

CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



*To the end of Wigmore with only a
Soggy Bottom*

CSS New Website

Tween Twins Hole

Jiuxing Scenic Area

Yorkshire

The Upper Hand

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The views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the author of the article and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society. Photos and illustrations not accredited are by the editor.

Membership

Subs are now overdue. If you are shown as Lapsed on the enclosed Members Handbook then you will not receive future Newsletters

Please send all subscriptions to:

Gary Jones, 29 Canney Close,
Chiseldon
Swindon
SN4 0PG

Current rates are:

Full £30
Joint £40

PLUS your BCA subscription per person of £6 for non cavers and £17 for cavers.

Members who have BCA membership via another club need not pay twice but should include their BCA number and membership club with their payment.

Associate £24 (BCA Non Caver already included)
Provisional £10

for 6 months + pro-rata BCA membership (depends on date joining). Provisional members made into full

members pay pro-rata subs for the period up to the start of the next membership year (1st October). Full membership information and application form can be downloaded from the CSS website

New members wishing to join should send a cheque payable to **Chelsea Spelæological Society** along with their membership application form to the Secretary. Members who are renewing a subscription should sent the payment to the Treasurer. The committee will normally consider voting provisional members up to full membership after 6 months by which time they should have become known.

Provisional membership can be extended for another 6 months, but only once, if a Provisional Member has been unable to become known socially and as an active caver within the club. Please contact the Treasurer with any queries.

Editorial

Thank's for all this editions contributions and photo's keep them coming.

Please send in your photos and trip reports etc
Please send all material to:

Steve-Sharp-Photography@virginmedia.com

Or put on a CD and send to:

*Steve Sharp
43 The Crescent
Sea Mills
Bristol
BS9 2JT*

Send your text for your article in Microsoft Word format or email.

Convert photos, surveys and other images to decent sized .jpeg, .tif, .psd files

You could alternatively zip your work and send in as a .rar file using
www.mailbigfile.com (Free version)



NEW Chelsea T-Shirt

£7 each or £12 for two of the same size & colour.

Available in S, M, L, XL, XXL

Printed in White on a variety of colours:

Black, Green, Navy Blue, Orange, Red, Royal Blue, Grey
To help the CSS committee determine how many to order
and to make sure that you don't miss out
please send your size, colour and number required
To Mel: melrei@hotmail.com

Paul Hartwright is due to be conferred as a full member at the next committee meeting. If any members would like to make any comments in support of Paul or otherwise, please make them known to a member of the committee.

HRC Daren Camps 2016

22nd-24th July (Gonzo and Mandy's 100 year Birthday Bash)

16th-18th September

18th-20th November

The main focus of our digging activity at present is at Kilburn Highroad, with a bit of maypole jousting in Bonsai.

If you're interested in coming along on any of the dates contact one of the Daren regulars.

Cover Photo

Wigmore Swallet

Photo by Stuart Gardiner



To the end of Wigmore with only a Soggy Bottom!

By Duncan Price

Readers of this Journal maybe familiar with my activities in Wigmore Swallet during 2008-9 during which period I (along with Claire Cohen, Stu Gardiner, Dave Garman, Chris Jewell & John Maneely) had done a number of trips to the bitter end of the cave to dig the terminal boulder choke which lies beyond 9 awkward sumps. We had reduced the amount of cave diving required to get there by finding a dry link between Wigmore 10 and Young Bloods' Inlet (entered a short way into Sump 7). This in turn prompted an attempt to enter Young Bloods' Inlet by digging in one of the several depressions in the field above it based upon the radiolocation of the passage below and a bit of guesswork.

The dig started at the end of August 2008 (shortly before Tony Jarratt's untimely death) using a mechanical excavator brought in to try to find a way into cave. A small crack in the rock at the base of the pit looked promising and the opening was protected with a concrete pipe while the rest of the depression was backfilled. Right from the start, the diggers adopted siege tactics with a shanty town of a changing shed and winch house (complete with head gear over the lined shaft) being erected. A record of the activities up until the end of 2014 can be found online at www.thelog.org.uk and I had dug there briefly during August 2012 until a temporary hiatus in work occurred while a restructuring of the team took place. After a considerable amount of toil following tiny cracks in the rock the diggers were finally rewarded with a 27 metre natural pitch into just over 300 metres of open cave during Christmas 2014 with the long awaited "dry" connection being made to Wigmore Swallet at the beginning of November 2015. Quite rightly, the enterprise won the J'Rat digging award for this discovery, highly appropriate since it was the culmination of Tony Jarratt's 2008 dream of finding a non-diving route to Wigmore 10.

On Easter Sunday March 27th 2016 I was invited along for a trip. The clocks had just gone forward and the rendezvous at Wigmore Farm was arranged for 11:30 am. I turned up 10 minutes early to find Tony Audsley's Land Rover already parked up in the field by the entrance so I waited on the track for the rest of the crew to turn up. Bang on time Alice Audsley (Tony's wife) and Roger Galloway (Tony & Alice's son-in-law) rocked up, closely followed by Paul Brock. There was no sign of the remaining member of the group (Nick Hawkes) so we went to join Tony and daughter Annie Audsley (who insists on not being known as Annie Galloway) over at the digging hut for a cup of tea. An hour later we were joined by Nick (who had forgot to take account of the change from GMT to BST). Tony was to drill some holes in a dig above the big pitch while Alice helped on the surface – this left Annie, Paul, Roger, Nick & I to put on our gear and get underground.

Up until the bottom of the big pitch there is not a lot of room to put on SRT kit so we donned them on the surface and set off down the fixed steel ladder in 12 metre

deep entrance shaft. At the bottom of the pipes there are cast concrete steps to a short descending passage, Rough Diamond Rift, and the 9 metre deep Tollens' Shaft followed the 3 metre deep Builder's Shaft and a 10 metre long horizontal crawl which was the limit of the dig back in 2012 when I had last visited. This ends at Annieversay Pitch (8 metres) followed by a short section of blasted passage which ends at rope climb down Humbug Pitch to a flat mudstone floored tube known as Soggy Bottom. Paul was at the front and I was following him by backing along the passage towing a tackle sack containing the rope for the 27 m pitch at the end of this tube, which ends at cross rift at the head of the drop.

The first few metres of the drop is in a narrow rift which bells out after it breaks into the Dolomitic Conglomerate and becomes a nice free hang landing in a bowl of gravel in a roomy chamber. We took our SRT gear off here and left it at the bottom of the pitch it before setting off up a mud slope and down a slide with a hand line into a walking-sized passage known as Sandy Tunnel. We passed a couple of leads on the right – the first being the way on to the connection with Wigmore Swallet and the second being the erroneously named Sixty Metres Tube (which is about half that length) – before meeting a couple of streams which converge and flow off down a low crawl. Paul and I went to the end of the right hand inlet which degenerated into a flat out wriggle over gravel which I followed solo until it got too silly beyond a brief enlargement. Then we retraced our steps to the left hand passage from the confluence and had a look at the boulder-choked, steeply-angled bedding plane at the end of this. I got the impression that there was plenty more cave to find here by someone brave (or stupid) enough to dig here.

We returned to the start of Sandy Tunnel where a route through boulders got us into Squality Street – this is a section of crawling which drew us on with the ever increasing roar of flowing water ahead until we popped through a hole down into an active streamway – this is the same water that we had followed from the other end of Sandy Tunnel. (The route continues beyond the hole to reach a large aven chamber with which it is hoped to make a connection from a dig near the top of Annieversay Pitch thus bypassing Squality Street). The rest of the party were all gathered here and I lead off downstream in rather aqueous conditions (passing Chris Jewell's abandoned line reel en route) to pop out into Young Blood's Inlet in Wigmore Swallet. The others soon turned up along with my SRT gear which Nick has packed up and brought along with a bag of rope. Nick explained that he thought I might like to climb the aven in Wig's Hall at the end of Young Blood's Inlet so (just to humour him) a few of us went to look at the site.

I had only been to Wig's Hall once before on my first visit to the area and I had been on my own. There are some nice mud formations here and it is now obvious that the passage represents the continuation of Sandy Tunnel in

Home Close Hole. I knew that Chris Jewell had previously climbed to the top of the aven and, sure enough, there was a thin bit of kite string hanging down which he must have used to release his rope. There was no way that we could re-rig the climb, so I set off towing a rope up an easy route where the walls pinched in. I had scrambled up about 5 or 6 metres when I came across a through-bolt sticking out of the wall. This had a nut on the end of the exposed thread, but no hanger plate. Without a spanner or plate there was no way that I could use this to put in some protection to continue upwards. The climb to the top looked straight-forward but not worth doing without being properly belayed from below. I made my excuses and came back down to join Nick.

Heading downstream we passed Paul re-rigging a ladder down a slippery climb that formerly had a bit of rope on it. It is apparent that the Home Close diggers have put in a fair amount of work putting fixed aids on obstacles that the cave divers chose to use brute force and ignorance to overcome. Leaving Roger to keep Paul company, Nick, Annie and I climbed up into the Generation Game and then back down into Vindication Streamway (Wigmore 10). Progressing down the streamway I had a look around for potential leads that might have been missed on previous visits. I guess that my lighting had improved over whatever dive torches I'd be using last time as I spotted an unclimbed aven opposite an inlet passage that we had overlooked. It looked an easy ascent to start off with and there was a small flow of water coming out of it - since we've left the bag of rope behind then it seemed prudent not to start up it. Beyond this point the stream flowed down some little cascades to a point where it is usually necessary to swim for a few body lengths as the river occupies the whole width of the passage and is out of depth. I managed to avoid this by straddling the walls and lunging for dry land on the other side.

Just beyond this was a short drop down which a hand line had been rigged before an aqueous descent through boulders to the top of Slime Rift which was once more deserving of its name than it is today. Even so, the place is a maelstrom of water and, forewarned, I had pulled up the hood of my oversuit to stay dry for the descent of the pitch. A short section of streamway follows before a maze of boulders must be negotiated to gain another short section of open streamway leading to the terminal boulder choke dubbed Good Bye Bob Davies.

It felt strange to be at the "end" of Wigmore Swallet without having to cave dive to get there. I clambered up into the start of the route over the top of the boulders that Chris, Stu, John and I had started digging in 2008. Memories of our trips to Wigmore came flooding back, both happy and sad (John died whilst cave diving in September of 2008 and Chris, Dave Garman and I had later scattered Tony Jarratt's ashes at the end of the cave after he had succumbed to cancer). The last time I had been there, I had left a waterproof box containing a cheap multi-meter that I'd used to check the condition of the bang wire. I wanted to bring the box out as it was worth more than its contents and might be useful for other purposes. Unfortunately the blue box wasn't where I had left it and had probably been washed away over the intervening years. I scrambled back down to the streamway and joined Annie and Nick who were hauling rocks out of a dig which

followed the right hand wall of the passage and had gone in several body lengths to a point where it was possible to see down into an open passage which would bypass the awkward up and down route that we had pioneered eight years previous. Some big blocks were extracted before we decided to pack up and head out.

I brought up the rear and had to wait for Nick and then Alice to clear the climb up into the Generation game from above the downstream end of sump 9. The ladder was hung down the pitch (which I had first free-climbed from the bottom up in 2008) and over the ledge above the stream as this made getting up the first part easier. I had just about reached the top of the ladder when the boulder that it went over just below the belay slipped a couple of inches. I cautiously climbed the last few feet and pondered what to do: I couldn't leave the boulder in precariously balanced but I wasn't sure where it would end up if I tried to drop it down the pitch. I pulled up the ladder and rope and put them to one side before (after taking a firm hold of the belays at the top of the pitch) leaning out and giving the rock a good kick with the heel of one foot...

Crash! The boulder slipped away from its position and sailed out into the void before landing on the ledge just above the stream below, missing (I hoped) the remains of an old ladder left there from 2009. From what I could see, the rock looked much more stable in its new resting place and maybe it could be tipped over into the streamway to provide a useful step up onto the ledge? (This was done on a later trip) It occurred to me that there was a possibility that we had overtaken Paul & Roger in Wigmore 10 so I lowered the ladder and rope that I had pulled up back down the pitch - the ladder didn't reach the water so anyone behind me would have to climb the remaining two metres up onto the ledge the hard way.

Back in Young Bloods Inlet, I met up with Annie & Nick, who were waiting for me where the stream inlet from Home Close Hole came in. We made quick progress back to the base of the big pitch and, since I was quickest at putting my SRT kit back on, I got to be first up the pitch (even though I offered the others the chance to go ahead of me as I was likely to be slowest). On climbing up the entrance pipe, I greeted Tony with a big smile. A sharp hail storm forced me to shelter in the dairy outbuildings whilst changing before we decamped to the warm and dry Queen Victoria Inn for a de-brief over several rounds of drinks and nibbles (the first one at my expense).

Subsequent visits to Home Close Hole have seen me getting more involved with the digging activities there - not only in the lower reaches of the cave (including through into Wigmore Swallet) but also the upper dig from Annieversay towards a possible bypass to Squality Street. At the time of writing, Chris Jewell has done a couple of trips to the end where he and Nick finally bypassed the awkward up and down route to the terminal dig face - finding, in the process, my lost Pelicase (but losing its contents) buried in the silt. Most recently, Stu Gardiner, Lucy Greenwood, Pete Hellier and I went on a photographic trip when the photos which accompany this article were taken.

Accompany Photos - front cover of journal and page 25

THE NEW CLUB WEBSITE IS ON TEST AT DEV.CHELSEASPELAEO.ORG

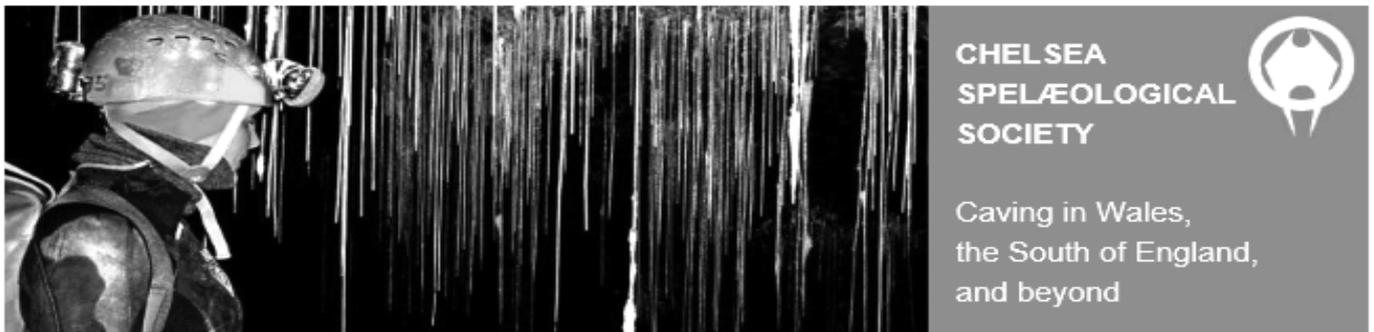
By Stuart France

The club's website publishing efforts go back to the late 1990s when Rob Murgatroyd started one and set up the chelseaspelaeo.org.uk domain, which he still appears to own though he is no longer a member of the club. Stephen Newton took over from Rob and migrated the Internet Service Provider (ISP) service to the 1and1 company, but set up the ownership of this account in his own name, debiting his personal rather than the club's bank account. Stephen is also no longer a member of the club. So this has left us with a bit of a legal problem, namely we are using a domain whose registrar and an ISP whose administrators have no legal basis for dealing with us as a club. So it was decided by the club committee shortly after I took over as webmaster in 2015 that this problem should be sorted out as soon as practical.

This was not the only issue that needed sorting out in 2015 because the club website design and content had become old-fashioned in its looks and inconsistent in its page layouts. This is because it was authored in an old version of Dreamweaver, by myself once again but back in 2006, and this toolset has since become obsolete and unavailable to the club's later webmasters who just soldiered on with it as best they could. Stephen did start building a new website, but it never got off the ground probably because the Joomla content management system he chose to use was too difficult and time-consuming.

So, as far as website style and content goes, I think we will face this same problem every 10 years, or perhaps more frequently. Our website will become obsolete in terms of its style and software tools to maintain it. I am afraid this is a fact-of-life in the fast-moving internet publishing world, the evolution of new viewing devices like mobile phones, tablets, with greater screen resolution and more tricks like portrait-layout screens. Anyway, I have just built a new website reflecting the contemporary style, a prototype one anyway for members' approval, using Xara Web Designer 10 Premium. The new theme is orange, not blue like the old one, by the way.

CHELSEASPELAEO.ORG



- HOME
- ABOUT
- ACTIVITIES
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- COTTAGE
- PUBLICATIONS
- NEWS
- GALLERY
- CONTACT
- FORUM

WELCOME

Come caving with CSS

Most of our current members live across the South of England and South Wales where we have a cottage adjacent to the Mynydd Llangatock limestone massif with some of the longest and largest caves in the country with over 65 km of explored passages.

Explore the amazing world beneath your feet

The club caters to all levels of caver and welcomes new members with both broad and specialist caving interests including photography, cave surveying, geology, science, and the discovery of new caves. Beginners can acquire practical skills and know-how, gaining knowledge about caves and caving in the company of experienced members while exploring the natural beauty of the hidden underground world.

NEWS IN BRIEF

60th Anniversary Weekend

Founded in 1956, the club will be 60 years old this summer and we will celebrate this during our summer barbecue weekend on July 17-19th.

[Read More](#)

2016 New Club Meets Programme

Mandy Voysey, our new Meets Organiser since the recent AGM, has published the club caving and social activities list for the year.

[Read More](#)



Alongside this, the club has bought a new domain called chelseaspelaeo.org but for now you will find that it re-directs browser page requests to the old website at chelseaspelaeo.org.uk. We will reverse that logic later in the year when the new domain will become the norm and the old one will do re-direction. The final stage is to fully retire the old domain and the old ISP account and settle up costs at that stage with Stephen. We have lost contact with Rob, so if anyone has his current address then please get in touch with me, as we would likewise wish to retire the old domain name and settle its subscription costs for all these years with Rob. Along with the new domain, Gary Jones has also set up a new ISP account in the club's name which debits the club's bank account. So the club is now, for the first time in almost 20 years, in full administrative and legal control of its online presence. The new website content, for the moment, is at dev.chelseaspelaeo.org and I would welcome feedback, ideas, and proof-reading corrections before it goes live. Once we are all happy with it, I will copy its content to the chelseaspelaeo.org domain and alter chelseaspelaeo.org.uk to forward browser requests there, and proceed with decommissioning the old domain and ISP account as outlined above.

This is another static website, insofar as members cannot add new content to it by themselves directly, and that is a good thing for reasons given later. We have the forum for discussions and an email address list for pushing late-breaking news. So the purpose of the new website, as visualised in its menu toolbar, is to:

*publicise the club and seek new members
set out the club meets for the current year
advertise the cottage and attract bookings
make online newsletters available in PDF
(the recent ones need the id and password to access)
catalogue and sell printed publications
view a news page and photo gallery
obtain club contacts
visit the club members' forum.*

However, I welcome content from members in the form of very short meet reports and photos because the meets list page needs to transform into a meets reports page as the year goes by. The cottage bookings are a Google calendar link which John Steven updates from outside of the website. The newsletters currently go back to January 2000 but earlier ones have been scanned by John Cooper and will be added in due course to extend the drop-down menu system. The records page reflects what stock is available to sell rather than list all that we have ever published. I have added surveys-for-sale page, but there is no system to support it yet.

The main input from members in future will be news items and photos. Now that the page template is selected and well understood, it is straightforward for me to create sub-menus under the News and Gallery headings which lead to re-worked material that was provided to me by members in the form of DOC and JPG files. I would also like a stock of general photos at 1024x768 or a bit more resolution which can be used to vary those currently of myself and Tony Donovan etc on the tiled banner at the head of each page. I will crop and set the resolution of your photos to suit the page widget, but bear in mind I need a letterbox-shaped image for the tiled banner, photos that looks right at around a 2:1 aspect ratio. For the club meets descriptions and reports, any landscape photos at around a 3:2 ratio will fit the design. The gallery pages can contain landscape or portrait photos, and I intend to experiment with other slide presenter widgets besides the one currently in use.

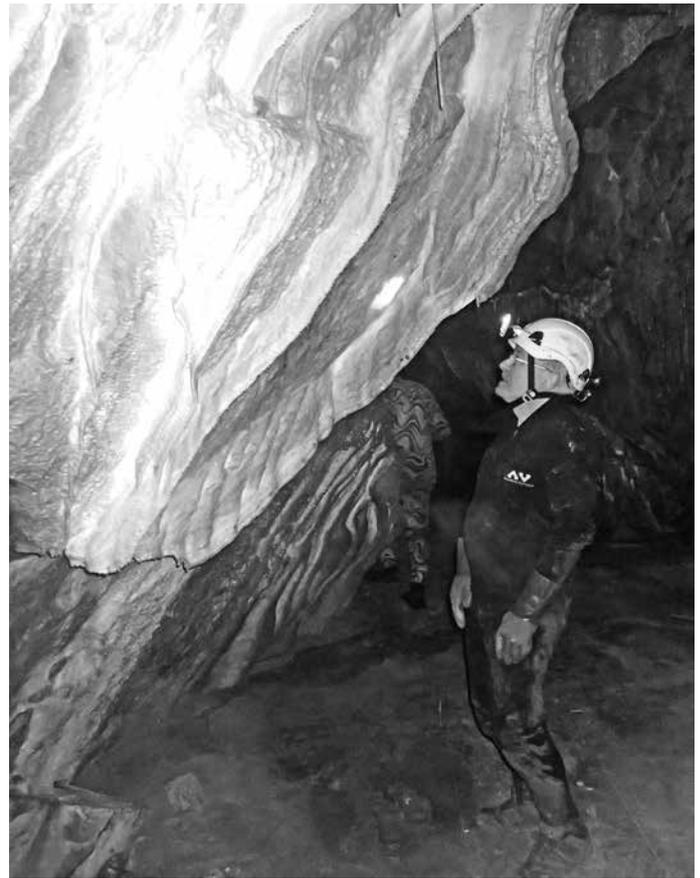
For those of you who have never produced a website, do not believe for a moment that you can just mix up a load of raw ingredients and the result will be just fine. Like any other engineering task, a website needs planning, the right tools and some design discipline to avoid creating an instant dog's breakfast or gradually mess it up over a period of time. In practical terms, it means running concurrently on your PC a copy of Xara (or equivalent production platform) alongside copies of Photoshop and Word and a browser, switching focus and content from one to the others as things develop, and having competence with each of these software packages, particularly Photoshop. Some server-side code, PHP or equivalent, might be needed to implement features such as fetching selected Newsletters in a secure fashion or raw HTML to display neat tables or the cottage calendar link. So the time and effort is quite considerable to get a tidy result like this new club website. I'm not an expert at this as I don't write websites for a living. So if anyone wants to see any radical changes then they will be volunteering themselves for the job! That said, it is the club's website, so it will become what we make of it between all of us, and I will do what I can to oblige members with ideas and materials to share with others and present it to their best advantage.

Tween Twins Hole alias Fester Dig By Nick Chipchase

Earlier this year a fine section of well decorated passage was found at this site in Burrington Combe. During April one of the diggers, Barry Wilkinson (who also digs with us at Vurley), took Peter Glanvill and I in for a photo trip. Tween Twins Hole is in the east side of Burrington Combe near Lionel's Hole. There are two entrances one is the original entry point and is now blocked. Beyond the gate lies twenty five metres of dug out tube ending in a small chamber. Dropping down here leads to the ten metre deep "Stannah Stair Rift", initially an awkward roped climb then an inclined ladder pitch. At the bottom a muddy blasted squeeze leads into " Golden Oldies Day Out ". This begins the finely decorated section and is the place where oversuits and boots come off. The larger passage runs for seventy five metres until the final chamber " Two Amigos "is met. The last few metres of cave get a bit muddy so tourist trips end before that point. Looking at the fragile floor deposits near the end I was glad to comply with that. There are many impressive formations in the cave including some macro botryoidal stalagmites. Of most note are the fragile floor gour which are impossible to miss even when treading carefully. At one point it is necessary to guide people through as the formations are so close. A lovely encrusted straw dips into a gour pool happily well away from the marked route. Another oddity here is the huge number of dead flies deposited in the stal formations making some look weirdly spotty.

I ended up with 85 photos of the cave including macro and Olympus Live Composite Mode. The latter, for me, is making photography so much easier as I need just a tiny extendable tripod and the Olympus TG4 Camera. (See thread on UK Caving in the photographic section). To be honest I think the discoverers have a huge problem on their hands now in trying to protect this fragile environment. Sadly more sloppy mud lies on the floor beyond the point where boots are removed. At the moment trips are being limited to three visitors and one trip a week. One would hope the floor dries out a bit later in the Summer months.

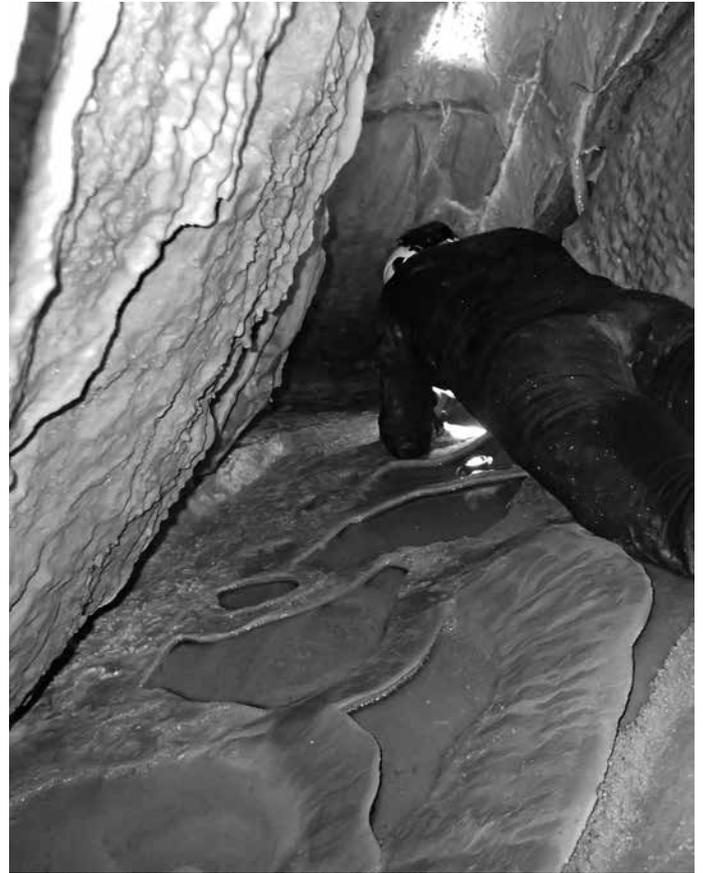
Photography Nick Chipchase



Reservoir Hole Update

In mid March I received a report from Carleton University in Ottawa regarding the stalagmite sample taken from the base of the choke below Trapdoor Chamber. The sample was taken from the bottom of the choked section of passage that formed part of the area between Skyfall and the route up to Trapdoor Chamber. Surprisingly the sample dated to 10.2 thousand years or early Holocene. It would seem that the choke and subsequent stalagmite flow formed just after the last ice age and is very much younger than the 300,000 year old Frozen Deep.

I was going to write up the GB drone photo trip but after two Mendip cavers decided to cause a fuss about it I think it best to wait until the issue has been clarified with Natural England who control the Cheddar Catchment SSSI. To me it seems that the CCC can make rules about access to GB but they are twisting a section of the SSSI guidelines to support their case. In effect NE have no anti drone policy and have assessed the case for their use for scientific research in various environments.



Wigmore Swallet



Jiuxing Scenic Area *By Frank Longwill*

Over the winter I was away climbing and caving in Laos, Thailand and China. I visited a lot of caves. Here is the story of one of them...

I wake early and kill the alarm to avoid disturbance to my dorm mates. It hadn't been a good night. The snorer had sounded like a suffocating pig. It had taken a good 10 seconds of violent bed shaking to silence him. Back at the CSS hut we have a water pistols for this type of occurrence.

I check the required tackle, a Kunming city map with a series of Chinese characters scribbled on it; East bus station, Yilaang County, Jiuxiang Scenic Area and Kunming Cloudland hostel.

The hostel staff had helped me prepare the night before. Hostel staff are the eternal saviors of linguistically challenged travellers in China.

Fortunately the city buses have normal numbers on them as well. The driver says something to me. "East bus station" I reply. He looks equally baffled. I pay 1 Yuan (10p) and I take my seat.

After about an hour the high rises have been replaced by low-rise tatty industrial units and vast yards of construction machinery. An English bus station sign indicates that phase 1 is nearly complete. I hand the ticket girl a note from the hostel staff and pay 25 Yuan for my ticket. I examine the ticket. Bus

leaves in 5 minutes so no time to go outside and photograph the distant skyscraper glinting orange as the sun struggles through the mist. At the stands I can't match the scrawled characters with a bus so I return to the ticket checking girl and I am installed on the (hopefully) correct bus.

Check my characters. Eventually I match a scribbled character on my map with something on the ticket. I settle back to appreciate the view. Forested hills inter spaced with factories, allotments, high rises, water towers and villages once tranquil but now surrounded by the modern world. The allotments are picturesque ancient agricultural systems modernised with plastic sheeting in places. Tall coppice flanking them. All this viewed through a haze of pollution. On my previous china trip I was away from this a lot as I was high in the eastern end of the Himalayas but here it's stark. The pollution is an often cited criticism of China but they do at least try. Clearly in many areas they have a long way to go. Western countries trying to claim moral high ground should maybe look at the hell they have created in the Middle East before they become to vocal.

Everywhere in Kunming solar heats the water. The electric moped is the most used form of personal transport. These almost silent machines are everywhere. Not restricted to the cycle lane they are on the pavements and run intersections at will. The lights are normally off to save power. You have to be





A lift in which fighting and jumping are prohibited whisks me into a canyon. A short boat ride takes us past some nice flowstone formations on the overhanging walls of the gorge. It would make a superb deep water solo venue in high summer. After about 100m the boatman turns and returns. Hmm the sign said 600m available for boating. Oh well I am in China.

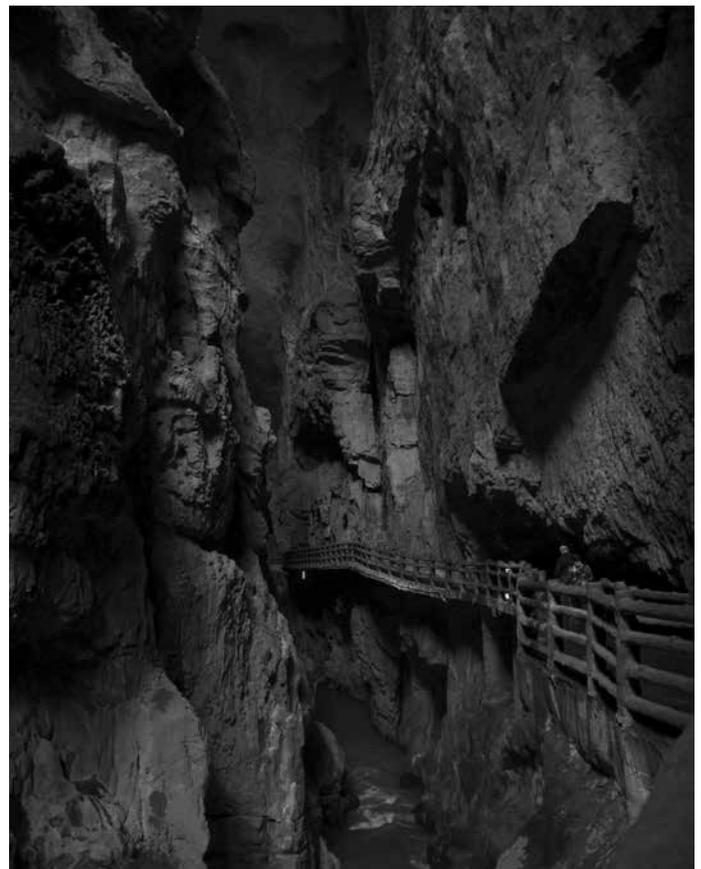
The disappointment is short lived however. The walkway now takes me along the side of the gorge in a blasted niche . The gorge is about 15m wide and 60 deep with the river thundering below. After 100m or so I spot an illuminated roof 90m above my head. After a few 100m the walkway crosses the stream Ahead the river exits and the gorge becomes unroofed. Beams of sunlight illuminate a waterfall coming in from above. The exit must be nearly 100m high. Chinese tourists help provide scale for pictures. The route takes a fine 4x2m abandoned passage, attractive fingers of rock protruding from the ceiling and floor . After a bit this enters a large entrance chamber. A small fish tank houses some Regal Headed blind cave fish and glass cabinets hold a wide selection of cave mineral specimens for sale- £300- 4 grand. I exit past the gift shop. The sky is visible but I am basically still in the cave with sheer rock on all sides. A sign indicates that I should visit Twin Waterfalls before Fairy cave. The English is bad, it could be saying visit Fairy cave first. I start walking down the steps to Twin Waterfalls not entirely convinced it's the right way.

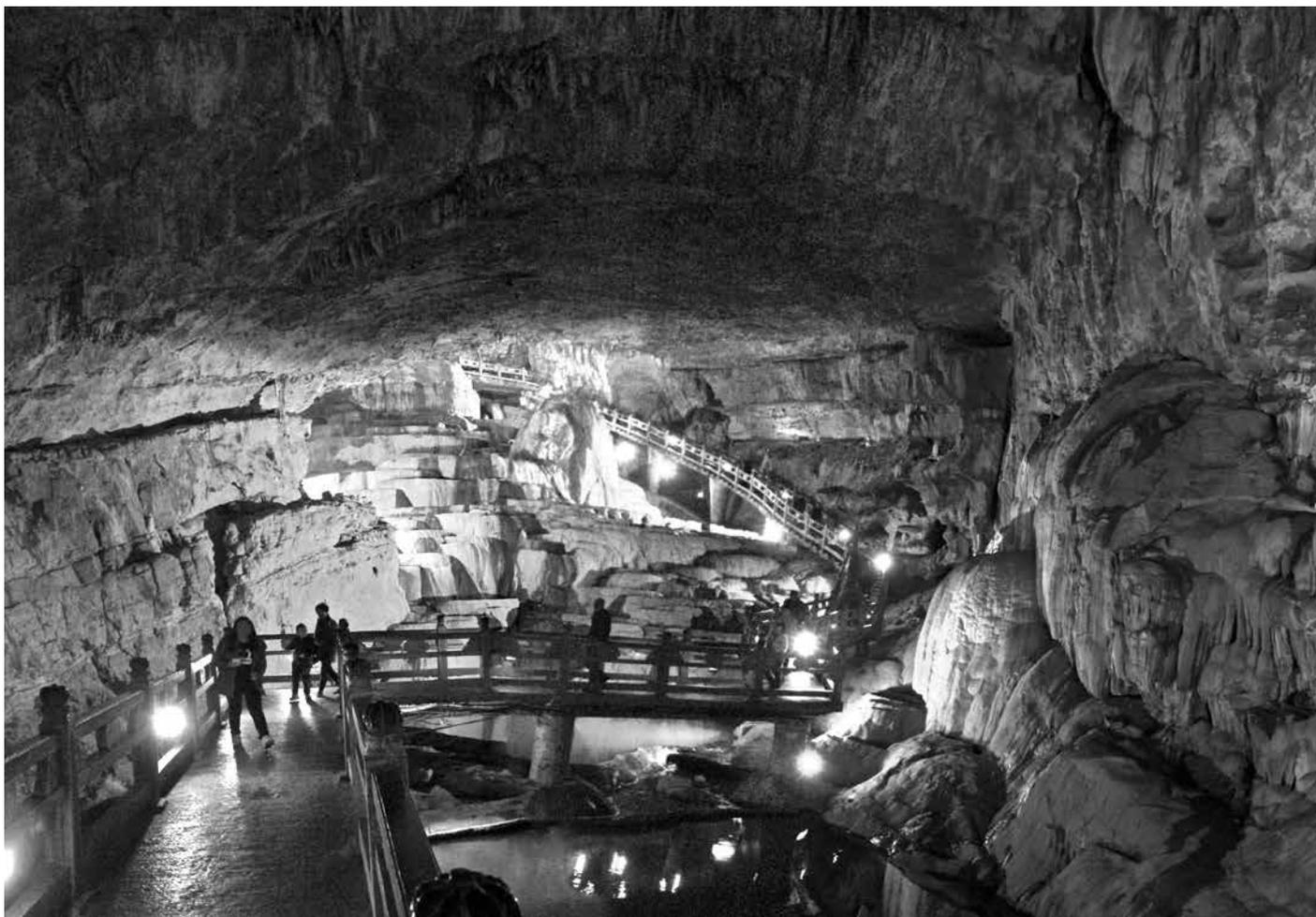
very careful not to get taken out by one of these. If only Sir Clive had launched his C5 in china.

The bus pulls off the highway into Yilang town. At an intersection the driver hits the horn and swings into the opposite lane and runs a red light to hang a U-turn . A police car sits in the traffic, obviously not bothered. Another ticket window and the appropriate symbol clarifies my mispronunciation. Spotting the Kunming symbol on a departures board I conclude that the last bus home is at 20.10 . Things are going well.

After about an hour off driving past plant nurseries cement works and increasingly prevalent agriculture we climb up out of the worst of the pollution. The bus stops to drop passengers off at the village. We seem to be waiting for something. The driver shouts angrily into his phone . A couple of minutes later a guy turns up on a moto bike and starts offloading some boxes of ceramic tiles onto the pavement. Buses also provide delivery services here. The driver shouts angrily and he starts unloading to a spot on the road adjacent to the door . I muck in to speed things up.

Cargo delivered the bus whisks me back down the road to the scenic area. £10 and I am in.





The thunder of water and vast size of the approaching cavern draws me on and soon I am on a platform gazing back up at twin 35m waterfalls. Behind me a vast cavern leads to an impressive set of gours. Coloured lighting illuminates attractive grottos high in the walls it's an awe inspiring place. As I found In Tham Nam Eng (my first coloured lighting cave) it doesn't really n"spoil it, it just" alters the experience. The show cave route leaves the stream to visit the gours and now continues past fine stal bosses and columns in a 20 x 20 passage. This terminates at some toilets and an area for ethnic minority performance from the locals. Apparently there's an opportunity to have a 100m sliding pole experience but its 20 quid so I don't bother investigating. Locals with sedan chairs are offering to carry people up the 352 steps . I start to realise I've probably missed The Fairy cave. I consider heading back but laziness kicks in and I head up the steps through a blasted tunnel. This comes out into a fine series of 8x3 passage with " bendy stalactites". The stal covered roof is indeed festooned with short but fine pop corn and helictites. This leads to a fine tall rift and an exit. This is the end. I have the option of paying extra to return to the car park by horse or chairlift. I try and return the way I came but a

security guard is having none of it. Despite missing Fairy cave it's been a fantastic experience. Ok it was a show cave but the sheer size and variety of the caverns coupled with the effect of seeing such vast spaces illuminated has left me feeling reborn just like a visit to a good wild cave. Back at the car park a waiting shuttle bus whisks me back to Yilang. The smog, or was it mist is lifted and the seemingly chaotic planning regulation free Chinese landscape is revealed in glorious technicolour. In the same vista you will have a power station ,luxury housing developments ,vast fields of poly tunnels, small allotments, ramshackle dwellings, ancient irrigation and terracing systems. The modern highway slices through the landscape carrying everything from ancient trucks belching smokescreens to massively taxed high end imported luxury 4x4s .As we approach the eastern bus station the bright low sun illuminates a similar chaotic mix of old and new .As I leave the station one of the chaotic hord of taxi and Hotel touts follows me firing something unintelligible. I duck into a dumpling place and all is calm. "bowser gowser" the staff and dinners smile at my bad pronunciation but understand. 5 seconds later 2 plates steamed doughy pork filled loveliness are in front of me. Tranquility returns. Thank you China.

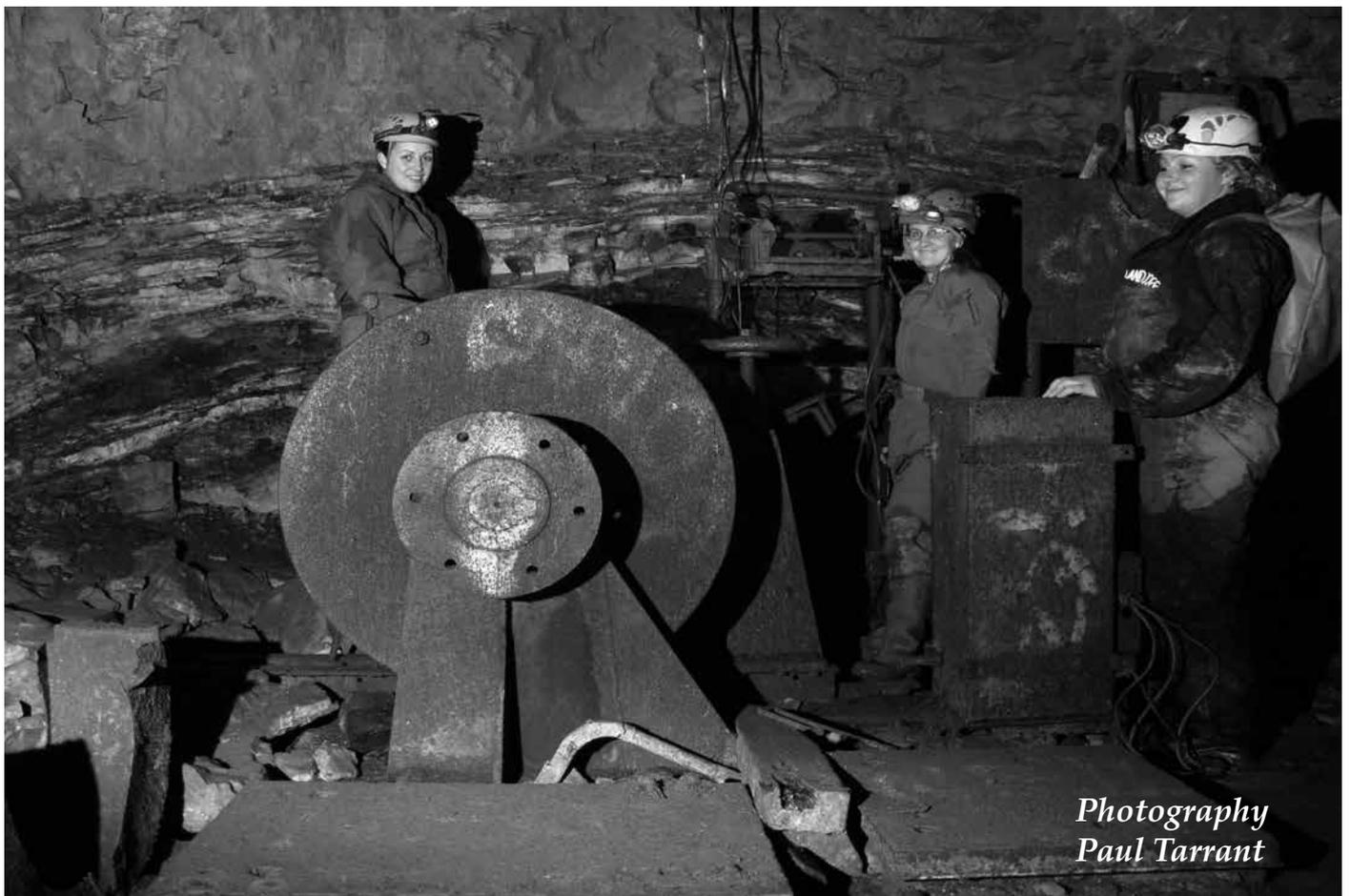
Photography
Frank Longwill

CSS evening trips to the Silica Mines

Four of us visited the Silica Mines near Glynneath as a quickly arranged evening trip. The rain managed to ease a little as we got changed and we walked up the hill from the Dinas Rock car park rather than try using the wet slippery path in the Sychryd Gorge. Locating the mine was simple - just head for the roar of the waterfall by the entrance.



We explored the main lower adit to its end and then progressively worked our way up through the passages until we came to the older pillar and stall workings high up in the rock strata. This area was interesting but we were running out of time so could only pay a cursory visit. There were several entrances to the surface but we were left being unsure where on the surface we were exactly, so we retreated back inside the mine to exit via the original main entrance. This was a good 2 hour trip done by Becky Healey, Liz Winstanley, Claire Vivian and Paul Tarrant.



*Photography
Paul Tarrant*

Yorkshire Easter 2016 *By Chris Tomlin*

Participants: Matt and Mandy Voysey, John Newton, Adrian Fawcett and Chris Tomlin

Friday: Short Drop Cave and Gavel Pot

This was an interesting trip. We first went to Gavel Pot to rig the traverse to come out of Short Drop. At first we thought there was another party down Gavel as there was a rope on the entrance pitch when we got there. Looking more closely, we could see that the rope was attached to the P-hangers via small loops of rope rather than maillons. Adrian did a sterling job of rigging the connecting traverse from the end of Short Drop cave (it is the sort of traverse that isn't hard but you are glad there's a rope there). We then went back out of Gavel, over the moor and down Short Drop. At one point we elected for a flat-out grovel in the stream to avoid a nasty tight oxbow. According to the guidebook there are several side passages and even a complex junction off the main route but we hardly saw any sign of side passages - perhaps they are at roof level? After some distance of varied going along a wide/narrow/wide etc stream and a mighty impressive rock bridge - in fact an arc of wedged boulders - we arrived at the internal pitch in Short Drop. We rigged this as a straightforward pitch due not all of us being able to descend double ropes (only Adrian had a rack so we made him derig). Then a zip up the traverse lines into the bottom of the impressive Gavel entrance and off down the pitches. All of the pitches were already rigged with the same rope technique as the first pitch, so I guess divers are active in the sump (we saw a tacklebag near the bottom of the cave with a wetsuit in it). Not knowing this we carried all the necessary rope to the 3rd pitch but we used the divers rope to the bottom (there are two nasty deviations on the last pitch). We also looked up a side passage or two but went the wrong side to find the decorated passages - we found the dull one instead. The sump in Gavel Pot is very impressive - it looks very deep - but it was a bit spray-lashed there so we didn't linger. At the awkward traverse from the head of the third pitch I climbed up well above the belay to do the traverse, only realising there weren't any holds to do that so I sorted out the cows' tails, flopped back on the rope and dragged myself along the traverse like a sack of spuds. Adrian went on ahead and derigged the pitch in Short Drop - he had almost done the traverse as well when we caught up. Then out, up the hill and a bracing Leck Fell change. We saw no other cavers that day.

Friday: A long walk in Ribblesdale (John N)
I decided that the good weather was too good an opportunity to miss so I left the others to go

underground and chose to talk a walk from the YSS hut. I followed the Ribble Way North to Horton and continued up past Sell Gill Holes. At this point there are two options and I took the Ribble Way to Birkwith and carried on with a short detour to Browgill Cave and on to Far Gearstones. Heading East from here on the Dales Way leads to the Pennine Way and this was taken back to Old Ing and Sell Gill Holes again. I managed to locate both entrances to Red Moss Pot en route. It is worth noting that the Ribble Way is a much nicer path on this section as it gives uninterrupted views over the valley and the Pennine Way doesn't. From Sell Gill I decided I did not want to go up Pen-y-Ghent so I just retraced my steps back to the YSS and a much needed cup of tea.

Saturday: Lancaster Pot/Cow Pot (too wet for Top Sink)

We saw frogspawn on the way over the fell, first of the year. We rigged but did not descend Lancaster Hole. It was tricky as there were two other ropes already there (Red Rose and Orpheus). I had never descended Cow Pot and was a little apprehensive about finding the way and about the tight bit. I have the 1975 guidebook which describes every dead-end passage in Cow Pot in minute detail (there is apparently another way into Lancaster now from the bottom of the first pitch in Cow Pot but I don't have that guidebook). The 1975 book makes route finding seem more difficult than it is. I was rigging for a change and at the bottom of the entrance pitch there was a sloping tube leading to a squeeze with a huge draft coming out of it. I thought this might be the way on. The tube didn't look too tight and I dropped straight through after taking my SRT gear off. After this there was an awkward climb through a rift, tight at the top but with a lack of footholds where it widened out below and then a low crawl and a streamway full of brown water in pools, it was like wading through tea. Shortly after this we got to the main pitch in Cow Pot. This starts as an awkward traverse with your upper body in a rift and your feet scrabbling around for grip on a gully lip while you try not to think about the drop beneath. There is a difficult rebelay on a hanging wall pitch then a y-hang with a distinct lack of footholds. Just below this y-hang you arrive into the enormous void of Fall Pot, I found it a bit scary especially with the creaking from the dry SRT rope. We reassembled, took off our SRT gear and dropped down the boulders into Main Stream. Three other cavers came up from Main Stream meanwhile, think they were Orpheus.

We went downstream to Main Sump (another big foamy swimming pool). We were thinking of going up Waterfall Passage but it was too wet, so it was Wilf Taylors instead. I thoroughly enjoyed this part of the cave - all the other times in Lancaster I had been on a through trip to or from County or similar - and the double climbs up on in-situ knotted ropes were good too. Wilf Taylors has a remarkable shape to it; it looks to have been eroded by very fast-flowing water. We had a look at the sump from Bull Pot of the Witches and made our way back to Fall Pot via Montague West Passage - this was a bit low for my liking but at least you get back to Fall Pot at mid-level. I found the climb down the fixed ropes back to where we had left the SRT ropes a bit greasy. Mandy and I went out via Lancaster Hole (I pruisiked up a fixed line from the bottom of the pot rather than facing the greasy rope again) while the men went back out of Cow Pot and Matt had a fun time going up a dead-end climb off the low crawl - he says lots of people must do that as the wrong way is well worn. The timings worked out well as we both emerged at the surface at roughly the same time - I found it odd to have Lancaster Hole to ourselves as ours was the only rope on the pitch on the way out - and ta to Adrian for showing us the way to Lancaster from Fall Pot and the Columns. Busy lad is he.

Sunday: Mistral Hole

This was our day off. No dangling around on ropes! Another trip to Bull Pot, hey it looks much the same as yesterday, then a tramp over Casterton Fell. We passed Link Pot on the way, it looks a bit tight that entrance rift, must do it someday. Arriving at Mistral, we looked at the climb down which is slippery but the holds are large. It is impressive how much work has been done to make the crawl passable to large to very large people. We met a party of five just as we emerged from the crawl. Think that was Orpheus again. They gave us good advice regarding what to visit - especially Gour Hall. So off we trogged to Dusty Junction. We're learning this cave now and know the route to Link Pot although it is apparently a bit desperate (low, wet and muddy). We went straight on at the junction to find ourselves in a peculiar little chamber with a crumbling bank of conglomerate; it looked just like a stone wall built underground. Exits from the chamber were a bit on the small side so we went back and had a glop through Hall of the Mountain King then a look at the water thundering down the Cigalere streamway, but it looked a bit on the wet side to do. On the way back Matt had a good look in the roof of the Hall and noticed digs and climbs heading upwards. Then, following the directions from Orpheus, we went off down and eventually got to Gour Hall via a rather crawly passage where I got a bit whiny about

the consistent low-ness and crawly-ness. Back at Dusty Junction once more we had a bite to eat and a chat & Matt eventually stomped off after too long listening to the oldsters going on about Dreadful Mobile Phones and The Modern World. Then an easy trip out and a stroll across the fell back to Bullpot Farm.

Monday: Washfold Pot

I had thought this was an easy Sunday trip. It isn't. I had idly wondered what it was doing in 'Not for the Faint Hearted' guidebook but even they describe it as an evening trip. Anyway after an amusing walk up the fell we got the two SRT bags and ourselves kitted with SRT gear and descended via a nasty free-climb into the entrance streamway. It was a lot tighter than I thought it would be, and I abandoned the trip after a few feet at a narrow bend (the NFTFH book says not to put on your SRT gear until you get to the first pitch. Sound advice). It wasn't even that tight, I just wasn't prepared to fight my way into the cave. The others continued, through a bedding-plane squeeze and down the first pitch which was apparently very wet and with very cold water. They turned around at a lovely inviting low wet crawl. Meanwhile I washed my gear and had just decided to see if I could get to the first pitch without SRT gear when the others returned - if Mandy can get through the bedding-plane squeeze in SRT gear then I might without it. Worth a try some sunny day while strolling past.

That was a good trip - Gingling next time? Time to visit Wharfedale even? Time for me to buy a more recent guidebook - preferably one from this century.



The Upper Hand

By Gary Kiely

"Good Evening Chris

Are you about next weekend and do you fancy joining a more rotund Gary than you remember underground. Preferably a large Mendip cave"

That's EXACTLY how my text message read.

And this was how Chris Seal's text message read.

"Lee's suggests a trip down upper Flood to Neverland. From recollection its not entirely spacious"

Did you notice that there was something subtle lost in translation? and that he was blaming Lee for the choice of cave. However I'm a brave little solider and pushed to the back of my mind my last trip into Upper Flood with Lee Hawkswell and Joe Duxbury last July where that cave broke me.

We changed at MCG and it was here that the first sign of impending doom occurred. One of my indestructible miner's knee pad straps broke, so I had to change the position of the good strap and really tighten it up, slowing down the blood supply to my lower leg would be fine.

We wandered across to the entrance. It was a daft day to go caving as it was really warm and sunny. I actually like the entrance crawl to this cave as its slightly downhill, nice dimensions, a bit of weaving, and a handful of low bits to stretch out in. One little wriggle between some stal at the end of the crawl and you slide down the flowstone into Midnight Chamber. It's a nice chamber with an interesting roof of various forms of stal but I'm sure it's often missed, as it's a pass through chamber, with people on a mission to be somewhere else. We climbed down into the stream way and ducked below the tape to keep away from the straws above the stream. This cave is well protected by tape, and it's just used in sensible places so it does not feel like you're on a train track. The stream way widened into another chamber with a gravel based stream which meandered gently under The Canopy, it's a bit like a giant sombrero made of flowstone. The next climb up to the right requires a little consideration, like how long are my legs and if I stretch that far will I rip the back side of my oversuit. The next section used to be called The Lavatory Trap but is now called Not in the brochure, it's a bit mean really and a bit of a shock to the system as by this time you have gotten into the nice rhythm of wandering through a welcoming stream. This feature includes a plunge pool, a flat deep crawl, more crawling but a bit sideways, then up and down stuff and then when it's finished, you're spat out into Sludge Junction. The next chamber of note is the Red Room, which had rusty coloured stal on the walls. I may have missed a section but the 3D squeeze U bend is very fresh in my mind, its deceptively tricky, especially if you somehow end up on your back in the middle



of the manoeuvre, some people learn but I did the exact same thing the last time I went through it and on the way back this time. Apparently It's ideally approached on your side.... I wouldn't know.

By this point we are well into the bolder choke and the scene of much puffing and panting, and a few choice words, you really earn your right of passage here, don't get me wrong its not very difficult but you want to have your cave head on and leave the heebie geebie monsters at home.

A narrow rift on the right hand side forces you to lie down on your side and snake along feet first for about 3 meters, then legs have to slither over a boulder into a vertical drop, but keeping the body high out of the narrowing wedge. The last time I went through here I slipped into the narrow section as gravity pulled the rest of me, a short fight ensued between the narrow gap and my not so narrow ribs. Mind you my ribs were narrower for the rest of that trip as I dislocated 2 ribs from my sternum. Naturally I was very careful this time round and got through with no issues.

Next, to the Departure Lounge. It just looks wrong, it looks like it would be more at home in Aggy in South Wales, It's a wide, high, and very long chamber of a rectangular shape. The cave then reverts back to Mendipiness and crawling ensues. Next big thing was Walk the Plank it's a large chamber with very black rock, and the stream cascading down part of it. It was nice to catch breath here and just look around, very different to the rest of the cave. The way on is to climb down and switchback under yourself through boulders until you are on the bottom of the chamber. Not far after the bottom of the black boulders is the climb back into normal coloured rock and the actual plank which is a narrow seemingly unsupported piece of rock of about 2M long, it's an unusual feature and worthy of giving the chamber its name.

I was really enjoying myself, we were making the right amount of progress, having time to look around and the twinge in my back I had for the last two weeks was gone. Ive always said that Caving is good for curing muscle aches and colds.

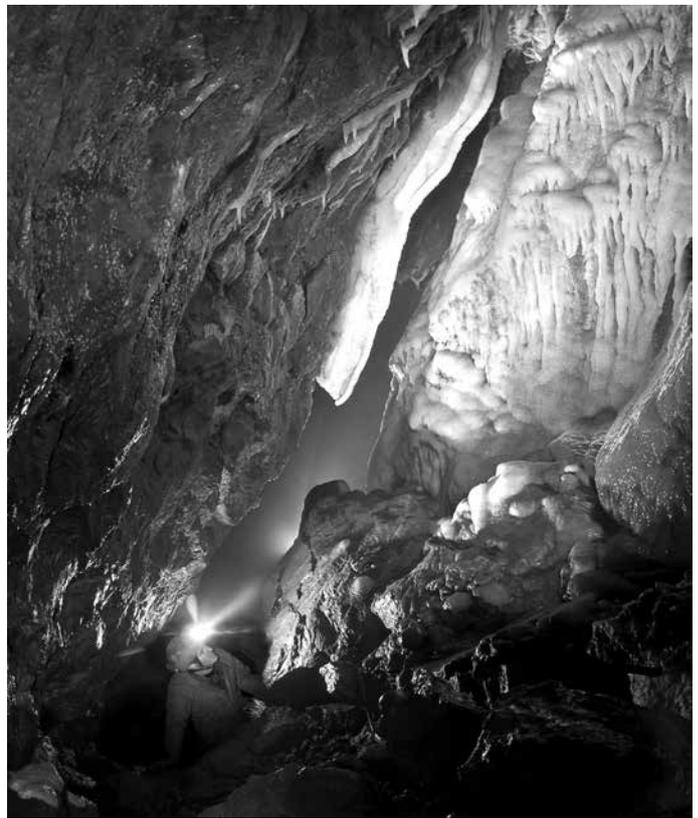
Between Walk the Plank and Royal Icing junction is a fair way and I cant remember any details of

it other than Chris had a ballerina moment and recovered it without any change in pace, it was an impressive manouver . Royal Icing Junction was another Welsh invasion of Mendip, long, high wide and carpeted with boulders. Passage names here are very clever and witty, like East Passage and West passage and South Passage..... come on mendip can do better than that! Getting to the end of Royal Icing Passage there is a hole in the wall on the right and into what feels like another room it's a bit odd it seems to share the same roof space as Royal Icing Passage with a serving hatch to climb through. We turned back on ourselves a bit here and Lee showed us the old Neverland entrance which for conservation reasons is no longer used. We continued downwards and thankfully a bypass to Neverland had been dug, I mean who wants to walk through all the stal that is blocking the way, its such a bloody inconvenience! The bypass is long and comfortably wide and occasionally very low,..... and did I mention it was long. In my head it was long and I'm biased so it was long. We emerged in a standy uppey chamber. However my back ache was biting again and I lay down and stretched out for a few minutes It didn't seem that long before we got to a narrowing rift with some god forsaken awkard climbs, you know the ones that look easy until you commit yourself and find they have no hand or foot holds, I found the walrus move worked eventually here. Popped out into the changing area of Neverland, complete with scrubbing brushes.

Except for camping in Darren, I have never taken off my suit underground, it just seemed wrong. When lifting my wellies to clean all the grooves before access could be granted I could feel cramp coming on... My personal chat going on in my head was " come on body, don't give up now , it's a long way out"

Neverland is a nature showcase and after each corner covered with perfect curtains came another area that laughed in the face of the last section. It is a very odd feeling walking on this sharp stal. It almost felt like a fairytale snowy winters walk where the snow everywhere has frozen over. There is a strange silence there unlike other caves, and only now by writing this, I can put my finger on it. Awe and respect ...That's it, a bit like walking into an empty church, it kinda takes your voice away. People who know me well, also know I am a bit uncomfortable around stal and its delicateness and want to get on with the physical rufty tuftyness of caving . This was different, it was like some of the mad places you imagined in your minds eye while reading journey to the centre of the earth.

Anyhow, like every good book that chapter had to end and we headed back to get changed into normal caving attire. This is the point where kneepad 2 strap 1 broke. Unbelievable! Ive had them for 8 years or



so and they never missed a beat. So now I have two kneepads held on by one strap each extra tight and restricted blood flow to both legs.

Coming back was more exhausting than I had anticipated, and I could not control my whinging. It was embarrassing because I've caved with people in the past (non Chelsea people of course) who whinged when they got tired and all I was thinking in my head was "is that noise going to help them or anybody around them in any way whatsoever?" But this was Karma and I was suffering for my old attitudes. My back was prodding me all the time, even when Chris did a return to the ballerina and recovered in style yet again it did not make me chuckle in quite the same way. I made a seven course meal out of several of the climbs. I actually did them better with dislocated ribs on my last trip.

Just before the departure lounge, kneepad 1 strap 2 had enough and snapped, So an elbow pad at full stretch will fit on a knee in desperation and the pins and needles that follow do have an advantage that you loose some degree of feeling. Lee and Chris were very patient with me and let me rest when I needed. The entrance crawl did seem a bit unfair but hearing Lee playing with the locking Mechanism of the door was music to my ears.

We exited into brilliant sunshine and the feeling of achievement started to wash over me. Its true we appreciate this sport more when we have finished it for the day. Upper Flood to Neverland is a long and full on trip, and you have to work for it but it is so rewarding. Thinking back to my first trip in u Upper Flood, when I was caving every weekend without fail, I was in much better condition than I am now, and even then I can remember feeling that

CSS Meets List 2016 *By Mandy Voysey*

June 17th- 19th - Summer BBQ at Whitewalls - with a trip to Dan Yr Ogof or anywhere else people fancy

July 2nd-9th - Jura/Doubs trip - A week of fine French caving (contact Adrian for further details)

July 15th- 17th - Mendip - Staying at the SMCC hut, BBQ Saturday, proposed trips Reservoir Hole, White Pit, and Swildon's (Organisers Mandy and Lee Hawkswell)

July 23rd - Gonzo and Mandy's 100 year Birthday Party in HRC - Not an official club trip as such, but all friends welcome. There'll be a choice of tourist caving trips to the further reaches of Daren Cilau followed by an evening of food, booze and camping at Hard Rock (contact Gonzo or Mandy if you'd like to come)

August 6th-13th - Speleo Camp at Whitewalls

August 13th-20th - Eurospeleo in Yorkshire

August 20th- 27th - Speleo Camp at Whitewalls

September 23rd-25th - Devon - Staying at the DSS hut in Buckfastleigh, caving in Baker's Pit Saturday, Sunday's trip to be decided but possibly Afton Red Rift (organiser Mandy)

October 14th-16th - Derbyshire - Staying at the Orpheus hut in Monyash. Proposed trips are Giant's Hole Round trip or Maskhill/Oxlow exchange on Saturday, and Water Icicle on Sunday (organiser Mandy)

November 4th-6th Whitewalls - Bonfire Weekend with local caving

December 2nd-3rd Whitewalls - Curry Night and caving



Gonzo & Mandy
Invite you to their combined
100th Birthday Party
Daren Cilau
on
Saturday 23rd July
For a day of digging and tourist caving,
with tea, jelly and cakes provided at
Kilburn High Road
followed by an evening party at
Hard Rock Cafe.
We'll provide a curry but bring
extra refreshments and,
if you're planning on staying the night,
bring your own sleeping bag
(karrimats are available at camp)
and take all your personal kit
out with you afterwards.
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Cottage Bookings

CSS BBQ - 17 - 19 Jun 2016

Technical Speleological Group - 15 - 17 Jul 2016

Gonzo & Mandy's 100th birthday - 22 - 24 Jul 2016

Euro Speleo pre Event - 6 - 12 Aug 2016

Euro Speleo - 13 - 20 Aug 2016

Euro Speleo post Event - 21 - 28 Aug 2016

Lincoln Caving Club - 23 - 25 Sep 2016

Imperial College Caving Club - 14 - 16 Oct 2016

South Wales CC - 21 - 23 Oct 2016

Imperial College Caving Club - 28 - 30 Oct 2016

CSS - Bonfire - 4 - 6 Nov 2016

CSS - Curry - 2 - 4 Dec 2016

Bristol Exploration Club - 16 - 18 Dec 2016

CSS Dinner and AGM weekend - 27 - 29 Jan 2017



**CSS Working
Weekends
2016**

