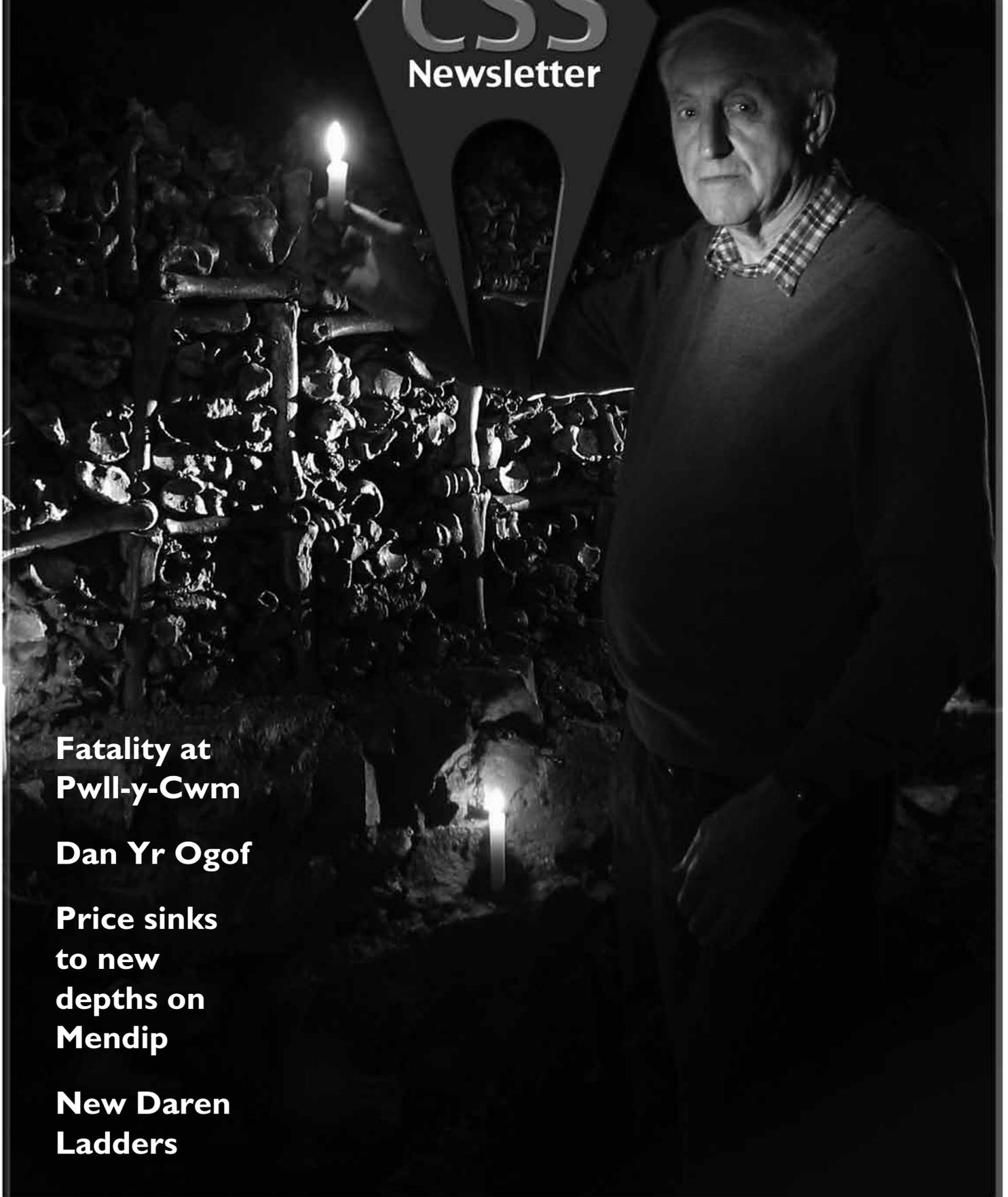


# CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 53 Nos. 5 & 6 May/June 2011



**Fatality at  
Pwll-y-Cwm**

**Dan Yr Ogof**

**Price sinks  
to new  
depths on  
Mendip**

**New Daren  
Ladders**

# Chelsea Spelæological Society NEWSLETTER

Volume 53

Nos. 5 & 6

May/June

2011

ISSN 0045-6381



Clive North (ATLAS) loads up a skip with TJ Swallet's thixotropic delights

## CONTENTS

	Page
Fatality at Pwll-y-Cwn	35
Dan Yr Ogof	36
Dan Yr Ogof Water Depth Logger	37
The New Daren Cilau Ladder	38
Banwell Caves	40
Price Sinks to New Depth on Mendip	42
Pottering about on Mendip	44
Meets List	
Officers of the Society	47

Cover Photo:  
John Chapman views the Bone  
Stack in Banwell Bone Cave-  
Photo: Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley  
Photos and illustrations not  
accredited are by the editor.

# Fatality at Pwll-y-Cwm

by Duncan Price

Readers will be saddened to learn that Bonnie Cotier (53) drowned whilst diving in Pwll-y-Cwm on Saturday 23rd April 2011. She, Martyn Farr and Duncan Price had gone there with the aim of taking some photographs of Duncan in the choke. This done, the divers separated, each diving independently. Duncan did some surveying work in the far reaches of the sump using a rebreather while Martyn and Bonnie swam up the mainline to around 100 m from the choke. It is evident that Bonnie must have become disoriented in the vicinity of the choke on exit leading to problems with the line. Martyn ran out of air in an attempt to guide her out safely and was forced to retreat to the surface after a dive of an hour. Duncan returned half an hour later and waited with Martyn until Helen Rider had brought fresh tanks for him. Bonnie's body was found 5 m upstream of the Window (where Elm Hole joins the main drain) - she was out of air and a short length of temporary line was around her harness indicating that she'd had to cut herself free at some point. Duncan brought her to the surface where she was handed over to the Police and Paramedics. Attempts to revive her were unsuccessful.

Bonnie was an experienced open-water diver with over 600 dives, including diving on a shipwreck under the Antarctic ice. She was also a trained cave diver with over 100 dives in the US and Mexico. An American citizen, she and her husband (who is also a cave diver) had moved to the UK in 2009 whereupon she had stated cave diving here as a member of the Cave Diving Group. A funeral service was held in St Neots on 6th May.

Deepest sympathies to Steve and Bonnie's family and many friends.

## Editorial

Thanks to all those who have provided material for this newsletter.

If you are concerned that these newsletters are few and far between then please feel free to contribute.



Mark Lumley

## OCAF gate

Someone has tried to hacksaw the curved bolt that holds the padlock, they got about 1/3rd of the way through it. Please keep an eye on this and let Stuart France know of any further damage.

## Whitewalls front door

I have fitted another new lock cylinder. Please don't insert muddy keys as the mud will dry and drop into the pin holes. I have plenty more spare parts, but do not regard this as a challenge. Members should retest their keys.

Stuart France

## Membership

Welcome to

**Mark Long**

Bridge End Cottage, Mardy Lane,  
Llangynidr, Powys NP8 1NR.

Tel 01874 730407

Mob 07919 216295.

markbryan.long@gmail.com

Mark has 10 yrs experience with Devon SS including Llangattock caves.

**Matthew Wood**

130 Thirlmere Avenue,  
Tilehurst, Reading RG30 6XL.  
mattpisces72@yahoo.co.uk

## Late News

ACG diggers - Mark Ireland, Nick Harding, Doug Harris, Nick Richards and Alan Gray on 23 April broke into a large chamber on Axbridge Hill when looking for the Lost Cave of Axbridge.

The cave shows extensive evidence of work by the ochre miners with seams of ochre, on old miner's spade, a detonator box and old hob nailed shoe.

The chamber is 55 feet high and 40 feet in diameter with one mined passage and a small grotto with a pool and some good formations. Total passage length 120 feet.

Please send all material to:

*mark@creativeedge.me.uk*

**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.**

# Dan Yr Ogof

12/03/11

by Matt Emmett

**Cavers present : Richard Dewsnap, Matt Emmett, Stuart France, Steve Sharp, Matthew Wood**

This was my second trip into this impressively decorated system with the aim this time of getting to see the delights of the Far North, located in the second half of the cave beyond the Windy Way pitches, the limit of our previous trip into the cave.

Having set a callout for 8pm, we entered the cave at 10.30am and quickly moved through the show cave. It is closed during March and so we missed out on the bit where you get to feel like astronauts in all the gear making your way to the launch pad past the looks of wonder and awe.

We waded the half full lakes and climbed the cascades to Pot Sump where Stuart did some work on behalf of Ashford, the show cave owner. Job done, we quickly progressed on to the long crawl where I noticed that I have at least learned a little about moving more efficiently and adapting my body profile to the shape of the passage. The first time through here I actually got wedged near the end of the crawl and used a considerable amount of energy scraping through the tightest section. No issues this time.

Once down the ladder we took the lower series to avoid the wet and very cold Green Canal as only Stuart was wearing a wetsuit. Passing through the passages quickly but safely to allow us to spend as much time as possible in the northerly part of the cave. Only the section of cave known as 'The Camel' slowed us down as different people had different ideas on how they wanted to pass it. My stocky but lanky build took me up high, traversing over the

Camels back whereas Stuart and Richard took the low road beneath it. We wondered what on earth was going on as several minutes passed waiting for Mr Sharp and new prospective member Matt Wood to appear on the other side. God knows what they were both up to in there, we could hear a lot of muffled grunting and they looked fairly puffed out as they finally came into view!

A short while later we began the climb up into the Windy Way, firstly the chain ladder and then a vertical section of climbing supported by SRT gear. Not having done a great deal of rope work in cave before, one thing that struck me was just how much you rely on visual markers like the horizon to know which way is actually down. Gravity lets you know most of it but I found it quite disorientating making my way up surrounded by rock and darkness.

Matt Wood passed up the climbs and back down the double pitches with an impressively cool head having never done any SRT underground before. (There is a video online of him 'crying' in his harness at the head of the quarry face behind Whitewalls.)

Alas the pitches had used up more time than we had realised and after walking a short distance along the large boulder strewn stream passage called the Great North Road, we decided to head back to avoid a rescue callout. Mr France and Richard made their way on to Pinnacle Chamber to pay homage to the site of Stuarts most serious underground injury (broken wrist) whilst the rest of

us got back into our harnesses and started the return journey. Another lesson learned, SRT eats time.

I wanted to take a short cut through the Green Canal on the way back and had persuaded each person coming down from the Windy Way to give it a go. Dr Doom (Stuart) arrived and quickly put a stop to my suicide bid with some explanation about icy cold water, hypothermia and death.

We made good progress on the way out and took a detour back to the Crystal Pool, Flabbergasm Oxbow and Cloud Chamber so that Matt could see the caves main wonders. We posed for more of Steves high quality caving shots as we neared the lakes and then made our way out to make the call with just 30 minutes to spare. Another awesome trip in this fantastic cave with a great bunch of people.

I want to take this opportunity to officially thank Stuart France who has been present on so many of my trips, for giving so much of his time, showing me the ropes of 'SRT' and generally being the interesting and generous individual he is.



# DAN YR OGOF WATER DEPTH LOGGER

by Stuart France

A new water depth logger system was installed at Pot Sump on 23 January. It is attached to the aluminium fixed ladder about 50cm below the usual minimum water depth. This uses an empty “wine box bag” as an air bladder which is compressed by the varying height of water above. The pressure reflects the height of water since it is measured with a “gauge” instrument which differences pressures from fluctuating atmospheric pressure.

These charts present the first results from this location. There is sump between Pot Sump and the Main Stream Passage, so it is a U-tube where the water height on both sides will be equal. The main stream floods to the roof in wet weather at a low arch at the bottom of the river cascades. Two cavers were stuck in the cave a few years ago due to such floods. The chart shows the minimum roof height as a horizontal line.

The warning here is that any unwise cavers who had visited the system during the early February wet weather spell could have got themselves stuck in the cave for 4 days, or got stuck for about 14 hours on either 13th or 26th February.

Chart 2 (bottom right) is the daily rainfall history from CCW’s climate change monitoring weather station near OFD on the opposite side of the valley. The lesson here is that three fairly wet days (4-6th February) following directly on from three moderately wet ones (1st -3rd February) has more of an effect on cave water depth level than does a really wet day that follows an almost dry one (13th and 25th February). Think of the speed of the former as “soaking and squeezing out a big sponge” and the latter as “tipping a glass of beer over”.

The device has been left running throughout the drought that was March and April 2011, and it should have captured the recent wet spell and storms in early May: more results will follow in a future newsletter.

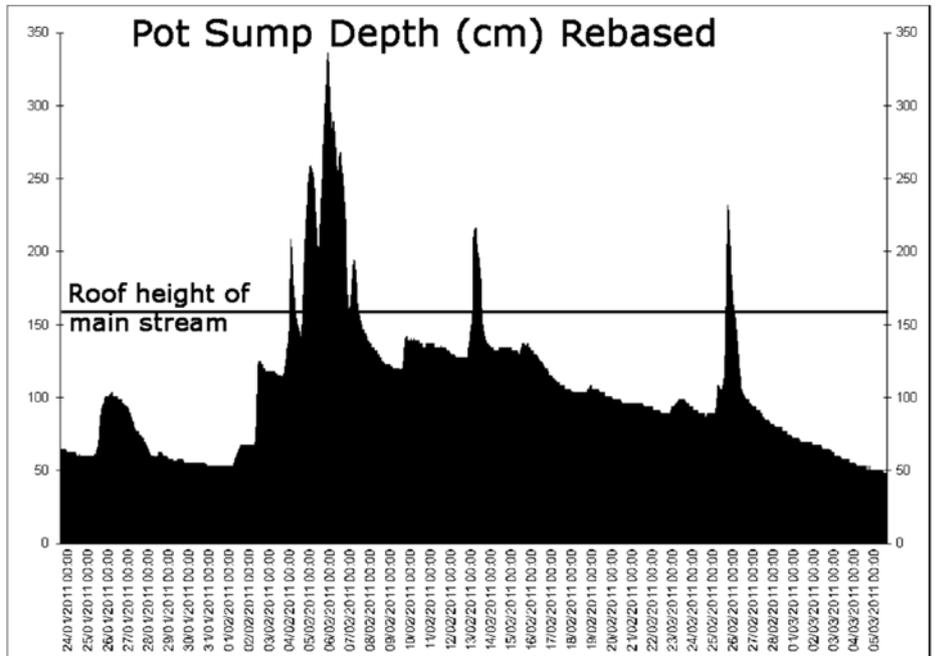


Chart 1

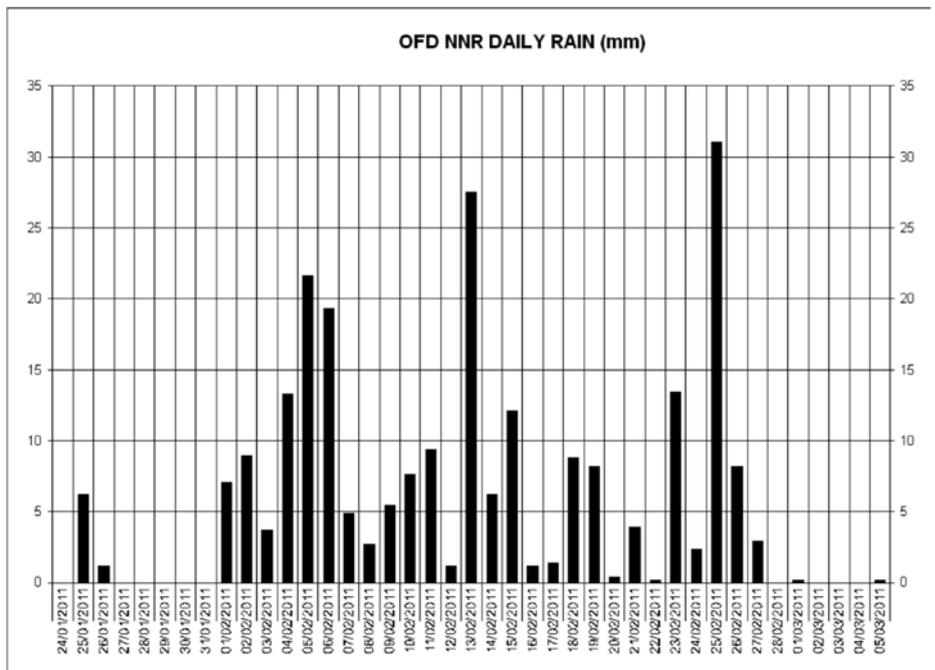


Chart 2

# THE NEW DAREN

by Stuart France

A project to install permanent ladders on the Busman's-Antler route into Daren Cilau was envisaged some years ago after the Ogof Cnwc connection was created – at the time you probably had to bail out the short sump to get in. Lengths of 10mm diameter long-link steel chain were sought, and were donated by Tony Donovan, but these chains then lay at Whitewalls for some years until the sump bypass was dug through and an interest in ladder-making was rekindled and time became available.

My idea was somehow to attach horizontal steel rungs to the vertical ladder links, but this little detail was never really thought out properly at the inception of this project. A word of explanation: chain comes in long-link and short-link versions, the latter being much more expensive and heavier as there are more links per unit length. The ladders in Dan-yr-Ogof utilised short-link chains where the gaps between links were relatively small, so they suited 12mm diameter steel bar, simply with nuts at either end to stop the bars sliding out of the links. An M12 nut is 19mm external diameter, so provided that the gaps inside the DYO links were smaller than a bar could be secured with just nuts. This is roughly what was done there many years ago – no doubt in imperial units.

It is not nice on the hands to pull on rungs made of round threaded bar. The makers of the original DYO ladders must have anticipated this problem and so made custom rungs out of square or hex profile solid bar. Each end was turned to become round bar and then the last inch or so was threaded for external nuts. The part you stand on or grab hold of was and remained square or hex and thus was not threaded. Some person must have spent many an hour fashioning these custom rungs by hand. They were also made in mild steel as stainless material was perhaps at that time too unusual or too expensive or too difficult to machine without factory-scale equipment.

The short chain ladder at GP Hall in DYO has long since been replaced

with a rigid fixed ladder. The longer ladder at The Rising is on its last legs and it is going to become a new chain ladder. There are bags of what look like 8mm long-link stainless chain stashed in sacks nearby awaiting further developments. Their problem remains how to attach their horizontal rungs, which are wide stainless tubes, securely to these chains.

With long-link chain some kind of adaptor is needed to fix the rungs on to the chain. The solution I had in mind was to manufacture custom plastic “widgets” to completely fill up the space left inside a link. These are drilled and tapped centrally to hold M12 threaded bar in just the right place. Widgets also have to be drilled out to make space for the articulating chain links above and below each link that supports a rung. In quantity one would obviously make them with a programmable milling machine, but I had to make mine by hand. It looks like this inside a 10mm diameter ladder link:

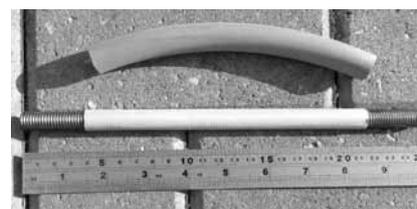


The plastic stock I bought is metre-long 10x19mm acetal bars. Acetal is a tough and accurately machineable plastic which I have used successfully before for other projects. Because 10mm chain links from different batches or manufacturers vary slightly, it is necessary to sand the widgets to fit the particular links as a final step. The process is to mark out rectangular widgets on the stock bars leaving a small gap between each one and centre punch the three hole centres on each widget section. A 3mm pilot hole is drilled accurately on each centre. Holes are then drilled out 1mm at a time up to 8mm, then continuing 0.5mm at a time up to 10mm diameter holes. The middle

hole alone is drilled out to 11mm and finally tapped to M12. This method is slow but relatively safe for use with a small-workshop power tools.



The M12 rungs now push into the links and are fixed in place with two stainless M12 penny washers (35mm diameter filed down to an oval shape which is 30mm between its flat sides), stainless plain nuts on the inside and stainless locking nuts on the outside of each link. It all can be tightened up effectively since the widgets are tapped and are just the same thickness as the links. So now we have the arrangement in the photo opposite. The second washer and its nut are out of view behind the white plastic widget.



The photo above appears to show a bar that is threaded at its ends only. The bar stock material is metre-long M12 stainless threaded all the way and then cut to 250mm lengths for each rung. The middle 175mm of the rung (the bit you hold and step on) is first covered with a tough shrink sleeve which brings it up to 13mm outside diameter. The shrink sleeve is then lightly greased with silicone spray and a length of 12.5mm internal diameter rubber tubing slid along it which holds very well despite the lubrication used to

# CILAU LADDERS

assist its fitting. The photo below shows a rung just before its rubber tube is slid over the shrink sleeve:

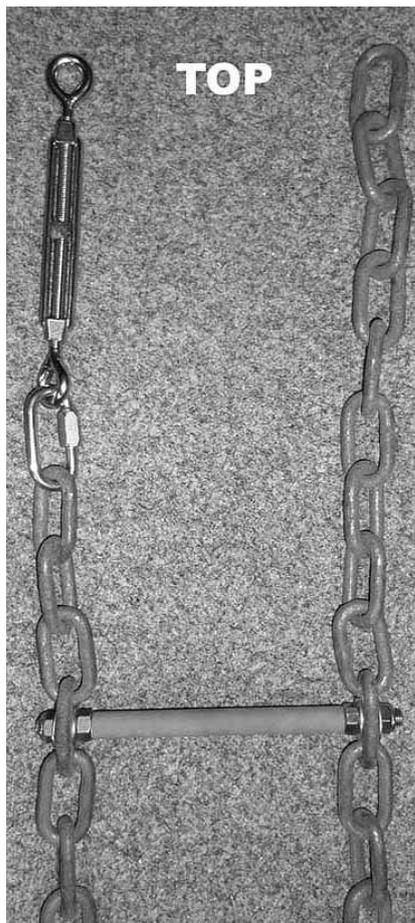
Each rung therefore has 37mm-long M12 threaded ends for the widget, the two nuts and two washers. The middle part that is handled is 17mm diameter with a rubber finish that is comfortable to handle and feels grippy. How long the rubber will last in a caving situation is an unknown, but as most people have rubber boots and rubber gloves the wearing should be slow so long as the ladders are free-hanging – which they all are. The chains will rust as they are mild steel, but the DYO experience suggests they will survive a generation of moderate usage. Ultimately these stainless rungs can be re-used on new chains, perhaps stainless ones at some future date, and new widgets to match that new chain could then be fabricated.

The chain supplied by TD has six links per 300mm, so the rung spacing I have used is 300mm, or 12" in imperial, which is what people are used to climbing. In terms of weight to carry, a section of ladder weighs about 6kg and easily fits into a "double daren drum" size tackle bag with Karrimat padding internally to protect the bag – a one person load. Each 4 or 5 rung ladder section is assembled in the workshop, so the only job in the cave is to link the sections together with Maillon Rapides and hook it on the bolts which takes only seconds.

One length of brand new 10mm chain had to be purchased. Its links are a bit longer so it requires longer widgets and the rungs can be spaced at 10 or 15 inches apart. I shall probably space them at 10 inches like an electron ladder. This is because you must leave an odd number of unfilled links between each link filled by a rung. I will write another article at the end of this laddering job to summarise the tricks and pitfalls.

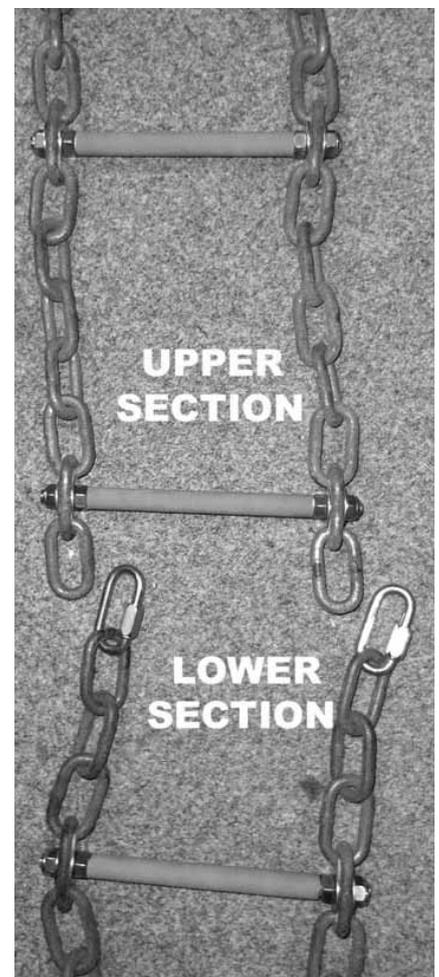
I have used double M10 stainless bolts with stainless hangers formed from 5mm stainless angle bar cut to about 60mm lengths, and these

fixings will last forever. The angle bar is certainly over-engineered and it presented Richard Dewsnap with a long drilling job in his spare time after work. Each hanger has a 10mm hole for its bolt and a 12mm hole for a stainless M8 Maillon which in turn holds one of the chains. Joints between chain sections are only galvanized 10mm Maillons to reduce costs. It is accepted that these will rust and perhaps become unremoveable whereas the stainless ones at the bolts will remain serviceable. One of the ladder chains incorporates an M8 stainless turn-buckle under one of the top bolts so as to permit its rungs to be levelled perfectly. The photos below show a top section and the means to join two sections.



BCA funding for this ladder project which will install four ladders during 2011. Describing them from the Ogof Cnwc end, they are at the end of Busman's, then an up-climb and a down-climb near Man-In-The-Roof, and the 6m pitch down to the passage containing the actual Antlers. BCA is also going to supply safety lines later, and these form part of their larger study into the durability of ropes in caves.

Richard Dewsnap and I did all the drilling and bolting on one very long trip. The first two chain ladders were installed by ourselves plus Matt Emmett, Richard and Rachel Dearden and Brendan Marris from SWCC. This is a big effort by relatively new members of our club, and I am looking for more help please later in the year – perhaps during the BBQ weekend – to carry in and hang the two remaining ladders which are longer ones.



A prototype ladder was shown at the Cambrian Caving Council AGM this year and it was well received. The full ladder for Busmans was hung at Whitewalls over the hatch for a while with no adverse comments being received. CCC obtained full

# The Story of BANWELL CAVES

Written by John Chapman

Illustrated by John Haynes

With Photographs by Gavin Newman,  
Steve Sharp, Mark Lumley  
and John Chapman

Supporting the Banwell Caves Heritage Group

48 pages, full colour

Available from:  
'The Caves', Banwell, Somerset, BS29 6NA.

Phone 01934 820516

£5 plus £2 p&p

[www.banwellcaves.org](http://www.banwellcaves.org)



## The Stalactite Cavern

The entrance to the Stalactite Cavern is just to the east of the house. It is approached by a flight of steps between stone walls. These steps continue into the cave and end in the Main Chamber. The steps did away with the ladders and made it much easier for the visitors. Unfortunately, at some time in the first part of the twentieth century, the steps collapsed half way down and caused a blockage. Now the cave is only accessible to properly equipped cavers. The two earlier entrances to the cave are lower down the hillside.

Nineteenth century visitors would have admired a large stalactite flow on the wall, but now many of the stalactites have been broken. One has fallen from the roof and a groove has been made in the wall, known as 'Bishop's Chair'.



## William Beard (1772 - 1868)

William Beard retired from farming at Wint Hill, a hamlet in the parish of Banwell, at the age of 52 to manage the caves for Bishop Law. From 1825, until he took his last visitors to the cave in 1863, Beard kept a record of his work. His notebooks and accounts are a valuable source of information about Banwell Caves in the 19th century. The Bishop was so impressed with Beard's work that he presented him with a silver tankard inscribed:

*Wm Beard of Banwell. By George Henry Law, Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells. In recognition of acknowledgement of his care and skill in exploring the caves and remains discovered at Banwell.*

Beard kept himself about bones. He was elected to the Honorary Membership of the Archaeological and Natural History Society of the British Association in 1840 and other caves in the area, in their Museum in Taunton. It is of Beard's enthusiasm and care of the Bone Cave that has led to the formation of what is now designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Beard also collected mammal bones from Bleadon and Hutton Cavern, another cave that had been discovered in the area. Beard also collected mammal bones from Bleadon and

**Reopening of a “Lost Cave” on Banwell Hill in the 19th century and the discovery of a second cave that contained the bones of animals no longer living in Britain caused great interest. The landowner, George Henry Law, Bishop of Bath and Wells considered the bones to be of animals drowned in Noah’s Flood!**

**The Bishop had both caves opened to the public so that his visitors could see the proof of God’s punishment of a wicked world. Nowadays we know the bones to be of animals which roamed Britain in the Ice Age. Because of the importance of Banwell Caves and their animal remains they are classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.**

**This little book is an introduction to Banwell Caves and the follies built by Bishop Law to create a park for his visitors.**

**John Chapman**

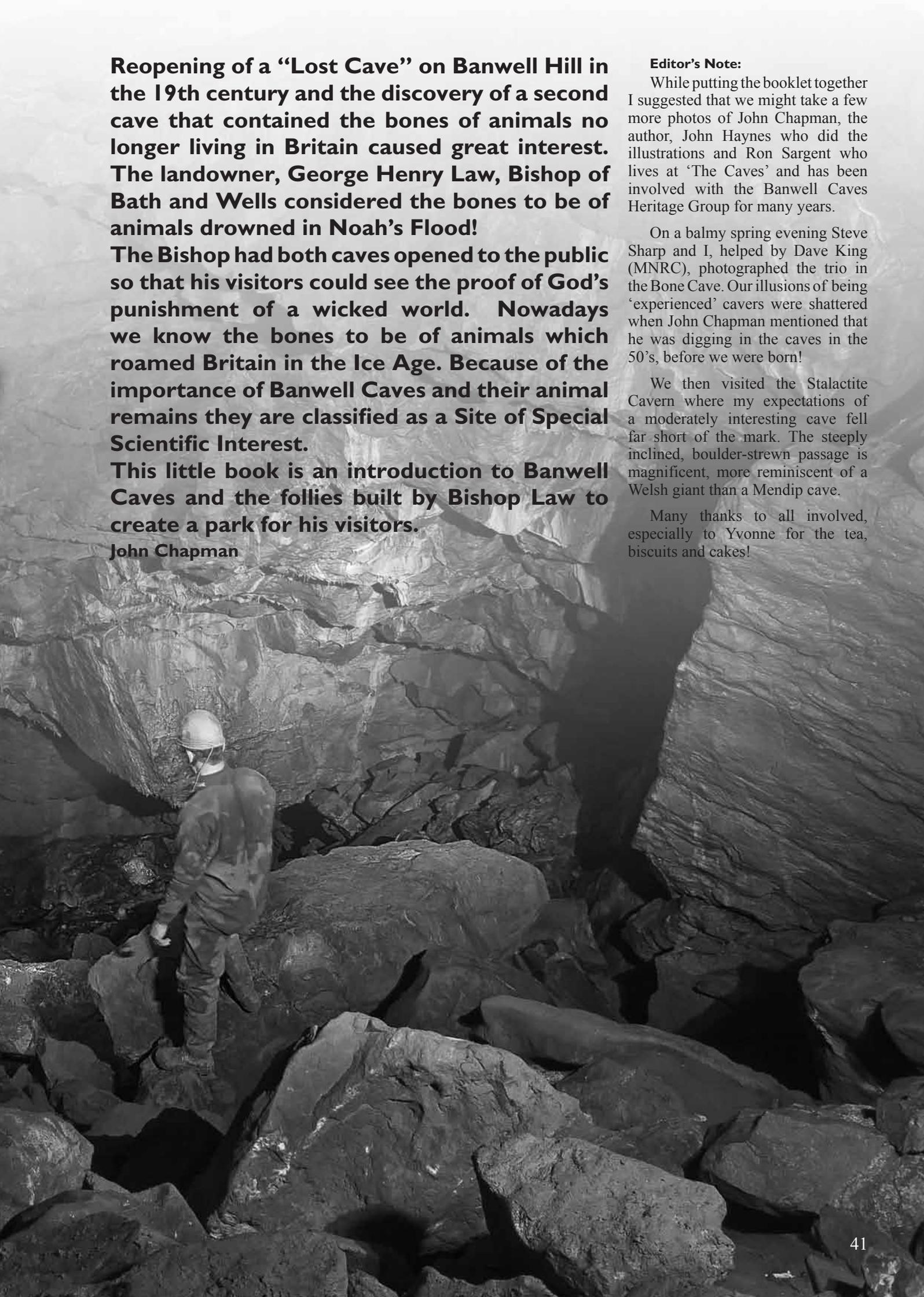
**Editor’s Note:**

While putting the booklet together I suggested that we might take a few more photos of John Chapman, the author, John Haynes who did the illustrations and Ron Sargent who lives at ‘The Caves’ and has been involved with the Banwell Caves Heritage Group for many years.

On a balmy spring evening Steve Sharp and I, helped by Dave King (MNRC), photographed the trio in the Bone Cave. Our illusions of being ‘experienced’ cavers were shattered when John Chapman mentioned that he was digging in the caves in the 50’s, before we were born!

We then visited the Stalactite Cavern where my expectations of a moderately interesting cave fell far short of the mark. The steeply inclined, boulder-strewn passage is magnificent, more reminiscent of a Welsh giant than a Mendip cave.

Many thanks to all involved, especially to Yvonne for the tea, biscuits and cakes!



# CAVING ANTHEM

by Stuart France

**Descent** 219 Page 5 - Write a caving anthem. UIS Arts and Letters Commission reports that some international caving body seeks an anthem that portrays caving. Their requirement is for music. Any lyrics are optional.

Surely there must be enough cave-evoking tunes out there already without encouraging amateur composers to indulge themselves? There are some obvious ones like Fingal's Cave by Mendelssohn, and most of us will have heard those long dark low chords that cadence serenely into a major key to reassure the tourists going round the DYO Show Caves that they're going to get out alive. So what are your choices for atmospheric cave music and what images do they create?

At the risk of my idea being forwarded to Pseudos Corner in Private Eye, my suggestion is the main theme from the film Havana, composed by Dave Grusin. Where better to find music that paints pictures than Hollywood? Havana starts with slow chords, but high pitched ones that hold a lot of dark tension. Percussion is added that backdrops a strange underground world with droplets of water falling off straws into puddles, trickling into small streams. A loud trumpet solo over latin rhythm brings in the main tune which is all big passages and bright lighting. Finally, a flute develops the same tune in a happy dancing style which would accompany a tour of the best cave pretties and people enjoying themselves. A quick fade to an unresolved chord, like those at the beginning, returns us to strangeness and mystery.

You can hear it at  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzgrsMlhcZU>

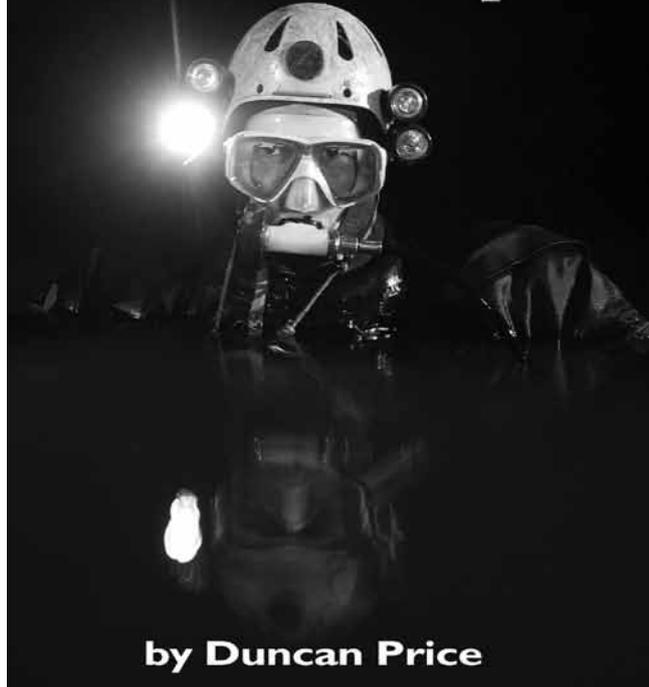
*The Duxbury Review*

## Brasyl

by Ian McDonald

*"Over the ten years she had worked her way up the ... hierarchy from production runner to development executive [her] life had necessarily been woven with an eclectic warp of celebrity: Cristina Aguilera, Shakira, Paris Hilton, even Gisele Bundchen, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, all of CSS, Bob Burnquist, Iruan Ergui Wu, and more wannabe popsters and telenovela actors than she could remember."*

# Price Sinks to New Depths on Mendip



by Duncan Price

**M**y best Christmas present was a phone call in mid December from Alison Moody inviting me to dive the terminal sump in Charterhouse Cave during the "open season" this year. Previously I'd been to the end of the 2008 extensions but this was going to be an altogether more strenuous affair so Ali kindly asked me if I'd like to do a "tourist" trip there on 30th April 2011.

I arrived at Upper Pitts at 10 am to meet with Ali, John Cooper and Pete Buckley (a veteran of digging trips to the Sand Dig in the '08 stuff. As the first trip of the year into the 2009/10 extensions, Ali was keen to see how the cave had fared over the winter and also mark some of the avens for future climbing. While the others got changed into wetsuits at the hut I elected to change over there (probably a good move). We got into Ali's car and drove over to the farm before a pleasant walk across to the cave in the sunshine and bluebells.

The first bit of Charterhouse holds the tightest squeeze by an old gate and I wondered if I was still as slim as last time when I'd actually ripped a hole in my (PVC) oversuit getting through this. No problem this time, but Pete (who was following me) asked me if I was left-handed as I seemed to be tackling each obstacle in the opposite fashion to him. Ali and I swapped loads through Chill Out Choke and again in The Narrows for ease and safety (she was concerned that I'd knock the choke in) but apart from this I carried my tacklesack containing a BDH and a very small cylinder all the way in. There were a couple of drinking points where we were able to stock up on fluids as we were very hot in our layers of neoprene.

Reaching the Frozen Cascade we cached some food and drink for the exit before climbing up over the tarpaulin (there to protect the cascade) and into a tight bedding leading to The Timeline. Portal Pool was passable - though I wouldn't like to have to dive it - into some fine passageway to (H)our Chamber, an impressive large open section. At the Crossing we joined Route 66, a nice (mainly) walking passage. It was from here onwards that we were walking in virgin passage - there was no sign of any footprints. Despite the fact that we were traversing previously explored cave, it felt like we were very much the first cavers there. Charterhouse must be a very active cave during the winter to scour out and wash away the previous season's footprints. None of us would have liked to have been there when this happened. For a lot of the inwards trip I was able to keep my bag on my back except where advised by Ali to avoid formations or it became too low.

Diesel Duck was open, so onwards and boulder hopping leading onto gravelly crawl and then into Hall of Time. Clipping into the line along the Flyover above the (W)hole of Time and a rather interesting squeeze through boulders lying on one's back looking at the hanging death. Once through, the passageway (High Time) is surprisingly large. At Zebra Junction the route changes to large canyon with plunge pools like the OFD streamway excepting that this passage was devoid of a stream. At Jet Pitch we paused to replace the ladder before descending into Hippo's Delight where the mud took over. We were careful not to trample in the small stream which had joined us before it flowed into a roomy lake - the sump and the deepest bit of Mendip cave.

I removed my bag and assembled my frogman's apparatus - a wetsuit hood, mask, neoprene gloves, compass and knife. The bottle I had brought was a 0.9 l former paintball gun cylinder. The day before it had been filled with oxygen, but I had wisely let some of this out and topped it off with air creating an

unknown Nitrox mix which I reckoned wouldn't kill me or cause the regulator to catch fire when I valved up. I kitted up and brought out my other secret weapon - a 15 m Fibron tape measure to act as dive line. With one end threatening to fall off my wrist and with JC & Ali feeding it out to me, I plunged in. Even in my thin surfing wetsuit I was still very buoyant as we'd only be able to find one block of lead en route. Nevertheless I got 8 m (according to JC) along the roof of the sump where I was able to see a handsome 2x2 m passage gently sloping off into the depths. I turned tail, wondering if my tugs on the tape measure would be understood at base. I emerged from the water with obvious excitement and a few words along the lines that I was going to need more serious gear next time!

On the way out we made a quick detour into Quicksand Chamber which contains a static sump that dries out in the summer to gain easy access to Skeleton Passage which ends in another undived sump. We picked up the buckets that had been washed in during the winter water flows and then headed out. Next stop was the plunge pool at the Crossing to clean off our rather muddy oversuits. I took a bath in the upstream sump, which is the other end of the terminal sump in the '08 stuff. Just as we were leaving I realised that I'd lost my drag sling for my tacklesack so Peter did a quick hunting trip until it was found. En route to the Frozen Cascade I had several bouts of cramp in both thighs which were agony. Luckily JC had some salted cashew nuts and plied me with them when we stopped for food. Ali took pity on me and carried my tacklesack most of the way up the 600 ft climb back up to the surface after 7 hours underground. Back to the cars where the others sat in their wetsuits while I was pleased to remove my smelly gear and travel in my own clothes back to Upper Pitts in time for tea and medals.

Needless to say - a return trip is being planned...

---

## Swallet

(from [www.websters-dictionary-online.com](http://www.websters-dictionary-online.com))

### Definition

**Noun** 1. Water breaking in upon the miners at their work; - so called among tin miners. [Websters].

**Source:** Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913)

**Date** "Swallet" was first used in popular English literature: sometime before 1828. (references)

**Etymology:** Swallet \Swal"let\, noun. [Compare to German *schwall* sea swell, from *schwellen* to swell, English *swell*]. (references)

Among the tin miners, water breaking in upon the miners at their work. Source: Webster's 1828 American Dictionary.

# Pottering About on Mendip

by  
John Cooper

## Buddle's Wood No. 9

**Saturday 23rd April 2011**

Ali & Pete Moody and self. Having obtained permission in advance from the estate we went wandering through the wood looking at entrances, trying to identify which hole was which as the numbered stakes (last seen nearly 30 years ago) seemed to have rotted away. Ali & Pete descended one (number unknown), about 5m deep with 10m of horizontal passage at bottom before we all descended No 9, 10m deep. We just looked at the upper series. It is intended to do a proper survey sometime in the future. There is supposed to be a couple of hundred metres of natural passage in this cave but I hear there is a squeeze to get to much of it.

## Charterhouse Cave

**Saturday 5th March 2011**

Pete Hann (Wessex CC), Ali Moody (Wessex CC), Adrian Vanderplank (Wessex CC) and self. Clearing spoil from last weekend's bang, drilling some more holes then demolishing them. 5 hours.

**Saturday 12th March 2011**

Peter Buckley (Wessex CC), Pete Hann, Ali Moody and self. Clearing spoil from last weekend's bang, drilling some more holes then demolishing them. 4¾ hours.

**Saturday 19th March 2011**

Pete Hann, Ali Moody, Naomi Sharp (Wessex CC), Adrian Vanderplank and self. Clearing spoil from last weekend's bang, drilling some more holes then demolishing them. Naomi and self went to listen for drilling in Timeline, still seems to be heading in right direction but not close yet. Timeline gours were all full and Portal Pool well up, although there was a good outward draught over the top of the water. 5 hours.

**Saturday 26th March 2011**

Andrew Atkinson (UBSS), Pete Hann, Ali Moody and self. Clearing spoil from last weekend's bang, drilling some more holes then demolishing them. Met an Axbridge CC party led by Steve Sharp in the lower part of the cave. 4½ hours.

**Saturday 2nd April 2011**

Peter Buckley, Pete Hann, Ali Moody and self. Clearing spoil from last weekend's bang, drilling some more holes then demolishing them. Peter and Ali went to listen to the drilling from the Timeline and took the opportunity to visit the upstream sump. Timeline gours all dried out and Portal Pool well down with a good outward draught over the top of the water. Problems with drill bit stuck in chuck caused some delay and meant we were heavily loaded on the way out. 5¾ hours.

**Saturday 16th April 2011**

Peter Buckley, Pete Hann, Ali Moody and self. (Missed last weekend as it was the Charterhouse Caving Company AGM on the Saturday. The meeting decided there would only be one lock on the cave in future, the one at the entrance. We removed the one in Chill Out Choke on our way out today.) We were heavily loaded carry everything back in today! Clearing spoil from the bang two weekend's ago, drilling some more holes then demolishing them. 4¾ hours.

**Friday 22nd April 2011**

Andrew Atkinson (UBSS), Pete Hann, Ali Moody and self. Pete and I clearing spoil from last weekend's bang (15 trugs of spoil – a record I think), drilling some more holes then demolishing them. We measured the tunnel and it was 3m, about half-way we reckon. Andrew and Ali went and surveyed Squiffy Inlet (provisional name) which is the first inlet on the left in High Time. This had an outward draught (towards you going into it) and a couple of pieces of very old wire were found part way up it! The sound of Pete drilling was heard part way up the inlet so it was a good job we had agreed to re-unite before demolition! Portal Pool was higher (wet ear to get through!) and no draught over it. 6 hours.

**Saturday 30th April 2011**

Peter Buckley, Ali Moody, Duncan Price (CDG) and self. To the terminal sump for a recce dive by Duncan. We also carried in a replacement ladder for Jet Pitch in the 2010 series. Slight draught in the cave today and Portal Pool was back down to the level of 2 weeks ago. We left our first cache of food and drink at Frozen Cascade for use on the way out. Ali left markers at various leads off Route 66 for the future climbing team to locate. There was no water in Diesel Duck but Quicksand Chamber had a nice deep pool in it. We detoured into Hall of Time as neither Peter nor Duncan had visited it before. Once across the Traverse and through the squeeze into High Time we detoured up to the High Time aven. Then on down the cave leaving our main food cache at Zebra Junction. Replaced the Jet pitch ladder (brought out the old one) and on to the terminal sump. Duncan kitted up with 0.9l cylinder and a 30m tape as a base fed line. He floated into the sump for 8m before turning back to report a large passage heading straight on and down. Will need serious kit for this sump! I think Duncan is looking forward to the return dive, but possibly not to the carry in. A steady trip out, total of 7 hours underground.

**Saturday 7th May 2011**

Peter Buckley, Pete Hann, Ali Moody and self. Had intended to start climbing the avens and additional taping in Route 66 but the climber cancelled so instead reverted to clearing spoil from last week's bang and drilling some more holes. Carried in 2 x 2kg weights for Duncan which are now at Frozen Cascade. 5 hours.

## Saturday 14th May 2011

Tom Chapman (Wessex CC), Pete Hann, Ali Moody and self. Carried in a load of climbing gear which Tom used climbing aven number 5 in Route 66. (Andrew Atkinson and Clive Owen (UBSS) had checked numbers 1 and 3 earlier in the week. Number 1 didn't go at all whilst 3 got up into a very chossy area which Ali and I have double checked and is now low priority.) Tom reached the top of 5 where it pinched out well over 100ft off the floor. Ropes left in situ for survey party but then will all be removed. Banged last weeks holes on exit. 6½ hours.

## St. Cuthbert's Swallet

### Monday 25th April 2011

I tagged along on a Gagendor trip with Dominique Barone, Tom Partridge and Lee Renney with Ali Moody as leader. We closed the sluice valves just to be safe in case of a thunderstorm, not that any were forecast. We put a handline down the Entrance Rift then went down the fixed ladder into Arête Chamber. Took a detour down Pulpit Passage to peer down the pitch before returning and descending the fixed ladders of Ledge Pitches. Down Wire Rift before descending the fixed ladder of Mud Hall Pitch. From Mud Hall we headed South and up into Pillar Chamber before dropping back East and down into Boulder Chamber and Kanchenjunga. Across Boulder Chamber, taking in The Octopus before detouring into Curtain Chamber. Back tracked a bit before heading into Everest Passage and then across Fingers Traverse to view the Fingers. Back in Everest Passage we followed it down to Main Stream Passage. Detour up to the Dining Room in Cerberus Series before descending the Stalagmite Pitch bypass. We followed the stream down through Sewer Passage to Plantation Junction and onwards to the Beehive. We climbed over this on the way in to reach Gour Hall then Gour Rift. Having put the bung in the dam we continued to Sump 1 and onwards into St. Cuthbert's II

before finally reaching Sump II with lots of loud gurgling coming from it. We then reversed what we'd done as far as Plantation Junction, except going under the gours and Beehive rather than over. We kept right at Plantation Junction and went up Struggle Passage into Rabbit Warren. Continuing West and North we headed along Railway Tunnel to see the Cascade before ascending Harem Passage and onwards to Upper Traverse Chamber. We continued across and up into High Chamber and admired the cave pearls in a taped off alcove. From here we retraced our route back down to Sentry Passage and detoured up to Maypole Series before descending Sentry Passage and using Bypass Passage to reach Traverse Chamber. Continuing upstream, after the Water Shute we climbed back up to Mud Hall. Back to the surface with two rescued frogs, one from St. Cuthbert's II and the other from the bottom of the entrance shaft. A very pleasant 4 hours.

## Swildon's Hole

### Sunday 17th April 2011

Barry Weaver and John Cooper resumed their jaunts. 40 minutes to Sump 2 via the Dry Way then the same time out via the Wet Way.

## Wookey Hole

### Sunday 13th March 2011

Portered for Duncan Price. Carried gear up to resurgence then waited for him in 9 whilst he continued survey upstream using a sonar unit to do passage dimensions.

**Congratulations to the Spider Hole digging teams and to the Pierre's Pot diving team on their latest advances. No doubt all will be revealed in due course.**

# Membership Subscriptions

Please send all subscriptions to:

Gary Jones  
4 Glebe Close,  
Brookham,  
Leatherhead,  
KT23 4DJ

Current rates are:

<b>Full</b>	<b>£30</b>
<b>Joint</b>	<b>£43</b>
<b>Associate</b>	<b>£20</b>
<b>Provisional</b>	<b>£20</b> (for six months).

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

These subscription rates include BCA 'non-active caver' public liability insurance. BCA operates its insurance scheme on a calendar year basis and as an active caver you should pay **£11 per annum**, pro rata the number of quarters or part quarters remaining. **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 send 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.

Temporary 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. Subscription rates of full members are adjusted for those who are members of several clubs so that their BCA insurance premium is paid only once.

**If *YOU* have any photographs  
or archive material  
that you think may be of  
interest to **CSS** members  
please email them to the  
editor**



# Meets List 2011

This is an outline of the meets for this year.

## 19th March

### CSS Western Section Dinner

Hunters Priddy – Organiser: Roy Musgrove

## 26th March Whitewalls

Caving during day at **Llygad Lluchwr I** & the newly opened **LL2** [Wetsuits advisable].

Cheese & Wine Party in the evening

Organisers: Paul Tarrant & Stuart France

## 22nd April Whitewalls

Easter Bank Holiday

Local caving to include **Bridge Cave**,

**Little Neath River Cave**.

Work on Whitewalls and the Library

Organiser: Paul Tarrant & Anne Northover

## 27th May Whitewalls

Bank Holiday weekend

**Pant Mawr Pot** which involves a 45 minute walk

in and 20 m entrance shaft

Organiser: Paul Tarrant

## 17th June Mendip

Caves to be confirmed but

possibly **St. Cuthberts Swallet**

Staying at the Wessex with BBQ on Saturday night

Organiser Jackie Ankerman

## 2nd July Whitewalls

Summer BBQ weekend

[Note the change of date so as to avoid Glastonbury W/E]

**Dan Yr Ogof** [BCA Insurance needed] and or **OFDI**

Messrs France & Tarrant will be your leaders.

## 30th July Whitewalls

Local Caving

## 3rd September Kayaking

on the Wye

Organiser: Mel Reid

## 24th September Hidden Earth

Caving Conference – south Wales

## 1st October Whitewalls

Black Mountain Caves

**Ogof Pasg & Ogof Foel Fawr**

Organiser: Paul Tarrant

## 5th November Whitewalls

Bonfire weekend

## 3rd December Whitewalls

Curry Night

Organiser: Stuart France

## 30th December Whitewalls

New Year Celebrations

## 28th January 2012 Whitewalls

Annual Dinner and AGM Weekend.

Note that we will try and obtain a booking to the superb

Pool Park shaft on Minera Mountain near to Llangollen

in north Wales. Access is arranged through North Wales

Caving Club who set up a winch for the 140m deep

shaft which gives access to interesting mine workings

and natural cave. Details will be entered here.

## Officers of the Society:

### Chairman

Tim Morgan

53 Coldershaw Road, London, W13 9EA

Tim@TerminalSump.com

### Secretary

Stuart France

The Smithy, Crickhowell, Powys, NP8 1RD

(01874) 730527 (Home)

css@linetop.com

### Treasurer

Gary Jones

4 Glebe Close, Bookham, Leatherhead, KT23 4DJ

(01372) 454776 (Home)

07979 854059 (Mobile)

garyrobertjones@tiscali.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

Paul Tarrant

10 Llwyn y Golomen, Parc Gwernfadog, Morryston

Swansea, SA6 6SX

(01792) 795600 (Home)

07867 820507 9(Work)

07812 110291 (Mobile)

ptpeaty@yahoo.co.uk

### 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

### Whitewalls

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



*John Haynes and Ron Sargent,  
Banwell Bone Cave  
Photo: Steve Sharp*