

Chelsea Spelæological Society Newsletter



Volume 51 No 2 February 2009
ISSN 0045-6381

CONTENTS

Page

Membership News	12
SUBS REMINDER	12
CSS WEB Forum	12
Library Additions January 2009	12
Meets List 2009/2010	13
THE FOOL IN FERNHILL by Gonzo	14
Daren Cilau - Frog Street by Adrian Fawcett	14
Helibeds	15-16
More Frogging Passage by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley	17
Note from Ex Editor	17
Officers of the Society	18
CSS Details	18
COTTAGE BOOKINGS	18

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Following AGM on Sunday 1st February the new list of Officers is shown on page 18.

ADDRESS LIST

Members will find the latest address list enclosed with this newsletter. If you are shown as **Lapsed** then you will not receive further newsletter until the Treasurer informs me you have paid your subs. Current rates are:

Full £30

Joint £43

Associate £20

Provisional £20 (for six months). Provisional members should renew when their previous subs expire or when promoted to Full membership.

CAVING INSURANCE: Whilst membership fees include non-caving public liability cover (unless already covered via another club in which case deduct £5 per person from the above) if you wish to increase this to ACTIVE CAVER level you need to send the treasurer a cheque for an additional £11.

CSS WEB FORUM

The web-based message board seems to be working well, with regular postings on a range of different topics, and the membership continues to increase, there are now 38 members. However there are a lot of people not yet using the message board who may be missing out on useful information and discussions, including trips that get organised at short notice.

Remember, the message board doesn't intrude on you by sending you emails - you just log on when you want to find out what's going on, or what everyone's talking about. If you've not yet got around to signing up, why not visit <http://cssmembers.proboards85.com> today?

LIBRARY ADDITIONS JANUARY 2009

Nothing to report.

Meets List – 2009/2010



This is an outline of the meets for this year.

February 21st – 22nd	South Wales. Draenen Round Trip.
March 28th – 29th	South Wales. Swansea Valley (DYO subject to weather).
April 4th – 5th	South Wales. Cottage building weekend.
April 25th – 26th	Derbyshire (<i>Orpheus</i>). Nettle Pot/Oxlow/Bagshaw.
May 23rd – 25th	South Wales. Otter Hole on Saturday 23 rd .
June 27th – 28th	South Wales. Decide your own trips. BBQ and Barrel on Saturday night.
July 25th – 26th	Mendip (<i>Wessex</i>). Banwell Bone/Stalactite Caves as an option on Saturday. Eastwater as another option on Saturday. Swildons on Sunday. BBQ will be arranged for Saturday night.
August 15th – 17th	Yorkshire (<i>YSS The Old School House</i>). Lost Johns/Birks Fell (Days will be confirmed when permits booked). Please contact me for any other requests.
September 26th – 27th	Hidden Earth (Location to be confirmed).
October 17th – 18th	Mendip (<i>Wessex</i>). Box Stone Mines on Saturday.
November 7th – 8th	South Wales. Agen Allwedd obscure passages. Fireworks on Saturday night.
December 5th – 6th	South Wales. Curry Extravaganza #5 on the 5 th Decide on your own trips.
January 2010 30th – 31st	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 it will be first come, first served.

John Newton, Meets Secretary

THE FOOL IN FERNHILL by Gonzo

Day after day,
Alone in Fernhill,
The digger with rocks on his back is lying perfectly still
But nobody wants to help him,
They can see that the dig face will fall,
And he wishes that he was in Balch Cave,
But be cool in Fernhill,
See the roof coming down,
While the bar through your head,
Pins your ass to the ground.

DAREN CILAU - FROG STREET by Adrian Fawcett

10/05/08 AF/FC/AS

Preliminary dig at KPs after recce in March. Spent about an hour digging and reckoned it might get bigger after a couple of metres. Agreed to make it a target for a future camp.

17/07/08 AS/FC/GK?

Not quite sure about the details as I wasn't there. I don't think much digging happened.

30/08/08 AF/AS/AW

First concerted digging effort. Broke through after about 6.5 hours to a T-junction and 30 metres of small fossil streamway. Named Frog Street and surveyed to G2.

11/10/08 AF/AS/ML/CB/SS/GK/JF/NM

Dug through the blockage at the northern end of Frog Street and subsequently a short sand-filled tube to reach a more intimidating obstacle - white stal and helictites, beyond which we could see ongoing passage in 2 directions. This junction was named "Hopping Mad" due to our frustration. With 55 metres of passage gained we retired to Hard Rock Cafe to discuss tactics over a cocktail or two.

24+25/10/08 AF/AS/AW/CB/ML

Carefully excavated a route underneath the formations. They just got better and better - some fantastic helictites here, and fortunately the best ones are relatively safe. Gained 45 metres to a descending slope into near total fill. Also found an interesting descending phreatic feature, a little too tight to get into, and named "The Inconvenient Truth" due to its initial use as a toilet! Surveyed Frog Street back to the Frog Street junction to G5.

29/11/08 ML/AF/CB/AH/MV

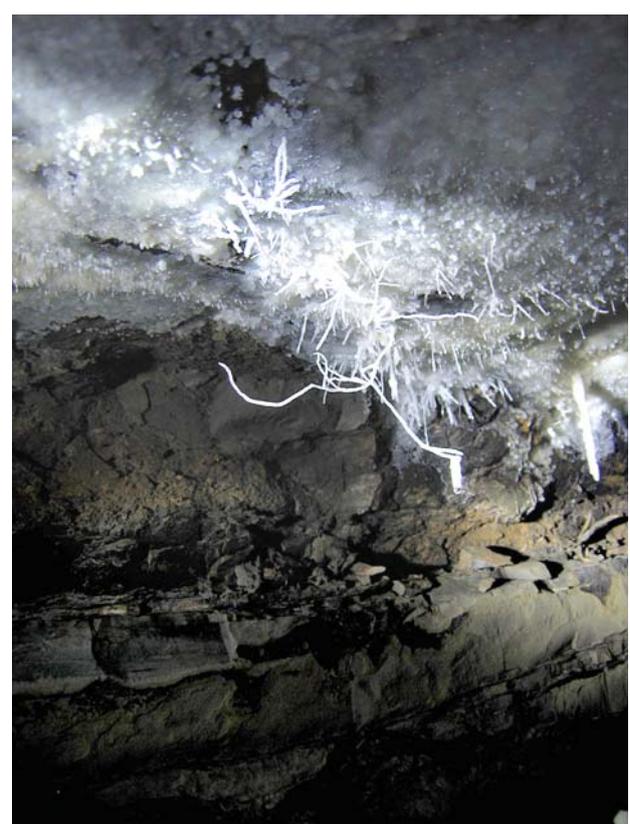
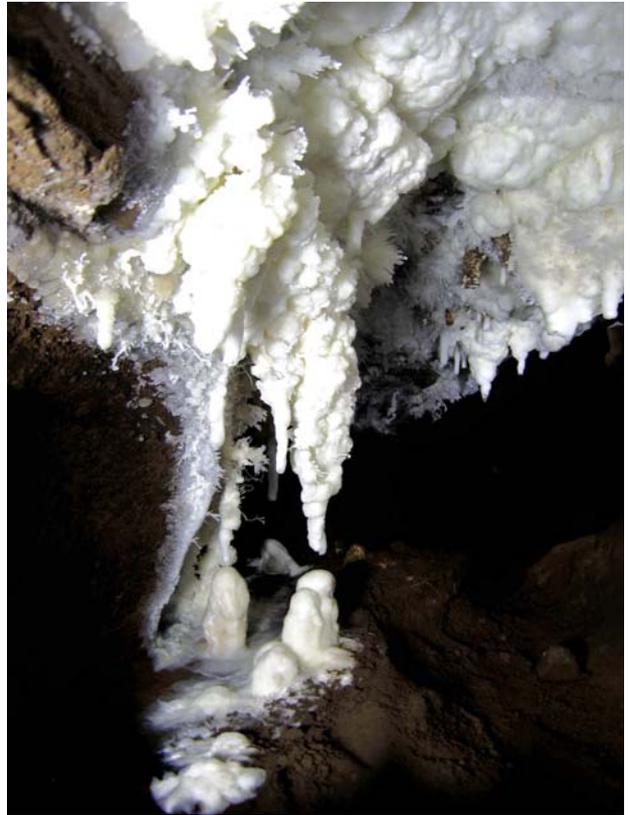
Dug the end for a full shift. By the end it was looking a little more promising but the draught had stopped and the air was getting very poor. The airflow in Frog Street doesn't seem to follow any rules that we've yet managed to work out. Also pushed the northwards dig at Hopping Mad, but it wasn't as wide open as it had appeared from a distance. Took a big chunk of rock off the constriction into T.I.T.

10/01/09 ML/AF/AH/MV/MV

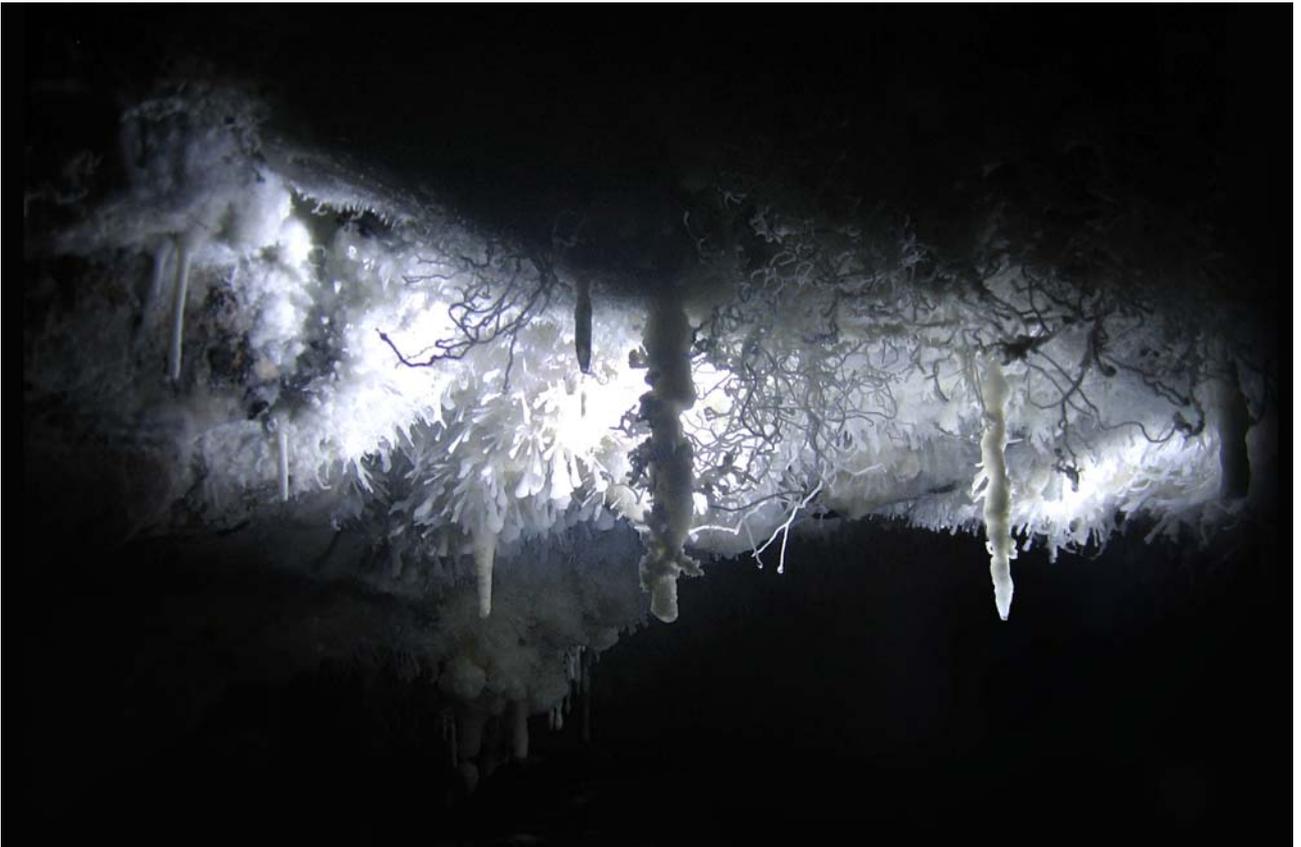
The end dig finally gave in after another 4 hours or so, and led to another constriction that held us up for another hour. Altogether we gained an estimated 80 metres to a small chamber. In the roof of this is an aven which seems to be the source of the draught. AH climbed the aven, but decided not to force his way past some rather mobile rocks about 15 metres up. AF and MV pushed the small continuation of Frog Street, around a contorted dog leg. The passage degenerates quickly and, although potentially diggable, doesn't seem to draught at all. Hopping Mad North was dug a some more, but doesn't look any more hopeful. It was possible to squeeze a bit further into T.I.T. and a view was gained of a very narrow ongoing rift.

17/01/09 AF

Took some rough compass bearings, which suggest that the aven is very close to the terminal choke in Half Mile Passage. Frog Street was draughting outwards strongly, so checked for a draught in Half Mile Passage and found that the choke here was draughting outwards strongly too. The entrance series was draughting inwards.



Photos pages 15 and 16 of Helibeds formations by Mark "Gonzo" Lumley



MORE FROGGING PASSAGE by Mark ‘Gonzo’ Lumley

Saturday the 10th of January and a glorious winter morning.

After an early start through the icy Daren entrance and a bumble through the cave we were back to dig in Frog Street.

Andy Heath and Mandy Voysey continued the northerly dig at Hopping Mad while Gonzo and Adrian Fawcett were joined by Matt Voysey beyond the Helibeds pretties at the dig at the sharp end of Frog Street.

When we left it a few weeks ago there was no draught and it was a suffocating, enthusiasm-sapping, cramped place to be. This time though the draught was coming through strongly, we were in high spirits and were able to make good progress through sandy fill with a small airspace.

Five hours and five metres later, as our stacking space was becoming alarmingly limited, we broke through. The continuation was a low crawl, two to three metres wide with some nice formations at the outset. The passage gradually enlarged until, leaving the formations behind us and reaching more bland, shattered passage, we were able to stand up in places. Fifty metres further on we were held up at another constriction.

While Matt went back to collect Mandy and Andy, Adrian and I carried on digging and an hour or so later we were all through a narrow slot into another 30 metres or so (apologies for being so vague but we had no surveying kit with us) of mostly stooping and crawling

passage ending at the base of an aven. Andy Heath, who has been digging on and off for twenty eight years without experiencing a breakthrough then broke his digging virginity by climbing and gardening the 15m aven to a vertical squeeze guarded by hanging, loose boulders above. Needless to say the earth shook for him!

Matt and Adrian then pushed the narrow, tortuous continuation below the aven for a few metres to another constriction before experiencing the delights of the 300m crawl back to Bonsai and then down to Hard Rock for an enjoyable evening (gin, grenadine and orange juice mostly!).

We broke camp on Sunday morning, packed up several rubble sacks-worth of putrid, wet clothing and sleeping bags that have been kindly left in an alcove for several years by persons unknown and left the cave after 32 hours to enjoy much-needed tea and hot showers at Whitewalls.

Needless to say we'll be back to survey, tape and resume the Frog Street extension in the near future.

Any assistance with the removal of old kit from the cave would be much appreciated. If you have stored kit at Hard Rock in bags in the past you can assume that it is moist, mouldy, aromatic mulch now.

If you'd like to join us in digging projects from Hard Rock you'll be most welcome.

NOTE FROM EX EDITOR

I would like to encourage all members to try and write something this year to go in the newsletter. It is quite a task chivvying people to get articles and I hope Mark doesn't have to be too ruthless with his arm twisting. I wish him all the best for the future and look forward to receiving the first issue from him.

John M Cooper

Officers of the Society are listed below

Chairman

Adrian Fawcett
5 Ambryn Road
New Inn
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 0NJ
(01495) 763130 (Home)
07973 815050 (Mobile)
adrianfawcett@talktalk.net

Secretary

Stuart France
The Smithy
Crickhowell
Powys
NP8 1RD
(01874) 730016 (Home)
(08700) 115772 (Work)
stuart@linetop.co.uk

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
Thattham
Newbury
Berks
RG18 9TQ
(01635) 200879 (Home)
john@k-stevens.fsnet.co.uk

Meets Secretary

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

Newsletter Editor

Mark Lumley
7 Langleys Lane
Clapton
Midsomer Norton
BA3 4DX
(01761) 419246 (Home)
markcreativeedge@btconnect.com

Librarian

Anna Northover
42 BrynGwyn Road
Newport
NP20 4JT
(01633)678833 (Home)
(0117) 950 5050 ext 4212 (Work)
(07968) 031858 (Mobile)
anna@pnorthover.freeserve.co.uk

Records Officer

John Cooper
31 Elm Close
Wells
Somerset
BA5 1LZ
(01749) 670568 (Home)
johncooper111@btinternet.com

Tackle Officer

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

Web Master

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

Whitewalls

The Hillside
Llangattock
Powys
NP8 1LG
UK

CSS DETAILS

CSS WEB site: The club has its own domain name www.chelseaspelaeo.org.uk

Chairman – adrianfawcett@talktalk.net

Treasurer – speleo@hotmail.co.uk

Cottage Warden and Survey sales – john@k-stevens.fsnet.co.uk

Librarian – anna@pnorthover.freeserve.co.uk

Meets Secretary – jnewton5@csc.com

Tackle Officer – gkiely72@mac.com

Webmaster – snewton@ukonline.co.uk

Newsletter Editor – markcreativeedge@btconnect.com

Records Officer - csspub@googlemail.com

Members forum - <http://cssmembers.proboard85.com/>

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

3-5 April	CSS Cottage building	
9-12 April	CSS Easter BH	
1-3 May	CSS May Day BH	
22-25 May	CSS Whit BH	
26-28 June	CSS BBQ	