

CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 53 Nos. 9 & 10 September/October 2011



The Dave Pike Incident

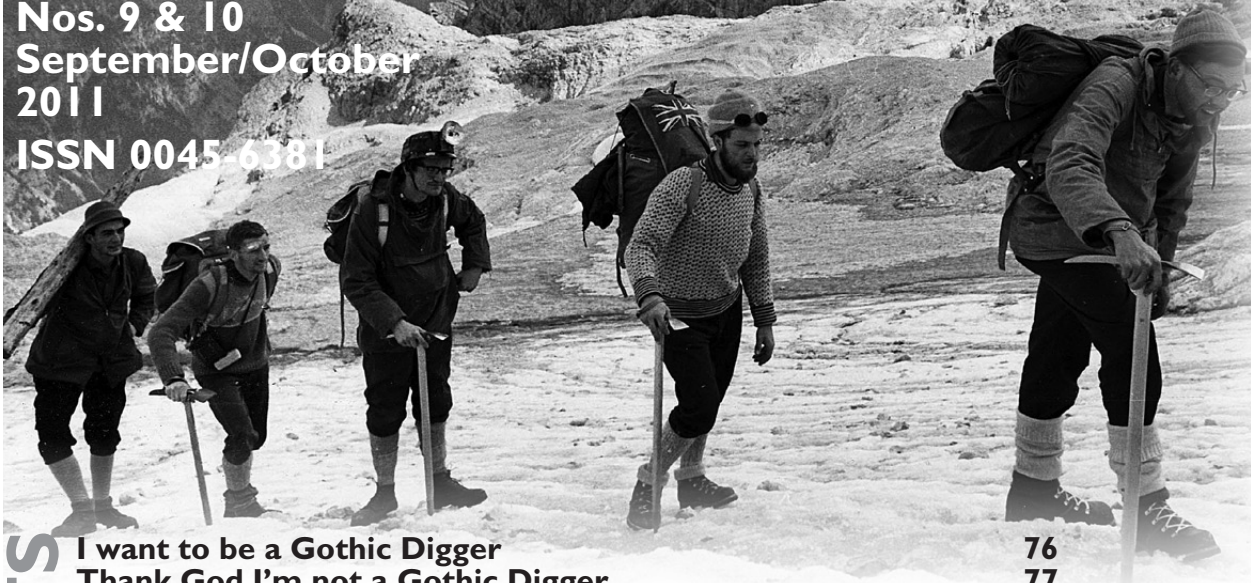
Ogof Gofan

Rescued from Daren Cilau

Montenegro 2011

Chelsea Spelæological Society NEWSLETTER

Volume 53
Nos. 9 & 10
September/October
2011
ISSN 0045-6381



Andre Puc, Geo Fletcher, Bruce Bedford, Clive Calder and John Wilmott high on the Triglav Glacier looking for the entrance to the Triglav Ice Pothole, 1964.
"We managed to penetrate the Ice Pot down to 1,000 feet and CSS went into the Guinness Book of Records briefly as 'bottoming the deepest Ice Cave in the world'.
Photo and background information from Geo Fletcher

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Cover Photo:
John Newton in OFD 1.
Photo: Steve Sharp
Photos and illustrations not
accredited are by the editor.

Membership Subscriptions are now due!

Please send all subscriptions to:
Gary Jones, 4 Glebe Close,
Bookham, Leatherhead,
KT23 4DJ

Current rates are:

Full £25
Joint £33

**PLUS your BCA subscription per person
of £5 for non cavers and £16 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 £20 (BCA Non Caver already included)
Provisional £20

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

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. Please contact the Treasurer with any queries.



Congratulations to Steve Sharp who, at Hidden Earth, won a distinction with his photo of John Newton in OFD 1 (cover photo).



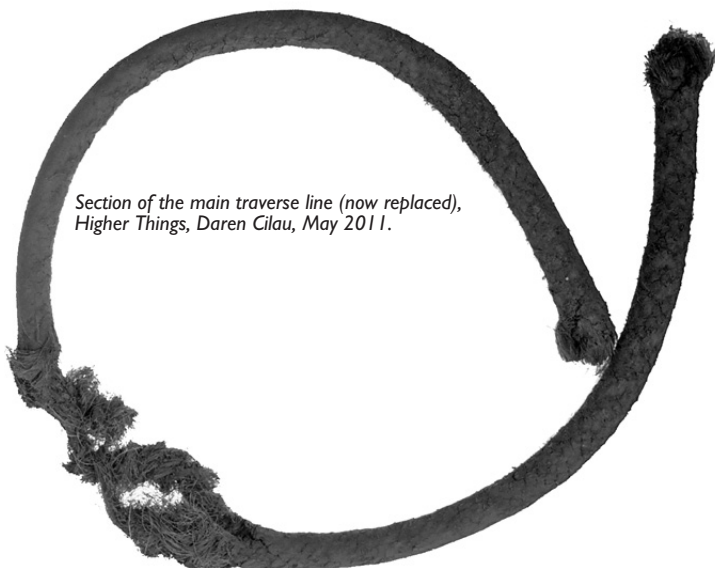
21-28 July 2013

www.speleo2013.com

A number of CSS members have expressed an interest in going to this event in 2013.

Interesting caving, other activities like walking and biking in a nice mountain area, bring the family, visit Prague, lots to do in or out of caves!

If anyone is interested in going as part of a group then contact **Mel Reid** (details in Membership list).



Section of the main traverse line (now replaced), Higher Things, Daren Cilau, May 2011.

Membership

Welcome to new provisional member

Dr. Timothy Gibbs

Congratulations to **Helen Ryder** on her recent marriage to Martyn Farr.

Please note that in future only paid up members will receive copies of the newsletter

Annual Dinner The Bear Hotel, Crickhowell

CSS Annual Dinner will be held on the evening of Saturday 28th January 2012 in The Bear Hotel, Crickhowell. Price will be £23 approximately and will depend on the menu we choose.

This year we have the large room available to us.

Rooms are currently available if members wish to make bookings with the Bear [Call 01873 810408 or book via their online booking system]. Details of the menu and the call for money and menu choice will be posted in the November/December newsletter. We will be laying on mini buses for those staying at Whitewalls.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 29th January 2012 at 11:00am in the Tretower Village Hall.

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

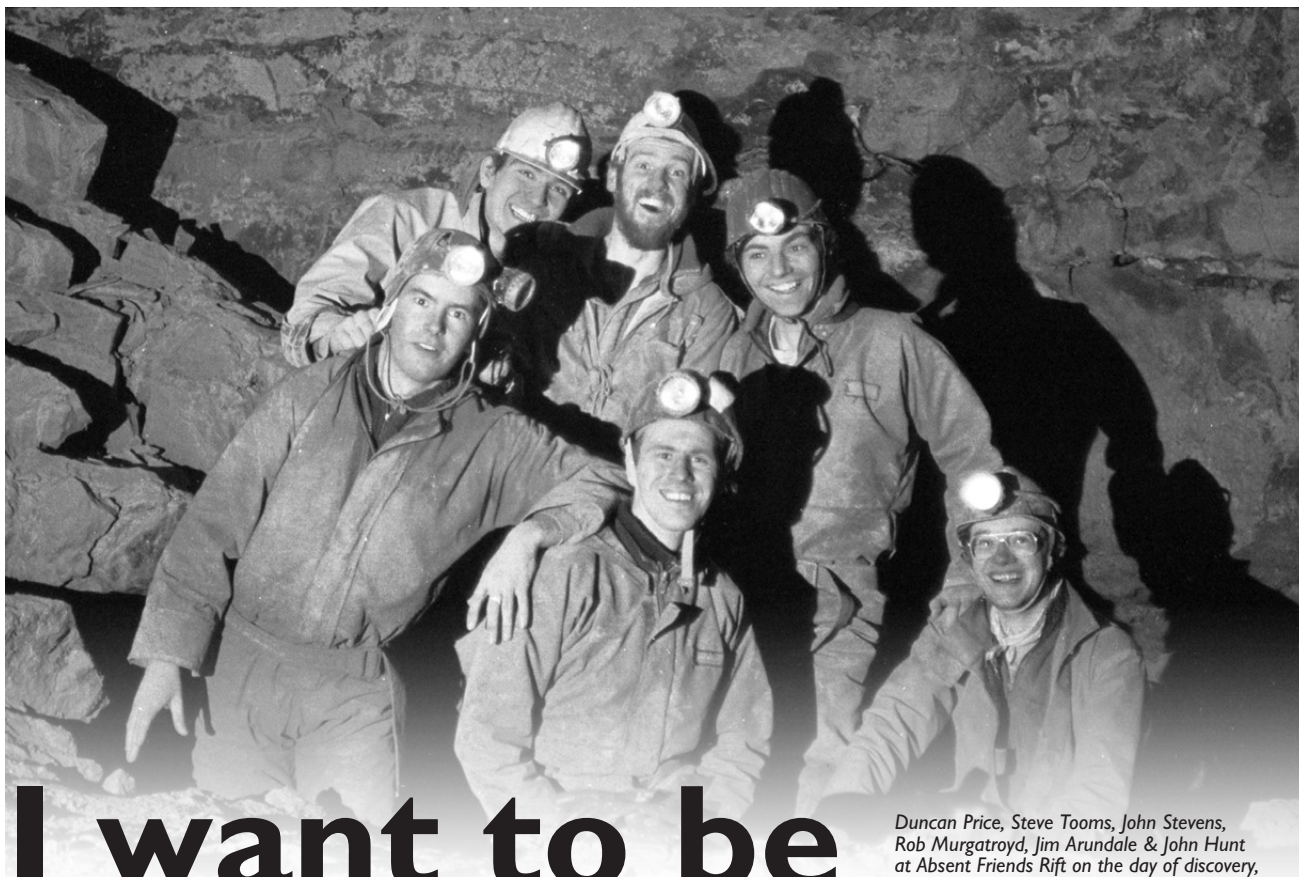
Please send all material to:

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.



Duncan Price, Steve Tooms, John Stevens, Rob Murgatroyd, Jim Arundale & John Hunt at Absent Friends Rift on the day of discovery, 10th Jan 1987. Photo: Duncan Price

I want to be a Gothic Digger

by Duncan Price and Rob Murgatroyd

CSS Newsletter Vol 30 No 5

I want to be a Gothic Digger,
Though people stare and people snigger;
Finest cavers in the land,
With feet in air and heads in sand,

Get on up, get underground;
There's lots of passage to be found,
Tryin' to avoid the midday sun,
Look out Daren here we come!

Simon Abbott - he's the man,
Gets on down fast as he can,
See the miles. of passage yield,
To the boy from Macclesfield!

Who's that man up at the front?
You can be sure it isn't Hunt!
He started well, but now he's spent;
He just studies sediment.

1,2,3,4,
Shiftn' drag trays by the score,
5,6,7,8,
Just leave that key by Aggy's gate.

When the water starts to rise,
Spanners will meet his demise,
Maytime is the place to be;
He'll keep Roger company!

Duncan always finds a way,
To keep his ego in the tray,
He'll begin to see the joke,
Trapped beneath a boulder choke!

The G.S.S. they never shirk,
From doing Parker's dirty work,
Down Ap Robert ev'ry week;
Do they have that winning streak?

With sand up nose & mud in hair,
We're too pissed to even care!
To make your ego even bigger;
Go become a Gothic Digger!

1,2,3,4,
Southern Stream is such a bore,
5,6,7,8,
Don't stay up we'll be out late.



*Andy Cave tossing pancakes
at the Restaurant at the End
of the Universe circa 1990.
Photo: Peter Bolt*

Thank God I'm not a Gothic Digger

by Andy and Ange Cave (Rock Steady Crew)

CSS Newsletter Vol 30 No 8

Thank God I'm not a Gothic digger,
Their heads are large, their egos bigger,
To reach their camp seems quick to me,
They cave as hard as HTV.

And at the risk of sounding blunt,
We've never seen them at the front,
Perhaps if we removed the crawl,
They'd come and join us after all.

A shame they had to blow their horn,
It's that, that attracted all our scorn
But if you think you can do better,
Get yours into the next newsletter.

So if you think that this sounds harsh,
Go shove this poem up your a---,
The invitations always there,
So visit Daren if you dare!

Rescued from 7th August 2011

by Rachel & Richard Dearden

Rachel Dearden

On Sunday the 7th August, Brendan Marris (DCC), Richard and I decided to explore a little more of Daren Cilau, having only been on the through-trip route previously. Our first intention was to reach 'Where the sun don't shine', which was perhaps a little ambitious, but we were happy to head in that direction and turn back early if necessary. Halfway through the Daren entrance crawl however, Brendan decided to turn around. He'd been down no less than four caves the day before and was feeling rather tired. So, Richard and I continued with survey in hand and with the revised objective of reaching the Hard Rock Cafe. We made it through the entrance crawl, through Jigsaw Passage and into the Big Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance. We then found our way into Valentine's Chamber and into Preliminary Passage. From here we ascended the ladder into Welly Boy Aven and down the multiple little rope climbs into White Passage. Soon enough we arrived at the Time Machine. We continued through and eventually got to the turn-off for the Bonsai Streamway, which went on for rather longer than we expected, but eventually arrived at the Hard Rock Cafe. Here, Richard and I ate our well-deserved pork pies, which were delicious, having been crushed to a pulp by the chest of a caver and warmed to body temperature for at least 4 hours. We also drank our ribena,

which was slowly permeating the cardboard of the drinks container from the inside!

We didn't stay long before we turned back to head out. The way out seemed to fly by and soon enough we were at the Big Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance. I'll let Richard pick up the story from here....

Richard Dearden

I got new wellies for this caving trip; maybe that was the problem. Whatever the reason, on the way back to the Daren entrance crawl just after coming through the boulder choke, I managed to slip on a rock and fall most of the way down a rocky slope, ending with a heavy blow to my shoulder. The fall happened at approximately 17:00.

After a couple of minutes, I attempted to continue, but it was obvious fairly quickly that arm was not going to be very useful, and that in particular I wasn't going to be able to get through the entrance crawl itself. After a discussion and inspection of the injured area, we decided to send Rachel through the crawl to call out the cave rescue.

Rachel hurried out as rapidly as possible, getting many bruises along the way. She slowed down through the vice, but still managed to get her knee jammed in the floor slot for about 5 minutes until it came free. Once out, Rachel ran (with wellies full of water no less)

down the hill and found a passer-by with mobile phone and from there she called the police and then the cave rescue. It was 1815 ish.

Left to my own devices, I sat around for a bit, but started to get cold, so had to wander around. I rigged up an improvised sling with my belt and waited for the cavalry to arrive. I knew it was going to be a long wait.

Outside the cave, the police and ambulance arrived within about 20 minutes. The latter had never attended a cave rescue before, if they had, they wouldn't have bothered with the flashing blue lights! Over the next hour or so, cave rescue members turned up, were fed, watered and assembled into groups focusing on communications (comms), first response, support, etc... First to go into the cave were the comms., followed shortly by the first responders, which included a medic and a couple of supporting people. After getting warm, Rachel moved to the entrance of the cave to hear the comms updates. She sat there for the next 6 hours!

Eventually, after wearing a furrow in the floor by walking back and forth, and running out of songs to sing, I finally heard the welcome sound of the first of the cave rescue – Adrian – arriving. He made it through the entrance crawl at about 2130. He got communications established with the surface and then we waited for

Daren Cilau

the first aid. They arrived a few minutes later and after examining my shoulder, dosed me up with painkillers. We had to wait about 20 minutes for them to take effect, but the time was quickly taken up with discussing what the best way to get me out of the cave was, and how to truss me up to do it. Eventually we opted for a chest- and sit-harness, my sling to support my arm where possible and to go out through the entrance crawl – the alternative of going all the way around to Ogof Cnwc was too horrible to contemplate.

At 2210 we set off into the crawl. The first obstacle was the calcite squeezes, which had me flat on my stomach. Fortunately the floor was smooth, so with a bit of pulling and pushing they managed to drag me through. The trickiest parts were where I had to go up above the floor. Normally you do a series of one-handed press-ups and jam your body into the passage, so that you can move your hand along. With my shoulder the way it was, I couldn't jam my body so I needed supporting each time I moved forwards. Adrian did a brilliant job of this in the first section.

After what felt like forever, crawling and being pushed and pulled down the passage, we met the next group coming in to relieve the first responders. They had all been fantastic, particularly Lisa the medic, and headed out to get warm and dry and recover. The second group fed me hot soup, cooled with Ribena, before

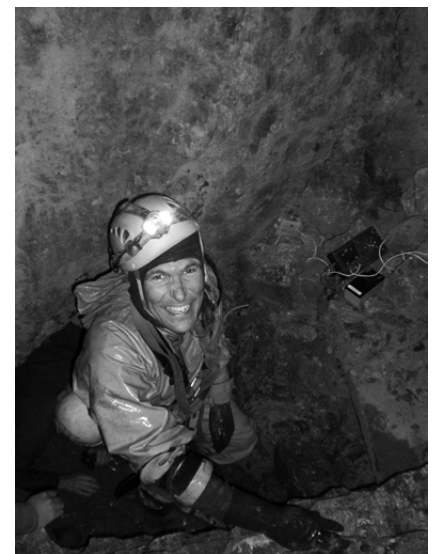
we continued the struggle. The passage continued interminably and was so tight and narrow that the people in front and behind could give me little help in many places. Eventually after a few more stops and communications with the surface, we reached the last major obstacle – The Vice! By this stage, it had been 4 hours since the rescuers arrived, so Amy gave me another dose of painkillers.

The Vice is a section where you have to go up over a narrow slot in the floor, so we did a bit of planning before getting me into there. John behind me attached a rope so that he could try and lift me a little and Chris in front turned around to face me. They also tried to fill the slot with tackle bags, although that wasn't entirely successful. A great deal of huffing and puffing commenced and I slowly inched over the slot. Things were going pretty well thanks to everyone's help until Chris got himself jammed. There was no way I could move to help him so he had to squeeze underneath me temporarily until he could free himself. He's probably the only person ever to go through the entrance crawl in reverse!

I finally exited the cave at 0230. I figure 4 hours for the entrance crawl with only one arm was a pretty good effort. Both the parties who helped me in the cave were absolutely brilliant and the organisation of the whole affair was excellent. I'd like to say a

huge thanks to the South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Organisation. Unlike Rachel's practice rescue, this time it was for real and all ~24 people who turned out for the rescue were incredibly professional.

The rest is pretty dull: a trip in an ambulance to Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny; x-rays revealing that I'd fractured my humerus, more drugs and then sent home to catch a bit of sleep. By the time we got back to Whitewalls any trace of the rescue had vanished.



*Richard finally makes his exit.
Photo: Rachel Dearden*

Thanks to:

The South Wales Cave Rescue Team for their professional, caring and efficient work

Apologies to:

The South Wales Cave Rescue Team for calling them all out just before dinnertime.

The Nevill Hall nurses who had to clean up the contents of my wellies (which were still full) and caving gear from floor of A&E.

My wife, Rachel, who is now my slave.

A bimble in the Wiltshire countryside

by Andy Watson

On Saturday, 6 August we played 'what about' and in the end just went to do some swallet holes without our caving kit and just a head torch, and Sue just said we did have a caving kit in the car we just didn't put it on and got rather muddy instead, well I did! We went to find some caves that I didn't know were there south of the A303 near Tisbury and sure enough there were some swallet holes. First we parked on a road south of Tisbury, went south out of the village and down a left hand fork. After about half a mile we walked up the hill to a small quarry about 200m south of the road and found **6X Cave** at *ST9399 2819* relatively easily. It is located in a low quarry with several other cavities. After munching our picnic lunch I found the entrance which is low behind some stinging nettles and surprisingly it is a small but well formed cave, a water worn rift that is about 12 m long with a couple of squeezes.



6X Cave

We then went back up the road we had come down and turned right and then soon on the right we drove down a private track to Totterdale Farm and asked whether we could get access to **Totterdale Farm Swallet** among others, however it was in the middle of harvest time and we were told that the farm was very busy at present but we could come back in the autumn when it is quieter. I will endeavour to plan a return trip, this is where my caving calling cards come in useful, as I left one to be given to the farmer who no doubt will expect me next time and may or may not allow us access.

After this we drove further west north of a village called Newtown which is behind a large estate that does have some rock shelters apparently. If you look in an ordnance survey map we are west of Beacon Hill in the edge of the woods and there are two locations here of interest **Cool's Farm Swallet** at *ST9089 2990* which is just in the woods at the head of a short dry valley going across the fields.



Cool's Farm Swallet

On the opposite side of the road in the private estate grounds are two swallet holes called **White Mead Swallet** in an area of forestry *ST914 298* supposedly a large stream sinks into one of the depressions and the stream could be heard in the second one. This reference must be at least 30 years old as forestry work has all but filled in the depressions as they were only about six or 8 feet deep and there appears to be no trace of the original stream. I've sent an update to the Mendip Cave registry.



White Mead Swallet
Photos: Andy Watson

Caves in Eastern Scotland near Arbroath

by Andy Watson

Sneaking off to look at some caves in eastern Scotland during a Scottish Wedding weekend!

With one of Sue's daughters getting married at Guthrie Castle near Carnoustie in eastern Scotland recently, I took the opportunity to go and visit some sea caves slightly north of Arbroath near a village called Auchmithie. Down some steep steps to the old harbour led to a pebble beach overlooked by some high sandstone cliffs.

To the north, the first thing I reached was a large, but vague rock shelter (36) at NGR NO 682 443 some 200 metres north of the harbour; according to *'The New Caves of Scotland'* by Tony Oldham this was possibly a habitation site, I have to say if it was, it was pretty draughty and not somewhere I would want to live. The next hole (37) another 25m north of the other was much more interesting, a quite impressive entrance 6 metres wide and 1 metre high and some 9 metres deep. 200 metres further on an even bigger entrance (38) at NGR NO 682 445 at 18 metres wide and circa 3 metres high but only 6 metres deep. 25 metres further on was a deeper cave (39) with a clean dry wide entrance 18 metres wide, 9 metres high and some 12 metres deep. On another 25 metres was another impressive entrance low dry entrance (40), about 18m wide, 6m high but quickly lowering to 1m high and 12m wide but longer inside and the roof rose to standing height, at about 2metres, overall it was about 30 metres deep with a fresh water source at the back percolating through the rocks. Further on again was another entrance (41) mostly surrounded by hanging plants (NGR NO 486 449 – not sure about this NGR) where a large entrance about 12 metres square quickly closed down to a small passage hidden behind some vegetation about 3m by 2.5m high and this seemed to go into a natural fault line for about 10 metres on a very slippery pebbly floor with no way on. After this one I ran out of time, but an interesting couple of hours including the walk from the car. There are plenty of sea caves along this area of coastline and some need a boat to access. I shall be back one day to 'bag' them all.

CSS Golden Oldies Meet in Crickhowell

9th, 10 and 11th September 2011

by Geo Fletcher

Since the Society's 50th Anniversary meeting, this get-together has become an annual event supported by those of us who caved with the CSS throughout the 1960's and beyond but anyone is most welcome to come along and enjoy the fun.

FRIDAY

Thirteen of us met up in Crickhowell with thirteen more sending their apologies with their latest news and best wishes from as far away as Australia and Germany.

We met up in the bar of The Bear in the evening and after hugs and hellos we started on a weekend of news, reminiscences, banter and laughter.

SATURDAY

This was a day of doing your own thing.

Some went to the Usk Agricultural Show, others to Raglan, one group walked up the Sugar Loaf in gale force winds and two others even went underground, wait for it, into The Big Pit.

On Saturday evening we all scrubbed up and met in The Dragon Inn where Ashley Nield put on a special choice menu for us in the meeting room. The food was good if a little slow in coming sometimes but I later found out that they had a temporary chef on duty during a very busy evening.

The highlight of the evening was a film showing some of the CSS activities of the past, taken by Bob Fish on a cine-camera which he has recently had put onto a disc.

The film showed early hut building activities on White Walls, before and after caving scenes, climbing in the quarries and the "highlight" was a drama played out on Doolin Beach at Fisher Street in Ireland; The Irish Dracula,

Tony Payne played Dracula and chased us all over the sand dunes until he caught the fair maid Jane and bloodily devoured her until there were only bones left behind, he then ran off disappearing over the distant sand dunes again. Wow what a laugh ! It nearly put us off our food.

A wonderful evening of reminiscing once again and we broke up late to say fond farewells to those who had to leave in the morning.

SUNDAY

Many of us met up at White Walls in the morning to have a sit on Tony's memorial seat, have coffee and biscuits and to admire all the improvement to the cottage. Later some dodged the rain and the gale force winds, from the remnants of hurricane Katia, to wonder along the Tram Road towards Eglwys.

Well, another great weekend with great company and friendship. I hope we can get more of us together for next year's meeting, Note, 7th, 8th and 9th September 2012.

A special thanks to Roy Musgrove for liaising with The Dragon and for braving the rain and wind to deliver a TV and player to the Dragon for the evening performance of Bob's film. The joys of living on the spot.

To off-set some of the high cost of the having the film converted onto a disc, Bruce Bedford proposed that if Bob had copies made we could purchase them for £10.00 each.

Let us know Bob and thanks a million for the enjoyment and pleasure the film gave us and for all your efforts to produce it.

CSS Clothing

If you'd like any of the badged items listed below please contact Lee Hawkswell (details in Membership List):

Rugby shirt £27.50 in Black or Navy

Polo shirt £16.50 in Black, Navy or Royal Blue

T-shirt (heavyweight) £10 in Black, Navy or Royal Blue

Full zip Regatta **Fleece** £24.00 in Black or Dark Navy

Half zip Regatta **Fleece** £22.00 in Black or Dark Navy



The Dave Pike Incident 18/11/1987

by John Cooper

As the editor is very short of material I (John Cooper) thought I'd document an incident from the past using papers that recently passed through my hands. I've used the individual reports and the summary at the end. I have tidied up a bit of the English and spelling where I thought necessary. I have not included any of the thoughts/recommendations that followed this incident.

REPORT OF DIVING INCIDENT AT WOOKEY HOLE 18/11/87

by Dave Pike

The Kirby Morgan was removed from the boxes and I connected the hose to the face mask while Robin Brown fitted the "A" clamp fitting to the 60 cuft bottle. I then kitted up and a high pressure air leak was found at the bottle connection. After several attempts by Bob Drake and Richard West this was sealed by using two "O" rings.

I was then submerged in Chamber 1 when I experienced a leak in the mask. I was then removed from the water and the mask adjusted. We then left Chamber 1 for a trip round the pool. The mask was still leaking. This was tightened but released because of being too tight. More lead was added.

We left Chamber 1 with Kevin Gannon as lead diver and Malcolm Foyle at my feet. The viz appeared good and all was going well until we were close to the rift going up to Chamber 3. As I opened the de-mister a small amount of air came out and then stopped. I shut off the de-mist and took a breath, but only a small amount of air was delivered. I once again opened the de-mist and received another small amount of air. When I took a breath this time no air arrived and the mask tightened on my

face. I then signalled to Kevin who looked at my face through the Kirby Morgan as I inhaled water coming in the mask.

We did an about turn which must have been very difficult as I was convulsing. Remembering Oliver Lloyd's words about wet and dry drowning I held my breath. I went very limp and could feel the speed with which I was travelling out just before I blacked out. The next thing I remember is Richard West talking to me in Chamber 1, but I can't remember much until being in the casualty department.

WOOKEY HOLE 18/11/87

by Malcolm Foyle

It was decided by Bob Drake that Kev Gannon and myself would be the two divers to take Dave through from 1 to 3 in the Kirby Morgan, with Alan Downton and Pete backing us up.

Before anybody entered the water all three of us got together and sorted out the signs and communications to be used in the sump and then Kev and myself had a chat about how we were going to transport Dave i.e. what speed we would try and go and what side we would carry him on. Kev was the lead diver and I was looking after the feet etc.

When we were all kitted up and Dave was in the Kirby Morgan we laid him in the side of the sump pool to make sure he was happy and the kit was working properly. When this was done we thought that we needed some lead so 8lb was added (This was the only weight used.). We then took him around the sump pool for a few minutes to make sure that all our kit was working and that all three of us were happy, because we had already decided that if only one of us was not completely happy we would not proceed through the sump.

After taking Dave around the pool we went back to the side. We all agreed we were happy so we started into the sump.

We went in slowly and very steady. Kev had his left arm across Dave's chest and under his right arm. I had both hands on Dave's feet, swimming off the line. The bottle was on his right leg and I had the contents gauge between his knees face up so that I could see it quite easily most of the time vis permitting. On entry the gauge was between 90 and 100. As we moved through the sump everything was going smoothly and fairly soon after entry the vis went and after we had been in for about a couple of minutes noticed that the contents gauge was pulsating from 90 to 0.

I looked up and saw Dave's hand on the valve at the side of the mask. He looked happy and relaxed, so we carried on the vis again clouded.

The next time the vis cleared I just happened to look up and I saw Dave give the pre-arranged signal that he was not happy and wanted to abort the dive.

I then moved up to his head, looking into the mask I could see that it had flooded and the water was just above his eyes. Realising that we were in the shit I moved straight back to his feet having already decided to get him back to 1 as quickly as possible. Just before I turned to start pulling him out I saw his hand go to the pillar valve which I know was still working because it had a slight leak.

Somehow now Dave was turned around because instead of his leg I had an arm.

On turning around I saw two divers behind me so I pointed back towards 1 and started to pull as hard and as fast as I could.

The only real thing that I remember about the return was that I lost Dave and the line at the same time luckily retrieving both and seeing another diver just before surfacing.

I man handled Dave to the bank and shouted to Bob and Rich for help through my D.V.

Then they took over and started to resuscitate him.

C.D.G. PRACTISE RESCUE WOOKEY HOLE 18th NOVEMBER 1987

by Kevin Gannon

We entered the water and took Dave round in a circle around the pool, to check if everything was ok, and to make sure Dave was happy. Dave and I had already worked out an agreed signal for aborting the dive. We then proceeded to enter the sump with me holding Dave with my left arm and the diving line on my right, and Malcolm bringing up the rear, steering Dave's feet. Alan followed 10 feet behind. The dive was going smoothly with no obvious problems. It felt as though we had been in the water for about five minutes and we were getting near the end, when Dave gave the signal to abort the dive. I then looked at Dave and decided to get Dave out. At the same time Malcolm started to pull his feet back the way we had just come. At this stage I could see lots of divers' lights everywhere. Then Dave started to panic, trying to pull at the first stage of the Kirby Morgan. He also started to try and pull off the Kirby Morgan face mask.



Dany Bradshaw tries on the Kirby Morgan Bandmask, 1985. Photo from MRO photo archive

I cannot remember in which order this happened. Then the vis went. We seemed to have Dave in a sideways position at this stage with me holding onto his left hand still. There was lots of loose line, which came up between Dave's legs and started wrapping around us both. I untangled Dave but could not free myself with one hand. At this stage Dave was pulled away from me. I freed myself from the line and caught up with Dave again. At

this stage all I could see was the red of Dave's wetsuit leg. Trying to feed the loose line through my hand I pushed him forward by pushing his legs. I then got tangled again in the loose line and Dave was pulled away again. Alan came up behind me somehow and freed me. When I surfaced a couple of seconds later Dave was just being pulled out of the water.

SUMP RESCUE PRACTICE WOOKEY HOLE 18-11-87

by Robin A Brown

Victim Dave Pike

Divers M Foyle, K Gannon,
A Downton, R A Brown

Report

I followed AD through the sump in 0-4 foot vis with no problems. I then felt the line being pulled about a lot, at that moment the vis improved and I could see KG, MF and DP. DP was thrashing about grabbing at his mask like a mad man. KG and MF looked like they were trying to get back to chamber 1. I somehow managed to overtake them without losing the line.

I found AD in the roof of the rift we exchanged worried looks and he signalled me to dive on out to chamber 3. I did this and told you that I thought there was a problem. I then exited the sump pool.

WOOKEY HOLE CAVES

Wednesday 18th November 1987

by Richard West

A demonstration of the Kirby Morgan Sump Rescue Apparatus had been laid on by the Somerset Section of the Cave Diving Group for visitors from WESTFED by Bob Drake. I attended as an MRO Observer. It was decided that David Pike would act as "victim" and be controlled by Kevin Gannon and Malcolm Foyle.

A line was laid from One to Three and tied off on the base of the steps to Nine. The Kirby Morgan was partly assembled on a clean polythene sheet on the pathway through the First Chamber. Final kitting-up was done at the waters edge where an O-ring leak was immediately apparent. Spare O-rings from the Sump Rescue Kit were tried until a satisfactory seal was achieved. There was still a very slight leak from the pillar valve O-ring but this was regarded as small enough to be acceptable by all present. The trio entered the water to check the equipment. The buoyancy proved to be too positive and the mask leaking so another weight was added to the K. M. bottle belt and the helmet spider tightened. The trio made a circuit of the pool observed by other divers and all seemed satisfied with the kit arrangement and operation.

The order was Kevin Gannon at the head, David Pike, then Malcolm Foyle at the feet. The K. M. bottle was arranged on David's chest in the usual manner with the Contents Gauge between his legs where it was visible by Malcolm. They submerged and started upstream whilst the surface party went to Three to watch the arrival.

After a few minutes a divers light could be seen from the shore quickly followed by at least one more set of lights. Venting air was both visible and audible and a speedy arrival anticipated. A single diver (not sure who) exited the sump and said "There's a problem - get back to One". We ran to the water's edge in One and very soon Malcolm and Kevin surfaced at speed with David inert. As soon as he was beached it was obvious through the face plate that he had stopped breathing. Rob Drake stripped the K.M. helmet off whilst others cut away the weight and cylinder belts. The whole Kirby Morgan Kit was put to one side and people told not to touch it. David's face was grey and the lips blue (cyanosis). I could not find a carotid pulse, his pupils were dilated and did not react to my torch lights. I immediately checked David's mouth for debris. found none and started E.A.R. whilst Bob started E.C.C. The time (by my watch) was 21.00 hours. Someone was despatched to make the 999 call which they did from the Electronics Lab night watchman's

office. Bill Lewis, who I think is the Chairman of WESTFED and another of their divers joined us and Bill took over E.C.C. and continued to check for a carotid pulse. At 21.02 hours a pulse was noted - faint and stringy at first raising to a weak but regular 60. E.A.R. continued with pauses to clear blood from the mouth. This was bright red and not "foamed". The exhalation cycles were very noisy but did not sound water logged. The pupils were still dilated and did not react to light. At approximately 21.08 hours David started to react and take irregular breaths but I continued to assist him for about another two minutes. By about 21.10 hours David established deep, regular breathing and he was turned into the Coma Position and covered with jackets. Lip and face colour, though very pale, had improved and strong pupil reaction was noted. Small amounts of blood still appeared in David's mouth (no more than a quarter of a pint in total) and dry retching did not interfere with the regularity of his breathing. At first he did not indicate any recognition of anyone, which worried me greatly, and could not comprehend any of the answers to his repeated question of where he was. Eventually, at about 21.20 hours he recognised me and then Bob Drake, much to everyone's relief. Almost simultaneously Dr. Ashman arrived, checked his pulse and instructed that he should remain in the Coma Position. Two Ambulance personnel arrived at much the same time. Someone got the Cave's wheelchair from the entrance and David was helped into it and taken to the ambulance and on to the Bristol Royal Infirmary in company with his flatmate (Rory ?).

Bob Drake made a statement to the Police. The Manager of Wookey Hole Caves, Mr. Haylings arrived and was informed of the situation by Bob. All equipment was removed from the Cave by 22.00 hours. The still assembled Kirby Morgan Kit was taken away by Bob Drake for inspection. All divers present, especially Kevin and Malcolm, were requested to put their observations in writing whilst events were still fresh in their memories.

Report on the incident at Wookey Hole Caves on Wednesday 18th November 1987 by Bob Drake

Compiled from reports by:
Dave Pike, Rich West, Kev Gannon,
Malc Foyle, Alan Downton,
Robin Brown.

Objective: A sump rescue practice from 1 to 3 as a demonstration to members of Wessfed the C. D. G.'s role in recovering an injured diver

Divers: Kevin Gannon,
Malcolm Foyle, Alan Downton,
Robin Brown.

Back-up Divers: Pete Brooke,
Nick Geh, Clive Betts.

Controllers: Bob Drake,
Rich West.

Victim: Dave Pike

The equipment was taken to Chamber 1 and spread out on the pathway on a polythene sheet and the various parts were explained to about 20 visitors, how it went together and its uses in different types of sumps. Alan Downton then laid the line from 1 to 3 and then returned along it to check the route he had taken was clear and the line was taught. The far end of the line was secured around a boulder and finally to the steps leading to 9. The Kirby Morgan was then fitted together while Dave finished getting ready. There was a leak from the 'o' ring seal on the pillar valve and first stage of the 60 cu.ft bottle we were using. Various other 'o' rings were tried until we reduced the leak to a very small trickle which we considered acceptable.

When Dave was ready the equipment was fitted on to him and tested again. Dave then got into the water and submerged himself with help of the two leading divers Kevin Cannon and Malcolm Foyle to test for bouyancy. It was found that the mask was leaking in water, so the spider over the head was tightened. Another weight was added to the victims belt to correct his bouyancy.

Kevin, Malcolm and Dave

had already sorted out signals to communicate with each other. Kevin took the head and Dave's arm while Malcolm kept an eye on contents gauge and negotiated the feet. He was then taken for a trial run around the sump pool to make sure everyone was happy with the equipment and conditions. All was working well, all the divers were ready and Dave was lowered into the sump pool. He was taken through on his back with his air bottle on his stomach and the contents gauge between his legs visible by Malcolm. Kevin led with his arm across Dave's chest and under his arm. Alan Downton followed one minute later then followed by Robin Brown.

All was going well for about three minutes, Dave said the vis. was good and cleared his face mask on the Kirby Morgan by using the valve on the side of the mask, this was observed by Malcolm behind. A few seconds later Malcolm noticed the contents gauge which had been reading 95 ats. suddenly flick back to 0 and then back to 95 again. Dave turned on the demist valve and was only given a small amount of air. He then shut off the de-mist and took a breath and again was only given a reduced amount. He again tried the de-mist which only gave a very small amount and then stopped. He tried to take a breath but was given no air at all and the mask tightened against his face. He then signalled to Kevin there was a problem. Malcolm who was in a better position came forward and looked in the face mask and saw water almost up to Dave's eyes. Kevin and Malcolm then decided to retreat to 1 as a quicker exit than trying to negotiate the rift up into 3. They turned Dave around in the sump and made a hasty retreat back where they met Alan and Robin following. Both divers moved over to let Malcolm, now leading, pull Dave through. Alan waited after they had passed to follow them out while Robin went on to 3 to notify the surface team. Dave meanwhile had started convulsing as the mask filled with water. He said all he could remember was Oliver Lloyd's words about 'dry' and 'wet' drowning, so he held his breath until he blacked out.

The visitors and the rest of the party had gone into Chamber 3 to see the divers surface. Lights had been visible from 3 down the rift then suddenly lots of air came to

the surface and a few seconds later Robin appeared and said 'There's a problem, I think you should go back to 1'. We all rushed back to 1 where Pete and Nick were waiting in the sump pool. Then Malcolm appeared pulling Dave to the surface. Rich and I then pulled him on land and quickly began to remove the facemask.

I removed the mask put it to one side and told everyone not to touch it. Dave's face was grey and his lips were blue, his pupils were dilated and did not respond to Rich's torch. Rich then looked for a carotid pulse but could find nothing, he then felt in his mouth for any debris and started to give E.A.R. while I undid his outer wetsuit and started E.C.C. this was exactly 21.00 hours. I sent two people to call for an ambulance. I called for assistance to help to try to find a pulse.

At 21.02 a faint pulse was detected.

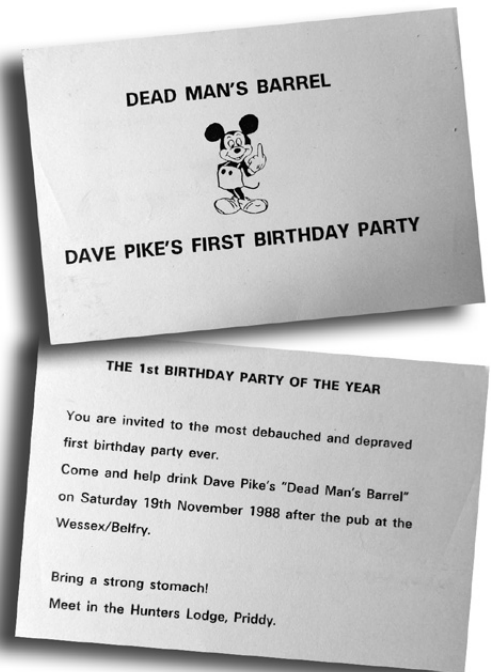
I was then joined by Bill Lewis the B. S. A. C. area coach in the Wessfed party. He carried on giving E.C.C. while I tried to remove more of the equipment from around his chest and waist. His weight belt was cut off and bottle removed. Meanwhile Rich continued with E.A.R. His pulse got progressively stronger and blood started to come up into the mouth, which Rich cleared and continued E.A.R. The pupils were still dilated and did not respond to light. The exhalation cycles were very noisy but did not sound water logged. At 21.08 hours Dave started to react and take irregular breaths but Rich continued to assist him for a further two minutes. By about

21.10 hours Dave had established deep, regular breathing and he was then turned into a coma position and covered in jackets to keep him warm. His lips and face colour, though very pale, had improved and strong pupil reaction was noted. Small amounts of blood still appeared in Dave's mouth and he retched several times but this did not interfere with his breathing. At about 21.15 he began to regain consciousness but at first did not indicate any recognition of anyone. After about five minutes he first recognised Rich then me and began to answer questions coherently.

Dr. Ashman then arrived and checked Dave's pulse while he was still in the recovery position. He said he had made a good recovery and was allowed to sit up. The ambulancemen brought the Cave's wheelchair from the entrance and Dave was assisted to it. The ambulance left the cave at 21.28 where he was taken to the Bristol Royal Infirmary. I returned to Chamber 1 to collect the equipment. I checked the airflow to the mask and the de-mist valve shortly after Dave had started to recover and found it all working normally. Our initial reaction was that he may have switched the air supply off at the side of the helmet but this proved not to be so. I removed the equipment, still as it was removed, for further inspection.

I gave a report to the police and Mr. Haylings the Cave Manager and then left the caves at 22.00.

Dave was kept in hospital for four days then allowed home. He has suffered a slight lung infection but has now made a full recovery.



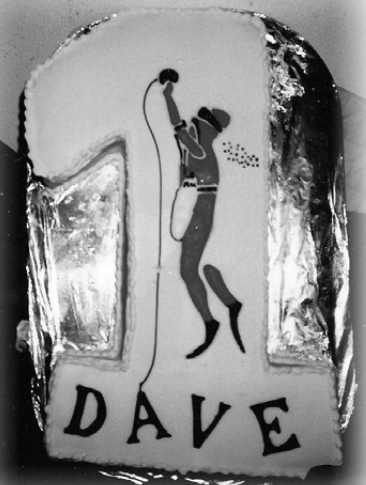
Top: The invitation for Dave Pike's 'first' birthday party.

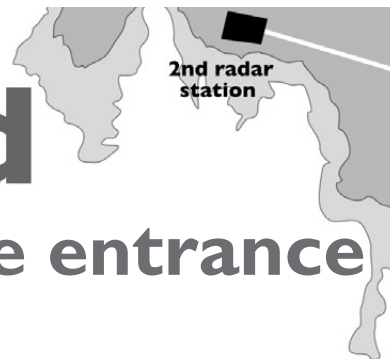
Below: An illustration for a one-off t-shirt designed and given by the editor to Dave Pike after his 'reincarnation'.

Bottom left: A well-refreshed Rich West (left) and Dave Pike celebrate at the Belfry.

Bottom Right: The birthday cake.

Photos and invitation supplied by Rich West





St Govans Head

and finding Ogof Gofan's elusive entrance

by **Matt Emmett**

We recently took the boys on a camping holiday in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. During the planning stages of deciding what we were going to see, I realised I could put to bed a problem that has been wasting the time and petrol money of quite a few cavers: to try and locate the anchor points in the cliff above the entrance to Ogof Gofan.

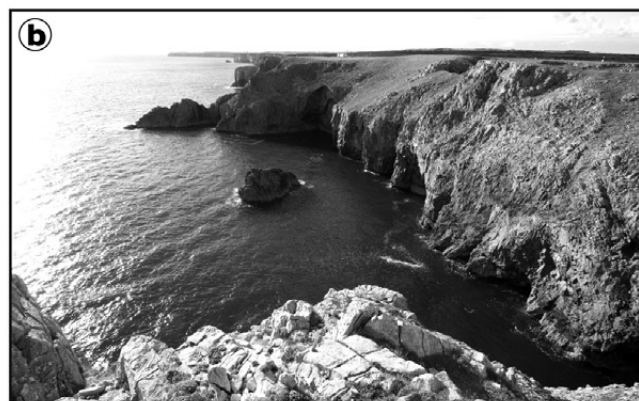
The sea cliffs to the south of Bosherton and Pembroke are designated MOD land and can only be entered at certain times when the firing range is closed. If you are ever heading in that direction it's probably a good idea to check the public opening times of the coastal path by phoning this number: 01646 662336.



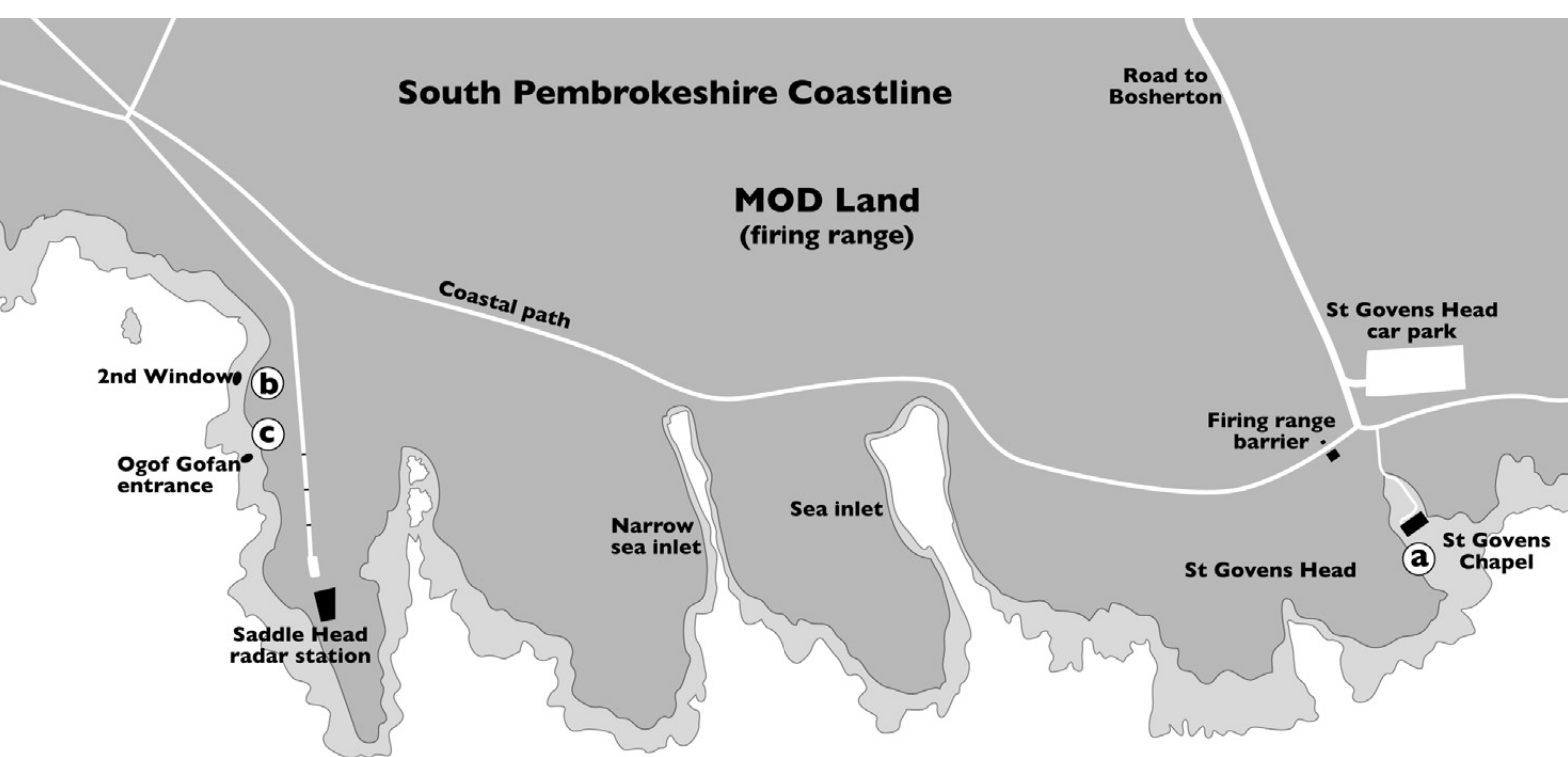
a St Govans Chapel

We were there to see the very pretty and enigmatic St Govans Chapel, set among a jumble of rocks within a fissure in the cliff face. The story surrounding it goes something like this, St Goven, a monk who travelled to Wales from Ireland around 560ad to trace his relatives, was set upon by pirates. In trying to escape, he made his way along the cliff tops where a section of rock in the cliff opened before his eyes. He climbed inside to hide and the pirates passed him by. In gratitude he spent the rest of his life living and praying around the rocky cleft, which can be found in a raised alcove at one end of the chapel. The chapel, however, was built much later during the 1300's. St Goven is supposed to be buried beneath it. The area is impressively rugged and very popular with rock climbers, walkers, photographers and little rock poolers. There are many other secluded rocky coves nearby some of which have steps leading down into them, along the cliff tops are precarious drops to the rushing foam below and in places the sea has cut its way inland to form blowholes and rock bridges. All in all a stunning bit of coastline!

A walk along the cliffs west of the chapel will bring you to Saddle Head, the location of the cave. Start by walking from the St Govans Head car park. Head off through the firing range barrier and along the paved path. Keep following this path until you pass a large sea inlet on your left, which is quickly followed by a second much narrower one (marked on map) After passing these inlets you'll notice the Saddle Head radar station off to your left with a second slightly larger radar station ahead in the distance. Head towards the Saddle Head station being very cautious not to tread on anything that looks like it may explode!

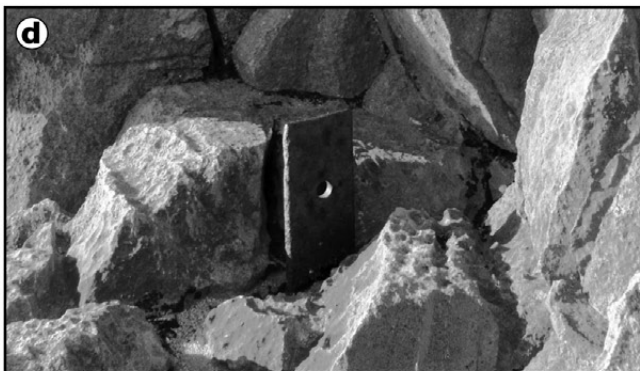


b View of bay from cliffs above the cave's second window



If you need to check you are at the right place walk to 'b' on the map and make sure your view is the same as in picture 'b' on the facing page. Then go to the radar station. Once at the station you will find a concrete road leading away from it. Starting from where the road passes an outer perimeter fence, progress along the road. You will pass over joints where the concrete sections butt against each other. Walk to a point that is a third of the way past the third joint. Turn left and walk at ninety degrees to the road, straight at the cliff edge. Once at the edge make your way carefully down the sloping cliff top. Lower down you should be able to see a flat section of rock before the vertical drop into the sea (shown to the right in image 'c'). This platform is the point that you will abseil from to reach the main entrance. Once on the rock platform, turn around to look a few feet back up the cliff. Situated in a hollow in the rock is a heavily rusted iron stake (shown in image 'd')

View down the cliffs to the rock platform (rigging point)



The rusted iron stake in the rocks above the platform.

Using this as the sole anchor would be inadvisable but there are quite a few spots nearby that can be used as a natural anchor. The rock is very sharp however and the rope will need to be well protected around any rub points.

Once the pitch is rigged and you are ready to head down, make your way over the edge of the rock platform at the point shown by the arrow in image 'c'. The entrance is an oval window around ten feet tall by six feet wide, roughly 10 meters further down the

cliff and slightly round to the right as you face into the rock face. To gain access to the crawl that leads off into the cave, a calcite slope must be climbed. The first person down will have to climb the slope unaided but can then use the end of the rope to help the others up into the cave. From here a crawl leads off into the cave and after a short distance, passes by the second window, allowing for an impressive, framed view of the bay. The crawl then continues away from the cliffs and arrives at the cave's very impressive main chamber. Filled with thick columns and dripping stalactites, this has to be one of this country's best decorated chambers. If you haven't seen Brendan Marris excellent pictures on Flickr of this cave and don't mind spoiling the surprise then go to www.flickr.com/photos/dudley-bug/sets/ It's a very long way to travel for most people for what is essentially a fun SRT trip in a highly unusual location to see a short but beautiful cave. Only obsessive types would go to such lengths surely... who's up for it then?

Show me your money!

by Gary Jones

Hello people,

Well, it's that time of year again, your subs are due as of the 1st of October. Adrian Fawcett has set the standard and is the first to pay up despite being in China or some such place so if Adrian can do it...

I'd hoped that by this time, internet banking would be up and running for the club but alas due to other difficulties it isn't yet... So again it's the good old fashioned cheque (hopefully for the last year). However, if anyone really would prefer to pay electronically, that's fine, just e-mail me and I'll let you have the details. Please do not just transfer any money without making contact first.

Ok here comes the tricky bit - working out what you need to pay...

This should be easy this year as you will be receiving renewal info from Stuart and this should detail how much you owe. But in case you have lost it or want to check, this is how it should work:

Single Membership is £25

Joint membership £33

On top of this you must add your **BCA premium**. This will be either £5 for those who are non active cavers or £16 for active cavers. The cost of **BCA insurance** is spread amongst the caving community with the active members paying more, this is done on an honesty basis so please do be honest! Also **BCA cover is not optional**.

If you have BCA cover through another club or as a direct member then you do not need to pay again however I do need to know through which club you have cover and your bca number (it's on your card). Bear in mind that this will be bca cover for 2012 so you will need to intend to remain a member of that other club and obtain cover via them. If you prefer you can transfer it to us but make sure you're not covered twice! Just let me and the other club know.

Examples:

Single caving member pays £41

Single non caving member £30

Single member with bca elsewhere £25

Joint caving members pay £65 as a pair

Joint non caving members £43 as a pair

One caving, one non caving member joint £54 a pair

Please forgive me if I'm teaching you to suck eggs! But I do get some weird and wonderful payments sometimes...

Any problems/confusion just drop me a line and I'll clarify for your particular case. By way of encouragement, maybe I should get Lee and Jackie to produce a particularly fine specimen of roulette bat for those getting it wrong this year! (I'll have to take one for the lack of internet banking....)

Be warned, I'll be taking a tax collection stance re incorrect payment ie I'll chase those underpaying but quietly bank those overpaying without another word...

Associate members - a straight forward £20 from you. It is assumed you are non cover for insurance purposes. If you have bca cover elsewhere, then please let me know before you pay, you may just get a discount...

Provisional members - you can relax at the moment, I'll hound you when your prov term comes to an end!

Please note, the bca premium has not yet been set for 2012 so we are using last years figures. If it does increase significantly, then we may have to ask for more or simply absorb it as a club. The exact nature of what we do will be decided when we have the facts, however by way of warning, there is a suggestion that anyone who has still to pay will be liable to the new amount whilst the club covers the shortfall for those who paid promptly! Now that's even more of an incentive than a dodgy garlic bat!

Send your hard earned money to:

Gary Jones

4 Glebe Close, Bookham, Leatherhead, KT23 4DJ

If you need to get in touch then:

07979 854059 or 01372 454776

garyrobertjones@tiscali.co.uk

See you all soon,

Gary





MCR^{MRO}
Mendip Cave Rescue

75
YEARS

CELEBRATION DAY
19TH NOVEMBER 2011

Friday

Hunter's Lodge: Rescue Videos

Saturday

Priddy Village Hall and Top Green:
Day:

Rescue Workshops – above and below ground

Displays and Videos

Speleo Olympics 'Rescue Challenge'

Evening:

Talk on Cave Rescue, Auction

J Rat Digging Award, MCR Stomp

Food and Drink
available all Day

www.mendipcaverescue.org

75 Years of Cavers Rescuing Cavers

Pottering About on Mendip

by
John Cooper

Charterhouse Cave

Saturday 6th August 2011.

Peter Buckley (Wessex CC), Pete Hann (Wessex CC), Mark Madden (Wessex CC), Ali Moody (Wessex CC) and self. There were several objectives today but as Diesel Duck had minimal airspace we cut short our trip just the other side. First objective was to remove the tarpaulin from Frozen Cascade and clean it (Cascade and tarpaulin) as the Frozen Cascade has now been bypassed. After completion we moved, via Sand Dig, to Timeline to retape as again it's not on a route. After that the Earby pump was used to flush away lots of mud from Sand Dig and also from the route down into Portal Pool. After that various notices were installed in the Rip Rift passages indicating which are now open. After that Pete H, Ali and I went through Diesel Duck to install the final bolt for the divers' line. Whilst Pete was drilling the hole, Ali and I checked Quicksand Chamber. The pool was full and we noted pools in the passages further along Route 66. The divers' line was connected before we returned through Diesel Duck. We had hoped to install a separate handline at the Flyover but decided against going that far, rope left to be taken on when weather is dryer. The heavy rain Thursday night had obviously had it's effect on Diesel Duck but not on Portal Pool. Drill and batteries brought out along with drill bits and some other digging tools. More still to bring out. It is hoped that the 2009 extensions will be opened for tourist trips in the very near future, with the 2010 extensions as soon as the Flyover has been fitted with a more robust traverse line and hangers. 5¼ hours.

Saturday 3rd September 2011.

Unfit for caving still (see below, Saturday 13th August) so a surface walk assisting the Mendip Cave Rescue testing communications between the surface and underground Charterhouse Cave (and GB). Underground teams were Adrian Vanderplank, Rich Marlow and Gordon Kaye at the foot of the Ladder Dig climb in GB, and Peter Hann and Clive Owen as a moving team in Charterhouse. On the surface were Richard Carey, Charlotte Hilton, Ros Simmonds + son, Jude Vanderplank and self. With the GB and Charterhouse teams underground the first surface location was established in the gruffy ground just east of Tynings Great Swallet. With about 10m of aerial wire out aligned N-S we established clear communications with the Charterhouse party in Singing Stal Chamber but not with the GB party who were still enroute. The surface team then moved about 60m South, carefully climbing over a barbed wire fence into a grassy field and set up using a slightly longer aerial, again aligned N-S. This time communication was clearly established with the GB party and with the Charterhouse party now at the foot of Gloop Pot (ie upstream of the Narrows). The GB team then reduced the length of their aerial to

communicate with the Charterhouse team as the signal was too strong (noisy)! Once done they were able to communicate clearly. The surface team then forgot they were supposed to stay in the same grassy field and do another link with the Charterhouse team at the foot of Dragon Pitch (ie downstream of the Narrows)! However the link between GB and Dragon Pitch was successful. The surface team meanwhile had retraced their steps back to the cars and set up just East of the Southern edge of the large barns. This time about 20m of aerial was set up aligned E-W and communication clearly established with the Charterhouse team at Portal Pool. I can't remember if we heard the GB team here although the GB team could just about hear us. Finally the surface team headed South then East until they arrived above the gueestimated start of Diesel Duck where the full length of aerial wire was run out, aligned NW-SE. Communications were clearly established with the Charterhouse team at the approach to Diesel Duck. Nothing could be heard from the GB team. After exiting GB Rich Marlow obtained a GPS location for the surface station above Diesel Duck (ST 47943 55595).

Saturday 17th September 2011.

Pete Hann and self on a trip to remove gear before it gets sumped in for the winter. A careful trip for me as my twisted knee and battered shoulder not yet fully recovered. Only a small bag containing chocolate and drinks to carry in so nice and easy. Portal Pool had risen by 5cm over the past two weeks and there was a fast drip coming off stal on the upward slope on the far side. Went as far as Diesel Duck which had a 15cm square of airspace over the water. Collected Pete Hann's SRT and climbing gear and Duncan Price's two cylinders before starting off out. Picked up Andrew Atkinson's (UBSS) climbing gear as we continued out. Pete checked out a high level passage about 10m down from the Crossing which he left going after 10m as a 30cm high 1m wide bedding. Collected an old ladder from Beyond Time then back out through Portal Pool. We left Duncan's cylinders propped against the dam so they can be collected at any time now. Stopped at Frozen Cascade to eat the chocolate and drinks stashed there on the way in. A steady climb out. 3¾ hours.

Saturday 1st October 2011.

Peter Buckley, Pete Hann, Alison Moody and self. We had intended to have a look at the high level passage found on 17th September but Portal Pool was well and truly sumped. That's probably it for the winter unless we get a long cold dry spell. The lock on the gate broke on the way in, the barrel came out with the key when it was withdrawn. On exit we locked the old Gate Squeeze gate with a spare padlock. Pete H was going to go and remove the broken lock before someone closes the gate, it can be opened from inside but not outside at present! 2 hours.

Reservoir Hole

Saturday 10th September 2011.

Peter Buckley, Ali Moody and self. As it was my first time underground since coming a cropper in Swildon's Hole I was very dubious about this trip. After all it has a vertical range of 122m and you go down then up again before turning round and reversing it. However with lots of care I managed fine. In the entrance crawl and the first detour was to check out South Passage, the end is still being dug. Back out and drop down into Moonmilk Chamber which we followed North until we reached the boulder choke. A series of well cemented drops lead down through the choke until a short section of open passage leads to a boulder slope and it eventually reaches Grand Gallery. We followed this South, ignoring the left turn into Topless Aven and went down past Pulsation Aven and Chain Chamber until we reached a forking of the ways. We ignored the two passages leading on, Jill's Slither to the right and Potter's Heaven to the left, as we had been told they were muddy! We dropped off the tackle sack, containing empty spoil bags, here for the diggers. Back up to the turn off to Topless Aven which we went through, admiring the ropes hanging down from somewhere above. Continued up via the Climbing Shafts into Golgotha. Continued ever upwards using fixed handlines and even a rigid ladder in one place until we finally reached Herbert's Attic. A very impressive view from the balcony on the right looking out over the route just ascended! Back down, meeting others in the Climbing Shafts. A quick look at the Topless Aven dig before starting the climb out. 2 hours.

Swildon's Hole

Thursday 11th August 2011.

Peter Buckley, Jez Hennell-James and self. Short Round trip. Mud Sump still low, Troubles still low and Jez managed Glistening Gallery Squeeze with a bit of effort. About 200ft upstream of The Landing a lot of water was coming down the left wall (looking upstream). It was grey in colour and smelled strongly of diesel/fuel oil. (see CSS N/L Vol53 Nos 7/8 p 68 for similar report on 12th June 2011). Upstream of this the water was crystal clear. Still a good airspace through Sump 1. 2¾ hours.

Saturday 13th August 2011.

Peter Buckley, Ali Moody and self. We took in club hammer, chisel and crowbar plus 2 ladders, one for the Twenty and one to use at Maypole Dig. For those that aren't familiar with this part of the cave don't bother, it's not nice! For those that wish to know, it's part of South East Inlets. Go through the Mud Sump into Paradise Regained then climb the boulders in the left wall just before reaching Shatter Pot. Follow the passage at the top past the 2 passages on the left (these lead to avens which drop into Airless Oxbow). At Keith's Chamber climb the wall on the right and follow the dug out passage until a climb up arrives at the bottom of the 42ft Rift. Ignore this and continue into the Sidcot Crawl, which starts as a flat out crawl in water but then is mainly dry. Once it enlarges to walking size you have reached Maypole Aven. When we arrived there was a rusty ladder, been there at least a year I believe, plus a double rope. I'm not sure why I

was sent up the ladder first as I was the heaviest, but at least I was lifelined. Once ensconced in the alcove at the top I hauled up the bag of tools and a fresh ladder and started bashing the seized up maillon and alloy Krab that were fastened to the bolt. First off was the maillon holding the rusty ladder so I kept the maillon and dropped the rusty ladder and spreader down so we could take them out. Second off was the corroded Krab with another rusty spreader which soon followed down the pitch. I was then able to use the maillon to attach our fresh ladder and finally lifeline up the other two. The ladder was then pulled up and the other end attached by Ali to a belay further up to assist with the next 3m climb. Ali then lead the way though a couple of wet crawls to an upward squeeze into a small enlargement followed by an even tighter upward squeeze into a chamber which was big enough for all of us. Here we discovered another set of digging tools matching those we'd carried in! Ali climbed up into the roof with the digging tools and started to shower us with boulders. There wasn't really enough room for both Pete and I to hide safely so I dropped back through the top squeeze and then bashed away at it from below with a club hammer. I'm told both Pete and Ali found it bigger on the way out, but that could have been gravity assisting them! After Ali had had enough Pete went up and showered Ali with rocks. Eventually there were no more loose ones so we retreated. I lifelined Pete and Ali down then lowered the ladder and slid down the doubled rope. After eating our chocolate bars we decided that, rather than do the sensible thing and go out, a visit to Renaissance Series was a good idea as Pete hadn't been there before. There was about 15cm of airspace through the Sidcot U Tube, a good way of getting totally plastered in mud! We went through the Stoopes to Black Chamber but managed to ignore New Renaissance. One day we'll have to go back! Back at the bags we started out. Rather than reverse the route in, we took a second right and climbed down the first aven into Airless Oxbow. Uneventful trip out until just short of Tratman's Temple where I slipped on the flowstone twisting my left knee and landing on my right shoulder. It made me a bit slow on the way out but managed fine, including the Twenty. However it'll be a few weeks before I'm fit for caving again. 4 hours.

Sunday 18th September 2011.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver resume their Sunday morning trips. At last the Swildon's stream is back up to reasonable proportions following Saturday night's rain. Lots of brown water and foam all over the place AND Sump 1 a proper sump again. Went as far as Sump 2. Creamy brown water coming out of the Landing Sump, very different colour from the dark brown water in the main streamway. 2 hours.

Sunday 2nd October 2011.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver to Sump 2. 2cm airspace through Sump 1 today. 1½ hours.

White Spot Cave

Saturday 10th September.

Same party members as for Reservoir Hole. After we exited Reservoir Hole we took a quick look down as far as the dug out pit. 5 minutes.

Welsh Trip Round-up

Photos by Paul Tarrant

by Paul Tarrant

The following is a retrospective account of the club's recent organised trips. They had been well-attended and provide an excellent means for newer provisional members to get to know CSS members, which will be useful when it comes to the time when people are considered for full membership of the club.

The club trips are broadcast within this august publication and also on the website. The Meets secretary also does a hard sell reminder on the bulletin board, so, if you want to get yourself on one of these trips in future, checkout the above-mentioned links or contact Paul Tarrant for further info..

Llygad Llŵchwr 1 & 2 26/3/2011

The club took a car drive over to West Wales in glorious sunshine. The journey to the village of Trapp is about 30 minutes more than to SWCC's headquarters in the Swansea valley, but the extra travelling time is more than compensated for by the quality of cave on offer here at Llygad Llŵchwr which is situated close to the spectacularly perched castle of Carreg Cennan [a Welsh one this, not Norman] which is worth a tourist visit in its own right.

Llygad Llŵchwr is the major resurgence for the Black Mountain [Mynydd Ddu] for all water sinking west of the A4069. It takes very little time for the water to traverse the six kilometres of mountain with the fast throughput indicating no long sumps en route. Unfortunately, however, severe faulting in the area of Llygad Llŵchwr has led to sumping of passages near the system's entrance that has prevented access being gained to the major system that undoubtedly exists under the mountain. We set ourselves to explore one bit of the cave that had, up to 20/11/2010 been the preserve of cave divers.

The wall to Llygad Llŵchwr 2 is the same as per the main Llygad Llŵchwr cave. Park at the side the road and climb over the stile and follow the path which goes between two very large dolines fringed with trees. LL2 is in the left-hand doline and access is gained through a gate in the fence at the back of it. The cave is at the base of the small cliff and is an 8m scaffolded shaft put in place by a Welsh chap called Tony who has done an excellent job here!

The shaft leads straight to a gravel lined stream bed. Water could be heard running near by but recent dry weather had lowered levels significantly. The

way into the cave which is upstream of the main Llygad Llŵchwr resurgence cave is to the right and after a short section of crawling we were able to stand up in a passage 5m wide. This passage was quite high with a rock bridge. The stream way was dry on the occasion of our visit but following the gravel stream bed led to some sandbags that divers had placed across it to prevent gravel being washed into Sump 5 of the main Llygad Llŵchwr cave which had given divers the way into LL2.



Duncan Price at the resurgence

Returning to the area of the rock bridge gave access to a bouldery, ascending ramp which led to a large chamber with much break down and loose borders. There was a hole giving access to a smaller chamber which we did not explore. There were nice pretties in this area. Memory does not serve me well but I recall we explored a large ascending passage which had a very attractive grotto and the mud lined floor.



This continued dropping downwards to another area of attractive formations and a pleasant calcite fringed aven. Looking at the survey John Stevens published in newsletter Vol 53 No. 3 & 4, it appears possible to crawl back to the entrance area but we did not do this and exited after a couple of hours of slow, careful exploration in a very pretty cave.

We then turn our attention to the main Llygad Llŵchwr resurgence where we watched Duncan Price kitting up to dive in. The entrance seemed smaller than I remembered due to additional layers of blocks that had been cemented in place. The cave comprises a higher level passage that connects with several river chambers. It is a confusing place as the river meanders around so you are left accessing the river chambers and one moment you're going upstream with the



streamway then going downstream in the next chamber.

We found the first river chamber easily to find Duncan already there after making a short dive from the surface. Some people did not want to get wet, but those who did saw Duncan dive the next short sump leaving us to find our way to the next river chamber via the upper fossil passages.

The batting order in which the river chambers present themselves is always lost on me, but I am certain we located the 4th chamber next as this is the furthest upstream chamber exploreable by non divers. Duncan broke surface from the downstream sump as we were exploring this finely decorated chamber. We looked next at the 3rd river chamber which required a ladder to access the stream way and this was a rather noisy place due to the water flowing quickly over the boulder lined stream bed.

We decided at this point to retreat to the surface and it just remained for us to change in a gloriously sunny evening, whilst admiring the splendid castle of Carreg Cennan in the distance. Back at Whitewalls later that evening, Stuart laid on a wine-tasting competition but I have no recollection as to who the winner was!

Participants:-Chris & Barley Seal, Duncan Price, Andy & Sue Watson, Stuart France, Joe Duxbury, Jason McCorrison, Richard Dewsnapp & PaulTarrant.

Little Neath River Cave - Ogof Afon Nedd Fechan 23/4/11

A large party travelled over from Whitewalls to this splendid cave. We drove down to the Bridge Cave parking spot after paying at Blaen Nedd Isaf farm and immediately had doubts about the wisdom parking there due to the steepness and poor state of the road. More about that later. Little Neath River Cave is probably best done in a wet suit as it calls for full immersion going through the aqueous small entrance. If you did not get a thorough soaking there you will do so at the tight left-hand duck that eventually follows!

The cave is a delight to explore with its noisy stream babbling away. We

took the Canal Bypass as the water was quite cold, probably due to the sun not warming up the stream on the surface as we were quite early setting off. There are some extremely good formations at the end of the bypass.

We carried on to look at Bouncing Boulder Hall with its light swallowing blackness. We observed a fine looking frog which seemed happy in its environment plus white trout which we saw swimming in the shallows of the stream way. We did not quite push ourselves all the way to the final sump and headed back out, with some of the party heading into Genesis.

Those who exited the cave early in a rapidly warming stream way went and visited Cwm Pwll Y Rhyd and the entrance to White Lady Cave just down gorge from the Bridge Cave car-park. The whole area is a spectacular example of limestone cave and gorge scenery.

How many clutches did we burn out ascending the rough road from the Bridge Cave car park? I'm not sure as I think I was first up and required a good push from several people before I could establish a good run at the steepest part of the hill. The problem is a large gully running down the middle of the road and copious amounts of gravel which do nothing to aid traction here. Park at the top if you can!

This was a good trip attended by open: - Mark Long, Frank Longwell, John & Steve Newton, Mike Read, Richie Dewsnapp, Gary Keelie, Andy Heath & Paul Tarrant

Pant Mawr Pot – 28/5/11

Another reasonable size party left Whitewalls for Penwyllte in pouring rain. I had seen the improving weather forecast and I could guarantee us finding the pot since I had my GPS. Nevertheless, the walkover took an hour and a quarter but thankfully it had stopped raining for us. The entrance pitch is 18 metres deep and a relatively straightforward pitch rig, best done with the deviation rigged from the far wall by the rock ridge below the shaft head. Mandy obliged by doing the rigging.

Abseiling as a party of seven took some time and another party from Yorkshire gave up waiting to descend, choosing instead to do OFD. Barley, Chris Seal's girlfriend decided she would join them rather than descend.

Describing a trip into Pant Mawr Pot is difficult and does not truly do it justice. The entrance pot and big chamber at the bottom contains a large stream way which reminded me very much of Pollnagollom Pot in Ireland. Other parts are very similar to that of Little Neath River Cave where you have to crawl around in choked areas looking for the way on.

We visited the high-level Vestry with its incredible array of helictites and curtains and high-level continuation over scary waded rocks, before carrying on along the stream way to the impressively large chamber which accommodates the stream before its eventual decline in dimensions to a tight rift and sump.

The return journey to the pitch was without incident. We saw several young frogs and newts at the shaft bottom in the full green oasis of vegetation that was blessed by light shining down on it. The walk back was much better than the walk up as it was dry and sunnyish. All who attended enjoyed the trip and perhaps the club should try and do this cave once every year or two as it is a joy to descend it.

Participants:- Gary Kiely, Jason McCorrison, Chris Seal, Barley, Mandy & Matt Voisey, Steve Sharp & Paul Tarrant

Entertaining the Poles – 17/6/11

Tony Moulton used to be one of our members back in the seventies and eighties before moving to Poland. Actually he was banished from the club to Poland due to his penchant for reciting Coleridge's 'Rime Of the Ancient Mariner' whenever he was pissed which was often.

Tony was always keen to show his Polish chums some proper caves in Wales and so booked Whitewalls and the Bureau des Guides Speleologique Gallois in the form of France, Stevens and Tarrant. We all met at Penwyllte on the Friday and then rearranged our planned caving trips from those intended due to the threat of very heavy rain that was said to be on its way.

Stuart took a party to do the OFD to Cwmdwr through trip [not in the water for terribly long] whilst John and I took a large party with Tony and his pals to visit Gnome Passage following Salubrious passage to its continuation and connection to Maypole Inlet and dropped to a reasonably high stream way. I intended showing the Poles the upstream section for 20 minutes or so but it was quite clear that our east European pals did not like water as they were determined to traverse at every opportunity rather than commit to enter the stream which was okay so long as we kept moving.

Deciding Top Waterfall was a bit too far for such a large group, we then retreated back-up Salubrious and visited the splendidly adorned Bedding Chambers quite close to Top Entrance. This elicited oohs and arrhs as it is very attractive passage here.

Our return was made interesting by following passages that seemed to go in the direction of Top Entrance but

we never made it there. We eventually got back via another route that led immediately back to the brickyard and so our trip was done. I think the Poles enjoyed it.

Barbecue weekend - 2/7/11

The barbecue weekend presented some pleasant weather and also an opportunity to do some caving local to Whitewalls. I personally did not want to embark upon a 4th busman's holiday by caving in the Swansea Valley area - too close to Home! We split into four groups with Chris Seal, Barley and Avelina & Sandy choosing to do a Price's Dig - Darren Cilau traverse. A party comprising the Newton's, Jason and Lee visited Copper Passage at the end of Agen Allwedd's Main Passage, whilst Duncan, Naomi & Ceri were diving in OFD1. Stuart France Richard Dewsnapp and I visited Ogof Draenen to do the main streamway to Rifleman's Choke.

The trip in Draenen was done under low water conditions, yet it was uncanny how quickly we all cooled down due to lower limbs being immersed in water. We really got quite cold in spite of me wearing a neo fleece. I had forgotten how long Rifleman's Streamway is. There are spectacular sections of passage that run dead straight in quite large dimensions towards the end of Rifleman's Streamway. Maybe it seemed more impressive as we were using bright LED lights which lit up the passages in a most effective way.

There was a bit of excitement for me when climbing over a large block in the streamway-a chunk of the block sheered off under me but I was able to brace myself so only fell a short way without injury. The resultant noise the block made tumbling into the water was most impressive and elicited comments from the other two.

We gave up trying to get to Rilfeman's Choke when we were about 200 metres short of it. The water was getting deeper, colder and time was slipping away and so we retreated back towards the entrance witnessing a Mayfly type bug flitting around the passage near the confluence with the Agent Blorenge Streamway. We exited after four-and-a-half hours good fun caving.

Back at Whitewalls the Aggie group and diving party returned. There was no sign of the Darren party. Eventually they arrived back at Whitewalls about 19:45 with some of them looking rather tired, but they soon recovered after a good cup of tea.

We enjoyed an excellent barbecue in pleasant weather and company (our new neighbours Tim & Cher attended with their family and friends-nice people) so all in all we all had a fine day. Thanks to Stuart for arranging the ale and barbecue food.

MONTENEGRO 2011

by Gary Jones

I'm sure some of the other CSS members who were on this trip will also produce a report here so I'll keep this short and only concerned with the stuff that I was personally involved with.

This year there was quite a Chelsea contingent on the trip: Joe Duxbury, John Stevens, Mike Read, Gary Kiely, Lucy Northover and myself. Others were drawn from a wide age range and selection of clubs making for a pleasant mix of familiar and new faces.

Logistics were similar to previous years with a minibus travelling out from the UK with all the kit whilst the majority of us took the easy route and hopped on a plane to Dubrovnik where we made our way via minibus, hire car or foot across the border into Montenegro proper.

The real difference this year was the inclusion of some diving kit which was probably the reason the minibus was overloaded and got stopped by the German rozzers! Fortunately, they allowed them to continue without having to abandon anything or anyone!

One of the objectives of this trip was to dive the sump that had been found last year at the bottom of the cave known as PT4. The sump was located at around 435m depth so was no casual undertaking. Shortly prior to the sump, a short duck had been passed and it was hoped the sump would be similar and short. There is still a significant vertical drop to resurgence level.

Once the cave had been rigged, Mike Bottomley and I debated whether to drag in lots of diving gear in case the sump wasn't short after all or to go for a minimalist recce approach. Eventually we opted for a lightweight initial look with a single 2 litre set. We made our way down and changed into wetsuits at the big chamber prior to the last few pitches - this was as joyous an experience as it ever is!

We then quickly dropped down the last few pitches and made our way to the final sump. My initial impressions were not promising. The stream flowed sluggishly over a sandy bottom across a large chamber with possibly

the biggest pile of sand I've ever seen. It gave the impression of backing up horribly. The sump itself, rather than looking like a short duck, appeared to be a heavily scalloped tube heading down at a steep angle. I became convinced that it had to choke. But you never know til you look. So after a bit of compulsory faffing, base fed by Mike I slipped into the water and found... it choked with sand around 4-5 metres in and a couple of metres deep...

A thorough search was made but there was no other way on. I dug it until the air was spent and although progress was made, there was no sign of the roof levelling, it carried on down. It could be dug but given it's location, it's not an appealing site. Besides, any flood would probably block it again almost instantly. Of course, a flood may just have the opposite effect but looking at the Giza style sand pyramid in the chamber, I doubt it.

Hence, two rather glum divers returned to the surface. On the way out, we met another member of the team, a Serbian called Uros and one of the original explorers of the cave. Despite telling him it was at an end, he was keen to have a look himself so we zipped him into his drysuit(!) and left him to it! He found the same result.

Attention now turned to other caves and prospecting. Much was found, some went well such as Meander Cave whilst much choked near the surface despite some quite monstrous draughts. We were leaving howling digs that would have caused minor wars of possession in the UK!

Some though did go further. One I was closely involved in was Sunbeam Hole. I'd found it on yet another ankle slashing yomp through the undergrowth shortly after Sardine Sanctuary had been found. There was a howling draught and it dropped quickly in to a large chamber which at certain times of the day produced the most amazing sunbeams. Incidentally, I almost ended up staying there as the entrance involved a small, slippery climb which wasn't too bad going down but a bit tricky to get back up! Fortunately, the decaying tree trunks at the bottom of the climb were just sufficient to form a rather dodgy ladder back out to safety.

Subsequent trips revealed an extension from the back of the chamber, initially via a hand and knees crawl with two vertical pots on the way before reaching a much larger and more significant pitch down. I managed to descend down to a ledge on my first trip here with a bit of natural rigging but found myself poised on an angled ledge of mobile boulders over a deep black hole... I retreated for back up and moral support!

I returned with Rich Timms who was giving me lessons on bolt placement as we went but I quickly found myself out of my comfort zone and handed the baton over to him. He efficiently then completed the rigging of the pitch and dropped in down a rather nice 29m pitch that we'd estimated at 30m!

Joined by Joe, we explored the chamber at the bottom, it was reasonably sizable but consisted of lots of loose boulders which was fun. The passage corkscrewed down beneath the pitch but quickly closed down. By digging through the false floor with my hands, I opened the passage sufficiently for the slim Rich to squeeze through only to be halted a few metres further on. Again the passage is draughting strongly...

This is just a taster of the sort of stuff we were finding. On the last few days, we were shown a site by a local (the journey there in his decrepit 4x4 is a story in itself!), which led us to some significant horizontal passage and yet another big deep hole though we believe this one has been explored previously by a woman with large breasts (I told you it was a strange journey!)

The down side of the trip was the salmonella! Approx half the team went down with serious diarrhoea and sickness and were out of action for most of the second week. They really were not very happy bunnies.... We think it came from the water supply but this is unconfirmed. Nevertheless, treating it in the future is probably wise.

All in all, it was a good trip with lots of interesting caving and prospecting done. A great area just a shame about the illness!

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



www.chelseaspelaeo.org.uk

*Looking down on White Walls ruin.
Putting up the first fence is "jinks" Malcom Fyfield, Colin Holdsworth and Tich Morris
Photo: Geo Fletcher*