

# CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 52 No. 2 February 2010



**Don't be  
Afraid of  
the Dark**

**Coleman's  
Cartoons**

**Springfield  
Rising**

# Chelsea Spelæological Society NEWSLETTER

Volume 52 No 2 February 2010

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Chocolate Fingers, 5th breakthrough, Frog Street, Daren Cilau.

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Cover Photo:  
John Volanthen

**Wookey Hole**

Photo: Gavin Newman (taken for  
the Wookey Hole book due out  
in April).

Photos in the Newsletter that are  
not credited have been taken by  
the Editor.

## Membership

CSS Subs were due in October.

Please send all subscriptions to:  
Peter Ward, 33 Gertrude Street, Abercynon,  
Mountain Ash CF45 4RL

Current rates are:

**Full** £30

**Joint** £43

**Associate** £20

**Provisional** £20 (for six months).

Provisional members made into Full members  
this year have to pay the Full member rate.

These rates include non-caving insurance.

Any member that has **BCA Insurance** via  
another club can deduct **£5** from the above  
rates but please let Petre Ward know their **BCA  
Insurance Number** and **Club**

**Caving Insurance for 2010** £11

Come the end of December 2009 any lapsing  
member will receive their last newsletter.

## Membership Cards

If you wish to have your photo on your Membership  
Card please send a JPEG to Peter Ward:  
**speleo@hotmail.co.uk**

# Editorial

Thanks for all the contributions, please keep them coming . . .



**Mark Lumley**

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## Membership

Welcome to new provisional members:

### **Claire Price**

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**Please send all material (ideally in blocks of less than 10 megabyte) to:**

**mark@creativeedge.me.uk**

**or put on CD (readable on all platforms as I'll be working on a Mac) and post to:**

**Mark Lumley**

**The Creative Edge**

**7 Langleys Lane**

**Clapton**

**Radstock**

**Somerset BA3 4DX**

**Send text for your article as .doc or similar, or simply send it as an email.**

**Convert photos, surveys and other images to decent-sized .jpeg, .tif, .psd or .eps files.**

# Reminiscences - Steve Allen

**by Brian Gibbons**

I well remember meeting and caving with Steve Allen. I didn't know him very well, but he seemed to have had many friends. Sipping a cup of tea, or drinking a beer seemed just as easy to him as going for a long trip into Daren on a digging trip. But I will always remember him for one incident.

We were sitting enjoying a cup of tea just before I left to drive back to Essex one evening. He had to wait until the following day to be able to get back to Cardiff by bus and train. When I left, I had to stop for a fire engine, the Police and another fire rescue truck to pass me on the tram road. I found out two days later that I had just missed out on the rescue of some people in 'Busman's Holiday', when my sister at last got hold of me, to confirm that it wasn't me trapped underground! Steve was there however, involved in the rescue! From what I heard later it was he who had carried in the car jack, that lifted the fallen boulder, that had trapped the people involved. I know he was glad to help out.

He also enjoyed the many Daren digging trips, and the breakthroughs he was involved in. Carrying gear with the people involved in the filming in Daren, and many other things as well.

He loved caving, and loved to enjoy life, it was that simple. He had the grit to take the hard things he enjoyed, with a smile.

Well now he's gone. He really did take a 'final flight'. Only it seems the earth wanted to claim him, or some higher power!

So from me to you Steve, wherever you are, good hunting.

Oh and keep the kettle boiling! I'll catch up with you another day!

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## Tim Morgan's Stag Night

Most of you should know by now that I'm getting married in April.

Paul, my best man, is planning a stag weekend on 20/21 March, based at Whitewalls.

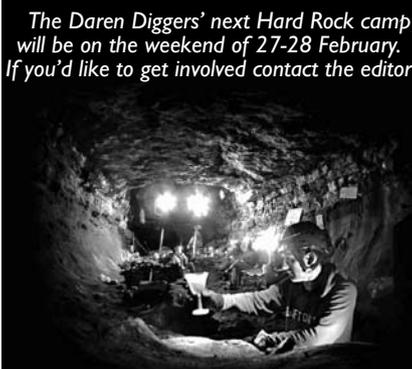
If you'd like to join in the fun you'll be most welcome.

Contact Paul Fellows [paul@pfellows.co.uk](mailto:paul@pfellows.co.uk)



**The Daren Diggers**

The Daren Diggers' next Hard Rock camp will be on the weekend of 27-28 February. If you'd like to get involved contact the editor



Cocktails at Hard Rock.  
Photo: Steve Sharp.

Extract from Wikipedia:

## Rant

*A rant or harangue is a speech or text that does not present a well-researched and calm argument; rather, it is typically an attack on an idea, a person or an institution, and very often lacks proven claims. Such attacks are usually personal attacks. Compare with a dialectic.*

*In some cases, rants can be based on partial fact, or may be entirely factual but written in a comedic/satirical form . . .*

*Rants can also be used in the defense of an individual, idea or organization. Rants of this type generally occur after the subject has been attacked by another individual or group.*

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF A RANT

*In D. Watt's pulp novel "Swoosh", a crewman aboard the privateer ship Great White Hope uses emotive language to question Cap'n Inamonly's plan for a raid. The insulted and angry Cap'n returns forcefully with a personal attack on the crewman's manliness, henceforth known as The Cap'n's Rant:*

**"Do we have a sashaying pirate on board, a fanciful folly of a fiend? Do ye keelhaul scurvy dogs or do ye serenade them from the crow's nest? Do ye shake ye cutlass and howl at the moon or do ye shake ye head and faint oh so sweetly at the sight of unkempt hairy men?"**

# Pottering About on Mendip

by  
**John Cooper**

## Charterhouse Cave Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

John Cooper, Alison Moody Jude Vanderplank and Jake (BEC) on a trip to the 2008 extensions. Only spent ½ hour digging at the Sand Dig as AM had to get out early.

## Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2010.

John Cooper, Pete Hann, Alison Moody and Pete Moody. More digging at the Sand Dig. It appears to have turned right, which I think is the correct direction for the shortest route to where we want to go. 5 hours.

## Sidcot Swallet. Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

John Cooper, Pete Hann and Alison Moody on a digging trip in Purgatory Series. 3 hours.

## Withyhill Cave Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver joined Duncan Price on a survey trip. DP thinks he's now finished the survey.

# Don't be Afraid of the Dark!

by Duncan Price

Many readers will have seen or already be using the modern generation of LED caving lights such as the Scurion, StenLight or Viper. These are horrendously expensive. Other cavers are using more homebuilt light conversions such as the BiSun or Stuart France's LED arrays. These are more attractive in terms of price but how about a simple LED conversion that only costs £7.82?

My own adventures with LED lighting started back in 2001 with the purchase of 24 matched Nichia 3.6 V white LEDs from Stuart France (total cost well over £40). I arranged the LED's on a circle of printed circuit board in a massively parallel configuration and simply powered it directly from three NiMH cells with an output of 3.6 V. This worked very nicely despite the absence of a control circuit (or even a dropping resistor). White LED's are actually blue LED's with a phosphor which re-radiates some of the blue light as yellow and the combination appears white. There is a very interesting article on white LED's at: <http://spectrum.ieee.org/semiconductors/optoelectronics/the-leds-dark-secret/1> - I have a financial interest in LED's as my employer makes equipment used in the semiconductor industry (so I would urge you all to buy more consumer electronics to keep my pay packet healthy). With improvements in LED technology, I have built new light sets with fewer and more powerful LED's (from [ultraleds.co.uk](http://ultraleds.co.uk)) again mounted on a 2" diameter disc of PCB which my tame machinist kindly turned down for me.

All of this soldering was a bit of a pain and I was surprised one evening when Gonzo showed me an array of LED's which he'd taken from a torch and just dropped into an Oldham head set. The problem was that although the LED's were a perfect fit - they didn't work. A bit of testing in the pub with what wiring we could muster showed that the polarity was

wrong and the LED's were in two discrete banks.

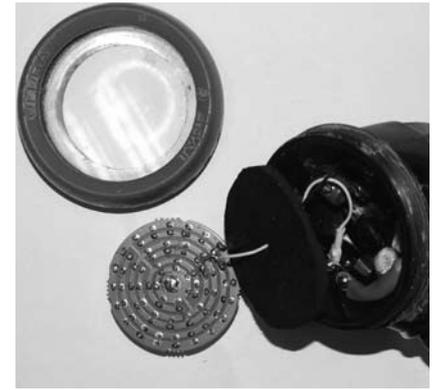


I took the headset away for some surgery. A little investigation showed that the two banks of LED's were in parallel and it only required a jumper wire to run both together (there being no advantage in making them discretely switchable as I had discovered from my own lighting builds). I fixed the light and Gonzo took it down Daren Cilau for a test drive. This didn't work out too well as a wire came undone but Gonzo fixed it and the light did a weekend camp. I was rewarded by the donation of another LED set from the same type of torch and after replacing a couple duff LED's I had my own light.



In fact I've been so impressed by this approach that I've gone out and bought more of the same torches (from [www.sourcing4u.co.uk](http://www.sourcing4u.co.uk) - look for the 41/21 super LED torch) - they are very good for general use and also cave photography (which is what Gonzo bought them for). The switch can be a little delicate so when one

failed I simply ripped the business end out and made up another caving light.



The entire process is fairly painless - simply unscrew the bezel of the torch and pull out the LED's. Cut the wires to the switch leaving a long tail to connect to the Oldham headset. Unsolder the black wire and connect it to the outside rim (this normally makes contact with the negatively polarised metal body of the torch). Put an insulated jumper wire across the second and fourth outermost tracks (the former is the one with the white wire on it, the latter is the one from which the black wire came). The white wire is now the positive lead. Connect them up to your headset (to observe the correct polarity, the switch on the Oldham controls the negative supply) and wire in a battery pack. Three AA cells in parallel work a treat - don't use four despite the fact that the donor torch uses four AAA's as you'll burn the LED's out in short measure. A bit of neoprene foam can be used to pad out the headset and I cut down an Oldham reflector to fit or you can just leave the existing reflector on the torch.



Photos: Duncan Price

# Coleman's Cartoons

by Tony Boycott

Jack Coleman was the doyen of Irish caving, and for a while probably the only Irish caver. He was founder and President of the Speleological Society of Ireland which later morphed into the current SUI (Speleological Union of Ireland). He was born in Cork in 1914, started caving in 1933 with knotted rope & candles, and carried out a survey of Poulmagollum in the 1940's with N J Dunnington.

This survey was one of the main reasons the UBSS [University of Bristol Speleological Society] became interested in North-west Clare after the war, and he facilitated many of the early trips, and became an Honorary Member of the UBSS.

In 1965 he published "The Caves of Ireland" which still

remains a useful source of information on several of Ireland's caving areas, and also instigated the publication of Irish Speleology, which continues, albeit sporadically, to this day.

I met him briefly on my first trip to Clare in 1970, and remember (well partially anyway) a drunken evening being introduced to IRA songs in the lounge bar of Keane's Hotel in Lisdoonvarna.

He was tragically killed in a car crash in April 1971.

The cartoons were drawn in 1969. I am not sure how widely they were distributed, but there is a copy on good quality paper, folded into an 8 page booklet, in the UBSS library, and I recently found another copy in a second hand copy of Caves of North-west Clare.





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## A WARNING

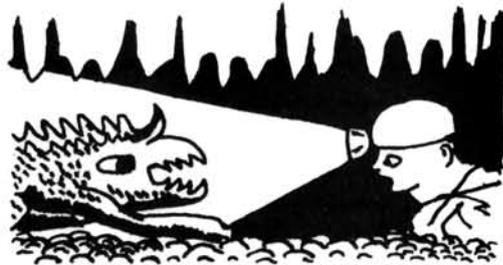
Addressed to the  
Nobility and Gentry  
of the Kingdoms  
of Britain and of  
Ireland

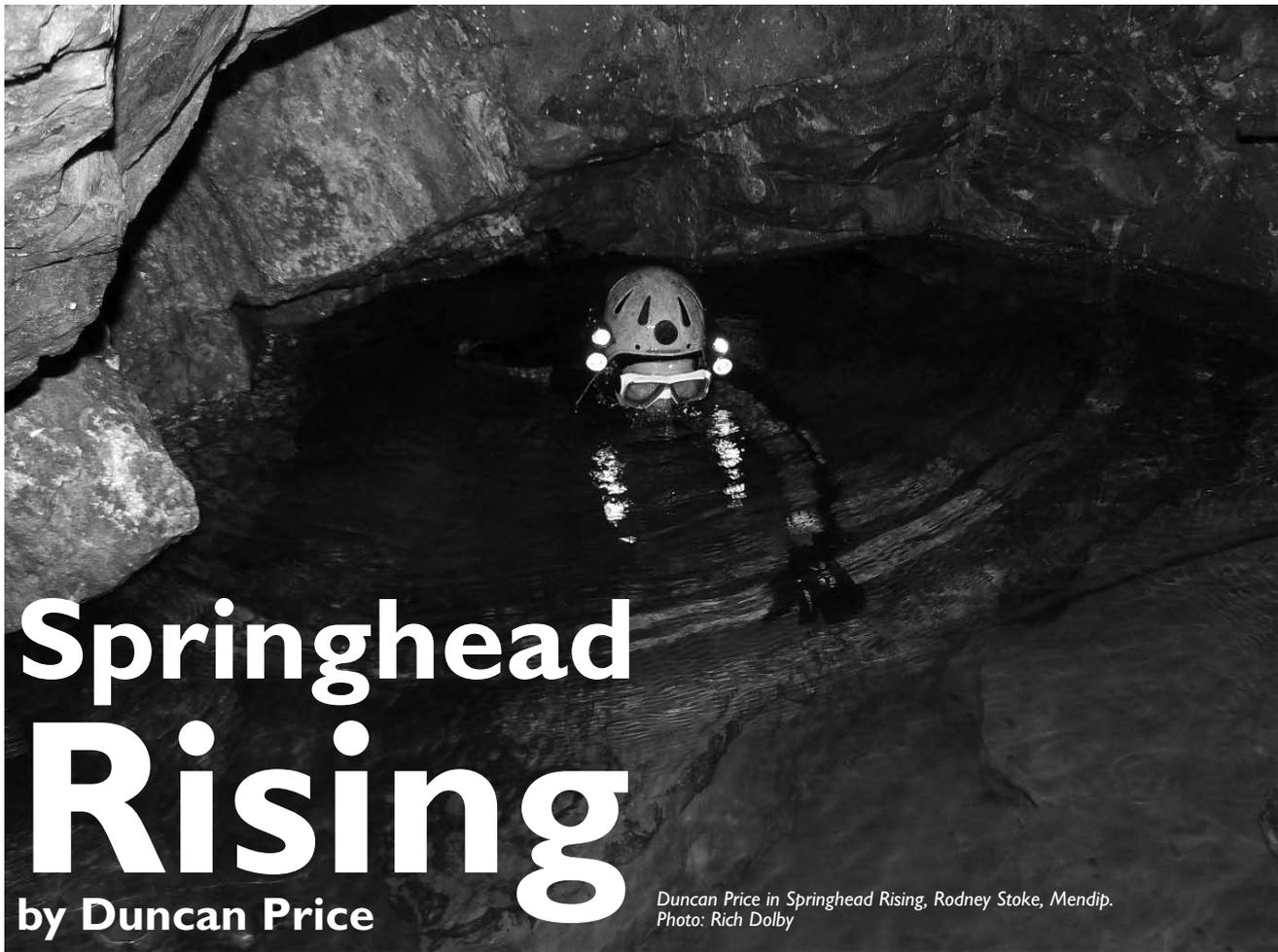
Presenting them with a  
**TRUE PICTURE**  
of the Perils that may befall  
their sons and daughters  
who enter into caverns

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**D U B L I N**

*Printed for Johann Coleman at  
the sign of the Stag's Head  
M C M L X I X*





# Springhead Rising

by Duncan Price

Duncan Price in Springhead Rising, Rodney Stoke, Mendip.  
Photo: Rich Dolby

*A local bloke from Rodney Stoke  
More fond of beer than labour  
Was recommended by a friend  
To go and be a caver  
He said "Your thirst is not the thirst  
Of such capacity  
I know a crowd who'll do you proud  
Go join the BEC"*

and so goes the song...

However, this is not about the BEC but about the little known resurgence in the village of Rodney Stoke, situated on the southern flank of the Mendips approximately halfway between the major risings at Cheddar and Wookey Hole. Proven feeders are Brimble Pit, Easter Hole, Hillgrove Swallet and Wheel Pit - all but the last and first feed other risings including Wookey Hole. The flow varies considerably, failing completely in drought suggesting that its output is being captured by Honeyhurst, Rowpits or Cheddar Springs. Thus the drainage feeding this site apparently has tenuous links with Cheddar and Wookey Hole as well as numerous swallets feeding from the Mendip plateau.

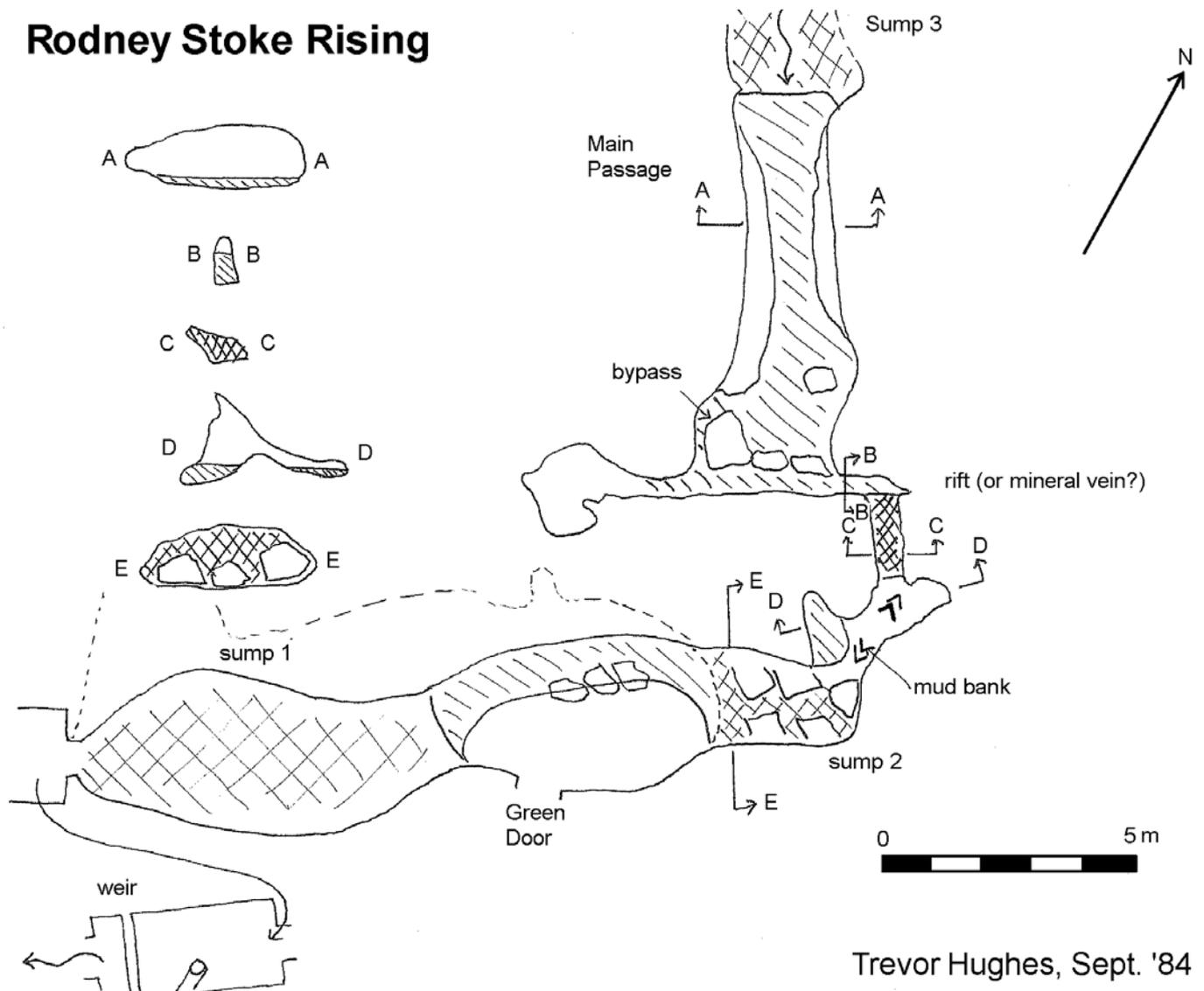
The first recorded exploration took place in April 1960 by members of the CDG to reach "impassible fissures" or "boulders" in the reports by the late Mike Thompson. Visits took place under the watchful eye of the water authorities who insisted that the divers disinfected all their equipment before entering the water. Probes with a stick containing exposed wire electrodes on the end showed that airspace could be found – when the contacts were underwater a voltmeter attached to a battery across the terminals showed a reading, but when the electrodes were in air it did not.

Dives with breathing apparatus by John Buxton, Ken Dawe and Thompson connected the resurgence with an artificial chamber that had been dug into the rising accessed down steps and through a green door. The continuation upstream was tight and full of boulders. Surreptitious visits by Trevor Hughes and others in 1982-83 (often undercover of darkness) attacked this blockage with crowbars, jacks and winches to make a way on but it was not until 9th September 1984 that official access was arranged and a pump brought into play to reduce the water level so that the cave could be explored dry.

Trevor wrote in CDG N/L 76:

*After a six week period of zero flow the risng had just*

# Rodney Stoke Rising



started to issue water after heavy rain, the measured flow being 0.12 l/sec. In company with PH (Paul Hodge, Bristol Waterworks), the party inspected the concrete block-house that now comprises the actual resurgence and the artificial chamber blasted open in 1902, when the rising was first utilised.

A petrol driven, 5.62 l/sec pump was set up in the dry stream bed, taking suction from the resurgence pool and discharging downstream. Pumping was started at 10:30 am and produced an immediate fall in water level. RJC(Bob Cork) was able to pass the supposedly impenetrable beddings after a drop in water level of about 0.1 m.

A small chamber of inverted V shape was found, the way on being a small sump choked with stones. By half-past twelve, a further 0.2 m drop in water level allowed TGH to remove the blockage and squeeze through the constricted and razor-sharp passage. After 2 m a cross rift half filled with water met at right angles proved easier going. A squeeze behind a large boulder led back into the main conduit 1.5-2 m wide and about 0.8 m high. After 9 m the passage sumped again, although an airspace could be felt after 1.5 m. Boulders blocked this sump and will have to be moved to allow further progress.

As the pump was losing suction, due to the hose being too short, we ceased our operations at this

point. As the resurgence was flowing this was the last attempt possible for 1984. Plans are to start pumping again in late July 1985, depending on the weather. Using a longer suction hose a further 0.3 m drop in water level could be achieved. Sump 3 will then go.

His sketch survey is included here.

No further work was carried out and it was not until July 2004 that Rich Dolby (following lengthy research and sporadic negotiation) obtained permission (and a key) from Bristol Water. Reports of his work which did not sadly extend the cave appear in the Somerset Sump Index and it was during research for this work that Rich and I made contact as the site had come to my attention as being one of the last major resurgences on Mendip that might yield to diving. All went quiet for over a year until late 2009 when Rich and I again got in contact and he indicated that he was unlikely to be able to restart work here and needed to pay a visit to retrieve his gear. Given the opportunity to see the place for myself I couldn't pass it up!



*Duncan Price in Springhead Rising, Rodney Stoke, Mendip.  
Photo: Rich Dolby*

We met at midday on the 12th December (12:00 on 12/12/2009!) on the bend in Scadden's Lane in Rodney Stoke where I changed into a wetsuit and walked up to the resurgence with Rich. The site is in a lovely setting, nestling in a valley backing onto woodland. Rich had just been up to the entrance and unlocked the Green Door. I stepped into this and was amazed by the clarity of the water. Wearing a single cylinder I dived upstream into Sump 2 and followed the constricted passage to airspace after a short dive of 4 m or so. In normal water levels this can be reached by free-diving. There is no dive line in this and the clarity of the water and size of the route means you don't need one. Turning around, I tried to reverse into the ongoing passage but it was just too snug for me. Maybe if it was dry then one could force it.

Rejoining rich, I passed his digging gear to him from its storage place above the sump pool before taking a plunge in the downstream sump (Sump 1). This is a low, wide bedding which discharges through a bricked-up arch into a manhole. Although there was a considerable current it was not difficult to return upstream to Rich and I tried to inspect the beddings off to stream right when there might

be possible underwater leads. Highly enthused by what I consider to be the best visibility in any sump on Mendip we went to the pub to recover.

Access to the site is sensitive as recent approaches to Bristol Water have not met with a favourable response. Our visit in December was purely to recover gear so that the key could be returned. Perhaps talking to the "right person" will be able to regularise matters but until then the site remains a tantalising lead.



# Dad's digging

by Ragy Lieky



Dad? Why do we have to be so quiet about this? I asked in a near whisper, as if there was some remote chance that somebody might hear us. He raised his head as much as he could, turned it slightly, to glare at me from under his armpit. His response was a deafening silence. Purposefully he reached into his over suit pocket and took out a steaming handkerchief, squeezed it a little and wiped the drip that had formed on the tip of his nose. No matter how hard he was working, I never saw him without that drip. His prominent nose hair was doing him no favours either on this score, keeping it all together as it were. "Pull" he grunted. I pulled the drag tray, tipped and scrapped it. Without a seconds lapse the tray would be weaving its way into his confined tube, his ever-extending coffin. I had what seemed like an eternity, to pack the spoil away and to muse over my thoughts.

It was four years and seven months since my mother had passed away. In my mind Dad had

still not dealt with the loss. It had been a strange relationship, no stranger than my own relationship with him now. He had worked in the same factory since he was a boy producing industrial paints, 7am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday. Holidays seemed to agitate him. A break from routine was always a negative thing. He worked to provide for his family. That was his one commitment in this life. In return, he expected to cave all weekend, every weekend and he expected us to keep out of his way. It was a simple life, and it worked for him. Growing up with it, we knew no different. On a Friday evening, Mum would pack his food box for the weekend. His ammo box would be left on the draining board from the night before, with just enough space for his small food. After dinner he would load up the car, kiss Mum on the cheek and leave. It was always the same, never changed. He never spoke of his weekends, his caving, which is hardly surprising; he didn't speak much in any case. Matthew and I were twins. It was assumed that because of this we should both share common interests. We were 15 years old when Dad took us on our first caving trip. I can't for the life of me remember where it was now. I do remember that I was very surprised, and felt really privileged that he was taking me away with him. I had expected him to take Matthew one day, but not me. I had never been curious about Dad's other life until then. After an hours drive in the blue Ford Cortina, we arrived at a cottage, I now know as "Whitewalls". It was a bleak place nestled into a

beautiful hillside. The inside of the building was just as cold as the outside. The people there were warm and welcoming. It would seem that Dad had some friends! I was shocked. The concept of my father involving himself in mild conversation with other people was so alien. He was not the life and soul, but he seemed almost comfortable.

Two ladies there, Hillary and Mavis made a big fuss out of Matthew and I. They were just like long lost Aunties. It was great seeing Mathew's face; it was a picture of disgust. The cool confident Mathew was visibly uncomfortable with the level of head patting and cheek pinching. I think if it were not for the 40 mile hike in the soft rain, he would have walked home and dealt with the wrath of Dad on Sunday evening. The things you remember!... That was 28 years ago. At 69 I felt that Dad should have given up caving years ago. Technically he had, as his obsession with the Llangattock hillside was beyond a healthy interest in caving. Now that he had retired, he had nothing in his life, so he spent his time under Llangattock. Having no family of my own, I decided to rekindle the only link I had with my dad. I could not keep an eye on him in the ordinary sense, as a daughter or son would do. So I had accepted that I would have to dig with him.

The interest at the known end of Trident had diminished about 2 decades ago, but we were there at the same dig, week in week out, Monday, and Thursday evenings. We had made about 130M of

progress, but considering the hours and regularity of our visits it didn't seem like a lot to me. 80% of it was just mind numbing toil. The general direction, the continuation of the sand and Dads gut feeling was the only positive thing about our mission. The draught was long since gone, but the air never got bad. The spoil removed from each length of tube that was mouse holed seemed to be equal in volume to the stacking space in the last chamber. Understand that the term chamber is used very loosely in any part of Trident. This had the effect of one stupidly long tube with one or two passing places. The monotony of all this, sapped any enjoyment I had in digging. It was purely the love of my dad that kept me there, and the guilt I felt every time I wanted to pack it all in. Seeing the cracking in his face, which was really a smile trying to blossom, each time he scribbled a little more on his survey, was enough to make me continue with it. Dad no longer associated with anybody from the club. I never asked why. I am sure it may have something to do with the secrecy of his dig, his stubbornness and the fact that he would never use the logbook at the entrance. Not having a key for the gate had never been an issue, I could even pop the latch now. Dad must have had lost any respect from fellow cavers by now. If we did find some passage, I mean a real break through into the sacred blank area. Would Dad ever tell anybody? Would anybody really care? If we never came back would anybody care? It was a bit suicidal really, nobody, absolutely nobody had any idea where we were. The car was parked in the Daren car park and we had no callout system. I spoke of my feelings on this many times, an always got the same response "If you don't want to come, don't waste my time" Times like this I felt he had forgotten his reasons

for digging. Would he take all this information with him to his grave? I had a dilemma. I wanted him to stop chasing the ghost. How do I stop a stubborn man? Real old school, never listen to a woman's advice in his life. To coax him was proving futile. Maybe he already knew that he might never find what he was looking for, but kept going. To save face? From who? Was his plan to keep going until his the pain of his arthritis-ridden joints made it physically impossible to continue? Or did he want to truly dedicate his life to the dig. That thought made me shudder. I had to make some decision for my own sanity. This kept me awake at night. To pack this game in would mean that I would loose nearly all contact with him, it was the only channel of conversation we had. I looked at this from every angle, and projected every conceivable argument that he could use. I am not the confrontational sort, so the thought of starting this made me feel so sick. The easy option would be, not to turn up for digging. But he would never contact me to ask why, and just continue on his own.

In my mind the chain of events was planned. I would suffer the self-punishment for a few weeks and express my despondency more and more. Try to elaborate on our lack of real progress and the effects of alienisation. It was going to be painful and all end in tears, probably mine. Our next evenings digging resulted in an ongoing airspace, which was draughting. It was unlike anything I had experienced previously. This was just my luck the day I try to instill negativity is the day we have the biggest chunk of hope land at our feet.

Oh how emotions can change so dramatically in the gloom of the sensory depravation. All my plans were fading to the back of

my mind, replaced with anxious anticipation. The spoil had started to change from the sand to gravel and shattered shale. There was now the odd small bolder imbedded in this mix, it was so much work to remove these boulders, as our stacking space was depleting dramatically. Even displacing the softer gravel and shale to bury the bolder was proving impossible. It was frustrating that the new success of the dig was choking itself. It took 3 evenings to break up and remove one bolder to a position over 70 yards back from the face, truly this was the nearest place we had to stack anything of any size. This was madness. Inside I was screaming. "We need help with this we cannot manage by ourselves" it was on the tip of my tongue for about 2 hours sprung loaded like a mousetrap. Then I let it out. The words hung in the silence like a bad smell, and that smell lingered for 15 minutes. It was like Dad was letting me think about what I had said and was waiting for some sort of justification, retraction or apology. Finally a positive grunt drifted back with the draft, nothing more, just a grunt. It was defiantly a positive grunt. I kept my head down to hide my face in case he would catch a glimpse of my elation. The trip out and the journey home gave me time to nurture the seed of necessity that we needed help. "Their all gone now, all the good ones" He mumbled in a tortured tone, like a forced answer, almost begging me not to speak anymore. I had to guess what he meant. I had to respect the pain in his voice and take a step back. So I spent the remainder of the drive home wondering what he was thinking.

He had turned away from me slightly as he stared out of the passenger window. He was very upset, his mind was working on many different levels of

complexity, I had no hope of second guessing where he was at. Approaching home the glow of the streetlight occasionally lit his reflection in the glass. I am sure I didn't imagine it but I saw a tear on the stony reflection. It was discreetly wiped away as I pulled up to let him out. He got his kit from the boot, mumbled goodnight and walked off. I drove off wishing I had not said anything, and just let him realise these things for himself. I was beating myself up now.

The evening before our next trip, I called to see him. I needed to know what he was thinking. It felt like he was ready to talk, he had time to rehearse what he wanted to say.

He was the last man standing of his generation. All the people he would have shared his potential or finds with, had either passed away or had hung up their kneepads or were physically unable to help in any way. The club was full of cavers who were just there for the faffing little trips and the drink in the evenings. There was no way he was going to lower himself to ask their help. This was a monumental turn around in attitude. I felt so relieved that this madness might end, sad that he was feeling so low and emotionally battered, and guilty that this was everything I has wished for. The next night we made another visit to our dig, nothing was mentioned about our chat the night before or the state of the dig. 30 minutes later another bolder appeared through the sand gravel, this was like a complete wall, completely blocking the way. This was larger than the two of us. This needed lots and lots of chemical adjustment. The sand the gravel, and the shale anything remotely diggable was effectively gone. One fist size notch filled with muddy gravel. That's all that was left; this notch was cleared out more as final exercise than

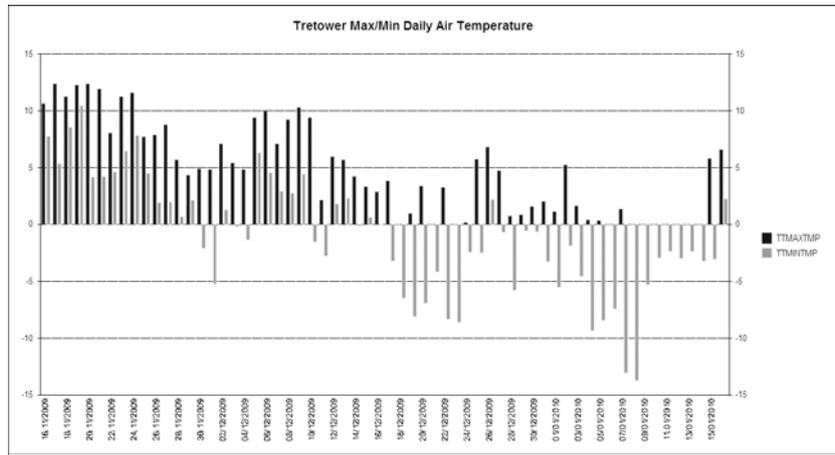
anything else. Dad reversed out of his position and clambered past me. I took this to mean that I needed to look.

The arm-sized tube had the draft, it also had space behind. Real space. I'm sure he did exactly what I did and dropped a pebble at arms length to hear the long multiple bounces and what could be a splash. A euphoric moment yes, but just for a moment. Knowing that the end of our journey had a bank vault door with our prize behind it. No possible way to open it. The anger, the disbelief, the helplessness. I turned to vent this to dad, but he had gone. He had not stopped when he passed me. He had given up. I turned my back on the dig and headed out. I came out slowly. Dad needed time on his own to let out what he must be feeling. To absorb that the goal of his years of toil had been realised yet it meant nothing. A life's battle fought hard and lost. Leaving effectively an open lead. To hand it out to almost strangers who he despised, who also had the supplies and the know how to use them etc. It was sickening beyond words. That was the last time either of us ventured underground.

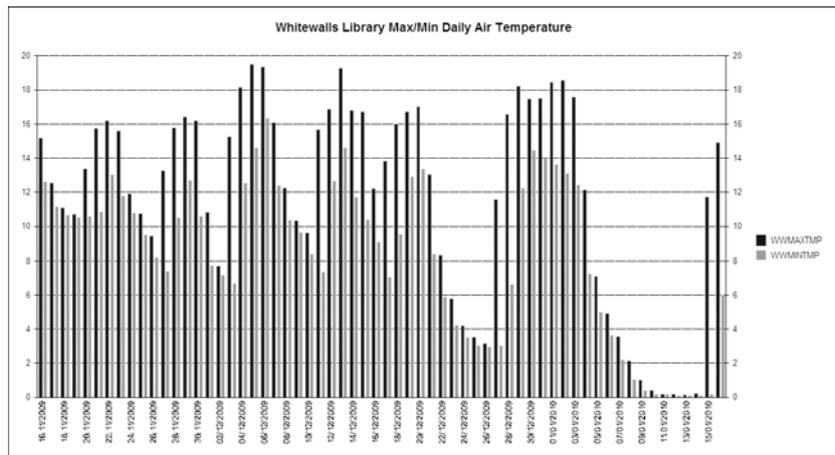
*Any similarity with superannuated cavers past or present, their curmudgeonly foibles, lack of social graces and their hopeless digs is purely unintentional!*



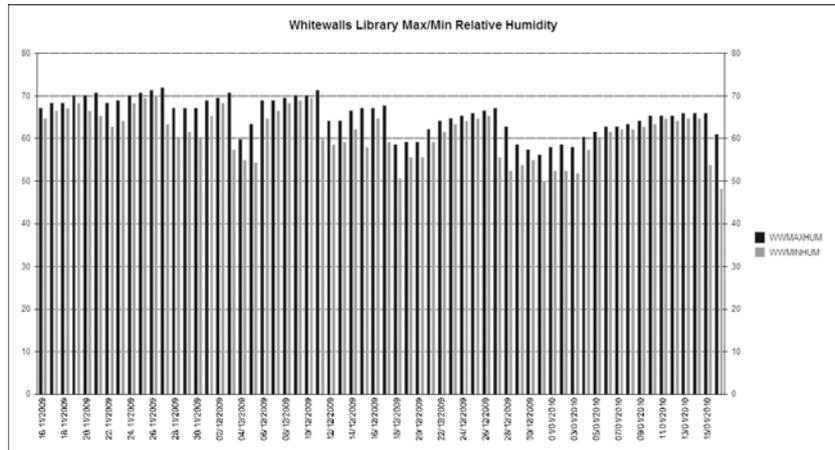
# Chart 1



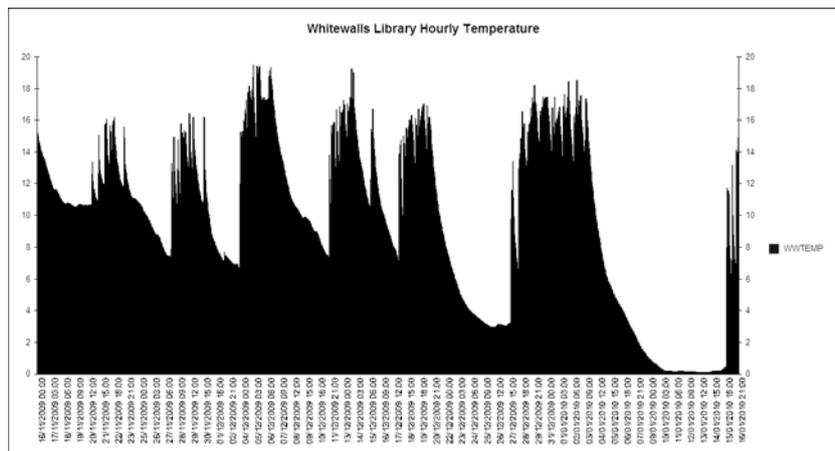
# Chart 2



# Chart 3



# Chart 4



# HOW COLD WAS YOUR COTTAGE?

by **Stuart France**

Some figures collected using my data loggers are presented at the end of the coldest, most snowy period for very many years. How did the new Whitewalls extension cope? I had installed temperature and humidity data loggers in the new library room, and I have also a temperature and rain gauge in my garden at Tretower a few miles away. As Tretower is at 100m altitude but Whitewalls is at over 300m, the air temperature up on the hillside will have been much lower. Indeed, Brynmawr experienced deep snow and road chaos whilst Tretower got away with disruption to normal life relatively lightly.

To put the humidity chart (chart 3) into context, the RH in my own house in Tretower is between 50-65% depending on how much the heating has been used or otherwise how much I have been going away. In the club library room, the inverse influence of room air temperature on relative humidity is obvious from the charts above and 50-70% is perfectly normal. After all the exceptionally cold and snowy weather we have had, it is easy to forget that between October 30th and December 9th 2009, there was only one dry day, at least in Tretower, so we also suffered some persistently wet weather too.

In chart 4 showing the hourly temperature readings in the library, the dates are clear on which the cottage has been occupied and the central heating system run. Over the bitterly cold New Year period the room temperature fluctuated between 14-18C with the heating being run in the evenings mainly and then falling overnight to a low at the start of the next day. Presumably the temperature was maintained just above zero in Mid-January when the cottage was unoccupied because of a frost stat bringing it on.

So in conclusion, the extension has been proof-tested with about the worst weather we can possibly expect and has passed the test well. Whilst the library gets cold when the cottage is unoccupied, its humidity remains within normal bounds for a domestic house.

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*Paul Dodd in GB  
Photo: Steve Sharp*