, C Anderson, A Day, G Clissold).

10 October 1972 [Training] Robin Hood Pit.



GCRG Ambulance, early 1970s

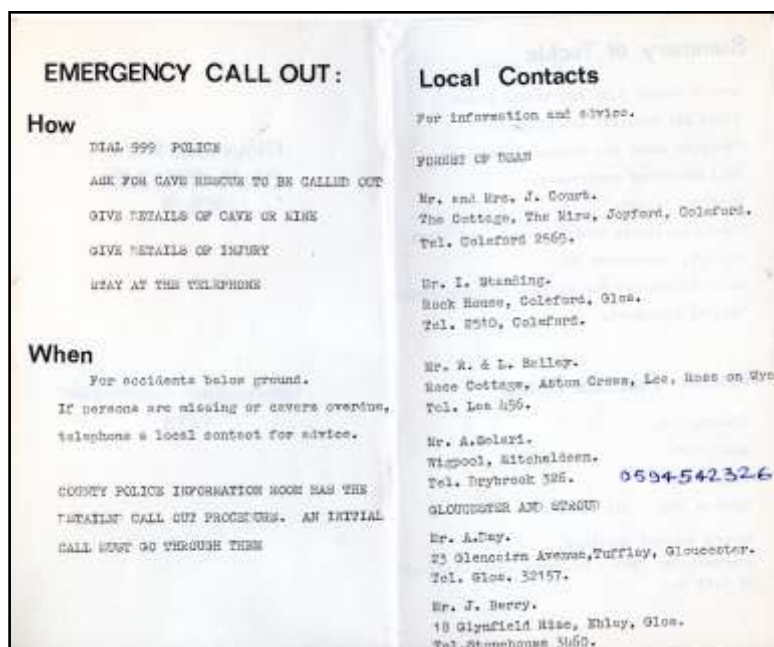
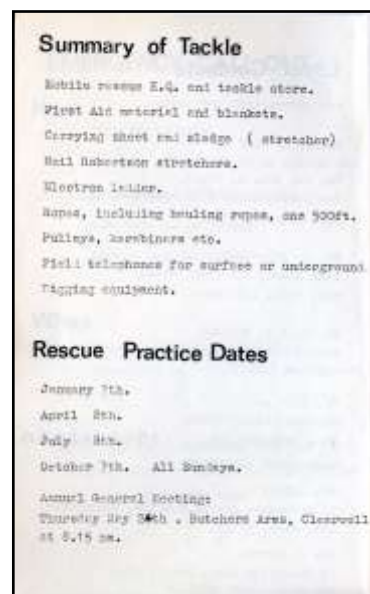
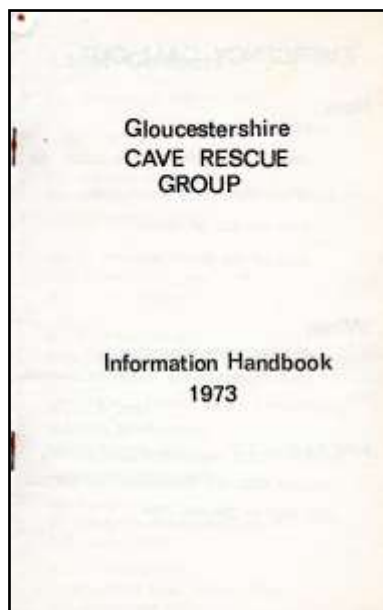
An early example of a Cave Rescue notice to be left in a car when on a callout.

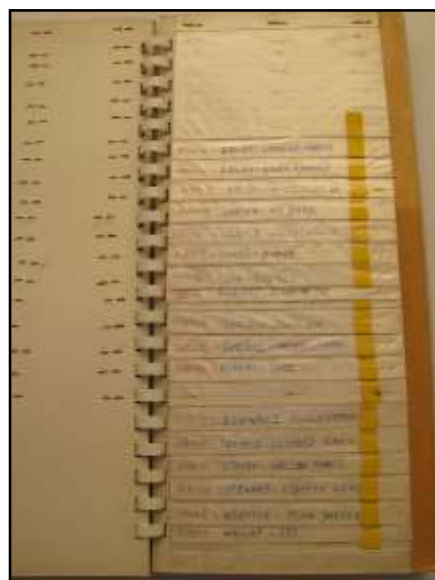
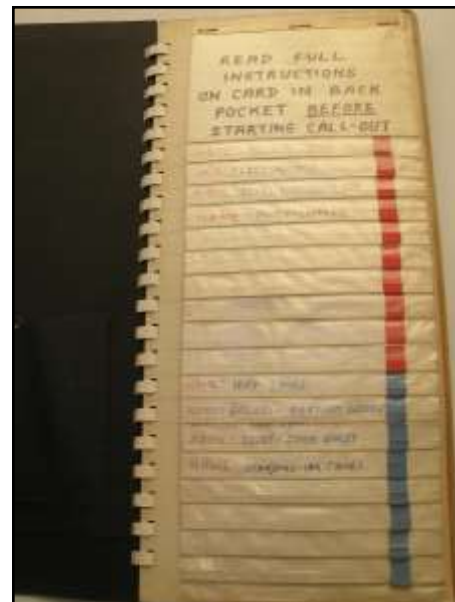
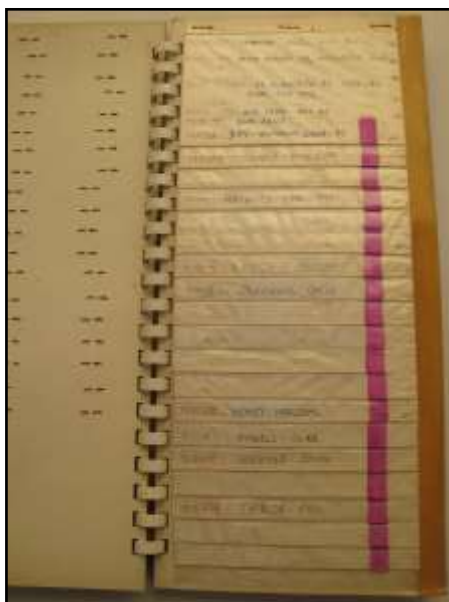
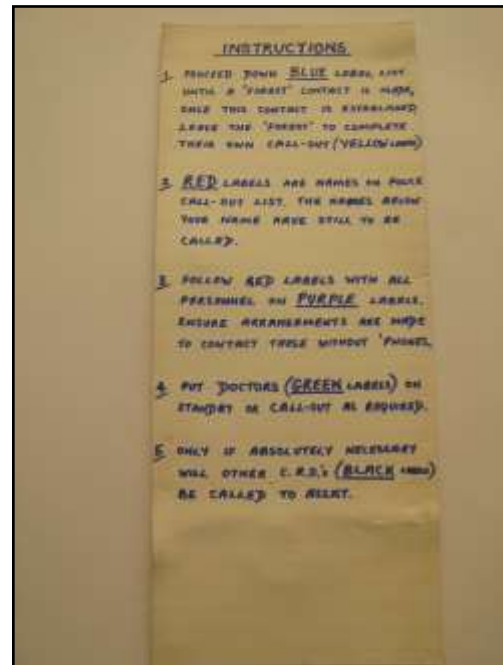


1973

1973 (June Newsletter) Ambulance now scrapped and replaced with a caravan which is now stored at the Coleford Police Station.

In 1973, the group produced its first information handbook.



Early 1970s GCRG callout handbook

7 January 1973 [Training] Surface/Underground Search (Forest of Dean).

8 April 1973 [Training] Clearwell Caves/Old Ham.

8 July 1973 [Training] Tufts (flooded lower level).

[CALLOUT] 12 August 1973, Old Ham, search for lost party.

7 October 1973 [Training] Bixslade Quarry area.

1974

7 January 1974 [Training] Old Ham (carry from bottom of shaft at Easter dig end of New Dun pit 2nd landing).

1974 (Petrol Rationing)

A notice sent out advertising the practice to be held on 7 Jan 1974 (carrying a casualty from the bottom of the climbing shaft at the Easter dig end of New Dun pit [second landing]) stated the following ...

"The caravan will be in position as HQ, providing that petrol rationing is not introduced before the practice day. If rationing is introduced please ring me (Di Court) on Fri 4th Jan so that I can inform you of the practice can go ahead – all depends upon the severity of the rationing."

[CALLOUT] 20 January 1974, lost party in Old Ham/Old Bow.

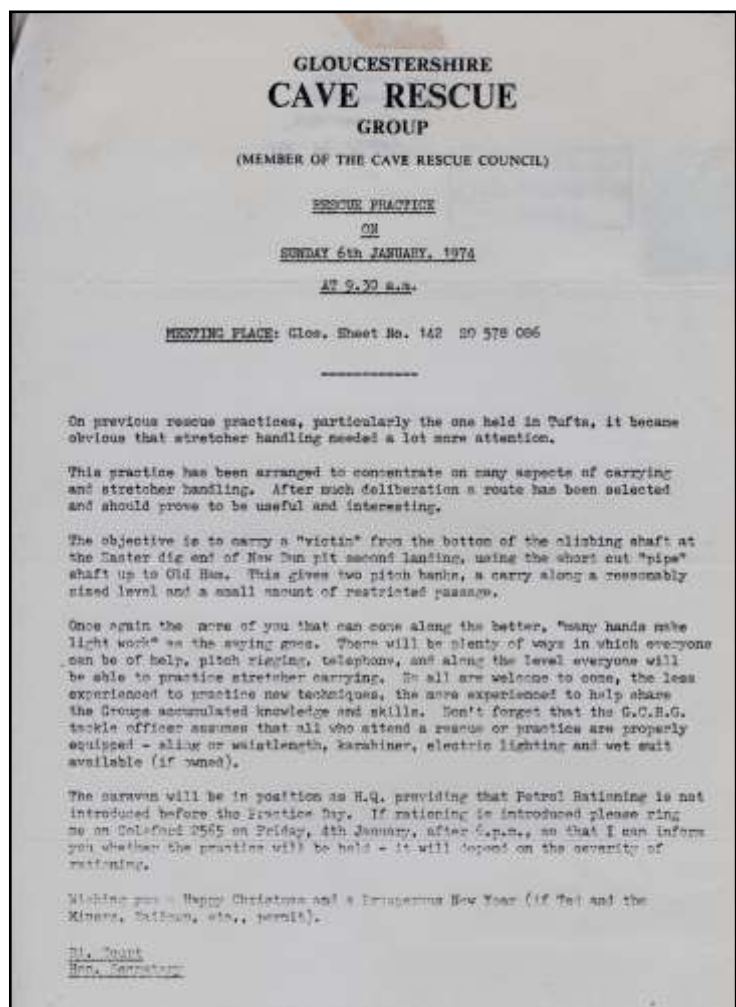
7 April 1974 [Training] SO 6554 1954.

7 July 1974 [Training] Oakwood Mill Deep Level.

6 October 1974 [Training] Wigpool.

[CALLOUT] 7 October 1974, lost party in Old Ham.

An early 1970s advert for a forthcoming training exercise in New Dun.



In November 1974, spare caving equipment was advertised for sale in order to raise funds for the group.

LIST OF TACKLE AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 1974		
Ladders	17	including 2 at 6 foot length
Rope 50 FOOTER	2	
Rope 100 FOOTER	3	
Rope over 100 FOOT	2	
Tethers (wire)	20	various lengths
Crabs	4	
Pulleys	2	
Survey Tape	1	
Compass	1	
Clogs	1 pair	
Nife and Edison Lamp Spares	2 boxes	assorted bits

LIST OF TACKLE FOR SALE		
ARTICLE	QUANTITY	PRICE
Taxalon Helmets	7	£2 each
Taxalon Headbands	2	45p each
Nylon strings for same	6	5p each
Three Cell Main Bulbs	20	23p each
Three Cell Dip Bulbs	9	5p each
Carbide Cap Lamps	3	£2-20p each
Electrolyte Available	} Contact J. Hay	
Carbide "batteries"		
New Rope Available shortly		price to be announced
Nylon Tape	" "	" " " "
Nife Cell Cable	off the roll @ 50p	per 1½ metres

1975

5 January 1975 [Training] Lambsquay/Old Ham (search).

[CALLOUT] 8 March 1975, Old Ham search for possibly missing cavers (found camping in Railway Churn).

1976

6 January 1976 [Training] Devil's Chapel.

4 July 1976 [Training] Search in Lambsquay/Dun/Ham complex (*incentive of 1/2 gallon of cider to be given to the person who finds the missing caver before 15:00*).

[CALLOUT] 5 July 1976, Lost party in Old Ham, found ok.

3 October 1976 [Training] Old Ham.

Callout list for June 1976

1976 June 76

Callout list for June 1976

Callout list for June 1976

Callout	Date	Location	Notes
1. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
2. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
3. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
4. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
5. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
6. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
7. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
8. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
9. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
10. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
11. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
12. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
13. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
14. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
15. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
16. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
17. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
18. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
19. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
20. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
21. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
22. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
23. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
24. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
25. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
26. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
27. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
28. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
29. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
30. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
31. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
32. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
33. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
34. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
35. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
36. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
37. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
38. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
39. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
40. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
41. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
42. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
43. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
44. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
45. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
46. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
47. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
48. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
49. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
50. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
51. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
52. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
53. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
54. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
55. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
56. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
57. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
58. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
59. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
60. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
61. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
62. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
63. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
64. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
65. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
66. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
67. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
68. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
69. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
70. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
71. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
72. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
73. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
74. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
75. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
76. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
77. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
78. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
79. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
80. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
81. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
82. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
83. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
84. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
85. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
86. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
87. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
88. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
89. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
90. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
91. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
92. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
93. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
94. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
95. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
96. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
97. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
98. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
99. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03
100. Capper	1976-06-03	Perseverance iron mine	1976-06-03

1977

15 January 1977 [Training] Otter Hole (carry from sump to car park).

12 March 1977 [Training] Otter Hole.

3 July 1977 [Training] Perseverance iron mine.

October 1977 [Training] Westbury Brook.

1978

8 January 1978 [Training] Cleeve Hill search and casualty rescue from Isaac's Cave.

16 April 1978 [Training] Old Ham.

1 July 1978 [Training] Otter Hole.

1 October 1978 [Training] Devil's Chapel.

1979

1979 GCRG adopts the Warden system and the following are appointed:

P Capper, Maurice Febry, John Elliott, John Hutchinson, Anthony White, Sally Harvey, Derek Appleing, Jim Hay, Bruce Hendrie, Paul Taylor, Phil Schwartz, John Berry

1 April 1979 [Training] Seymour's Swallet.

[CALLOUT] 31 May 1979, Otter Hole, party (Bath University) trapped by sump not opening.



1 July 1979 [Training] Old Bow.

7 October 1979 [Training] Old Ham.

1979 (Newsletter) An ambulance has been donated to GCRG, just needs moving to the Forest & re-painting. A small caravan has also been donated; will be used as a field kitchen and for carrying heavy equipment.

1979 GCRG joins SWERA (South West England Rescue Association) and becomes an official Mountain Rescue Post (No. 100).

1980

1980 GCRG receives a grant of £250 from the central Silver Jubilee Trust, for a stretcher for Otter Hole.

3 March 1980 [Training] Old Ham.

12/13 July 1980 [Training] Otter Hole.

September 1980 (newsletter) Due to rising costs of printing/postage, the newsletter will in future only go to regular attendees. All other members will get the post-AGM one and all other copies will be available at the Butchers & via club newsletters.

5 October 1980 [Training] Old Ham.

1981 to 1990

CALLOUTS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

The following events involved GCRG in one form or another, whether just being on standby, the involvement of just a small number of group members, or as a full callout.

17/19 January 1981 Agen Allwedd (Southern Stream passage, Tim Flannigan). GCRG members had potential issues with cars running out of petrol.

12/13 March 1983 Search in Nailsworth area for 3 boys who had probably gone underground, found in Rockness mine.

1986 Old Ham (caver fell 20ft & broke a few bones, in the lower sections of the system, with partner (who did not know the way out to get help) (*newsletter, July 1987*).

1986 Old Ham, lost group of 5 cavers, callout made and they were quickly located and brought out.

28 March 1987 GCRG assist (with 3 diggers) SWCRO with the rescue of a caver trapped in a collapse at a dig (Coed-y-Mwstwr Woods Cave) near Bridgend.

20 July 1987 Otter Hole, party late (from RAF Locking), sump not opening.

12 August 1987 Mounton Brook dig (between Chepstow & Shirenewton) callout (assistance also from SWCRO), roof collapse, caver trapped & buried.

23/24 January 1988 OFD, HADES party trapped by rising water.

30 January 1988 GCRG on standby for incident at OFD.

2 April 1989 Missing person search (mines & caves of the Nailsworth area), body later recovered by Police from a pond (8 GCRG personnel searched 15 mines/caves in an operation that lasted 4 hours).

26 April 1989 Old Ham, GFRS bring casualty (knee injury) out (school party) with GCRG assistance.

25 June 1989 GCRG requested to attend (and assist GFRS) a climbing incident at Symonds Yat; climber had fallen into a cave entrance.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS INVOLVING THE GROUP

1981

4 January 1981 [Training] Wigpool.

[CALLOUT] 17-19 January 1981, Agen Allwedd (Tim Flannigan, Southern Stream Passage). GCRG members had potential issues with cars running out of petrol due to lack of available open garages (*no 24-hour petrol stations back then!*)

5 April 1981 [Training] Old Ham.

July 1981 [Training] DYO (joint practice with SWCRO).

1982

4 April 1982 [Training] Old Bow.

15/16 May 1982 [Training] DYO (joint practice with SWCRO).

18 July 1982 [Training] Westbury Brook.

1983

[CALLOUT] 12-13 March 1983, no details (*newsletter, March 1983*).

27 April 1983 [Training] Cranham stone mine.

22 October 1983 [Training] Joint practice at Agen Allwedd.

1984

8 January 1984 [Training] Symonds Yat.

7 October 1984 [Training] Worcester Quarry.

1985

16 January 1985 [Training] Symonds Yat area.

31 March 1985 [Training] Old Ham.

7 July 1985 [Training] Symonds Yat area.

1986

[CALLOUT] 1986, Old Ham (caver fell 20ft & broke a few bones, in the lower sections of the system, with partner (who did not know the way out to get help) (*newsletter, July 1987*).

Exercise in Old Ham/Clearwell Complex [5 January 1986] search for 'casualties' (beer mats and bottles of beer). Beer supplied by Hawthorn Brewery, including a barrel for afterwards.



Glos Citizen, 7th January 1986



Glos Citizen, 7th January 1986



Glos Citizen, 7th January 1986

6 April 1986 [Training] The Doward.

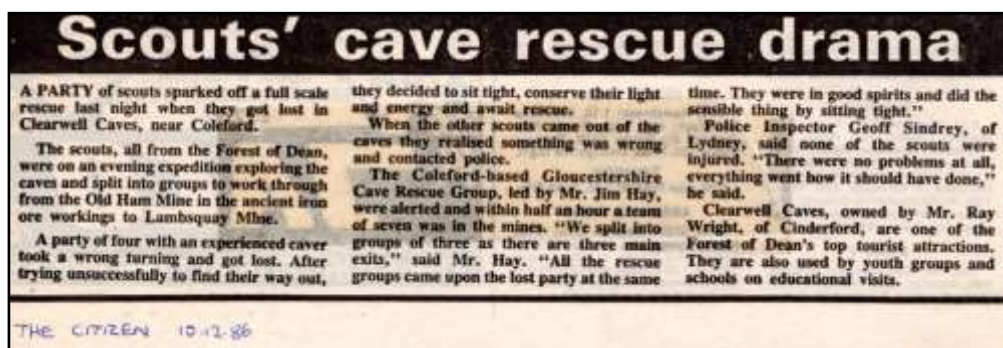
AGM (6 June 1986) held in BBQ Churn, Clearwell Caves. The request was made to attendees to "please bring a chair, evening dress".

5 July 1986 [Training] Otter Hole (carry from sump 2).

5 October 1986 [Training] Wigpool.

December 1986 (newsletter) GCRG now has a 'new' caravan, stored at Coleford police station. The group is also applying to become a registered charity. Finances at this point are severely stretched.

[CALLOUT] December 1986, Old Ham lost group of 5 cavers, callout made and they were quickly located and brought out.



Glos Citizen, 10th December 1986

1987

1987 GCRG starts the construction of its own Ogof Phones.

4 January 1987 [Training] Westbury Brook.

[CALLOUT] 28 March 1987, GCRG assist (with 3 diggers) SWCRO with the rescue of a caver trapped in a collapse at a dig (Coed-y-Mwstwr Woods Cave) near Bridgend.

5 April 1987 [Training] Old Ham.

[CALLOUT] 20 July 1987, Otter Hole, party late (from RAF Locking), sump not opening.

[CALLOUT] 12 August 1987, Mouton Brook dig (between Chepstow & Shirenewton) callout (assistance also from SWCRO), roof collapse, caver trapped & buried.

23 August 1987 [Old Ham Time Trials] 'Pit Bottom Race' (organised by RFDCC) and consisting of the fastest possible time from 'Pit Bottom' to the car park near Old Ham entrance. Entrance fee £1, BBQ afterwards raises £80 for GCRG. 41 cavers take part. Winning time was 9 minutes and 42 seconds.

4 October 1987 [Training] Old Ham/Old Bow/Red Pit/Yew Tree Pit (using the new Yew Tree Pit finds by the GSS). Ogofone demonstrated by SWCRO (*subsequent decision made by GCRG to have its own Ogofone in 1988*).

GCRG holds a successful jumble sale in Gloucester and makes a profit of about £75 (*newsletter, Nov/Dec 1987*).

1988

3 January 1988 [Training] Brinchcombe Level.

[CALLOUT] 23/24 January 1988, OFD, HADES party trapped by rising water.

[CALLOUT] 30 January 1988, GCRG on standby for incident at OFD.

Wardens

As of February 1988, the GCRG Wardens were: Maurice Febry, Sally Harvey, Jim Hay, Paul Taylor, John Berry, John Elliot, John Hutchinson, Doug McClean, Phil Schwartz, Roger Gosling, Claire Bishop, Chris Bowen.

10 April 1988 [Training] Robin Hood iron mine (land shaft).

19 June 1988 [Old Ham Time Trials], winner was Malcolm Taylor with a time of 11 minutes & 10 seconds. This was followed by a BBQ at the Crown, Coalway. Total raised for GCRG was over £89.

July 1988 [Training] Old Bow (Severn Sound radio in attendance).

2 October 1988 [Training] Old Ham (carry from New Dun, No.2 level).

1989

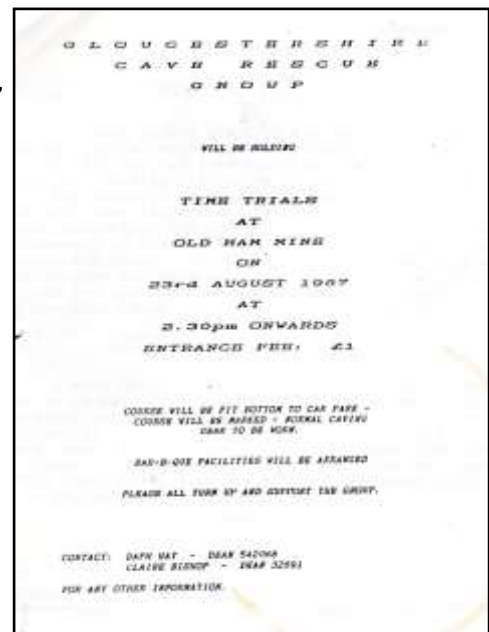
1989 GCRG receives £250 from Central ITV as part of their Telethon appeal.

GCRG had applied for £1600 to pay for a pair of mole-phones. Central ITV had arranged for Bob Machin to come down with the mole-phones & filmed their use in Clearwell caves along with some stretcher manoeuvring and a sequence with Comedian Jimmy Cricket. This was televised as part of a programme called 'Thanks a Million' and shown on Central ITV on 22 December 1988.

8 January 1989 [Training] Wigpool.

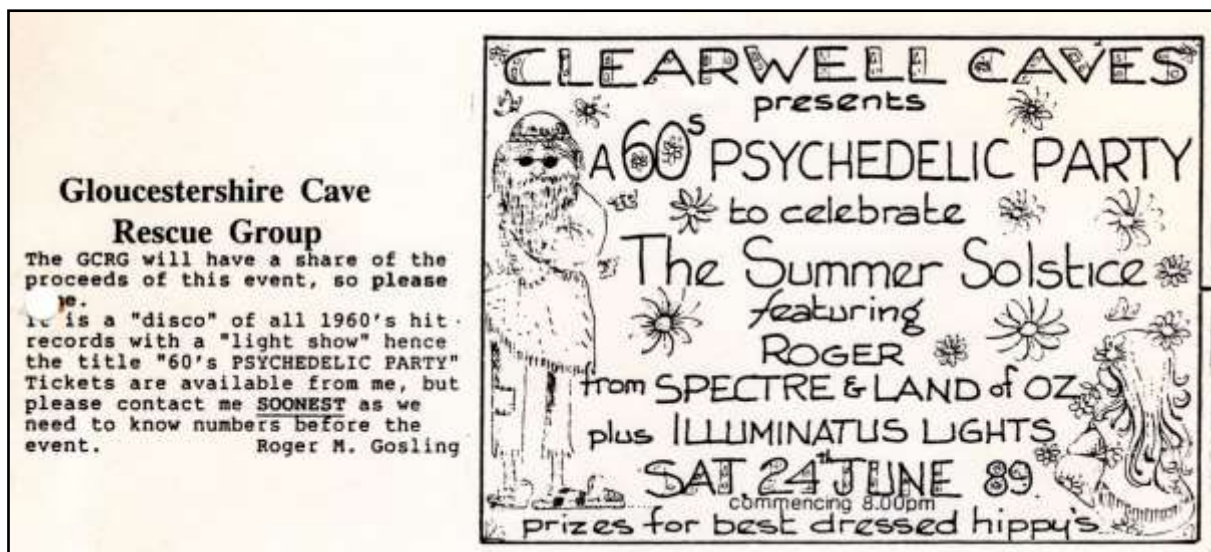
[CALLOUT] 2 April 1989, Missing person search (mines & caves of the Nailsworth area). 8 GCRG personnel searched 15 mines/caves in an operation that lasted 4 hours. Body later recovered by Police on the surface.

9 April 1989 [Training] GCRG takes part in a large area exercise in Lower Wye Valley with SARA/SWERA.



1989 GCRG officially presented with an ex-GFRS Landrover (*newsletter, July/Aug 1989*) and made available through the Public Protection Committee. To be stored at a locked garage at the Coleford Police Station.

[CALLOUT] - 26 April 1989, Old Ham, GFRS bring casualty (knee injury) out (school party) with GCRG assistance.



[CALLOUT] 25 June 1989, GCRG requested to attend (and assist GFRS) at a climbing incident at Symonds Yat (climber had fallen into a cave entrance).

2 July 1989 [Training] Wigpool.

9 July 1989 [Old Ham Time Trials] "Lambsquay to Old Ham", winner was Greg Jones with a time of 18 minutes & 20 seconds. £58 raised for GCRG.

2/3 September 1989 [Training] DYO (with SWCRO).

8 November 1989 [Training] Wigpool.

1990

1990 GCRG landrover & members provide support to the cheese-rolling event held in May 1990.

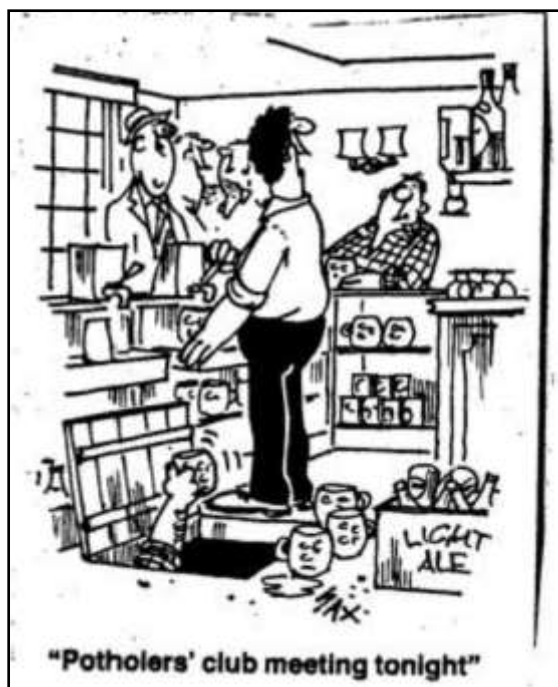
7 January 1990 [Training] Clearwell Caves.

31 March 1990 [Training] Daren Cilau (joint practice).

1 April 1990 [Training] Westbury Brook.

8 July 1990 [Training] Soudley (Brinchcombe).

7 October 1990 [Training] Symonds Yat.



1991 to 2000

CALLOUTS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

The following events involved GCRG in one form or another, whether just being on standby, the involvement of just a small number of group members, or as a full callout.

24 July 1991 Wetsink - 4 GSS members (at Kiln Hole) assist with the rescue of a Belgian caver who had had fallen and trapped his leg in the ladder. Using a pulley from Kiln shaft, the casualty was hauled/life-lined up the pitch.

28/30 December 1991 Daren Cilau (casualty suffered a dislocated shoulder at the Hard Rock Cafe).

28 February 1992 Missing/overdue boys in Clearwell/Old Bow.

5 April 1992 Wetsink, fall from Balcony Pitch (Dave Bowdley).

6 April 1992 Wetsink (small callout, concluded ok) (short writeup in Newsletter, June 1992).

4 March 1993 Lost party in Merlin's Cave (Doward), all ok, lights failed.

28 May 1994 Wetsink, fall in Zurree Aven (John Hewitt).

June 1995 Novice caver, slipped on slope above Doward caves.

Feb 1996 Wetsink, caver exhausted, unable to climb Mouse Aven; GCRG on standby but stood down after another group in the cave assisted.

3 July 1996 Overdue party, Wigpool.

3 July 1996 Wetsink (Ian Jeffries rescue).

(Later, in 1997 GCRG was approached by BBC TV in regard to the filming of a reconstruction of the incident for the '999' TV programme.)

2/3 October 1996 Stuck caver, Ban-y-Gor, callout made at 1 am. Caver finally extricated by wedging rescuers (and gear) under him in order to lift him higher in the slot. Returned to the surface at about 3.45 am. Most cavers back at their cars by 5 am. 24 GCRG members attended.

9/10 February 1997 St Braivels, dog stuck in rift, 6 GCRG members attended.

31 August/1 September 1997 Otter Hole, party (Devon SS), delayed due to heavy rain.

2 September 1999 Surface search assistance (3 GCRG members) to Police, looking at disused shafts in Parkend & Yorkley area.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS INVOLVING THE GROUP

1991

5 January 1991 [Training] Coleford Police Station.

30 June 1991 [Training] DY0 (with SWCRO).

13 July 1991 [Training] Old Ham.

[CALLOUT] 24 July 1991, Wetsink - 4 GSS members (at Kiln Hole) assist with the rescue of a Belgian caver who had had fallen and trapped his leg in the ladder. Using a pulley from Kiln shaft, the casualty was hauled/life-lined up the pitch.

6 October 1991 [Training] Clearwell Caves (Rescue Techniques workshop).

24 November 1991 [Training] Major Search & Rescue Ex (SAREX 91) in the Forest of Dean. GCRG & teams from South & Mid Wales (Old Ham and Wetsink).

[CALLOUT] 28/30 December 1991, Daren Cilau (casualty suffered a dislocated shoulder at the Hard Rock Cafe).

1992

1992 Valkyries Caving Club becomes affiliated to the group.

12 January 1992 [Training] new Cheltenham sewer system.

EXERCISE 'PADDLE'

January 1992

(Article reproduced from the June 1992 newsletter.)

This rescue practice was somewhat different to that which we are used to. To begin with it was held in Cheltenham, and secondly it was in a man-made hole in the ground!

Following a casual conversation about the traffic chaos due to road works in Cheltenham it was decided by Paul Taylor and myself to use the road works for a rescue practice. I say 'road works', but in reality it was the new main sewer tunnel which runs some 700m from Hewlett Road to College Road, not far from the Fire Service HQ. Permission to use the tunnel was given by Messers Lilley Construction and Cheltenham Borough Council.

The scenario for the rescue was that members of the press had been invited into the access shaft to make reports and take photographs. Whilst at the bottom of the shaft, a coffer dam holding back thousands of gallons of water, gave way. All but two of the press managed to get out. These two being washed down the 950mm pipe. Our job was to locate and remove the two people.

The teams entered the pipe system by the access shaft and went in each direction. The plan was to evacuate the casualties by another access shaft some 300m away. This had to be rigged by a third team. The shafts were some 50ft deep and 30ft across. The casualties were positioned in the sewer via an access manhole halfway between the two shafts, but were positioned some 10ft above the main sewer. Initially there was quite a bit of descent about how easy this exercise was going to be and that it was not a 'real cave'.

As it transpired, it was far more difficult than most people imagined. The construction company had (at our request) placed debris – bricks, buckets and a wheelbarrow, etc in the pipes. Add to that not being able to stand up and the noise of sewage flowing in another section of pipe making communication difficult, and it seemed to sort out the men from the boys! I should add at this stage that the pipes we were in were sewage free and new shame!

Back at the evacuation access shaft rigging was in progress to pull up the stretcher once it had emerged. Prior to this about a foot of water had to be pumped out using the GCRG pump. A convenient 110v supply being found on the construction site.

After around 2 hours nothing had been seen or heard of the team that went upstream. According to our visit a week before, this section of pipe only went about 200m. When they did finally return it would seem that the pipe they were in had been joined to the new extension and they had travelled some half a mile before exiting past some rather puzzled Irish workmen!

It was nice to see some new faces at the practice; perhaps we ought to move to more training sessions around the county a bit more?

After the practice, shower facilities were made available at the Fire Station and access to their (cheap) bar had been arranged.

Some interesting lessons were learned on the day – like the fact that you can't turn a stretcher round if its longer than the pipe's diameter, and don't always assume that the stretcher you are given is necessarily the best one for the job. There have been some good feedback points from the casualty too. For example, we need to get a full-face visor instead of just goggles – it's difficult to wipe mud etc off your face when your hands & arms are in a thermal body bag.

And finally, starting this month, a similar tunnelling task is commencing in Gloucester at the junction of Escourt Road/Cheltenham Road. The contractors know of GCRG and what to do if something goes wrong

Oh yes! Why exercise "Paddle"? Well, we tried the '999' system on the day (with prior liaison with the Police) and had to give the event a name. Well, being a sewer, I'm sure you know the old saying about being up a certain type of creek without one!

Paul Taylor/Nick Negus

CALLOUT

28th February 1992

CLEARWELL

GCRG members involved in a search for an overdue party.

The article below was originally printed in the June 1992 newsletter.

Cave Rescue Incident on 28th Feb 1992

At approx. 1.30 am I was rudely awoken by the telephone ringing. An Inspector Whitlock from Cheltenham Police H.Q. said that he had been trying to contact a G.C.R.G warden and that I was the first to answer the phone.

He said that he had a caving incident, three 15 year old boys were missing on a "caving trip" at Clearwell. The boys had gone caving, after dinner on the 27th Feb and had failed to return home.

It was not until late in the evening that their parents realised that they were missing. The parents had each assumed that the boys were at each others homes.

Inspector Whitlock asked if G.C.R.G would send a team to look for the boys. I said that I would get together a small team of G.C.R.G. members and we would make a quick initial search. If we failed to find the boys then we would have to call out more members for a more thorough search.

The Inspector asked for the names of the G.C.R.G. members who would be taking part in the initial search. I said that I couldn't be sure of who I could get hold of, so it would be better if those members turning up at the search gave their names to the police officer at the scene. This the Inspector agreed to, and I told him that as soon as we had organised a team I would ring him back to say that we were on our way.

I tried to get hold of Chris Hutchinson three times, but received no answer. I then managed to get hold of John Elliot and Clare Bishop. I asked Clare to phone Ray and Jonathan Wright. I then asked Alison to phone John Sibley and John Hine, while I sorted my caving kit out. We now had a team of seven, so I rang the Inspector to tell him that we were on our way. I told Alison to stay put near the phone in case we needed her to call out more G.C.R.G. members.

When I arrived at the entrance to the chicken farm, where we had arranged to meet, I found that Clare, John Elliot and John Hine were there already and Ray and Jonathan and John Sibley turned up a few minutes later. Two police cars were also there and the boys parents.

Our names were taken by the police and then Clare took charge of the search, someone said that the boys might have been trying to do a through trip, as they had been underground the previous week with some friends who knew the route. Clare sent Jonathan and John Sibley down Old Ham, Ray and Mole down Lambsquay and me, Elliot and herself down Old Bow.

On entering Old Bow we found the boys in a few minutes. We were shouting all the time and when we arrived in the chamber where you turn off for Red Pit we heard a plaintive shout of "Help!" coming from the top of the Red Pit Road.

There we found three boys lying on the floor. Their lights had gone out, they only had a 6v lantern torch and a scoutmaster torch between them, no helmets and they were wearing sweatshirts. Apart from feeling cold and subdued they were ok. They had entered Old Bow from the Lambsquay entrance and had stopped on the Red Pit Road when their lights had started to fail. They didn't know that they were only a few hundred feet from Old Bow entrance. The boys had been underground for approx. 12 hours.

We took them to the surface where their parents were waiting. The parents and boys thanked us for turning out and then went home at approx. 3am. The parents were surprised when we said that we would have to wait for at least another half hour for the rest of our team to surface, they didn't realise how extensive the mines were.

I eventually arrived home at 4am. I rang Inspector Whitlock and told him that the rescue team had now gone home. He thanked G.C.R.G. for their prompt action.

J. Hine has since received a letter of apology from one of the boys.

Ray Wright has since mended the Lambsquay entrance gate which had been vandalised, and has also locked the Old Bow gate again. Old Ham gate was locked on the day of the incident but we weren't sure if the boys had used that entrance, someone might have left it open during the day.

To summarise, the rescue was a success for G.C.R.G. :

The call out was initiated properly by Cheltenham Police H.Q.

The police inspector took our names for insurance purposes.

We managed to raise an initial search team, promptly, even though the incident was in the early hours of the morning.

We found the missing boys within a few minutes of starting our search.

The only thing that spoilt our search was the wildly inaccurate reporting in the Citizen that day. " Park End Cave Rescue Team were called to the scene and after a two hour battle the three boys were discovered near a main path".

P. Schwarz

25.3.92

4 April 1992 [Training] Surface search (Ban-y-Gor, High Wood, Dannel Wood, Tidenham Quarry).

5 July 1992 [Training] Wetsink (Zurree Aven, pitches).

[CALLOUT] 5 April 1992, Wetsink, fall from Balcony Pitch (Dave Bowdley).

[CALLOUT] 6 April 1992, Wetsink (small callout, concluded ok) (*short writeup in newsletter, June 1992*).



GCRG collecting 'tin'

A number of these were located at various points in the Forest of Dean

WESTERN DAILY PRESS
TUESDAY 14 APRIL 1992

Rescued caver's thanks can save lives

By Beverley Hawes

INJURED caver David Bowdley will say a big thank you today to the rescue group which saved his life.

David, aged 45, suffered severe injuries after he fell while 150 feet down a cave in Joyford, near Coleford, Forest of Dean.

His ordeal lasted for three hours as Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group struggled to bring him to the surface.

Today David, who works for Severn Trent Water, will present the rescue group with an air compressor on his company's behalf.

He will hand it over in Gloucester to the rescuer who reached him first, Nicholas Negus.

David of Sedgely, West Midlands, is now recovering from a broken right leg, smashed kneecap, ripped tendons, injured left leg and broken jaw.

Doctor

An experienced caver and a member of the Dudley Cave Rescue Organisation, he said: "It will be a real honour to make this presentation."

"I owe my life to these people. I was trapped and I genuinely believed my time was up."

"The rescue team got to me within an hour and elevated my leg to stem the bleeding."

"The team's doctor was with me shortly afterwards and injected me with painkillers at a time when I was on my way out."

"Shock had set in, my body temperature was dropping and I was losing a lot of blood."

The compressor will be used to power pneumatic tools vital for the rescue group.

Mr Negus said: "Although we are a recognised emergency service we do not receive any government funding."

INJURED POTHOLER'S GIFT



Injured caver David Bowdley with son David and rescuers Steve Tomalin, Nicholas Negus and Paul Taylor

CAVER David Bowdley came face to face with the rescuers who saved his life yesterday — and came to their rescue with desperately needed new equipment.

Mr Bowdley, a Severn Trent water worker, was pulled from caves in the Forest of Dean by members of the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group.

He was close to death more than 150 feet below the surface after falling and suffering multiple injuries.

But rescuers were able to reach him in an hour, just as his temperatures started to drop dramatically.

Yesterday Mr Bowdley, aged 45, himself a member of the cave rescue team in Dudley, near his West Midlands home, was the welcoming face.

He presented a generator already pledged to the rescue group by his employer before the accident.

"I know the risks of caving and believe me on that Sunday morn-

Rescued caver turns life-saver

ing there were no risks taken whatsoever. For me it was a pure accident — a fluke of the spot," he said at the presentation.

He added: "This is the sort of equipment that any voluntary organisation would like to possess, but money obviously does not come easily to voluntary organisations."

Rescuer Mr Nicholas Negus, who was first to reach Mr Bowdley underground, said the air compressor was sorely needed to power pneumatic tools when the team goes into action.

"It is ironic we should rescue someone from Severn Trent when it is Severn Trent who are effectively coming to our rescue," he said.

WESTERN DAILY PRESS, TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 1992 — 13

News Release

Severn Trent Water

1207 OXFORD ROAD
BIRMINGHAM, B4 7PT
TELEPHONE 0121 444 4444



10 April 1992
DW/NN1738

Cave fall victim says thank you

Injured caver David Bowdley owes his life to the brave volunteers of the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group.

David (45), suffered severe leg injuries when he fell while 150ft down a cave at Joyford near Coleford in the Forest of Dean last week.

Now recovering from his ordeal, the father-of-three and Severn Trent Water worker is to thank his rescuers when he hands over vital equipment to help future rescue attempts.

Severn Trent Water's Gloucester District had arranged to donate an air compressor to the Cave Rescue Group before David's brush with death. By a bizarre twist David, from Sedgely, West Midlands, is now able to present the compressor to the man who reached him first, Nicholas Negus.

David, an experienced caver and member of the Dudley Cave Rescue Organisation in the West Midlands, broke his right leg in two places, smashed his kneecap, ripped tendons and gashed a hole through his left leg and broke his jaw.

- more -

He said: "It will be a real honour to make the presentation. I owe my life to these people. I was trapped and I genuinely believed my time was up."

"The rescue team got to me within an hour and elevated my leg to stem the bleeding. The team's doctor was with me shortly afterwards and injected me with painkillers at a time when I was on my way out - shock had set in, my body temperature was dropping and I was losing a lot of blood."

The rescue group had originally approached Severn Trent when a 10-year old compressor broke down leaving them without essential equipment.

Severn Trent were able to oblige by providing a unit which had previously been used for servicing water mains in its Gloucester district. The compressor will be used to power pneumatic tools when the team goes into action.

Mr Negus said: "It's ironic that we should rescue someone from Severn Trent when it is Severn Trent who are effectively coming to our rescue - we cannot thank them enough."

"Although we are a recognised emergency service we do not receive any Government funding. The donation of the compressor will enable us to operate effectively for some time to come without having to worry about finding cash to replace an important piece of our equipment."

Severn Trent's water distribution works manager in Gloucester, Richard Clinton, said: "The excellent work carried out by the Cave Rescue Group left us in no doubt that this was the kind of request we were delighted to grant."

- ends -

CALLOUT

5th April 1992

WETSINK

GCRG members were called out to rescue Dave Bowdley who had fallen from Balcony Pitch and broken his leg.

6/4/92

2 — WESTERN DAILY PRESS

Update

Injured caver rescued

CAVER David Bowdley was recovering in hospital last night after being trapped underground for three hours with a broken leg.

Mr Bowdley, aged 45, from Dudley, West Midlands, was with three friends exploring Slaughter Stream caves at Joyford, near Coleford in the Forest of Dean, when he slipped and fell yesterday morning.

Rescuers were unable to squeeze a stretcher through the narrow entrance and were forced to climb down 150 feet to fix a splint to Mr Bowdley's leg.

He was given painkillers before being helped to the surface.

An ambulance took Mr Bowdley to Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

MAN HURT IN CAVE ORDEAL

AN INJURED caver is today recovering in hospital after being rescued from a dangerous Forest of Dean cave network in a three-hour operation.

The West Midlands man was today described as being in a stable condition in Gloucestershire Royal Hospital after his ordeal.

Police launched a major operation yesterday afternoon when the man fell into a hole while 150ft down a pit hole at Joyford, near Coleford.

David Bowdley (45) was with a party of three experienced cavers when he fell into a ledge at Slaughter Hole.

The Gloucester Cave Rescue Team eventually lifted the injured man to safety after a lengthy operation.

Mr Bowdley was taken by ambulance to Gloucestershire Royal Hospital with a suspected broken leg.

Police say the rescue operation was particularly difficult because of the narrowness of the cave.

"This was a difficult rescue because of the nature of the complex," said Inspector David Smith of Coleford, who co-ordinated the rescue at the scene.

Victim safe after 3-hour rescue

by Kath Knapp

"The area was so small that we couldn't get a stretcher through and the man had to be hoisted up," said Mr Smith.

Caving experts say the injured man was lucky rescuers could actually locate him.

"If he had gone in much further, it would have been extremely difficult to find him and get him out safely," said one of the rescuers.

Allison Schwarz of Gloucester Cave Rescue said the operation had been easier than it might have been because the man's injuries weren't as serious as first expected.

The Slaughter caves complex, which stretches to the River Wye, was discovered by caving teams last year. Police launched a mock rescue exercise at the scene a few months ago.



■ Above: The rescue team carries injured caver David Bowdley (right) to safety

Picture: Central TV

CIT 6/4/92

REVIEW

17 April 1992

WEST Midlands caver David Bowdley, who suffered severe leg injuries after a fall in a cave at Joyford, near Coleford, last week is to get the chance to thank personally the rescuers who saved his life in a special presentation from Severn Trent Water.

David, who is 45, broke a leg, smashed a kneecap and suffered ripped tendons and a broken jaw when he fell in a cave more than 150 feet beneath the surface.

By coincidence, the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group had approached Severn Trent after their 10 year old air compressor broke down and now David will be presenting the new one to the rescuer who first reached him, Nicholas Negus.

FOREST REVIEW, 21 April 2017

4 October 1992 [Training] Westbury Brook.

1993

£40,000 grant boost for cave rescue team

8 THE CITIZEN, FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1993

A RESCUE group in Gloucestershire has been awarded a £40,000 grant to help buy a new headquarters.

Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group was based at the police station at Coleford until 18 months ago.

But because of operational requirements the police needed the space and they had to move out although their equipment is still stored there.

Since then the group has been looking for its own premises and now the Foundation for Sport and Art has given them £40,000 to help out.

Underground

The cave rescue group has already identified a suitable building in the Forest of Dean. It has put in an offer and is awaiting a response.

The building would initially be used to store their equipment, although it is hoped it will be used as a control room to co-ordinate rescues in the future.

The rescue group is a recognised emergency service which provides round the clock underground rescue for the whole of the county. It also helps out with surface rescues.

by Sam Goldsack

The group was formally established in 1965 and over the years has been called out on dozens of rescues.

Spokesman Nick Negus said: "Over the last two to three years there have been major new caves discovered in the Forest of Dean. As a result there a lot more people involved in caving as a sport or on the education side and the potential for incidents is higher."

The foundation has also awarded a £20,000 grant to Wotton-under-Edge Community Recreation Trust to help finish building a community hall.

The Trust built the foundations of a community hall and changing rooms at Drylaze two years ago but ran out of money to complete the project.

Now the £20,000 grant will be used to complete the shell of the building and put on a roof. The trust will need to raise more cash for the interior.

Other Gloucestershire groups to benefit from a grant were Gotherington Tennis Club at Cheltenham and Cirencester Judo Club.

The tennis club has been awarded £6,000 to resurface a court and the judo club £500 for mats.

December A £40,000 grant from the 'Foundation of Sport and the Arts' was obtained to enable the purchase of Littledean Hill depot (former Highways Depot) for £37,000. Around the same time a sub-committee was formed to deal with the refit of the newly purchased depot.

Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group

NEW CAVE RESCUE HEADQUARTERS

We have been given the opportunity of obtaining our own building for development into a Cave Rescue Headquarters. The building, which is located at the rear of Cinderford Ambulance Station, will be purchased for us by means of a grant. The premises will provide garage facilities for our vehicles along with much needed storage and maintenance space.

The building will be open for members to view on

Wednesday 2 June between 18.30 and 20.00 hours

and

Saturday 5 June between 10.00 and 12.00 hours.

We will also be looking for people to help with the improvement of the building and grounds. Please contact Nick Negus (home - 0452-504515) if you require further details.

2 January 1993 [Training] Noxon Park.

3 July 1993 [Training] OFD (with WBCRT).

3 October 1993 [Training] First training at the new GCRG depot.

1994

4 January 1994 [Training] The Doward (Merlin's Cave).

10 April 1994 [Training] The Doward.

CALLOUT

28th May 1994

WETSINK

GCRG members were called out to rescue John Hewitt who had suffered a fall in Zurree Aven.

The article below was originally recorded in the June 1994 newsletter.

Fractured spine and shoulder in Slaughter Stream Cave (Wet Sink)

On Saturday 28 May 1994, John Hewitt from Luton fell about 25-30 feet while climbing Zurree Aven in Slaughter Stream Cave. His fall was almost certainly caused by the rock he was climbing on becoming detached. This, of course, was also the cause of Dave Bowdley's fall on the entrance pitches of Slaughter just over two years ago.

The rescue call was initiated at about 13:20 by a lady living in one of the houses near the field gate; she would not let a muddy caver in the house to call. John Berry was the first Warden contacted by the Police.

John managed to find Nick Negus, Andy Clarke and Claire Bishop at home, although being a fine sunny weekend day, most of the wardens were not at home. Andy went to the entrance and asked the Fire Service to rig the entrance, while awaiting further GCRG support.

Meanwhile John Hewitt, although having a compression fracture to the spine, a fractured right clavicle and several cuts and bruises, was able to make his way towards the surface with the assistance of his team of cavers. He was assisted up the pitches, meeting with Andy Clarke part way up the entrance.

Meanwhile, Nick Negus had arrived with kit in the landrover, Mike and Daniel Howell, Phil and Alison Schwartz, Will and Terry Browning and Jonathan Wright as Surfec Controller, were all involved at the cave. The depot was manned by Dave Tuffley. Other GCRG members were on route but didn't get to the cave in time.

GCRG received a letter of thanks from John and Rose Hewitt and a donation of £50.

3 July 1994 [Training] Bixslade Quarries.

CALLOUT

20th November 1994

WHITTINGTON STONE MINE

GCRG was called out to recover the body of a member of the Hereford Caving Club who had died while on a trip into the Whittington stone mine.

Man dies in 800ft caves

Six-hour effort to rescue body

A MAJOR cave rescue operation was launched when a man died while potholing near Cheltenham.

Rescuers spent more than six and half hours working 800ft below ground to retrieve the man's body.

The alarm was raised yesterday after the 55-year-old collapsed and died inside a former stone mine at Whalley Farm, Whittington.

The dead man, who was married with two children and was an experienced caver, was one of a party of five. Two of his fellow team members went to the surface to raise the alarm.

Gloucestershire Cave Rescue was alerted by police at 1.30pm that a male caver had suffered a suspected heart attack.

Thirty-five rescuers were called to the scene of the incident on Dodwell Hill and were told the caver was reported dead.

A team of eight went in to locate the body and place it on a stretcher ready to be moved.

A second team worked with pick-axes and shovels to widen the narrow passage leading out of the cave where rescuers had to crawl on their hands and knees.

Rescue group spokesman Nick Negus said: "It was not an easy operation. Part of the passageway is incredibly tight. It is called The Keyhole and your only way through there is to go on your side. Getting a body through on a stretcher is extremely difficult.

"It is obviously worse when you are getting

Man dies in cave

From page 1

someone out who is a fellow caver. A couple of the people knew the man."

Mr Jan Rowe who runs the dairy farm provided a tractor and trailer to aid the operation. He said everyone at the farm had been upset by the man's death.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service provided additional lighting for a third team at the entrance of the cave which was setting up ropes and pulleys ready to lift the stretcher out into the open air.

A Cheltenham doctor certified the man, a member of Herefordshire caving Club, dead when his body was brought to the surface just before 7.45pm.

Coroner Lester Maddrell was due to open an inquest today. The caver has not been identified.

Inspector David Brooks of Gloucestershire Police said the man appeared to have died from natural causes.

Caver (55) dies in potholing tragedy

A CAVE rescue team was unable to save the life of a 55-year-old man who suffered a heart attack while potholing in Gloucestershire.

The man, who is believed to be from Hereford, was exploring the redundant Cotswold stone mine at Whalley Farm, Whittington, near Cheltenham, when he collapsed yesterday lunchtime.

All three emergency services attended the scene and the man, who had been potholing with friends from the Hereford Caving Club, was eventually brought 800 feet to the surface by members of the county's cave rescue team at around 7.45pm.

A doctor confirmed the

man dead at the scene and Cotswold Coroner, Lester Maddrell, is expected to confirm the identity of the dead man today.

Nick Negus, the cave rescue team's cave communications director, said the groups were only 15 minutes from the surface when the man collapsed.

He said colleagues of the man tried in vain to resuscitate him but he was on the wrong side of a "keyhole" in the tunnel and had to be passed through on his side.

Mr Negus said the dead man was an experienced caver and the mine was not a particularly difficult one, but added: "It's not a mine you would take a novice to."

1995

GCRG gains the flexible orange rollup stretcher (Breon stretcher) and Breon spinal splint (*newsletter, Sept 1995*).

8 January 1995 [Training] Devil's Chapel.

12 February 1995 [Training] Joint practice with Dudley Cave Rescue Team.

2 April 1995 [Training] Depot and the Doward.

2 July 1995 [Training] Depot.

8 October 1995 [Training] Wetsink.

1996

Purchase of a new Landrover/Ambulance

The newsletter of April 1996 (issue 2) reported that money from the National Lottery fund had been allocated to the group for the purchase of a new Landrover Defender (110 Tdi). The vehicle was subsequently purchased during the financial year ending on 31 March 1997 and the old landrover was sold for £1250.

GCRG again supports the cheese-rolling event, 8 members assist St John's Ambulance at Coopers Hill.

22 June 1996 GCRG runs the 'Team Challenge' event (a good successful event, see June '96 newsletter).



CAVE RESCUE SOCIAL & FUND RAISING EVENING

SATURDAY 22nd JUNE
VENUE... MALLARDS PIKE LAKE PARKEND

Is Your Group Up To It ????????
On Targets Team Challenge
a series of problem solving challenges designed for fun & achievement for 5 to 8 person Teams

START TIME...6PM (LAST TEAM 6-30)
FOLLOWED BY GET TOGETHER AT RISING SUN....
BBQ &

COST/MEMBER...£3
BRING THE FAMILY HAVE FUN
ALL YOU NEED IS 5 PEOPLE
A CHANGE OF CLOTHING
YOU MAY GET WET...!!!

INTERESTED... CONTACT JOHN BERRY... 01453-823460

AN 'ON TARGET ACTIVITIES' SUPPORTED EVENT
IN CO-OPERATION WITH FOREST ENTERPRISE

CALLOUT

3rd/4th July 1996

WETSINK

In the early hours of the 4th of July, GCRG members were called out to rescue Ian Jeffries who had fallen down the 'Twin Avens' and broken his leg.

The survivor of

CAVER RESCUED AFTER
17-HOURS OF AGONY

By Nicholas Cecil

INJURED caver Ian Jeffries, aged 30, emerged into daylight yesterday after an agonising 17-hour ordeal trapped a quarter of a mile underground.

Inch by inch, a 50-strong rescue team took nearly nine hours to haul the father-of-three to the surface through a labyrinth of subterranean passages.



Anxious: Wife Irene

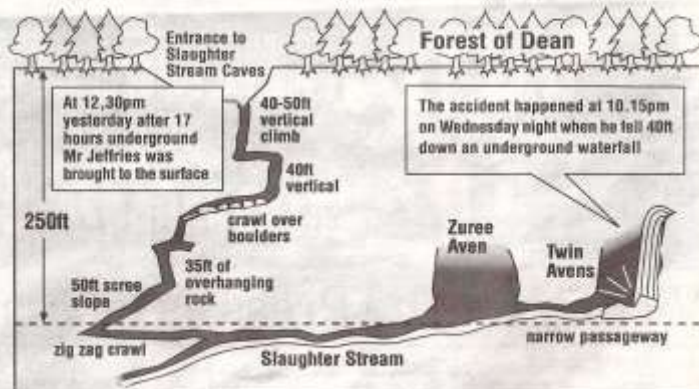
The experienced pot-holer was left in agony after plunging 40 feet down an underground waterfall in the Forest of Dean and breaking his left leg at the knee.

Sometimes the tunnels were so narrow Mr Jeffries had to twist his injured body around corners and drag himself through with his arms.

One brave rescuer even used his own body to fill a crevice in a passage floor to allow a flexible stretcher carrying Mr Jeffries to be dragged past.

The caving drama began at 10.15pm on Wednesday night when Mr Jeffries fell into Twin Aven's at Slaughter Stream Caves at Joyford, near Coleford.

He hit the bottom of the waterfall "like a sledgehammer



Underground nightmare... how the drama unfolded

hitting soil." Initially he laughed and joked about his injury, but then felt the pain and realised the severity of his situation.

The rescuers had to drag him through a stream and up four or five 30 to 40ft vertical slopes, as well as having to chisel away rocks to clear passages.

When he emerged at 12.30pm, ashen-faced, yet remarkably composed, Mr Jeffries said: "I'm feeling fine now."

"I'm all right now we are out. It was narrow in places."

"I would like to thank all the

lads for all their help."

His wife Irene, who spent an anguished night waiting for her husband to be rescued from about 250ft below ground, said: "I'm very relieved he's OK. He's in good spirits."

The experienced caver, a tractor driver at Gloucester cattle market, was airlifted to the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital where he was said to be stable and comfortable.

Mr Jeffries, from Whittington, near Cheltenham, broke his leg while trying to rescue fellow

caver Richard Osbourne, who had also fallen down the waterfall and was in a state of shock.

The third member of the group, which had taken a wrong turn in the caves, was Neil Holloway who had never been in this underground network before.

Father-of-six Mr Holloway, aged 31, a kennel assistant from Moreton-on-Lugg, near Hereford, was sent to raise the alarm but was unable to find his way out.

He said: "I went around in cir-

Slaughter Stream



Team effort... rescuers battle to finish their task

cles. I was panicking. I was hoping and praying I would get back to them for reassurance."

"It's the worst experience I have had. It seemed like a lifetime."

"I was thinking about my wife and kids at home and whether I would get out all right."

Anxious and shivering with cold, Mr Holloway, who has been caving for about four years, waited for more than two hours for help from another group they were due to meet in the nearby Dog and Muffler pub.

He said: "It was horrible just sitting and waiting and I could hear the others screaming for help."

The second group found Mr Holloway, raised the alarm and took him to safety shortly after 2am.

One of the first at the scene was the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group's doctor Simon Silver, who with another experienced climber, went down to the trapped men and stabilised Mr Jeffries.

The rescuers also arranged for drinks of Ribena, coffee and more

chocolate to be sent down.

Rigging teams put cables and ropes down into the cave to pull Mr Jeffries on a special flexible stretcher to the surface.

Mr Osbourne, who was able to walk, was brought to the surface at about 5am.

Twenty rescuers worked underground while teams of paramedics, cavers, communication experts, the fire brigade, police and the air ambulance were deployed in a field near the cave entrance in dense woods.



Relief... the ordeal is over for Ian Jeffries

Cave rescue co-ordinator Ladi Broadman said: "My team performed admirably."

Rescuer Glenn Randall, aged 28, a member of the Bristol-based Hades Caving Club and a British Aerospace engineer, said: "The tight sections were very awkward because he's quite a heavy bloke."

"He was in a lot of pain, particularly when we were moving."

"He was using upper arm strength to move himself around corners, which is remarkable seeing he's been underground for longer than 15 hours."

By Adam Powell

THE rescue at Slaughter Stream has added another chapter to the history of a cave which has gained some notoriety since its discovery five years ago.

The cave was discovered by a team of cavers and yesterday's operation was the third at Slaughter Stream since 1994.

The main difficulties in the cave are at the last - a series of difficult passages leads to a 40ft drop which must be tackled using a special hanging ladder. It is here the majority of accidents happen.

In May 1994, a major operation was launched to rescue a Luton over who fractured his ankle after slipping 5 feet inside Slaughter Stream. Another man broke his leg after falling in the cave - the same injury which necessitated yesterday's rescue.

But cavers are keen to stress the safety element of their sport and it is common sense and experience can make the difference between life and death.

The most common reason the rescue team is called out is simple -

Danger of the long drop

people get lost.

John Hine, a member of the Cave Rescue Squad, said: "Slaughter Stream is a very large complex which involves lots of water inlets. It is more of a master cave than anything else. It is a classic cave because of what you get inside."

All caves in the UK receive a difficulty grade. This ranges from one (easy) to five (difficult). Slaughter Stream is graded three.

Many harder caves exist in the Forest of Dean but the size and popularity of the system make accidents more likely. Dangers in the caves include flooding and falling down vertical holes.

WESTERN DAILY PRESS, FRIDAY, JULY 5, 1996 - 3

D. Telegraph. *GRG July 5th*

NEWS

Picture: PAUL ASHTON



Out of the darkness: members of the Cave Rescue Association carry Ian Jeffries to safety after entering Slaughter Pits yesterday

Caver's ordeal after breaking leg a quarter-mile underground

AN injured potholer was airlifted to hospital yesterday after a 17-hour ordeal a quarter of a mile underground.

Ian Jeffries, 32, from Cheltenham, Glos, broke his leg falling 20 feet in a shaft deep underground in the Slaughter Pits, Joyford, near English Bicknor in the Forest of Dean, Glos, on Wednesday night.

Fellow potholer Richard Osborne, also fell but suffered less serious injuries.

They were alone for six hours as a third member of their group made his way to the surface from the complex labyrinth of caves. The alarm was raised and a rescue operation swung into action at 2am.

Members of the Cave Rescue Association, including a doctor, reached the injured men and Mr Osborne was quickly helped to the surface.

But the rescuers then faced a very long, slow operation to bring Mr Jeffries up on a stretcher.

George Price, a Cave Rescue group member who spent 10 hours with Mr Jeffries, said: "He had spent six hours waiting for someone to get to him."

"Once we got there with a doctor, who gave him some painkillers and splinted his leg, he was a lot happier."

"As soon as he knew that the rescue was under way he was in good spirits and he stayed that way even when we had to twist his leg the wrong way once or twice to get him around tight corners."

Once he reached the surface, Mr Jeffries was taken by air ambulance to Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

Emergency flight: Mr Jeffries inside the air ambulance

End of a nightmare



This was the moment that a 17-hour nightmare ended for caver Ian Jeffries, trapped in a deep pothole after falling and breaking his leg. Read the story of his dramatic rescue on Pages 2 and 3.

WHEN the emergency services heard a caver was injured in the largest system of caves in the Forest of Dean, a carefully-rehearsed operation swung into gear.

Trapped and in pain, injured Ian Jeffries (30) was lying a quarter-of-a-mile underground, marooned in the cold, wet darkness.

Rescuers faced one of their toughest ever challenges to release Mr Jeffries from his dank prison.

He and fellow caver Richard Osborne - members of an experienced three-man party negotiating the entrance system of Slaughter Stream Cave at Joyford, near Coleford, - were injured when they strayed off the chartered route known as Zurrie Aven.

Disaster struck when Mr Osborne (30) slipped and fell 30 feet into the cavern.

Mr Jeffries, a tractor driver at Gloucester Cattle Market who lives at Cheltenham, went to help, but lost his footing and plummeted down the near-vertical slope, breaking his lower leg.

Their friend, Neil Holloway, became lost in the cave, and the alarm was raised when the trio failed to appear.

Gloucestershire Cave Rescue, based at Cinderford, were attending another incident when they received the call at 2am. A team was on site within the hour, along with police, the cliff rescue unit from Coleford Fire Station, and ambulance paramedics.

The rescue services' first priority was to reach the trapped caver and establish his injuries.

Accompanied by a doctor who

Cold, wet, 'It was a v

Report: Alison Gow
Pictures: Dick Besant

administered pain-relieving drugs, the team placed Mr Jeffries on a stretcher and prepared to negotiate the vertical climbs and tiny crawls to daylight.

"It was a very tricky operation," said Ladi Broadman, who co-ordinated the rescue.

"We had never managed to get a stretcher up there before in practice and we had to be as careful as possible because of his broken limb."

"We removed the gate at the entrance and chipped away rock to make the passage easier but we had to take things steadily."

The rescue took 17 hours - with the team snatching a few hours' sleep when they could.

"The casualty was very cheerful, considering the circumstances," said Mr Broadman.

"We were giving him high energy food and drink, Ribena and Mars Bars, to keep his strength up."

"The main thing was to let him know that we were doing everything we could to get him out."

"Everyone was very tired by the end of it. It was great to see the air ambulance leaving for the hospital and to know he would be all right."

6 October 1996 [Training] Wigpool.

7 July 1996 [Training] Kit cleaning and de-brief at the depot (following the Wetsink rescue).

CALLOUT

2nd/3rd October 1996

BAN-Y-GOR

GCRG members were called out to rescue Keith Bucknall who had become stuck in the cave at a notorious tight rift.

The callout was made at 1 am. Keith was finally extricated by wedging rescuers (and gear) under him in order to lift him higher in the slot. Returned to the surface at about 3.45 am. Most cavers back at their cars by 5 am. 24 GCRG members attended.



1997

2 March 1997 [Training] Depot.

1 June 1997 [Training] Redhouse.

14 June 1997 GCRG again runs the 'Team Challenge' at Mallards Pike Lake.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP

TEAM CHALLENGE & SOCIAL EVENT ~ 97'

SATURDAY 14th JUNE
MALLARDS PIKE LAKE
FOREST OF DEAN
AND THE RISING SUN THERE AFTER.....

IS YOUR GROUP UP TO THE CHALLENGE
???????
5 or 6 members per team

TO TAKE ON A SERIES OF CHALLENGES..TO TEST YOUR TEAM SKILLS
A COURSE SET OUT AROUND & ON/IN THE LAKESIDE.

BRING YOUR CAVING HELMET & A CHANGE OF CLOTHES
BRING £3 FOR THE ENTRANCE FEE..ALL PROCEEDS TO CAVE RESCUE

THE CHALLENGE STARTS FROM 1PM TO 5PM(LATEST ENTRY)
AND LASTS FOR ABOUT 2 HOURS(ish)

Followed by a get together at the Rising Sun
Bring your own food for the BBQ
Camping over available.....

Please let John Berry know of your intentions on 01594-860581
Help required on the day..manning the challenges etc.....

A chance to have fun and raise some money for GCRG

7 September 1997 [Training] Depot & Wetsink (pitch rigging).

1998

January 1998 Formation of the (Forest of Dean) Mines Rescue Digout Team. Comprising volunteers from GCRG and Freeminers, as backup to the Dinas Mines Rescue Team (for operating in the Forest).

AGM 1998 Information Officer reports that GCRG has 90 members on the callout list and that the membership was mainly drawn from 3 clubs: Hades, 25; GSS, 21; RFDCC, 37 & Out-of-county, 7.

Mines Rescue Dig Out Team

The Chairperson, the Equipment Officer and the Information Officer attended a meeting on the 29th January 1998 at the Speech House at the invitation of the Mines Inspector. Also present were various local freeminers, the Mines Rescue from South Wales, representatives from Glos. County Council and the emergency services.

The Inspector and the Mine Rescue service are interested in setting up a call out list of all people with mining experience in the area, so that in the event of a collapse in a **WORKING MINE OR A SHOW MINE**, these persons would be available to help dig through a fall. These persons would be working under the direction of **MINES RESCUE** in such an event not **CAVE RESCUE**. These ideas are very much in embryo form at the moment, and matters such as insurance etc. have not yet been sorted

***Have you got
mining experi-
ence?
If so would you
like to be involved
in the Mines Res-
cue Dig Out
Team?
Fill in the form.***

out.

If you have mining experience and are interested in being involved in the Mines Rescue dig out team please fill in the enclosed form with your details, return it to me and they will be passed onto the Mines Inspector via the Deputy Gaveler.

I will keep you informed of any developments. Please note that this concerns working mines, and that the Mines Inspector has already recognised that Cave Rescue is more appropriated for the disused areas of iron mines in that we are the recognised rescue service for the non show cave parts of Clearwell Caves. In any case Mines Rescue are prohibited by law from working in many areas as would be found in disused iron mines.

DIG OUT

June/July 1998 [Training] (Old Bow?)

6 September 1998 [Training] Clearwell Caves (joint training with Mines Rescue Team).

7 December 1998 [Training] Old Bow & the Depot.

1999

7 March 1999 [Training] Symonds Yat (surface search).

6 June 1999 [Training] Bixhead.

12 THE CITIZEN, TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1999



■ To the rescue: Angela Bassett-Jones, of British Gas, at the presentation with cave rescue group members Paul Taylor and Steve Tomalin.
Photo: Martin Perry

**The Citizen
COMMUNITY
PROJECT AWARDS**
British Gas
More Energy

Boost for cave rescue team

VOLUNTEERS of a cave rescue group will be saving lives with new equipment bought with £200 from the British Gas/The Citizen Community Project Awards.

The Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, which has around 100 volunteer members, has bought abseiling equipment which will be used to help rescue people stuck in caves.

The organisation, which formed more than 30 years ago, provides a rescue service to people visiting mines and caves in the county and the surrounding area.

And in the past it has helped rescue people who have suffered injuries including broken legs.

The group's equipment officer Paul Taylor said the money was greatly appreciated.

"Although not a large caving area, Gloucestershire's significance and popularity has grown over the last few years.

"We have a very minimal income," he said.

Mr Taylor said the group's volunteers specialise in skills ranging from medical knowledge to rescue expertise. The group's members are from the Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club and the Gloucester Speleological Society.

British Gas spokeswoman Vera Brinkworth said: "As a responsible energy supplier, British Gas is well aware of its own responsibilities towards the safe use of energy. We would be delighted if the new equipment bought with this community award was never put to use by the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group."

5 September 1999 [Training] Wetsink.

5 December 1999 [Training] Wetsink.

2000

5 March 2000 [Training] Drakelow Tunnels (Combined Exercise with Dudley CRT).

2000 (or 2001) 'Mines Dig Out Team' conducts a multi-agency Exercise at Haynes Bailey (Freemine); Follow-on exercises are held at Oakwood Mill and Hopewell Colliery.

3 September 2000 [Training] Hole-in-the-Hedge.

3 December 2000 [Training] Miss Graces Lane (shaft only).

2001 to 2010

CALLOUTS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

The following events involved GCRG in one form or another, whether just being on standby, the involvement of just a small number of group members or as a full callout.

25/26 February 2001 Daren Cilau (in support to WBCRT).

9 September 2002 OFD (in support to WBCRT).

24 July 2003 Otter Hole (Laura Trowbridge).

Late April 2004 Monument mine (miner hit by roof fall, GCRG called out to assist).

12/13 June 2004 Wetsink, fall in Zurree Aven (Robin McDougal, full report in Sept 2004 newsheet).

TIMELINE OF EVENTS INVOLVING THE GROUP

2001

February - October 2001 Foot & Mouth across the country severely restricts access to the countryside.

[CALLOUT] 25/26 February 2001, Daren Cilau.

7 June 2001 [Training] Combined rescue exercise with GFRS & Mines Rescue at Clearwell Caves.

8 June 2001 GCRG landrover & stand on display at the Longlevens Infant School fete, squeeze machine proves popular!

2 September 2001 [Training] Miss Graces Lane.

2001 (October) New warden's manual introduced.

2 December 2001 [Training] Bixslade stone mine.

2002

2002 Decision taken to replace the control caravan due to its deteriorating condition and that it could not be guaranteed to be able to be get to a rescue.

In order to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2002, it was decided that a commemorative medal would be issued, not just to members of HM Forces, but also (amongst others) the Voluntary Emergency Services (this included Mountain Rescue and Cave Rescue).

GCRG members who had served 5 or more years were subsequently awarded the medal.



Golden Jubilee Medal

Photo: Paul Taylor

2 March 2002 [Training] Old Ham/Depot.

2 April 2002 [Training] Training day at Total Access.

16 June 2002 [Training] Colwall railway tunnel.

4 July 2002 [Training] Combined mines rescue Exercise at Hopewell Colliery.

1 September 2002 [Training] Wetsink.

1 December 2002 [Training] Depot.

2 March 2002 [Training] Old Ham & the Depot.

2 April 2002 [Training] Training day at Total Access.

16 June 2002 [Training] Colwall railway tunnel.

4 July 2002 [Training] Combined mines rescue Exercise at Hopewell Colliery.

1 September 2002 [Training] Wetsink.

1 December 2002 [Training] Depot.

2003

7 March 2003 [Training] Depot.

1 June 2003 [Training] Doward Pancake Mines.

CALLOUT

24th July 2003

OTTER HOLE

GCRG was involved in a large-scale and complicated rescue of Laura Trowbridge who had suffered a fall and broken her pelvis in Otter Hole, beyond the tidal sump.

TV CAVE GIRL RESCUE

STUDENT Laura Trowbridge was rescued from a 27-hour ordeal trapped underground yesterday when a TV adventure programme turned into a nightmare.

Laura, 22, fell seven feet from a rock and was too badly hurt with a suspected cracked pelvis to make it out of the treacherous cave system. The route from the sur-

face flooded at high tide but a 100-strong team rescued keen caver Laura after the tide dropped on the River Wye near Chepstow, Monmouthshire.

Laura was one of the stars of a documentary being shot 500ft underground.

But viewers won't see the drama of her fall – the HTV crew missed the shot.



Cave girl Laura rescued by 100 volunteers in marathon operation

Plucked to safety after 24 hours of sheer hell



Steve Tomalin [L] and Craig Cameron [R] glad it's all over!

24-hour terror of trapped girl

By Cyril Dixon

A YOUNG woman potholer was trapped underground for more than 24 hours after injuring herself making a television documentary about a hazardous river cave.

Student Laura Trowbridge, 22, was stranded 450ft down when she suffered back and pelvic injuries as she fell while carrying camera equipment.

More than 100 volunteers worked through the night to bring her to the surface following the accident at Otter Hole cave on the Welsh borders.

Rescuers carried Laura on a stretcher for nearly half a mile through a dark, muddy tunnel to the entrance on the River Wye near Chepstow.

She was transferred by boat to a waiting helicopter and taken to Royal Gwent Hospital.

Last night, she was recovering with her parents, John and Susan, from Taunton, Somerset, at her bedside.

Laura had been part of a caving group which was being filmed for a HTV programme about underground cavers and tunnels in the western region.

Otter Hole is regarded as one of the most hazardous and challenging underground caverns in the area and only experienced potholers are advised to use it.

Not only is it dark and muddy, but it features a dip which fills up with water at high tide to cut off cavers from the exit.

Rescue teams said the "tidal sump" had complicated the job by forcing them to get Laura through before tides rose.

Paul Taylor, of Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, said: "It meant we had a race against time to get her through before the tide cut us off. She was not in danger, but if we had missed the tide it would have delayed the rescue process for six hours until it fell



RELIEF: Smiling Laura reaches safety and is transferred to a boat

again. People put in a superhuman effort to get her out. They all deserve a big pat on the back."

The drama began at about 4pm on Tuesday when Laura, who is chairman of Aberystwyth University caving club, went into Otter Hole with five other potholers and three camera crew.

Witnesses said she fell off a 6ft ledge while trying to move a camera tripod and was told by a doctor

in the party not to move. Two of her colleagues returned to the surface and called the cave rescue service, which dispatched volunteer crews from all over the West Country and the Midlands.

After giving Laura food and medication, they placed her on the stretcher and began the journey to the surface. Mr Taylor added: "It was slow and difficult because there was mud everywhere."



Hole ordeal: It took almost 24 hours to get Laura on a stretcher, top, to the entrance of the cave, left. Otter Hole, below, is well-known among cavers for its stalactites

Pictures by Matt Carby



Blackadder eased ordeal for caver

By RICHARD SAVILL

A YOUNG caver who was rescued after being trapped underground for 24 hours with an injured pelvis recited her favourite *Blackadder* and *Monty Python* comedy sketches to ease her suffering.

Laura Trowbridge, 22, was recovering in hospital yesterday, three days after falling from a ledge 800 yards inside the Otter Hole cave complex at Chepstow, South Wales.

The Aberystwyth University student has been praised for remaining cheerful during her rescue, giving "a yelp now and again" but otherwise remaining calm as she was brought to the surface by 100 volunteers.

"The rescue team was amazing," she said at Nevill Hall hospital, Abergavenny, Gwent.

"They made a makeshift stretcher out of a camera tripod and made me as warm and comfortable as possible. We spent the next 10 hours drinking hot soup, eating

Mars bars and reciting all the *Monty Python* and *Blackadder* sketches we could remember.

"My biggest worries were the painkilling injections - I hate needles."

Miss Trowbridge, who was taking part in a television documentary when she slipped, was carried to safety on a stretcher through mud and over slippery rocks.

The last 10 yards took almost two hours as she had to be taken off the stretcher and crawl unaided along a narrow passage.

Miss Trowbridge, an experienced caver, of Taunton, Somerset, said she would not be deterred from returning.

"I want to get back into Otter Hole as soon as I can," she said.

"I went to see the best cave formations in the United Kingdom and help to film them and I still want to do that. We're already planning a return trip to complete the film once I'm better."

Going underground with the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group

Rescue heroes emerge into the limelight



THE DAILY TELEGRAPH Thursday, July 26, 2003

Rescuers save injured caver trapped by tide

By RICHARD SAVILL

A YOUNG caver who was trapped underground for 24 hours with a suspected broken pelvis remained cheerful and calm as she was rescued in a "superhuman" effort by 100 volunteers.

Laura Trowbridge, 22, an experienced caver, was taking part in a television documentary 800ft underground.

The alarm was raised on Tuesday afternoon after she fell seven feet from a ledge inside the cave. She was too hurt to make it out of the cave and her plight was made worse when part of the escape route flooded at high tide.

The volunteers rescued her after the tide dropped on the Silver Key near Chepstow, allowing them to crawl through the muddy rock system.

She was carried 750 metres on a stretcher through mud and slippery rocks to the entrance of the Otter Hole cave by a chain of people who worked throughout the night and day.

Miss Trowbridge, a student from Taunton, Somerset, said "thank you, thank you" as she was brought to the surface at 4.30pm yesterday.

Peter Hudson, a rescuer, said: "She was put on a stretcher and was a super patient. She was very cheerful and calm and her attitude made our job so much easier. She must have been in a lot of pain but did not show it."

He added: "It was very tight

and restricted in the caves and the amount of mud made movement difficult. It has been a superhuman effort by the rescue team in very difficult conditions."

Paul Taylor, of Gloucestershire Cave Rescue, said: "They were passing some equipment to each other and she just slipped. Luckily there was a doctor in the team who gave first aid to the woman."

The rescue operation was delayed by last-minute problems. The last 10 metres took more than two hours to complete.

She was very calm. She must have been in a lot of pain but did not show it

piety, and Miss Trowbridge was given painkillers. One passage was compared to a letterbox. She had to be removed from the stretcher due to the tight passages and narrow tunnels.

She was later ferried by lifeboat to a waiting helicopter which flew her to the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport. Otter Hole Cave, which is two kilometres long, is famous for its hall of 13 stalagmites and stalactites. There

have been no other injuries at the cave since it opened in 1974.

Miss Trowbridge was part of a nine-strong team, including a film crew working for the ITV television company, who were making a new series on "lost of the way" places. Four of the team crawled for two hours out of the caves to raise the alarm. The other four, including the doctor, stayed with her.

Eleven members of a rescue team climbed into the cave system before the tide flooded the entrance. All 15 stayed with Miss Trowbridge until the tide dropped shortly before dawn.

Sue Moore, another rescuer, said: "I feel a great sense of relief. I have spent a lot of time lying on my back with the stretcher on top of me to keep it out of the mud. She was very determined throughout."

Miss Trowbridge, a member of Wexham Caving Club, is studying at Aberystwyth University, where she is secretary of the caving club.

Her parents, John and Susan, travelled from Somerset to the scene of the rescue and were said to be "very relieved" she was safe.

A spokesman for Redweather Productions, an independent company making the documentary for ITV, said viewers would not see the full "Unfortunately, our camera was nowhere near the incident so we did not get it on tape."

By Janet Hughes
j.hughes@bepp.co.uk

AN injured caver was pulled to safety yesterday, in a mammoth rescue operation after more than 24 hours trapped underground.

More than 100 volunteers from all over the country were involved in rescuing Somerset caver Laura Trowbridge from Otter Hole near Chepstow, one of the most difficult but stunning caves in the country.

After spending the night underground comforting 22-year-old Laura, rescuers took more than a minute to travel each metre as they dragged her stretcher through the tortuous system of underground tunnels which formed the last leg of the journey.

But finally, after a day of tense false starts, the mud-splattered young woman from Taunton finally emerged from the muddy depths and was placed on a boat for the journey to hospital.

Cave-diver Laura injured her back and pelvis when she fell three metres from a ledge on Tuesday afternoon while making a video for HTV about the cave, which is recognised as one of the most spectacular in Europe.

She was with a party of nine from Bristol who had travelled through the most difficult part of the cave, which stretches two miles under the River Wye and Chepstow racecourse, when disaster struck.

Fellow caver Gavin Newman, 42, who was in charge of the video, said it soon became obvious she would need to be taken the 750 metres back to the entrance on a stretcher and the party of nine split in two so some could stay with Laura while others raised the alarm.

But it was too risky to take her out on Tuesday night because tunnels in the cave system flood with water during high tide, and Laura was cut off for six hours.

A rescue team went in with equipment and medical help and overnight they slowly moved Laura towards the flooded tunnel to wait for the water to subside.

Peter Hobson was one of the first on the scene and said: "She was in really good spirits and still smiling when we arrived. Morphine is the most wonderful stuff."

BUT the conditions were really horrid. It was very narrow and tight and sometimes dangerous. Most of the time we were dragging her over our legs and there were times when, if we had dropped her that would have been the end of her."

A second rescue team was sent in

during
morn-
six-ho-
get La-
it flood
Exh-
chest-
side a-
to sul-
across
And
said:
very b-

WESTERN

Daily Press

Thursday, July 24, 2003

BRITAIN'S NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2003 40p

SEVERNSIDE
EDITIONWeather:
Sunny with clouds of rain.
Max today: 18°C, 17°C.
Full details: Page 2

West potholer in dramatic cave rescue after 24-hour ordeal

FULL STORY: PAGE 3

WESTERN MAIL - JULY 2003

'She did give a yelp now and again but she was quite calm'

By Janet Hughes

j.hughes@bepp.co.uk

After an ordeal that saw her trapped underground for more than 24 hours, Laura Trowbridge emerged from Otter Hole near Chepstow, one of the most difficult but stunning caves in the country.

After spending the night underground comforting 22-year-old Laura, rescuers took more than a minute to travel each metre as they dragged her stretcher through the tortuous system of underground tunnels which formed the last leg of the journey.

But finally, after a day of tense false starts, the mud-splattered young woman from Taunton finally emerged from the muddy depths and was placed on a boat for the journey to hospital.

Cave-diver Laura injured her back and pelvis when she fell three metres from a ledge on Tuesday afternoon while making a video for HTV about the cave, which is recognised as one of the most spectacular in Europe.

She was with a party of nine from Bristol who had travelled through the most difficult part of the cave, which stretches two miles under the River Wye and Chepstow racecourse, when disaster struck.

Fellow caver Gavin Newman, 42, who was in charge of the video, said it soon became obvious she would need to be taken the 750 metres back to the entrance on a stretcher and the party of nine split in two so some could stay with Laura while others raised the alarm.

But it was too risky to take her out on Tuesday night because tunnels in the cave system flood with water during high tide, and Laura was cut off for six hours.

A rescue team went in with equipment and medical help and overnight they slowly moved Laura towards the flooded tunnel to wait for the water to subside.

Peter Hobson was one of the first on the scene and said: "She was in really good spirits and still smiling when we arrived. Morphine is the most wonderful stuff."

BUT the conditions were really horrid. It was very narrow and tight and sometimes dangerous. Most of the time we were dragging her over our legs and there were times when, if we had dropped her that would have been the end of her."

A second rescue team was sent in

After an ordeal that saw her trapped underground for more than 24 hours, Laura Trowbridge emerged from Otter Hole near Chepstow, one of the most difficult but stunning caves in the country.

After spending the night underground comforting 22-year-old Laura, rescuers took more than a minute to travel each metre as they dragged her stretcher through the tortuous system of underground tunnels which formed the last leg of the journey.

But finally, after a day of tense false starts, the mud-splattered young woman from Taunton finally emerged from the muddy depths and was placed on a boat for the journey to hospital.

Cave-diver Laura injured her back and pelvis when she fell three metres from a ledge on Tuesday afternoon while making a video for HTV about the cave, which is recognised as one of the most spectacular in Europe.

She was with a party of nine from Bristol who had travelled through the most difficult part of the cave, which stretches two miles under the River Wye and Chepstow racecourse, when disaster struck.

Fellow caver Gavin Newman, 42, who was in charge of the video, said it soon became obvious she would need to be taken the 750 metres back to the entrance on a stretcher and the party of nine split in two so some could stay with Laura while others raised the alarm.

But it was too risky to take her out on Tuesday night because tunnels in the cave system flood with water during high tide, and Laura was cut off for six hours.

A rescue team went in with equipment and medical help and overnight they slowly moved Laura towards the flooded tunnel to wait for the water to subside.

Peter Hobson was one of the first on the scene and said: "She was in really good spirits and still smiling when we arrived. Morphine is the most wonderful stuff."

BUT the conditions were really horrid. It was very narrow and tight and sometimes dangerous. Most of the time we were dragging her over our legs and there were times when, if we had dropped her that would have been the end of her."

A second rescue team was sent in

After an ordeal that saw her trapped underground for more than 24 hours, Laura Trowbridge emerged from Otter Hole near Chepstow, one of the most difficult but stunning caves in the country.

After spending the night underground comforting 22-year-old Laura, rescuers took more than a minute to travel each metre as they dragged her stretcher through the tortuous system of underground tunnels which formed the last leg of the journey.

But finally, after a day of tense false starts, the mud-splattered young woman from Taunton finally emerged from the muddy depths and was placed on a boat for the journey to hospital.

Cave-diver Laura injured her back and pelvis when she fell three metres from a ledge on Tuesday afternoon while making a video for HTV about the cave, which is recognised as one of the most spectacular in Europe.

She was with a party of nine from Bristol who had travelled through the most difficult part of the cave, which stretches two miles under the River Wye and Chepstow racecourse, when disaster struck.

Fellow caver Gavin Newman, 42, who was in charge of the video, said it soon became obvious she would need to be taken the 750 metres back to the entrance on a stretcher and the party of nine split in two so some could stay with Laura while others raised the alarm.

But it was too risky to take her out on Tuesday night because tunnels in the cave system flood with water during high tide, and Laura was cut off for six hours.

A rescue team went in with equipment and medical help and overnight they slowly moved Laura towards the flooded tunnel to wait for the water to subside.

Peter Hobson was one of the first on the scene and said: "She was in really good spirits and still smiling when we arrived. Morphine is the most wonderful stuff."

BUT the conditions were really horrid. It was very narrow and tight and sometimes dangerous. Most of the time we were dragging her over our legs and there were times when, if we had dropped her that would have been the end of her."

A second rescue team was sent in

After an ordeal that saw her trapped underground for more than 24 hours, Laura Trowbridge emerged from Otter Hole near Chepstow, one of the most difficult but stunning caves in the country.

After spending the night underground comforting 22-year-old Laura, rescuers took more than a minute to travel each metre as they dragged her stretcher through the tortuous system of underground tunnels which formed the last leg of the journey.

But finally, after a day of tense false starts, the mud-splattered young woman from Taunton finally emerged from the muddy depths and was placed on a boat for the journey to hospital.

Cave-diver Laura injured her back and pelvis when she fell three metres from a ledge on Tuesday afternoon while making a video for HTV about the cave, which is recognised as one of the most spectacular in Europe.

She was with a party of nine from Bristol who had travelled through the most difficult part of the cave, which stretches two miles under the River Wye and Chepstow racecourse, when disaster struck.

Fellow caver Gavin Newman, 42, who was in charge of the video, said it soon became obvious she would need to be taken the 750 metres back to the entrance on a stretcher and the party of nine split in two so some could stay with Laura while others raised the alarm.

But it was too risky to take her out on Tuesday night because tunnels in the cave system flood with water during high tide, and Laura was cut off for six hours.

A rescue team went in with equipment and medical help and overnight they slowly moved Laura towards the flooded tunnel to wait for the water to subside.

Peter Hobson was one of the first on the scene and said: "She was in really good spirits and still smiling when we arrived. Morphine is the most wonderful stuff."

BUT the conditions were really horrid. It was very narrow and tight and sometimes dangerous. Most of the time we were dragging her over our legs and there were times when, if we had dropped her that would have been the end of her."

A second rescue team was sent in

After an ordeal that saw her trapped underground for more than 24 hours, Laura Trowbridge emerged from Otter Hole near Chepstow, one of the most difficult but stunning caves in the country.

After spending the night underground comforting 22-year-old Laura, rescuers took more than a minute to travel each metre as they dragged her stretcher through the tortuous system of underground tunnels which formed the last leg of the journey.

But finally, after a day of tense false starts, the mud-splattered young woman from Taunton finally emerged from the muddy depths and was placed on a boat for the journey to hospital.

Cave-diver Laura injured her back and pelvis when she fell three metres from a ledge on Tuesday afternoon while making a video for HTV about the cave, which is recognised as one of the most spectacular in Europe.

She was with a party of nine from Bristol who had travelled through the most difficult part of the cave, which stretches two miles under the River Wye and Chepstow racecourse, when disaster struck.

Fellow caver Gavin Newman, 42, who was in charge of the video, said it soon became obvious she would need to be taken the 750 metres back to the entrance on a stretcher and the party of nine split in two so some could stay with Laura while others raised the alarm.

But it was too risky to take her out on Tuesday night because tunnels in the cave system flood with water during high tide, and Laura was cut off for six hours.

A rescue team went in with equipment and medical help and overnight they slowly moved Laura towards the flooded tunnel to wait for the water to subside.

Peter Hobson was one of the first on the scene and said: "She was in really good spirits and still smiling when we arrived. Morphine is the most wonderful stuff."

BUT the conditions were really horrid. It was very narrow and tight and sometimes dangerous. Most of the time we were dragging her over our legs and there were times when, if we had dropped her that would have been the end of her."

A second rescue team was sent in

After an ordeal that saw her trapped underground for more than 24 hours, Laura Trowbridge emerged from Otter Hole near Chepstow, one of the most difficult but stunning caves in the country.

After spending the night underground comforting 22-year-old Laura, rescuers took more than a minute to travel each metre as they dragged her stretcher through the tortuous system of underground tunnels which formed the last leg of the journey.

But finally, after a day of tense false starts, the mud-splattered young woman from Taunton finally emerged from the muddy depths and was placed on a boat for the journey to hospital.

Cave-diver Laura injured her back and pelvis when she fell three metres from a ledge on Tuesday afternoon while making a video for HTV about the cave, which is recognised as one of the most spectacular in Europe.

She was with a party of nine from Bristol who had travelled through the most difficult part of the cave, which stretches two miles under the River Wye and Chepstow racecourse, when disaster struck.

Fellow caver Gavin Newman, 42, who was in charge of the video, said it soon became obvious she would need to be taken the 750 metres back to the entrance on a stretcher and the party of nine split in two so some could stay with Laura while others raised the alarm.

But it was too risky to take her out on Tuesday night because tunnels in the cave system flood with water during high tide, and Laura was cut off for six hours.

A rescue team went in with equipment and medical help and overnight they slowly moved Laura towards the flooded tunnel to wait for the water to subside.

Peter Hobson was one of the first on the scene and said: "She was in really good spirits and still smiling when we arrived. Morphine is the most wonderful stuff."

BUT the conditions were really horrid. It was very narrow and tight and sometimes dangerous. Most of the time we were dragging her over our legs and there were times when, if we had dropped her that would have been the end of her."

A second rescue team was sent in

during the early hours of Tuesday morning to take advantage of the six-hour window of opportunity to get Laura through 'the sump' before it flooded again.

Exhausted cavers swam through chest-deep water to reach the other side and then waited for the water to subside before bringing Laura across.

Andy Lougher from Cinderford said: "She was still conscious and very bossy. She let us know she was

in charge and was telling us how to put her through the holes."

But once Laura was on the other side she faced the most difficult part of her journey and took more than six hours to travel 350 metres to the entrance.

Cavers, mainly from Gloucester and South Wales, worked in tandem to drag her through the underground network of twisting tunnels, many of which could only be passed by dragging themselves along on

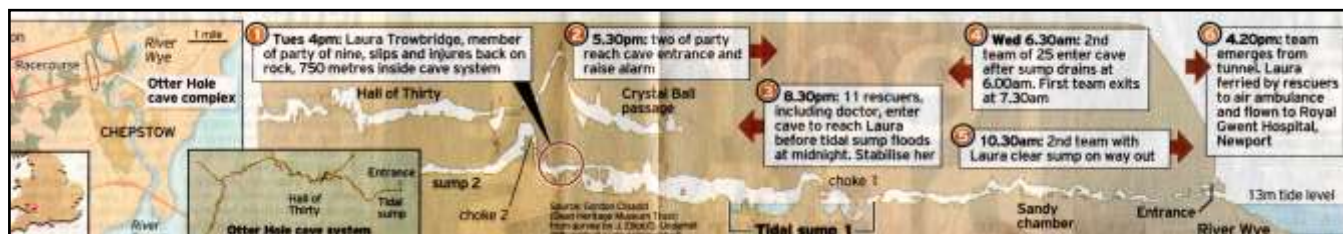
their stomachs. Dave Jackson of the Forest of Dean Caving Club said: "It is a very, very hostile environment and one only very experienced cavers can attempt."

"Anything that immobilises you in those conditions is dangerous, not only to you but to the rest of the team. It's the cold. If you stop moving you get chilled and when you are wet and caked in mud, it's exhausting. Rescue operations are a slow process. There's a cave in the

Forest of Dean where they estimate that if you injured yourself at the end, it would take 200 cavers three days to get you out."

Two female doctors from Wales, who are specialist cavers, stayed with Laura throughout her ordeal.

During the last 50 metres rescuers held their breath as Laura's stretcher became trapped in a rock "corkscrew" near the entrance but at 4.20pm she finally emerged all in one exhausted piece.



EXERCISE (WETSINK/SLAUGHTER STREAM CAVE)

6th September 2003



11 September 2003 [Training] Hopewell Colliery (with Mines Rescue Team)

14 December 2003 [Training] Old Ham/New Dun (with Mines Rescue Team).

2004

2004 a grant of £2500 from the Summerfield Trust enables the depot roof to be replaced & exterior cladding applied.

2004 'T Card' system introduced; earlier, in 2003, it had been decided to use this system as a method of being able to easily control (at a rescue & practice) who was where underground and doing what. Previously, all members going underground were issued with a numbered 'tag' to be returned to the control point upon exit from the cave.

2004 Depot roof replaced and walls covered in cladding.

7 March 2004 [Training] Depot.



Example of a 'tag' (the actual GCRG ones were round)

MINES RESCUE EXERCISE (HOPEWELL COLLIERY)

11th September 2003

TRAINING

www.t-rescue.com

INTER-AGENCY MINES RESCUE

The Learning Curve



by Brian Robinson

When I first learned of the date of the planned exercise was to be September 11th '03, or the now infamous 9-11, obviously concerns went up as to how it would be received, we hadn't planned the date specifically, it was a just one of those little oversights!! Within sight of the chosen mine is a carved stone memorial to 3 miners, a father, son and third miner, who drowned in a tragic flooding at Union Colliery in 1902, Union having the same surface location, a fitting tribute then to those who are carrying on the unenviable task of both working the coal, and rescue in these difficult conditions, but again, a message of "doom".

The latest in a long series of multi-agency exercises within the small mining area of the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire here in the U.K., this was chosen as a non B.A. related incident, to get all of the different agencies working together, to see what had been learnt and put into practice from previous exercises, and to try new equipment and techniques.

The mine chosen, "Monument" mine, is probably one of the smallest most restrictive mines in Great Britain, offering undoubtedly the most difficult conditions. Working height varies from 6' (1.82m) in the main entrance and roadways, to about 2'5" (0.75m) on the coal face, a lot of which is at gradients of up to 1 in 3, conditions vary also from dry floor to standing and flowing water. Roof supports are mainly traditional "timber", these can prove very restrictive to get stretchered casualties around, an ideal place to play then!

The scenario chosen by the organising

committee, a three person team of the area's "Deputy Gaveler", the local HM Mines Inspector and myself, involved a set of runaway coal drams (mine cars) derailing and injuring 2 persons, one pinned and crushed by the drams themselves and having a partially amputated lower leg, the other suffering an impalement to the leg, loss of fluids and shock.

Almost guaranteed to be first on scene, the local Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service (from Coleford and Lydney retained stations) gather information and begin command and control operations, resisting the urge to dive in, as they are not miners. Following close behind are the areas other miners forming an initial "first response", to travel underground (only a sketch plan was given and brief details) to gather further information and check the integrity of the mine, using their skills and only basic equipment to begin.

Overall incident command from the beginning

is taken by the Fire & Rescue service. They are generally first on scene, have a disciplined command structure, and normally have the most personnel on site. Incident Command may begin with a Leading Firefighter but is always passed up the chain to arriving officers. Since this exercise is a "regular" event most are now familiar with the command and control hierarchy. The Fire & Rescue Commander is not a mining engineer so technical decisions are made by the "rescue committee" formed from representatives of the relevant specialist disciplines.

750 meters may not sound a huge distance over which to extricate 2 casualties in Mine Rescue terms, but in these conditions the whole operation took some 3 hours, and at one stage had some 37 rescue workers underground, believe me at the end of it all there were some very dirty and tired people from the various organisations involved.

♦ Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service - 2



www.t-rescue.com

TRAINING



pumping appliances & 2 Special Rescue Units - 18 personnel

◆ Gloucester Cave Rescue - 1 Land Rover, 12 personnel

for personnel and major equipment, giving an accurate account of who and what have been deployed, on reserve, etc, an important task in a protracted incident. Utilisation of Cave Rescue equipment is normally restricted to spinal protection, specialist stretchers and rope gear for rigging haulage gradients. Gloucester Fire & Rescue service also set up checks of equipment, to make sure no non IS (Intrinsically Safe) gear goes underground in a coal mine, and to see that the right gear goes to

the right location.

Here again, Fire & Rescue Service gear is limited to extrication and standard rope rescue, they are only permitted to use their single cylinder CABA in limited duration rescue within some iron mines, definitely not the coal mines. Even though lighting such as Wolf ATEX fire torches are IS, they are not allowed, although interpretation of ATEX for this application is difficult. The issue is in being able to access the battery compartment without use of a 'special' tool, in other words it should be impossible for a rescuer to accidentally open the torch on scene. A huge advantage from the Fire Service inventory is the use of surface generators for area lighting. Mines Rescue had their latest additions the

- ◆ First Response Team - 3 local miners
- ◆ Ambulance Service - 2 paramedics, 1 instructor
- ◆ Mines Rescue Service - 6 man team, 2 officers, 2 vehicles
- ◆ Wessex Area Mines Rescue Team - 4 man team, no equipment

The 'impalement' through one casualties leg was cleverly measured to be just too long to travel through the coal face, so had to be cut before extrication could take place. An easy task? well not when either bolt cutters or hacksaw has to be transported three quarters of a kilometer underground, as well as lifting bags and all the necessary medical equipment! For obvious Intrinsic Safety reasons battery powered reciprocating saws are not normally allowed below ground - and although hand powered hydraulic tools are available, it fell to an old fashioned set of bolt croppers to sever, quickly and easily, the 10mm steel bar. In the event of a 'dire emergency' there is provision within the regulations for use of non-IS equipment with permission of HM (Mines) Inspector. This is only if constant gas monitoring is carried out and detailed risk assessment is in place. A small electric /hydraulic tool such as the powerful little Japanese Ogura would be ideal but Intrinsic Safety implications negate normal use. Standard generator powered Fire Service style hydraulic combi's are prohibitive for reasons of weight, exhaust fumes, non-IS but most can be used with a hand pump so these last two factors can be negated and this is a worthwhile consideration. However, when cutting an impale the rotation on the bar caused by the powerful cutting blade of a combi-tool can cause too much movement for the comfort and safety of the casualty. [ED: see Product News report on the Ogura bar cutter's simple but effective means of overcoming such a problem]

Cave Rescue implemented a new style check in system using a special board and 'T- cards' This had been used on a previous cave rescue exercise with mixed reviews, here it proved easy for the operators and did a good job, but was backed up by the Fire & Rescue guys doing a secondary Entry Control check. Conventional BA tally boards just don't seem to work with such multi-agency incidents.

The 'T- card' board is an accountability system

Reeves stretcher and Grogg Spine Splint for use with the SKED stretcher as well as the Salter MARS resuscitator, backed up by older Sebe Gorman Maxman. BNOS Microvent units and Nitrous Oxide analgesic units were provided by the Paramedic service, although this is also carried by all mines rescue teams.

Once underground, rescue discipline is really a team effort with clear demarcation of efforts:

- Location and safety assessment was carried out by the First Response Team.
 - Accompanying and assuring the safety of paramedics and fire & rescue personnel by First Response or Mines Rescue.
 - Casualty care by Paramedics (Gloucester Cave Rescue also have a qualified paramedic on the team).
 - Extrication from entrapment is carried out by Mines Rescue & Fire & Rescue.
 - The difficult carry / drag out is completed by Cave Rescue and Fire & Rescue.
- Sounds complicated, but works a treat. Getting to the casualties was an easy 10 minute job, assessing and making safe another 20 minutes, and casualty care around 45 minutes, because of the bad conditions. The longest part was the carry out.

So, from an initial briefing 2 miles from the mine at 1800, arrival of the first personnel at 1820, the last person out of the mine was at 2050.

New to the scene were 4 members from the Wessex Area Stone Mines Rescue team, initially observing from the surface, but then willingly participating in the rescue. This independent Mines Rescue team has recently been set up by a group of 3 stone mines in the Bath / Corsham area, equipped with twin cylinder CABA as well as a wide range of other equipment.

Two female paramedics that hadn't been underground before, were, to say the least 'astounded'...but they coped admirably, maybe even enjoying the experience!

Had this been an atmospheric problem rescue, because of the dimensions of the mine, it really is very doubtful if an effective rescue could have been carried out. Even within the main drift of the mine, closed circuit oxygen BA sets would have taken a pounding, and on the coal face at less than 1m high by some 40m long, it would have been a tough call. If twin cylinder CABA was used, dimensions of the sets are similar, but with the extra fatigue on the personnel, duration would have been well down.

Overall this was a well orchestrated rescue. There was some indecision on casualty handling during the face traverse, 'too many cooks' maybe, as there was no senior person at this location.



Another very basic mistake, the conscious casualty, brought out in a SKED stretcher was left without eye protection a seemingly minor point that can become a major oversight, ask the casualty! Any oxygen resuscitator bag or major first aid kit should have some basic safety goggles kept in it.

A lot of the action was filmed by a camer / camera person, the finished version giving a true idea of the difficulties of casualty extrication and the lengthy nature of the two casualties.

OK, so that's what it's all about, putting pre-formed plans into action, learning new skills, enhancing old ones, and making sure the system will work if it's required for real.

CALLOUT

April 2004

MONUMENT MINE

GCRG is called out to assist with the rescue of a miner trapped by a roof fall.



GCRG DEPOT

May 2004

GCRG members help to re-roof the depot and add the green cladding to the outside of the building.





Photos: Nicky Bayley & Jon Maisey

6 June 2004 [Training] Depot.

CALLOUT

12th/13th June 2004

WETSINK

GCRG members, with support from West Brecon Cave Rescue Team [WBCRT] & Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation, were called out to rescue Robin McDougal who had suffered a fall in Zurree Aven.



4 September 2004 [Training] SWCC HQ with WBCRT.

2005

6 March 2005 [Training] Bixhead.

2006

4 March 2006 [Training] Miss Graces Lane.

4 June 2006 [Training] Depot.

3 December 2006 [Training] Depot.

GCRG ON TELEVISION!

May 2006

GCRG was approached to see if it could help out and provide 'extras' for the BBC over several days for an episode of *Dalziel and Pascoe*.

The episode involved a body being found in a cave during a cave rescue, followed by an underground search for evidence. As caving "supporting artistes" the 'extras' had to appear to be carrying out cave rescue activities, mostly in the background, as part of a fictitious "Mid-Yorkshire Cave Rescue Group".

The GCRG volunteers were: Paul Taylor, Joe Duxbury, Jo Clarke, Gareth Jones, Haidee Jones, Ed Williams, Craig Cameron and Jan Karvik. The GCRG Land Rover, cunningly disguised, also got in on the act.

Two weeks later the location was Clearwell Caves, in which a set had been constructed to simulate a cave subject to flooding. Pumps provided a flow of water to produce waterfalls, dripping ceilings and walls, and fast-flowing rivers.

The two-part episode, "The Cavewoman", the first in a new series of *Dalziel and Pascoe*, was broadcast in early September 2006.



Caving extras display their strength!

Photo: Haidee Jones



The GCRG Land Rover steals the scene from Warren Clarke and Colin Buchanan

Photo: Haidee Jones

2007

2007 (AGM) Group membership stands at 105.

4 March 2007 [Training] Doward.

3 June 2007 [Training] Bixhead.

8 September 2007 [Training] Wetsink.

2 December 2007 [Training] Noxon Park.

2008

9 March 2008 [Training] Old Bow.

1 June 2008 [Training] Old Bow.

19 July 2008 [Training] Joint Exercise with WBCRT in mid-Wales.

7 September 2008 [Training] Westbury Brook.

7 December 2008 [Training] Doward.

2009

8 March 2009 [Training] Miss Graces Lane.

6 September 2009 [Training] Wetsink.

6 December 2009 [Training] Depot.

2010

7 March 2010 [Training] Emmer Green chalk mine (Reading) with SECRO.

September 2010 [Training] Huglith mineral mine (Shropshire), joint exercise with MCRO.

5 December 2010 [Training] Windrush stone mine.

GCRG GOES FURTHER AFIELD

The original version of this was written by Paul Taylor and Emma Porter and published in the May 2010 newsletter.

A number of years ago, the BCRC (British Cave Rescue Council) in conjunction with ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) divided the UK up so that all police force areas were covered by at least one cave rescue team that could be called upon to deal with an underground incident within their areas.

For GCRG this meant that the group's area of responsibility was expanded from Gloucestershire and over the River Wye into parts of Gwent (Otter Hole & The Doward) along with our existing support roles to the then Gwent, South Wales and MRO teams. GCRG also became responsible for Hereford & Worcestershire and with a supporting role for the West Midlands and Warwickshire. The most significant primary responsibility addition was that of the three counties of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire who all come under the Thames Valley Constabulary. The latter county extending beyond Reading and almost to the outer fringes of London.

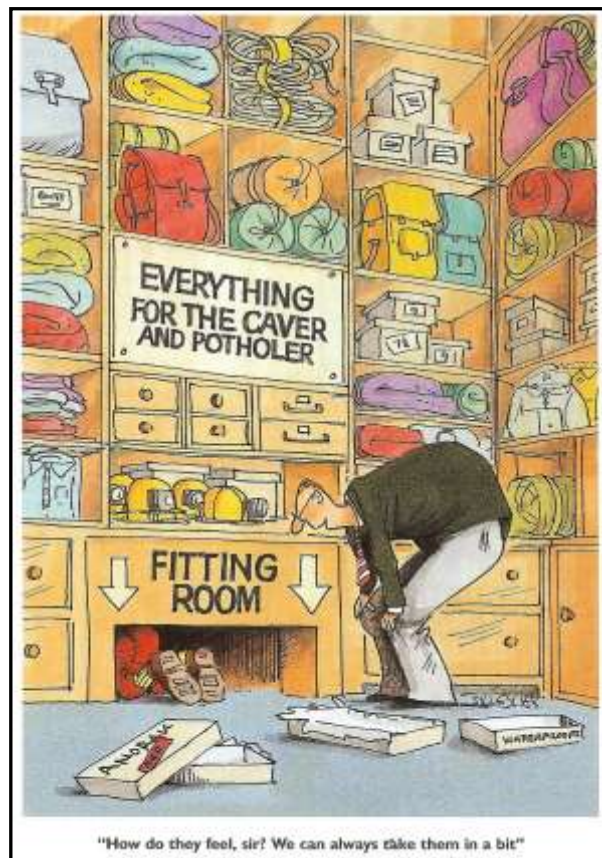
From the direction of the South East, the area covered by the SECRO (South East Cave Rescue Organisation) was also extended to cover the same area around Reading; this allowed for a crossover of resources at this point.

These changes led to a quadrupling of the GCRG area of responsibility and over the years have held a few practice exercises on the eastern-side of GCRG's area covering the Cotswolds and the numerous stone mines.



**Joint SECRO/GCRG Exercise at
Emmer Green chalk mine
(Reading), 7 March 2010**

Photo: Jon Maisey



2011 to 2015

CALLOUTS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

The following events involved GCRG in one form or another, whether just being on standby, the involvement of just a small number of group members, or as a full callout.

4 April 2011 Old Bow.

16 April 2011 Biblins/Doward search (nothing found, potential hoax).

5 May 2011 Symonds Yat (C10, member of public got stuck but was able to get himself out).

7 August 2011 Daren Cilau (first live use of SARCALL).

16 November 2011 Snailbeach mine (supporting MCRO).

6 September 2012 OFD (GCRG on standby).

24 October 2012 Hartpury/Murrels End (casualty fell down a well; GFRS got casualty out with a ladder).

8 November 2012 Climber fell at Symonds Yat (GFRS rescued the casualty).

24 November 2012 Wetsink (heavy rain, GCRG on standby).

2 May 2013 Ogof Draenen (GCRG on standby).

19 December 2013 Brownhill/Chalford (dog rescue).

2 January 2014 Lydbrook (land search).

23 April 2014 Agen Allwedd (GCRG on standby).

5 May 2014 Otter Hole (overdue party, callout not needed in the end).

22 June 2014 Soudley (land search).

25 June 2014 Robinswood Hill (land search).

18 April 2015 Old Ham (overdue/lost party).

TIMELINE OF EVENTS INVOLVING THE GROUP

2011

Wardens

As of April 2011, the GCRG Wardens were: Maurice Febry, John Elliott, John Bery, Dave Tuffley, Steve Tomalin, Pete Turier, George Price, Dave Appleing, John Hutchinson, Cliff Seymour, Andy Clark, Paul Taylor.

6 March 2011 [Training] Depot.

5 June 2011 [Training] Ban-y-Gor (with SARA).

August 2011 SARCALL system adopted & goes live.

September 2011 Depot refurbishment gets underway.

2012

29 March 2012 [Training] Surface search training at Lydney Docks area.

4 March 2012 [Training] Noxon Park.

10 June 2012 [Training] Depot.

ONGOING WORK AT THE DEPOT DURING 2011



Photo: Jon Maisey



Photo: Nicky Bayley



Photo: Jon Maisey



Photo: Nicky Bayley



Photo: Nicky Bayley



Photo: Jon Maisey

PRESENTATION OF DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDALS TO GCRG MEMBERS

14th of June 2012, Clearwell Caves

As part of the celebrations to mark the Queen's 60 years on the throne, commemorative medals had been struck. These medals, in addition to being awarded to members of HM Forces (*just as in 2002 for the Golden Jubilee*) were also issued to members of the voluntary rescue services (*as well as members of the Police and Fire Brigades etc*). The criteria to be awarded one of the medals being effective membership of the organisation (*in this case GCRG*) for 5 or more years.

It was proposed that some form of official ceremony ought to take place in order to provide a fitting occasion for such an event and being a cave rescue organisation, where better than somewhere underground as the location for such an occasion! Paul Taylor (GCRG Chairman) takes up the story

'I have to say at the outset that I can't take the credit for the idea of holding a medal presentation underground. That must go to Jon Whiteley from Devon Cave Rescue Organisation who told me that they were planning theirs for Kent's Cavern and what were we doing in GCRG?

With a seed sown I thought that's a great idea and Clearwell Caves a tourist Iron Mine in the Forest of Dean instantly came to mind as a very suitable location.

Being owned by caver's we have a good relationship with them and when contacted they immediately said yes and a date set for the evening of June 14th.

With part of the mine known as Barbecue Churn many parties and events have been held in the past and it would prove to be very suitable. During the weeks that followed invitations were sent out to all of the GCRG Medal Recipients and also four guests contacted to undertake the presentation.

For the night of the event the chamber was transformed with a static display of gcrg equipment and display boards, Lap Top projector and screen, lectern, tables and chairs and also the all important food & even more important drinks.

In total 90 people attended including 48 recipients' family and friends, GCRG Guests and Distinguished guests.

An excellent mix of light hearted humour blended well with the more serious aspects of the evening dealing with the presentation of the medals and the heartfelt words of support that were given. How many events have you been to where one of your guests, the Assistant Chief Constable, was employed to move the table and lectern when a light failed? All joined in whole hearted with the proceedings and everybody was extremely complimentary of the location. It had made the event.

From a balcony looking down onto the lower section of the chamber the picture of all the recipients and guests was taken.

It is fair to say that there is only one word that describes the evening "Fantastic" and thanks are extended to all who took part and organised the event. It will go down in the history of the group and be remembered for a very long time. Thanks also go to Rose Taylor & Fiona Cameron for producing the fantastic selection of cakes that were consumed during the evening.

Special thanks go to Mr Richard Berry Assistant Chief Constable Gloucestershire Constabulary, Mr Jon Hall Chief Fire Officer Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Mr Ceri Evans Deputy Lord Lieutenant Gloucestershire & Mr Tony Forster HSE Mines Inspector who undertook the presentation of the Medals, current Deputy Gaveler Daniel Howell and John Harvey who held the same post for the previous years and was also a medal recipient were also in attendance.

The support of all of the staff at Clearwell Caves contributed to the success of the evening and thanks also go to Jonathan and Ray Wright for making the caves available to us for this very special and unique event'.



Diamond Jubilee Medal

Photo: Paul Taylor



Photo: Chris Howes



Photo: Arthur Champion



Photo: Chris Howes



Photo: Arthur Champion

As of August 2012, the GCRG Wardens were: Maurice Febry, John Elliott, John Berry, Dave Tuffley, Steve Tomalin, Pete Turier, George Price, Dave Appleing, John Hutchinson, Cliff Seymour, Andy Clark, Paul Taylor, Kev Brockway, Greg Jones.

2 September 2012 [Training] Balls Green Lower.

2 December 2012 [Training] Wetsink.

6 December 2012 [Training] Coal Mines Exercise.

2013

2013 Wetsink/Slaughter Stream Cave training guide produced by Ian Healey.

2013 GCRG metal badges produced for sale and Nicky Bayley starts making GCRG mugs.

23 April 2013 GCRG members involved in Ex Selfridge (at South Cerney).

May 2013 Official opening of the refurbished depot.

2 June 2013 [Training] Depot and Wigpool.

6 June 2013 [Training] Scenes of crime training (Depot).

In 2013 Nicky Bayley began producing mugs for sale to raise funds



Photo: Andy Harp



Photo: Nicky Bayley

Enamel badges were also made available for sale



Photo: Jon Maisey

CALLOUT

19th December 2013

ANIMAL RESCUE, BROWNSHILL, STROUD

A small number of GCRG members who were local to the area and available, were able to extract a dog who had managed to get itself stuck in a small natural rift cave near Browns Hill, Stroud.

After a lot of hard work the animal was finally rescued and returned to its grateful owner.

Cavers to rescue after pet gets stuck in mine

By Kate Wilson
01453 769414
k.wilson@stroudnewspaper.co.uk

DOGGED determination led to the successful canine-cave rescue of adventurous terrier Millie, who was trapped underground for nearly a week.

Fittedale terrier Millie, eight, was rescued from an old mining cave near the grounds of the monastery of Our Lady and St Bernard in Browns Hill after being trapped for six days.

When Millie vanished during a walk before Christmas, worried owner Lisa Bewick spent hours searching the area and had almost given up hope of ever finding her beloved pet.

Then one day, she came across a small opening in an old mining cave near the monastery.

Thinking that Millie may have crept inside, she returned home to collect her

other terrier, MJ, believing he may be able to detect his playmate.

"As soon as MJ got near the opening, he ran into the tunnel and started barking loudly," said Lisa, of St Mary's Way, Browns Hill.

"Then I heard a very faint bark coming from underground."

A friend took MJ home and

called the fire service, who called in the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group.

Group chairman Paul Taylor and a team of six cavers used an electric chisel to create a 30 metre tunnel to reach Millie.

"It was a very delicate operation and we had to be extremely careful moving the rocks to prevent the tunnel from collapsing around us and on to the dog," said Mr Taylor.

After eight hours, the team finally saw Millie, who was running around and trying to jump up to them. Unfortunately Millie was out of reach, so they attached a wall tie to a drainage rod from the fire engine, hooked it on to Millie's harness and dragged her to safety.

"There was a point when I wasn't sure if we would ever get Millie back and to have her sitting in front of the fire again is just such a relief," said Lisa.

Although Millie was uninjured, MJ has developed post-traumatic stress due to the stress of the situation.

Friends cheered: Lisa Bewick with her beloved pets MJ (left) and Millie (right). A rescue operation was launched after Millie became trapped in an old mining cave near Browns Hill

2014

3 January 2014 [Training] Ogof Draenen (with SMWCRT).

2 February 2014 [Training] SARA land search training.

3 March 2014 [Training] Miss Graces Lane.

22 March 2014 [Training] SARA land search training.

STEVE TOMALIN



In July 2014, longstanding GCRG member, Steve Tomalin, sadly passed away after a short illness.

For Steve, caving was an integral part of his life and was a mainstay of both the GSS (he was the Chairman) and GCRG (he was on the Committee and also a Warden). He had been a member of the GSS and GCRG for many years.

In the late 1970s, after a friend took him to Old Ham iron mine at Clearwell, Steve was hooked and caving became a significant part of his life. He joined the Stroud Subterranean Ramblers and then in the early 1980s he made contact with the GSS and joined the club soon after (1983 or earlier).



Steve at Total Access

Photo: Nicky Bayley



Steve at Snailbeach, 2010

Photo: Nicky Bayley

Within a short space of time of joining the GSS, Steve also joined GCRG and was soon a member of the committee and also a warden.

As a member of the committee, Steve held most of the positions at one time or another (and ordinary member, Librarian/Archivist, Tackle Officer, Information Officer, Training Co-ordinator and Chairman). It was while Steve was Chairman (1991-1995) that he was responsible for overseeing the purchase of the building and land which is now the GCRG depot.

As well as being a member of GCRG, Steve was also a member of the South and Mid-Wales Cave Rescue (SMWCRT) team and Midland Cave Rescue Organisation (MCRO). He could always be relied on whenever there was a callout.

Steve's Auction

In his will, Steve had specified that his outdoor gear should be sold off in order to raise funds for the various organisations with which he had been involved. After cataloguing all of Steve's kit (just how much outdoor gear can one person hold?), a date was arranged for a grand auction. Luckily Liz Maisey (GCRG Treasurer) was able to persuade a professional Auctioneer (Joe Trinder from the Wotton Auction Rooms) to volunteer his services and really make the day an event.

On the 4th of July 2015 the auction was set up at the GCRG depot on a blazing hot day and Joe set about getting the assembled crowd to part with their money.

By the end of the afternoon, everything had been sold and in total the sale raised in the region of £2165 each for GCRG and the MCRO and an additional donation of £250 to the SMWCRT. A fantastic sum to have raised and also the knowledge that every single item of equipment/clothing etc will have been found a good home and continue to be used as intended by Steve.



Photo: Jon Maisey



Photo: Jon Maisey

Caver's dying wish raises cash to help others

FOREST of Dean caving enthusiast Steve Tomalin's dying wish came true this month when his collection of specialist underground equipment raised £4,500 at auction.

Steve, a long standing member of Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, died of liver cancer last year.

In his will, he asked that his collection of equipment be sold to raise funds for the group.

Group Chairman Paul Taylor said: "Steve was a very active member of Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group and also a very active person within the outdoor world.

"He also worked in Outdoor Edu-



IN MEMORY: Steve Tomalin.

ction and took part in many activities.

"In his will he left instructions

that all of his equipment from these activities were to be given to the local rescue group and sold to raise funds for the organisation.

"To this end, we held an auction at the Cinderford depot in St White's Road, attended by around 120 of his caving friends and from this a total of £4,500 was raised.

"This money is being split between the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, the Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation and South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team.

"The Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group share is to be used to provide an extension to our Training Wall as Steve was very much into Training, along with a kit washing and drying room.

2 September 2014 [Training] Snailbeach Mine (with MCRO).

16 November 2014 Sue Ryder working day, in memory of Steve Tomalin.

As a way of saying thankyou to the Sue Ryder organisation for the care that they had provided for Steve, GCRG volunteered its services to try and help out in some way. Consequently, early on Sunday 16th November, approximately 20 GCRG members turned up at the Sue Ryder Hospice at Leckhampton (Cheltenham) and set about working to help tidy up some of the woodland within the extensive grounds of the property. A very productive day was had by all and the local paper (Gloucestershire Echo) even took a few photos and produced a short newspaper article.



Photo: Paul Taylor



Photo: Paul Taylor

2015

1 March 2015 [Training] Wigpool.

7 (& 28) March 2015 Emmer Green chalk mine, GCRG members involved in the training of the local Scouts and Leaders.

BRITISH CAVE RESCUE COUNCIL CONFERENCE and GCRG 50th ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND

12th-14th June 2015

The BCRC weekend was organised jointly by GCRG & MCRO and held at the Dean Field Studies Centre (Parkend) and Clearwell Caves.

The last time a national Cave Rescue conference was held in the county (and hosted by GCRG) was back in 1968 , taking place at the Berkeley Hotel, Cheltenham on 28th September. At this point in time the GCRG was only officially 3 years old and to take on the organisation of such an event would have been no simple matter.

Fast forward now 47 years to 2015 and the (BCRC) conference was back again and this time held in the Forest of Dean at the Dean Field Studies Centre (DFSC), Parkend.

The organisers would have been happy if just 50-60 people attended but in the end between 150 & 160 eventually attended. It got to the point that eventually the books had to be closed for bookings ... not something that we are aware has been necessary for a BCRC conference before.

From within the attendees, 13 out of the 15 UK cave rescue teams were represented and cave rescue representatives from Tunisia, Hungary, Poland and Canada were also present.

On the Saturday during the day there were displays and presentations of a wide variety of cave rescue-related equipment and techniques. On the Saturday evening, a special event had been arranged at the Clearwell Caves to officially celebrate the 50th anniversary of founding of the GCRG. The event, in BBQ churn, consisted of a meal, live music and a wonderful donation to GCRG of £5000 by Rose and Paul Taylor. It was the generous donation by Rose and Paul that enabled GCRG to buy the CaveLink messaging system, complete the depot's equipment washing and drying rooms. and provide additional funds for other equipment purchases. Following the Clearwell event, the coaches took everyone back to the DFSC where the celebrations continued into the early hours.

Photos from the weekend

Parkend and the accommodation



Photo: Jon Maisey



Photo: Jon Maisey

On the Sunday there was an underground exercise, held in Old Ham and attended by approximately 80 people.

Bill Whitehouse (Chairman of BCRC) said afterwards that the event was one of the best, if not the best. That he had been involved with.

Activities, displays and presentations at the Dean Field Study Centre



Photo: Jon Maisey



Photo: Nicky Bayley



Photo: Nicky Bayley



Photo: Nicky Bayley

Display showing the changes in caving/cave rescue equipment over the last 50 years



Photo: Jon Maisey



Photo: Jon Maisey

Display showing the changes in caving/cave rescue equipment over the last 50 years



Photo: Jon Maisey



Photo: Jon Maisey

GCRG 50th Anniversary event at Clearwell Caves

13th June 2015



Photo: Andy Harp



Photo: Nicky Bayley



Photo: Nicky Bayley



Photo: Andy Harp



Photo: Andy Harp



Photo: Andy Harp



Photo: Andy Harp



Live band at the anniversary event

Photo: Nicky Bayley

JULY 15, 2015 11

Donations to the Cinderford based Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Team

Cave rescue teams flock to Clearwell

CAVE rescue teams from around the world including Canada, Hungary and Tunisia travelled to Clearwell Caves for the British Cave Rescue Council annual conference. During the weekend the host group, the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, was presented with a cheque for £5,000 by the chairman Paul Taylor and his wife Rose.

Mr Taylor explained: "I was planning to leave the group this amount of money in my will but, after having a heart attack last year, I decided to give it now so that I am here to see the benefit of it.

The money will go to buy a Rock Text Messaging Communications device which allows underground rescue teams to communicate with colleagues on the surface.

PRESENTATION: Paul and Rose Taylor hand over £5,000 to the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Team.

Jointly organised by members of Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group & Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation, the conference was based at the Dean Field Studies Centre at Parkend and on the Sunday around 100 people attended an underground training exercise at Old Ham Iron Mine Clearwell. It was the first time the conference has visited Gloucestershire for 47 years.

Sunday morning exercise at Clearwell Caves

14th June 2015



Photo: Jon Maisey



Photo: Andy Harp



Cave Link unit

Photo: Paul Taylor



Photo: Andy Harp

4 July 2015 Steve Tomalin's Auction at the GCRG depot.

COMMITTEE POSITIONS, 1965-2015**Chairman**

Derek Appleing	1965-1966
----------------	-----------

Prior to 1971/72 there was no fixed GCRG Chairman, just guest Chairmen (Derek Appleing, Tony Day, Gordon Clissold [SWCRO], Oliver Lloyd [Mendip Cave Rescue]) for the AGM.

Gordon Clissold	1971-1972
-----------------	-----------

Ian Standing	1972-1974
--------------	-----------

John Court	1974-1975
------------	-----------

Doug McLean	1977-1978
-------------	-----------

Paul Taylor	1978-1982, 2002-2015
-------------	----------------------

Roger Gosling	1984-1987
---------------	-----------

Jim Hay	1987-1988
---------	-----------

Jim Hay/Paul Taylor	1988-1989
---------------------	-----------

George Price	1989-1991
--------------	-----------

Steve Tomalin	1991-1995
---------------	-----------

Nick Negus/John Berry	1995-1996
-----------------------	-----------

John Berry	1996-1997
------------	-----------

Sally Harvey	1997-1999
--------------	-----------

Dave Appleing	1999-2002
---------------	-----------

Secretary

Tony Day	1965-1966
----------	-----------

Derek Appleing	1966-1973
----------------	-----------

Jim Hay	1972-1973
---------	-----------

Di Court	1973-1974
----------	-----------

Ian Standing	1974-1975
--------------	-----------

Paul Taylor	1975-1978
-------------	-----------

Sally Fearn/Harvey	1978-1980
--------------------	-----------

Pete Male	1984-1987
-----------	-----------

Christine Hutchinson	1987-1994
----------------------	-----------

Roger Gosling	1994-1995
---------------	-----------

Niki Adlam	1995-1996
------------	-----------

Judy Moore	1996-2000
------------	-----------

Pete Turier	2000-2015
-------------	-----------

Treasurer

Les Sherratt	1965-1966
--------------	-----------

R Stewart	1965-1966
-----------	-----------

Jim Hay	1966-1970
---------	-----------

Laurie Gage	1970-1971
-------------	-----------

Colin Anderson	1971-1973
----------------	-----------

Tony Day	1972-1973
----------	-----------

John Court	1973-1974
------------	-----------

Doug McLean	1974-1975
-------------	-----------

Phil Schwartz	1975-1988
---------------	-----------

Roger Gosling	1988-1994
---------------	-----------

Tim Gilson	1994-2008
------------	-----------

Information Officer

Tony Day	1966-1971
----------	-----------

John Court	1970-1973
------------	-----------

Ian Standing	1971-1973
--------------	-----------

Roger Solari	1973-1974
--------------	-----------

John Berry	1974-1978
------------	-----------

Anthony (Chalkie) White	1978-1980
-------------------------	-----------

Rose Taylor	1985-1987
-------------	-----------

Pete Male	1987-1988
-----------	-----------

Steve Tomalin	1988-1992
---------------	-----------

Dave Appleing	1991-1997
---------------	-----------

John Berry	1997-2002
------------	-----------

COMMITTEE POSITIONS, 1965-2015**Treasurer (cont'd)**

Tim Gilson/Liz Maisey	2008-2009
Liz Maisey	2009-2015

Information Officer (cont'd)

Gareth Jones	2002-2015
--------------	-----------

Training Coordinator

Roger Smith	1968
Maurice Febry	1968-1969
Ladi Broadman	1993-1998
Steve Tomalin	2001-2003
Steve Tomalin/Nicky Bayley	2006-2008
Andy Harp	2009-2012
Dave Appleing/Ian Healey	2012-2014
Ian Healey	2014-2015

Tackle/Equipment Officer

Lawrence Bailey	1966-1971
Malcolm Sterry	1970-1973
Cliff Seymour	1972-1973
R Stewart	1973-1975
Maurice Febry	1975-1979
Steve Tomalin/Claire Bishop	1985-1987
Paul Taylor	1987-1994, 1997-2001
Sally Harvey	1994-1997
Ed Williams	2002-2010
Nicky Bayley/Steve Tomalin	2010-2012
Nicky Bayley	2012-2015

Medical Officer/Advisor

Nigel Mizrahi	1986-1991
Ian Gadsby	1992-1996
Nigel Garbutt	1997-1998
Andy Harp	2007-2015

Liaison Officer

Dave Jackson	1997-1998
--------------	-----------

Librarian/Archivist

Steve Tomalin	1996-2001
---------------	-----------

Newsletter Editor

Roger Gosling	1986-1989
Chris Hutchinson	1989-1993
Paul Taylor	1992-1993
Dave Appleing	1995-1996
Sally Harvey	1999-2001
Jon Maisey	2012-2015

Communications Officer

Nick Negus	1986-1995
Nick Negus/Matthew Bell	1995-1996
Paul Biggin	1996-1999
Craig Cameron	1999-2015

COMMITTEE POSITIONS, 1965-2015**Ordinary Members**

Tony Isles	1965-1966	Mike Cox	1994-1995
R Stewart	1965-1967	Arthur Venning	1989-1993
E Lewis	1965-1967	Dave Tuffley	1989-1992
Roger Bailey	1965-1970	Joe Duxbury	1995-1996
John Court	1971-1973, 1976-1977	Andy Solari	1970-1971
Di Court	1972-1975	Sally Fearn	1977-1978
J Sanders	1975-1977	Nigel Mizrahi	1977-1979
S Clark	1975-1976	A Thomas	1978-1979
Colin Graham	1968-1974	Paul Taylor	1985-1987, 1997-1998
Tony Day	1970-1973	Alison Schwartz	1985-1987
Dave Appleing	1988-1991, 1997-1999, 2002-2003, 2006-2015	John Berry	1986-1998, 2002-2003
George Price	1987-1989	Gary Dudgeon	1999-2000
Ron Cowley	1987-1988	Mike May	2002-2003
Paul Stretfield	1987-1988	Ed Williams	2002-2003
John Sibley	1992-1993	Jon Maisey	2006-2012
Cliff Seymour	1991-1995	John Elliott	1969-1971, 1973-1974, 1997-1998
Dave Jackson	1995-1996	Elise Jones	1998-1999
Dave Dickson	1995-1996	Nicky Bayley	2006-2007
Maurice Febry	1968-1969, 1974-1975, 1997-1998	Rachel Brown	2014-2015
Steve Tomalin	1995-2014	Kevin Brockway	2011-2015

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR PROVIDING INPUT TO THIS PUBLICATION

In addition to those people who provided photos for use (and are already credited), thanks also goes to the following for input to the publication or donations of information/records.

Derek Appleing
John Hine
Tony Day
Gloucester Speleological Society

Craig Cameron
Nicky Bayley
Paul Taylor