



**Pottering around
in Charterhouse**

**Mines of the
Yoxter Range**



CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 52 No. 6 June 2010

Chelsea Spelæological Society NEWSLETTER

Volume 52

No 6

June 2010

ISSN 0045-6381

Henry Bennett selflessly conducting a smoke draught test and a rigorous appraisal of the dig sound system, spoil-heap sofa, food store and candle-powered brew station, while Charles Bailey (centre) and Adrian Fawcett dig. Eastern Flyover dig, Daren Cilau 2006

CONTENTS

Pottering about on Mendip
Four Days on Lundy Island
Kingsdale Master Cave
Geryon Logbook
Bats v Birds
Mines of the Yoxter Range
TJ's Dig
Book Review - Is that So?
Dan Yr Ogof
Meets List
Officers of the Society

Page

92
94
95
96
97
98
100
101
102
103
103

Cover Photo:
ATLAS Pot

Thrupe Lane
Swallet
Photo by Steve Sharp

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

Membership

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 Peter Ward know their **BCA Insurance Number** and **Club**

Caving Insurance for 2010 £11

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.

If there is anything submitted that is in any way contentious it may well, if topical, get printed (as I'm an editor, not a censor), but I will gladly put in any alternative views that are presented by other club members (and occasionally from those outside the club) to give a sense of balance.

As editor I will use my discretion with regards to what is published and what is not, with the reputation and interests of the club as my primary concerns.

Gonz

Mark Lumley

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.



The Daren Diggers

The Daren Diggers' next Hard Rock camp will be on the weekend of June 18-20. Work will continue on The Inconvenient Truth and elsewhere. If you'd like to join in and need more details contact the editor.

CAVATAR

by Joe Duxbury

For those of you who have not seen the recent popular film 'Avatar', it included an episode involving some 'floating mountains'. (It's only a film!). The indigenes were able to reach these by flying on the backs of winged lizards.

I wondered if any of these mountains would be made of limestone. That could make for interesting caving.

You start on the top of one of these huge, suspended lumps of rock. Down some pitches, through a couple of chambers, into a fine streamway, with some cascades, then you lose the stream and get into a smaller, dry passage. It's blocked by some rocks, but there's a stonking wind coming through, so you start to pull some out of the way. You make good progress, then the last one falls away and you're right on the edge of thousands of metres of nothing!! And the lip of rock you're crouched on is just another loose boulder ...

John Newton has announced that he is standing down as Meets Secretary with immediate effect.

We wish him well and thank him for all the hard work he has put into the position over the years.



Pottering About on Mendip

by
John Cooper

Charterhouse Cave

Saturday 24th April 2010.

I tagged along with Pete Hann on a qualification trip where Alison Moody was showing Steve Sharp (Axbridge CC leader) the 2008 passages prior to him being issued with his key. (Not sure he should be trusted with a key as he broke his van key before we even started!) Once we arrived at the Frozen Cascade we rigged the protective tarpaulins then went to check Portal Pool. We pumped it for a short stint leaving it with a couple of inches airspace. Then went right to the bottom of the 2008 series where Steve visited the streamway sump whilst the rest of us had a final look at the Sand Dig for this season. We took a boulder and 4 trugs of spoil out from the bend before heading out. The end dig where we had dug down had 6 inches of water in it so we are obviously fairly close to the Timeline. About 3¾ hours.

Saturday 1st May 2010.

As it had rained recently today's group, Ali & Pete Moody, Pete Hann and myself decided it would not be safe to enter the 2009 extensions so concentrated on the ends of the 2008 instead. Whilst Pete M worked on the boulder at the corner in Sand Dig the rest of us concentrated on excavating a larger drain hole for Portal Pool. When we arrived there we discovered Portal Pool had in fact drained by another 4 inches during the week so we would have been OK to go through. We could clearly hear Pete M when he attacked the boulder, but not when he was digging the sand surrounding it. Filled 6 sacks with mud from the drain hole which will go on the dam at Portal Pool. I thought the air was not quite as fresh today, maybe the rain had washed in something creating CO2? Just over 4 hours.

Saturday 8th May 2010.

Same team as last week. This time a short while was spent cleaning out the Portal Pool pump before we gave it a short session pumping, just filled the hole in the floor. Then on to the 2009 end, or very nearly. Just before The Hall of Time we climbed up into the higher level passage. Whilst the rest of us shivered in the cold draught Pete Hann put in a bolt high on the muddy ledge at the start of the high level traverse. Deciding he didn't fancy the traverse itself, and as none of us were keen, we had some chocolate and a drink before returning to check out another lead. About 100m South of Diesel Duck, which was dry today, a short muddy passage on the East was checked. After a short wriggle over the mud it opened out and started to climb. A rotten calcite floor in a passage about 1m wide and 2m high led upwards until it pinched down to a calcited horizontal tube. Ali was sent in and after about 5m she reported she was looking head first down a pot. She came out and went back in feet first and descended the pot. Pete Moody went in as backup and

Ali explored as far as a pitch down (6m?) into a larger passage. She could not descend this without a ladder so came out. Whilst they were off exploring both Pete Hann and myself went back to the main passage and tried to locate where they might be but no contact was made even though we went well past Diesel Duck and checked out Quicksand Chamber. Guesstimated 50m of passage, but need to go back and bolt the top of the pitch as no natural belays seen. Just to finish off, a climb in the main passage by Quicksand Chamber was checked by Pete Hann. He arrived at the base of an aven which needs to be climbed. The name, Cow Splat Aven, refers to the sight as he came back over the edge on his way down. 6¼ hours today.

Saturday 15th May 2010.

Same team as last week with the addition of Andrew Atkinson (UBSS). A short session pumping at Portal Pool, just filled the hole in the floor, then on to the 2009 end. AA had brought along a battery powered drill so the traverse was bolted, about an hour, and then a short ladder pitch of about 3 metres took us back down to the floor of the high level passage, our starting level. Once we were all across, using cows tails for protection, (the slippery mud was a couple of cm deep at the start and about 10cm deep at the end) we set off down the passage. After a few metres we ran into a boulder choke, very large precarious boulders coming down from above! Ali soon removed a few small boulders and squirmed through at floor level. The rest of us just about broke our legs and backs getting up and out at the far end! Into some bigger passage, provisionally called High Time. Followed it to a junction, left was large but muddy and soon terminated. Right was much nicer with some lovely flowstone on the walls, pots in the floor and nicely marbled walls. Stopped when we needed a ladder to descend or bolts to traverse again. Surveyed a couple of hundred metres back out to tie into the station before the original traverse as we didn't want to leave a "hanging survey". 8 hours 10 minutes and the lock on the gate is broken again!

Swildon's Hole

Sunday 25th April 2010.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver continued their Sunday stroll in Swildon's. John forgot to put a ladder in so just looked around as far as the pitch. In via the Zig-Zags and the Wet Way. Visited Rolling Thunder passage on our way out to exit via the Long Dry Way.

Sunday 2nd May 2010.

John Cooper, Lee Hawkswell and Barry Weaver. Decided to go and peer down the Black Hole. On arriving at the 10ft Overhang discovered the scaffold bar and knotted rope had been removed and were lying in a heap on the floor. I climbed up and the rope and bar were passed up to me to fix in place and the others ascended. On returning

I left the bar in situ but pulled the rope down, leaving it where we found it. Not sure if the intention is to remove the fixed aids completely. If so then will need to take a rope in to help, would be possible to loop it round a boulder in the floor above the climb, but need to work out how long it would have to be.

Sunday 9th May 2010.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver. Decided to go and check how the mould was getting on. There were several large parties of novices in today, some were even following the old route under the boulder! We got past them and arrived to find the Twenty already laddered. Continued past the Mud Sump before we detected the smell of "Diesel". By the time we arrived at the top of Shatter Pot the mould was very visible. As we retraced our steps it was noted growing back as far as the entrance side of the Mud Sump. Very little draught today which could explain why we did not smell anything earlier.

Sunday 16th May 2010.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver. Went to collect another mould sample for Alison Moody. Went as far as Fault Chamber. Collected the sample just before, from the

lowest point where the mould was thickest. Then just to be certain collected a second sample from about 15m past the junction heading off on the Round Trip. Very strong smell of Diesel at the first sample point today. Collected a copy of "Is That So?" in The Hunters afterwards. This book, compiled and edited by Rob 'Tav' Taviner with cartoons by Robin 'Reg' Gray, is described on the cover as *A selection of tales from caving's legendary 'nutters, characters, pissheads and selfless, generous, rough diamonds'*. A very good read, well worth the £10 which goes to the Mendip Cave Registry & Archive.

Wookey Hole

Friday 23rd April 2010.

Visited Chamber 3 as part of the book launch "Wookey Hole 75 Years of Cave Diving & Exploration by Jim Hanwell, Duncan Price & Richard Witcombe". Watched the divers appear with their varied costumes through the ages. Most people got out safely. Hope Chris Howes, Descent editor, is OK after testing his head against the rock. Having now read the book I can thoroughly recommend it. Hadn't realised it included information on the feeder caves as well. 4½ hours.



Andrew Atkinson (UBSS) bolting the traverse (Flyover).
Photo: Alison Moody

Four days on Lundy Island

by Andy Watson

This was a trip that we, Andy & Sue Watson, Sue Chase & Phil Candy had planned for some time (well Sue Chase did all the planning actually, thanks Sue) to visit the caves on Lundy Island, unfortunately some four weeks before our planned visit the island warden, whom I had contacted said there were restrictions on rock climbing on the island due to the nesting birds and in fact probably none of the caves would be accessible due to the seals which are also protected. However, undaunted we went for the walking holiday anyway.

On Day One we landed and we went to the Marisco Tavern we looked at the island church with its rock collection and had a local walk and we got into the cottage that we had rented, Stoneycroft, at around three o'clock in the afternoon. This is a two-bedroom cottage away from the main village but adjacent to the disused central lighthouse and it was used whenever the lighthouse inspectors came to stay. All the cottages used for visitors to stay in have been restored by the Landmark Trust to a high standard. That evening after settling in we went for a walk to the earthquake zone, which was a very interesting area of rifts in the rock caused by movement and collapse towards the sea, the deepest one of these cracks was 100 feet deep and about 4 feet wide. This day which was a Tuesday and it was very wet and misty and the wind was blowing vigorously, which we suspected is fairly normal weather Lundy most of the year, although it is supposed to be slightly milder than the mainland at times. We went back to the old lighthouse for 'singing at 18:00 hours' which was organised by some island holiday residents and this was memorable but probably not repeatable as we did a number of four-part harmonies and choruses not very well.

On Day Two we walked along the west side going past the earthquake zone and all the way down to the North West point to visit the northern operating lighthouse and we came back along the east coast stopping to visit Gannet's Bay to watch the

seals and continue back along the east coastal path to visit the Marisco Tavern on the way back. The evening saw Phil and Sue have a visitor at night, a pigmy shrew in the bedroom.

Day Three we took off to the south-west along a path from the cottage and visited Devil's Limekiln, an impressive rock hole some 250 feet deep. We then continued along the coast to Benjamin's chair and I scrambled down to visit the two short copper mines and we also visited the castle (now converted lodgings) and Benson's Cave, a man-made rock shelter/cave. We then stopped at the shop for ice cream and then back to Stoneycroft for lunch. After lounging around on what was a lovely sunny day we walked up the main island track to Tibbet's, the remotest dwelling on the island and met a lady author who was staying there with her artist husband and she had to write a paper on Neolithic burials. From Tibbet's we cut down a cliff coastal path to a place called Frenchman's Landing and watched lots of seals bobbing around in the sea and I tried to find a cave to the west but failed to climb around to it, with several grey seals groaning at me from the sea, I assumed I was in their territory so I retreated. On the opposite cliffs I could see Queen Mab's Grotto which was an old sea cave from a time when the sea level was much higher. To get access to this involved climbing some way towards the top of the island some 100-150 feet going around an inlet and then climbing down the other side of the cliffs that proved to be very tiring, everybody else watched me. This was worth a visit as it was very pretty and some 25-30 foot deep, however my camera (off the shelf point & shoot disposable) had run out of film/picture taking power. We walked back on the track to Stoneycroft and then visited the Tavern again where I had a cider and a beer and fail to remember the rest of the evening, but recall I was fairly happy.

Day Four, we went to the old battery and you can not get the caves underneath due to the sheer cliffs and in some areas nesting birds. We did

go later to the earthquake zone holes which I played around in with Philip hanging on a piece of string and Sue and Susie watched some sea birds among which were some puffins (still very rare but making a hopeful comeback), these were the only ones we saw among various seabirds. We walked back to Stoneycroft for lunch. After lunch we went south west down to the jetty and to visit Rat Island to see if we could find a cave that goes right through this small island and we in fact first found to a small one that was too tight to continue, but you could see light through from the other side of the island and we also walked through the main cave through the island and Philip and Sue swam back out round the far side to the jetty, I thought we had lost them!. I also went to see Mermaid's Hole which was slightly north of Rat Island on the main island which looked like a suitable swimming spot. We also watched more seals in this area between the islands.

On Day Five we packed up and left Stoneycroft by 0930 and we all decided that it had been a loyal and faithful cottage, a very good place to stay. We went south west again, this time to find the Montague Steps below some cliffs on the coast where the battleship Montague which was about three years old had been wrecked on the rocks back in 1906. There was no loss of life but the ship cost £1 million to build and was sold for £4000 scrap and the Captain and the Navigation Officer were court-martialled as they thought they had hit Hartland Point on the North Devon coast! We walked around the coastal path past the rocket post, Benjamin's Chair, the castle and we went down the jetty again to Mermaid's Hole for a swim, which was very, very cold, prior to getting back on the boat, the MS Oldenburg back to Ilfracombe.

Editor's Note

I have family connections with Lundy - my grandfather, lived in Tibbet's (the Admiralty lookout) for many years (there is a memorial stone on the island bearing the legend 'Jack Spink refined gentleman of leisure', and my uncle lived in the old lighthouse. It really is a magnificent place to visit, with a diversity of wild terrain and an abundance of wildlife as it is situated in a marine reserve . . . and the Marisco Tavern brews its own beer! If you get the chance to visit, take it. www.lundyisland.co.uk

Kingsdale Master Cave via the Valley Entrance

3rd April 2010

by Barry Weaver

John Addison, Rick Box, Paul Tarrant, Chris Tomlin and Barry Weaver.

Surface Support and buns Cath Addison and Judy Mullington.

There have been a few minor changes since we last visited; the entrance orange oil drum has been replaced by a grey plastic pipe and has a wooden lid, and I'm sure someone has lowered the roof tunnel by about six inches. Despite this we soon reached the short pitch that leads down into the master cave.

Then, steady progress along the splendid passage with its magnificent canyon to the Master Junction where the river passage leading to the Rowten Sumps was easily located. At this point

BW, the only one wearing a wet suit, left the others on a convenient mud bank and wandered up towards the Rowten Sumps and again I'm sure this passage used to be higher. On returning he was a little surprised to meet CT, (who hadn't come down the cave with us), who was complaining about hanging around in cold water.

After returning to the Master Junction we decided to go to Swinsto but instead of going directly via Philosopher's Crawl we detoured up East Entrance Passage just to get a little crawling practice. On finally reaching Swinsto Chamber RB, PT and CT went up the fixed hand line

to the bottom of Simpsons, whilst JA and BW tried to remember when they had last been to Swinsto. We weren't sure but it was along time ago.

An uneventful exit was then made with CT, the youngest, carrying all the tackle.

Then off to the Marton Arms for a quick one, or two, before a pleasant stroll to Braida Garth in the evening sun before returning via the chippy to the caravans.

Underground time approx. 2 hours.

As always, many thanks to John Addison for organising a great weekend.

Social section Easter statistics:

Pub visits: 8: to 7 different pubs

Closed Pub visits : 1
(dear oh dear)

Peaks climbed: 1

Train rides: 1

Air shafts investigated: 2

Average m.p.g: 5.9; a truly excellent result achieved by Judy Mullington who beat past champions Rick Box (6.89) and John Addison (6.97) into second and third place. The Awards Committee are delighted to present prizes to all three for this outstanding performance.

We are sad to note that once again wine drinking was observed, (John you need have a quiet word with Cath).

Carnglaze Caverns CORNWALL

I noticed an advertisement recently in the local rag down in Cornwall for Carnglaze Caverns at St. Neot near Liskeard.

As well as guided tours around the slate mine and the predictable array of showcave-related activities it also hosts underground concerts, including **Hawkwind** on June 19. So all you old Chelsea Rockers should get matron to fix you a packed lunch and a thermos of Ovaltine, grab your bus passes, dust off your beads, squeeze into your old purple, elephant cord loons and get down there!

www.carnglaze.com



Summer Barbecue June 26-27



Geryon Logbook

John Stevens had asked me to include these entries from the logbook at the Gerion in his last article:

Date	Club	Cavers	Comments
19/4/1997		John Stevens	Discovered on the 19/04/97 by the Grade 5 Surveyors, Mike Read & John Stevens. Arthur Millett & Paul Stacey were also surveying in the area. This is my 10th trip down to the Cantankerous Surveyors Series and I am still amazed at these formations (book installed)
22/7/2000		Paul Stacey Arthur Millett John Stevens Adrian Paniwnyk	Still nice to see after all these years. (digging at end)
20/8/2000		Ben Lovett	Another astonishing suprise from Ogof Draenen, lets hope there are many more to come. Ben
		Sam Smith	one of the most incredible things I've seen in my life. Sam
		Lou Maurice	Beautiful - photographs don't + won't ever do it justice - I'm so pleased I came down here. Lou
8/9/2002		Chris Densham Ben Lovett Claire McElwain Rob Garrett	Surprised this is not a more popular tourist destination!
15/12/2002		Paul Mackrill Chris Deh?? Jonathan Cap??	Good grief! These are over sized! Un-be-leave-able. Jonathan says "Nice" I say Heck. Spot the complete circle! Paul Mackrill. Chris says it "lacks colour - pale blue, green"
21/4/2003	oucc ic3 rrpc lug wsg ncc excs hong meigui cave exploration society smes riba	Chris "again" Densham Pete Jurd Gareth Phillips Rich Gerrish	"Humph" Gavin "not present" Lowe
11/10/2003	BCC	Ian Wilton-Jones	Still as unbeleavable as ever - aliens, hibernating, father
		Malcolm Reid	just incredible another wonder of nature
	BCC	Huw Groucutt	The prefect finale to the wonders of luck of the draw! Amazing.
29/11/2003	Ferrets SS	Ian Whitney Adrian Fawcett	Where am I? Speleo-sensory overload. Oh, If you find yourself here, do look up!
7/9/2004	BCC + visitors, 9 in all	Charles Bailey Ian Wilton Jones Tarquin WJ Huw Groucutt Christian Saxtoff	
26/2/2005	WCC CPC	Carmen Tash Patrick	It was worth dragging the camera all this way. Does anyone know the way out from here:) !! Is there an elevator to the surface?
9/4/2005	Red Rose	Neil Pacey	WOW !
	MCG	Andrea Vaydics Claire McElwain	Just when we thought the cave couldn't get any better... Stunning...fantastic...beautiful...gobsmacking
	OUCG G2 surveyor	Fluer Loveridge	Rather splendid
		little Helen Pac (hun) H????	Unbelievable & outrageous
14/5/2005	Ferrets SS	Adrian Fawcett Damian Weare Justin Weare Jim Coffin	The sun don't shine here either
3/11/2007	BEC	Chris Jewell Rich Bayfield	Pretty... Rekon these would fetch a few quid on ebay!!
7/3/2009	Chelsea SS	Adrian Fawcett Andy Snook Tom Foord	Careful in case they grab you. £5 bid by Tom Foord. One of them growled at me!
20/2/2010	Dudley CC	Brendan Marris Keith Edwards Rachel Dearden Richard Dearden	

Bats v Birds

THE PLOT THICKENS

by Joe Duxbury

Pete Ward's article 'Great Tits!' in the April 2010 issue of the CSS Newsletter reminded me of a previous article I had seen on the reverse situation: birds being preyed on by bats. The article was in the Toronto Star¹, in August 2001. It reported that studies in Italy and Spain² had shown that greater noctule bats were preying on songbirds. Firstly the Italian biologists had found bits of feathers in some greater noctule droppings. The researchers speculated that the bats might be snatching the birds from nesting boxes, in a similar way to how they catch prey by skimming over the ground or water. Then the Spanish team also found remains of feathers, in many more samples, over several months. But the distribution of the bits of feathers during the year was irregular: they were abundant in spring, from March to May, and again in autumn, from August to November. But there were virtually no feathers in the droppings during the summer. They came to the conclusion that the bats were preying on migrating songbirds. If the bats were taking birds from nesting boxes, predation would be high during the summer, but it was found to be negligible.

Moreover, they concluded that the bats were taking birds in flight. For two reasons. Firstly, bats that catch prey off the ground have wings that allow them to manoeuvre with ease at low airspeeds. The greater noctule has wings that are adapted to high speed. Secondly, the greater noctule produces long, low frequency chirps suitable for long-range detection of prey. Such calls would not be useful for picking birds from leaf-cluttered branches. And it looks as if the frequency range of these calls is out of the range of bird hearing.

These reports generated considerable argument, with other researchers³ claiming that the research was flawed, that the bats were mistakenly or selectively ingesting falling feathers, but not birds.

A study of great evening bats in India and China has also been made⁴, and it suggests that these bats also catch birds on the wing. More recent research in Spain⁵ has used stable isotope analysis of the bats' blood, which can identify not only ingested, but also assimilated food. The results confirmed the earlier work, showing an insect-based diet in summer, and incorporation of birds into the diet in spring and autumn during passerine migration.

So this most recent report that Pete publicized, from Hungary⁶, about great tits, has shown that the birds are hitting back!

If you are wondering about the relative sizes of the adversaries, the body weights are approximately as follows:

Great evening bats	49-63g
Greater noctule bat:	48g
Robin:	20g
Great tit:	18g.
Pipistrelle bat:	3-9g

At the top end of this scale, however, the superior weight of the greater noctule looks very small compared to that of the hawks that feed on flying bats:

Bat hawk:	600-650g
Red-tailed hawk:	690-1460g

And at the bottom of this scale, the pipistrelle will have to look for the few birds that are even smaller for it to feed on!

¹ Ingram, J. 2001. "The rare bats that 'hit' birds", The Toronto Star: 19 August.

² Dondini, G, Vergari, S. 2000. "Carnivory in the greater noctule bat (*Nyctalus lasiopterus*) in Italy" Journal of Zoology **251**: 233-236.

Ibáñez, C, Juste, J, García-Mударra, JL, Agirre-Mendi, PT. 2001. "Bat predation on nocturnally migrating birds" PNAS **98**: 9700-9702.

³ Bontadina F, and Arlettaz, R. 2003. "A heap of feathers does not make a bat's diet" Functional Ecology **17**, 141-145

⁴ Thabah, A, Li, G, Wang, Y, Liang, B, Hu, K, Zhang, S, Jones, G. 2007. "Diet, echolocation calls, and phylogenetic affinities of the great evening bat (*Ia io*; Vespertilionidae): another carnivorous bat" Journal of Mammalogy **88**, 728-735.

⁵ Popa-Lisseanu, AG, Delgado-Huertas, A, Forero, MG, Rodriguez, A, Arlettaz, R, Ibáñez, C. 2007. "Bats' conquest of a formidable foraging niche: the myriads of nocturnally migrating songbirds" PLoS ONE **2**(2): e205.

⁶ Estók, P, Zseb k, S, Siemers, BM. 2010. "Great tits search for, capture, kill and eat hibernating bats" Biol. Lett. **6**, No. 1, 23 February: 59-62.

Mines of the Yoxter

by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley

Centre: Kate Lawrence in Fallen Slab Shaft (Barbershop Mine).

Right: Mandy Voysey negotiates the fallen capping stone in Fallen Slab Shaft (Barbershop Mine).

Below left: Mandy Voysey at the entrance of Fallen Slab Shaft (Barbershop Mine).

Below right: Matt Voysey ascends Fallen Slab Shaft (Barbershop Mine).



Range

At the invitation of Somerset Wildlife Trust's Kate Lawrence, a small group of cavers, Mandy and Matt Voysey (CSS), Paul Stillman (WCC) and myself have been visiting lead and iron mines in the Yoxter Range/Chancellor's Farm area near Priddy on the Mendips. Some of these mines have been descended before, others noted but not previously explored since they were mined. In addition to these there are a number of 'new' sites.

In some instances we have had to remove dislodged capping stones and other debris that has been jammed in the shafts.

Most of the mines are shafts of around 6-15 metres ending in chokes of rubble, timber and cattle bones (not to mention the occasional gas cylinder, collander and barbecue!).

It is our intention to do a complete survey of known and new sites in the area over the next few months. A full report will be made and the sites will appear on the Mendip Cave Registry.

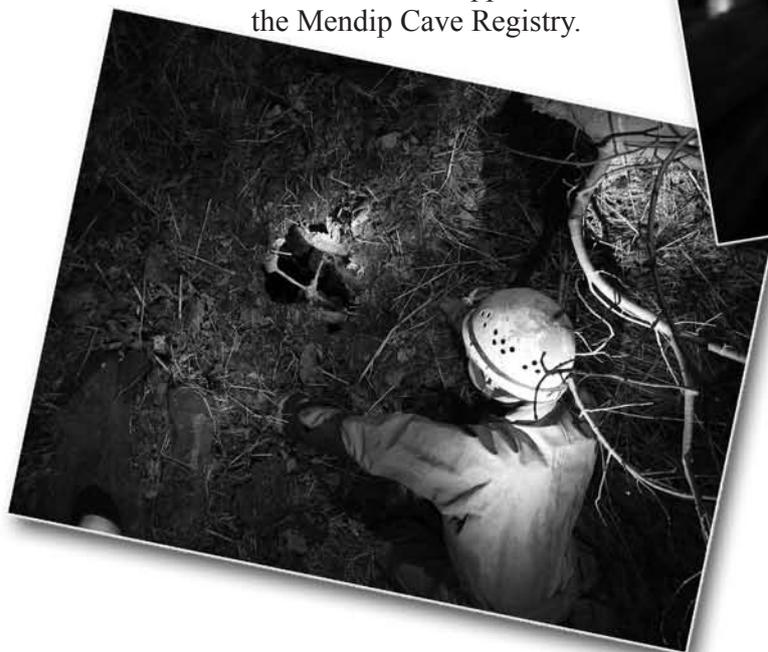
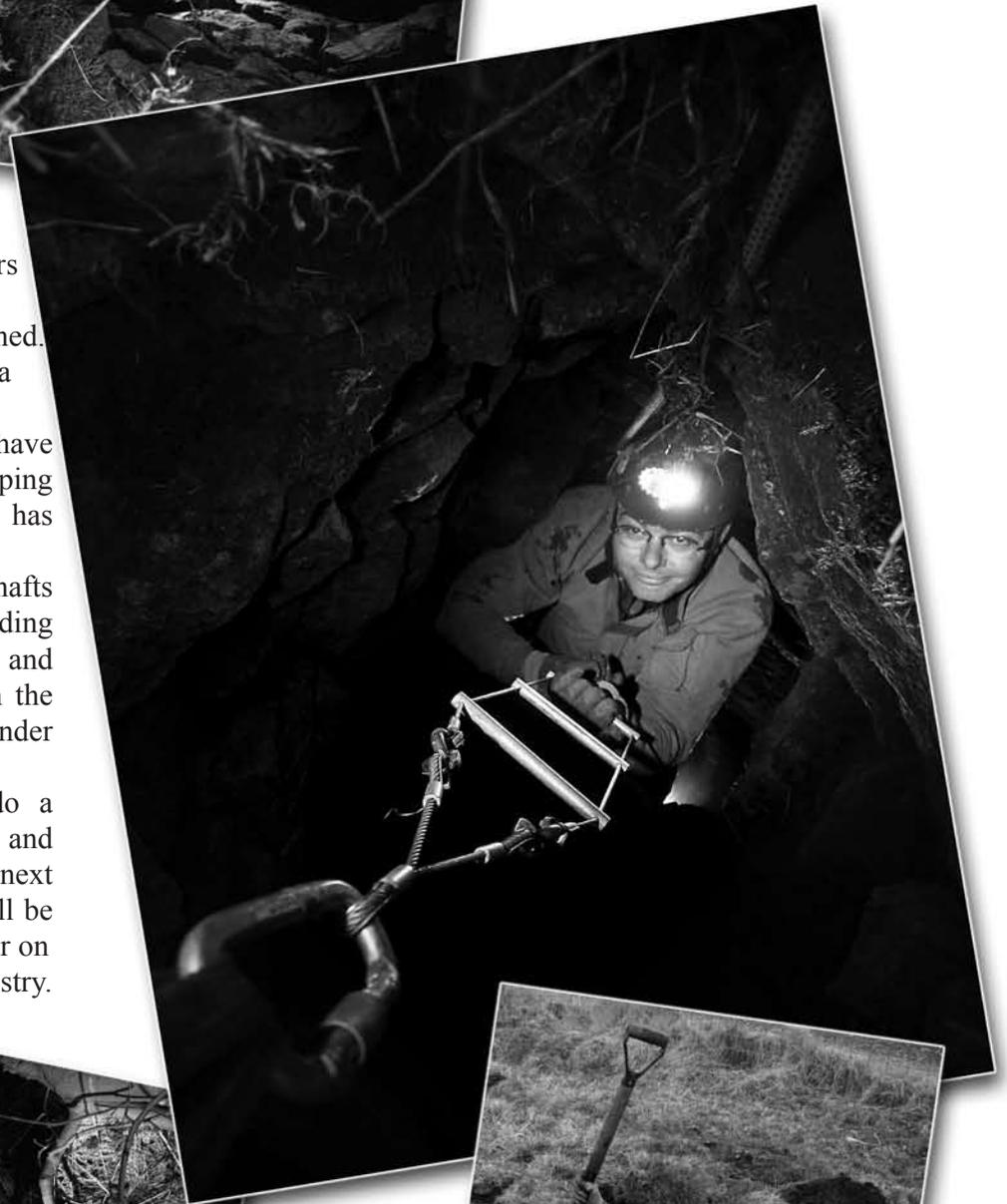


Left: Mandy Voysey ascends a 'new' mineshaft.

Centre: Paul Stillman at the top of the same shaft.

Below left: Matt Voysey investigates the entrance of Bedstead mine.

Below right: Matt Voysey digging at the entrance of Blanco pot.





TJ's Dig

near Dallimore's Cave, Green Ore

ATLAS members clearing back the overburden above the dig, Weds May 5 2010. Clockwise from top left: Kate Beard, Paul Stillman (WCC) Alan Merry, Dave King (MNRC) (Mandy and Matt Voysey out of shot, gurning & heckling the photographer, Mark Lumley).

by **Andy Watson**

In early September 2008 I was looking for a new dig site and combed areas of woodland in a few areas after looking at maps and Google Earth etc. near MNRC. I found a few sink holes and one was slightly more interesting than most. I discussed this with Tony Jarratt a few weeks before he died and he said it sounded interesting and in a good location, hence the name of the hole.

24/09/2008 – Convinced I had a good dig site tucked away discretely in some woods, I got permission to dig there.

19/10/2008 – I moved a bit of topsoil and a few small rocks in the dig and checked for any

draught with joss stick smoke and I thought there was a slight draught through big boulders.

January 2009 – I dug solo on a few cold evenings and pulled a few bigger boulders out using a simple pulley setup. I checked the geology and the dig is on a significant fault line on the BGS geology map.

March 2009 – I took my wife, Sue to have a look at my new hole. A massive tree had fallen across it and so my tree 'crane' was now repositioned.

April 2009 - March 2010 – I continued occasionally to visit the dig with tools and a geared hand winch setup to shift the larger

boulders; progress was slow but promising. I got to the stage where I had surfaced some very big boulders so I needed some assistance.

May 2010 – Clive and Duncan and Sue accompanied me to 'pop' the first couple of boulders. ATLAS crew now working with me on the dig and they are doing a great job, new steps, encouragement etc, particularly around the resident midges.

BOOK REVIEW

by Duncan Price

Is That So?

Compiled and edited by Rob "Tav" Taviner with cartoons by Robin "Reg" Gray

Subtitled "**A selection of tales from caving's legendary 'nutters, characters, pissheads and selfless, generous, rough diamonds**", this

book is a collection of 103 stories from 43 contributors* recalling numerous scrapes, japes and tall tales from the caving world. Collated by "Tav" and illustrated by cartoons by Robin Gray as well as black & white photographs from various sources the 172 page volume is nicely laid out by our very own newsletter editor. The book is a vehicle for raising money to support further publications by the Mendip Cave Registry & Archive (MCRA) such as a new edition of "Mendip Underground" and other worthy projects so it is worth getting a copy (£10) to support a good cause. There was an auction of the original artwork at the book launch which will be used to further swell the coffers of the MCRA's publications fund.

Is it any good? Well, firstly, I ought to admit to being biased because I supplied three stories.

Secondly, I should declare that "Tav" definitely has leads on one or two tales about me that I wouldn't want published in a second volume of yarns (or not until the Araldite has set) so I am under pressure to put in a good word for it. However, I must say that "Is That So" is rather an enjoyable read - one to be dipped into at random rather than read from cover to cover. Some of the tales will make you wince, others will make you chuckle, a few will make you laugh out loud. There are several common themes which run throughout the book; many stories involving encounters with wildlife of the non-human variety. Several individuals seem to feature in a disproportionate number of anecdotes and it would, for example, be entirely practical to have a series of such books devoted to the things that Tony "JRat" Jarrett got up to (such was the

nature of the man). My favourite story is right at the end of the book and features another of Mendip's well-known curmudgeons. There is however an international flavour to the scope of the book with episodes from all corners of the globe and it is not necessary to know the story teller or participants to appreciate the humour or misfortunes involved.

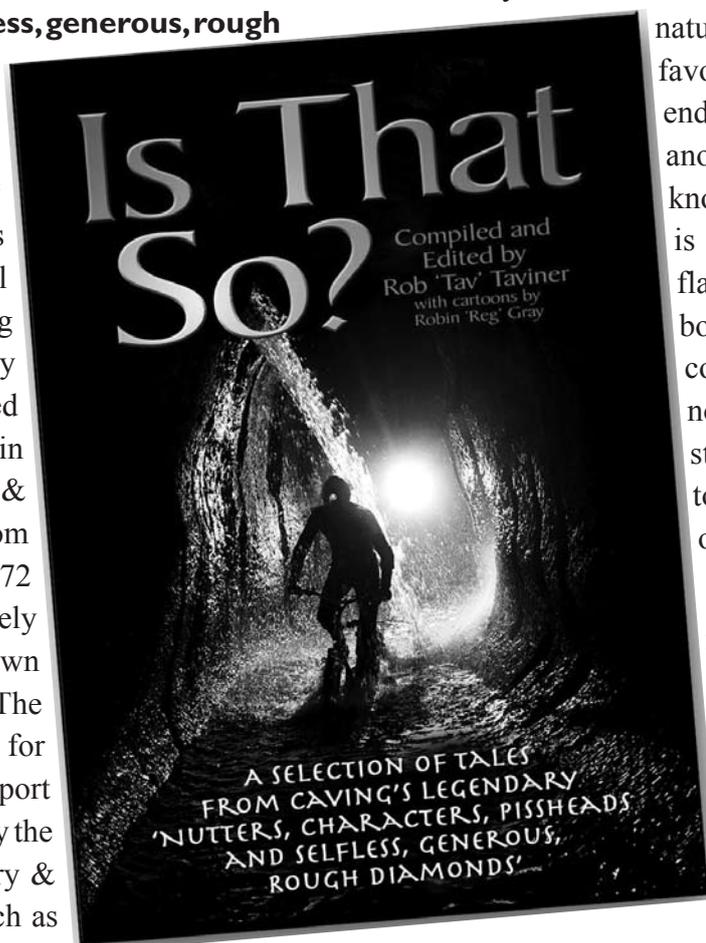
This book is definitely not a guide to safe caving practices, nor does it contain material suitable for reading by minors or mothers. I think that my father, being an ex-rugby player, would appreciate the content

and he will be getting a copy for his birthday - with strict instructions not to let my mum read it!

* I counted them all and my enumeration may not be completely accurate though I note that several of the more dodgy tales are not attributed to anyone in particular.

More information on the book and MCRA is available at

www.mcra.org.uk



Dan yr Ogof

Saturday May 8

by Steve Sharp

This was my second trip into Dan yr Ogof cave system, the first was the show cave only.

We arrived at around 10.30am after a two hour drive, our first port of call was a walk around the resurgence, and the water was fairly deep here in places.

We then made our way through the show cave into the main cave system.

We made our way across the lakes and deep into the heart of the mountain, through climbs and crawls until we reached the start of the long crawl. The crawl was a picnic compared to the Daren Cilau crawl.

We then climbed down through the roof onto a fixed ladder and made our way into the upper series of the loop route, the passage was big!

We made our way to Flabbergasm Oxbow and Cloud Chamber to take in the views and take a few photo's. The route then varied in size.

Our next stop was the Green Canal, a long stretch of deep water. The fun really started here trying to swim with a life jacket and tackle bag, Matt went for the rubber ring option. The Green Canal then joined up with the main fossil passage where we took an excursion towards the Great North Road. We made a u turn at the ladder and made our way back through the passage towards Mazeways. This part of the cave is normally sumped but luckily for us there was plenty of air space to explore all of the tunnels. This part of the cave



looks incredible, the tunnels end in various sumps.

Our next stop were some fine pools and a 50 foot climb down into the large lower series, impressive to say the least, a climb over the Camel's Back and

one last tricky climb back into the upper series.

The trip lasted about eight hours as we were taking our time

If you have never been to this cave it is a must!



Top: New CSS member Matt Emmett in the Green Canal
Above: Stuart France admires the Candlewax Formation

Photos: Steve Sharp

Meets List 09/10

This is an outline of the meets for this year.

April 10th – 11th

South Wales

Working Weekend.

A lot of small jobs to be completed.

Also work in the Library.

May 1st – 2nd

South Wales

Saturday will be an OFD1 to 2 through trip
(Paul Tarrant)

May 27th – 31st

Yorkshire (YSS)

Booked for 5 nights for 10 people

No caves booked as yet

June 26th – 27th

South Wales

Saturday will have a trip into DY0 (Paul Tarrant)
BBQ and Barrel on Saturday night

July 24th – 25th

Mendip (Wessex TBC)

Swildons on Sunday

BBQ will be arranged for Saturday night

August 20th – 22nd

Yorkshire (YSS)

Booked for 3 nights for 10 people

September 25th – 26th

Hidden Earth

(Location to be confirmed)

November 6th – 7th

South Wales

Decide trips on Friday evening and then change them
Saturday morning.

Fireworks on Saturday night

December 4th – 5th

South Wales

Curry Extravaganza #6 on the 4th

Decide on your own trips

January 2011 29th – 30th

South Wales

Dinner and AGM

For all non Whitewall events except Hidden Earth,
I need to know numbers to book beds etc, so please
phone or email me to reserve a place. Also certain
caves such as Otter Hole have number restrictions so
will be first come, first served.

John Newton

Officers of the Society:

Chairman

Tim Morgan
53 Coldershaw Road
London
W13 9EA
(07989) 595430
Tim@TerminalSump.com

Secretary

Stuart France
The Smithy, Crickhowell, Powys, NP8 1RD
(01874) 730016 (Home)
css@linetop.com

Treasurer

Peter Ward
33 Gertrude Street, Abercynon
Mountain Ash, CF45 4RL
07749 235985
speleo@hotmail.co.uk

Cottage Warden

John Stevens
14 Kiln Close, Hermitage, Thatcham
Newbury, Berks, RG18 9TQ
(01635) 200879 (Home)
john@k-stevens.fsnet.co.uk

Tacklemaster

Gary Kiely
22b St Johns Road, Isleworth,
Middlesex, TW7 6NW
07958 039721 (Mobile)
gkiely72@mac.com

Newsletter Editor

Mark Lumley
7 Langleys Lane, Clapton, Radstock
Somerset, BA3 4DX
(01761) 419246 (Home and Work)
mark@creativeedge.me.uk

Librarian

Anna Northover
42 BrynGwyn Road, Newport, NP20 4JT
(01633) 678833 (Home)
anna@pnorthover.freemove.co.uk

Meets Secretary

John Newton, 39 North Park Grove
Roundhay, Leeds, LS8 1EL
(0113) 293 3807 (Home)
jnewton5@csc.com

Records Officer

John Cooper
31 Elm Close, Wells, Somerset, BA5 1LZ
(01749) 670568 (Home)
csspub@googlemail.com

Web Master

Stephen Newton
68 Myrtle Avenue, Long Eaton, Notts, NG10 2LY
(0115) 972 9029 (Home)
snewton@ukonline.co.uk

Committee Member

Mel Reid
3 Bryntirion Terrace, Llangollen, LG20 8LP
07711 943492 (Mobile)
melrei@hotmail.com

Committee Member

Jason McCorrison
72 Christchurch Road, Penmaen Estate
Oakdale, Blackwood, Gwent, NP12 0UX
(01495) 221479 (Home)
jason_mccorrison@talktalk.net

Cave Rescue Liaison

Tom Foord
138 Habershon Street
Cardiff
CF24 2LD
(02920) 355130 (Work)
07766 605827 (Mobile)
tomfoord@gmail.com

Whitewalls

The Hillside, Llangattock, Powys, NP8 1LG, UK



*Cloud Chamber
Dan Yr Ogof
Photo: Steve Sharp*

www.chelseaspelaeo.org.uk