

CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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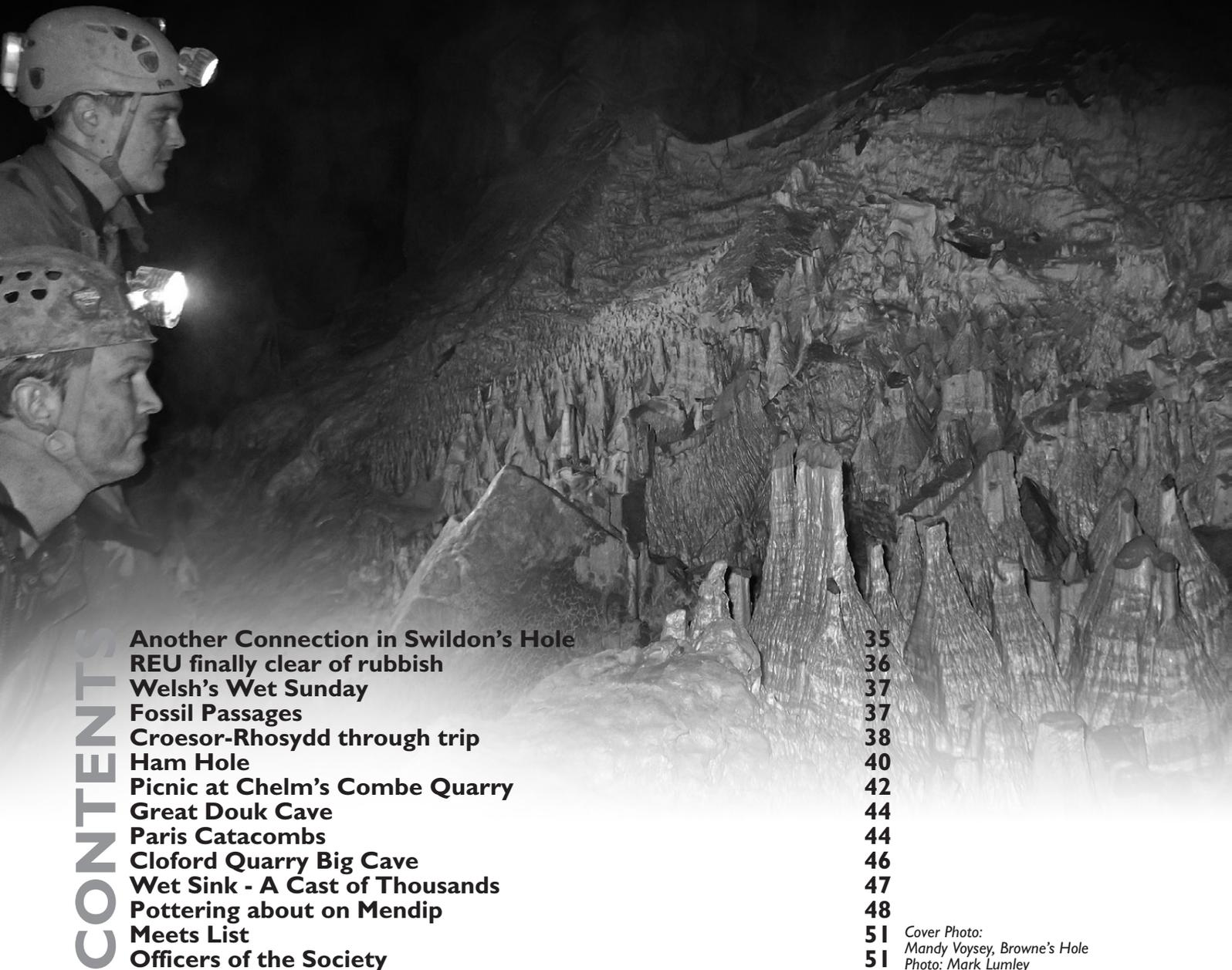


**Cloford Quarry
Big Cave**

Ham Hole

Reynold's Rift

Paris Catacombs



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Cover Photo:
Mandy Voysey, Browne's Hole
Photo: Mark Lumley

Membership

Please send all subscriptions to:
Gary Jones, 4 Glebe Close,
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Current rates are:

Full £25
Joint £33

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

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

Associate £21 (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 sent the payment to the Treasurer. The committee will normally consider voting provisional members up to full membership after 6 months by which time they should have become known.

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

Membership

Welcome to new provisional members:

Paul Shea
Richard Smith
Daniel Thorne

The word **Chelsea** originates from the Old English term for "landing place [on the river] for chalk or limestone" (Cealc-hyð: chalk-wharf, in Anglo-Saxon).

Editorial

Thanks to all those who have provided material for this newsletter, please keep it coming.

 **Mark Lumley**

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Another Connection in Swildon's Hole

by **John Cooper**

Those of you who bother to read my "Pottering on Mendip" will note that another connection has been forged. The aim was to get easier access to a dig site leading on from Terminus Chamber in South-East Inlets. It's certainly shorter, but I'm not sure it's much easier. Anyway here is a description for those wishing to try it out. I'd strongly advise reading up in the Swildon's Hole book.

Tackle required:

- 10m ladder - for ascending Maypole Aven
- 20m rope - for descending 42ft Rift
- 40m rope - for alternative descent via Shatter Pot
- 8m ladder - for alternative ascent of Shatter Pot

Suggested route to do a round trip: Up Maypole Aven and down the 42ft Rift. Doing it this way round means the tighter bits are done first!

Proceed along South East Inlets to the base of the 42ft Rift. Ignore this and continue straight on through the flat out muddy wet crawl until you can stand again at the base of Maypole Aven. At present there is a double rope on this which can be used to haul up a ladder or as a lifeline for someone to climb. It's best to get everyone up the first 7m of the pitch before re-attaching the ladder to a tape sling 3m higher. (Leave the ladder - you will collect it later - but bring along the rope you brought in.) The top bit is where the fun starts, it's narrow and awkward. It becomes a low, narrow rift with a few cm of water on the floor and a couple of small steps up, only 20cm or so but you still notice them. Once you get to standing room it becomes necessary to wriggle up a couple of tight climbs before finally reaching a chamber, room enough for several people. It's now necessary to climb up into a tight sloping rift which turns left and levels off at the top. Once through this, the breakthrough point, you have reached Lower Terminus Chamber. Climb up the wall for a couple of metres then ascend the V-groove and wriggle out the top. Some people might like to use the rope you've brought along as a handline up this! Two routes lead off, one goes down a slope to the U-tube and the terminal dig whilst the other goes to Terminus Chamber itself (ignore the hole you crawl over - it just drops back into Lower Terminus Chamber). From Terminus Chamber follow Swynne-Puke Passage down, taking care not to fall down a couple of drops on the way. Eventually you will arrive at a three way junction. Turn left, which goes back up hill through a low passage to reach the top of the 42ft Rift. At present there is a loose hanger there which can be used to secure the rope for your descent. It's about 10m which is why you have brought along a 20m rope so the last person down has it doubled for the pull down.

If you have pre laddered Shatter Pot and brought along a 40m rope then it is possible to continue straight on from the three way junction, abseil down the first 11m rift (P-hangered) pull your rope down and then continue along to the final 20m abseil into Shatter Pot itself. Before pulling the rope down you can lifeline the first person up the ladder you installed earlier.

Whichever way you exit you now have to repeat the route to the bottom of Maypole Aven and recover your ladder! Please leave the in situ rope ready for the next team.

Have fun.

Restaurant at the End of the Universe Finally Clear of Rubbish

by Phil 'MadPhil' Rowsell and the Fat Belly Boyes

Just over 8 years ago, Graham 'Jake' Johnson (BEC & CSS) took me in to Daren for a 4 day camp at the Restaurant at the End of the Universe. Jake had some digs from way back when he wanted to look at again. When we got to the camp however, Jake was dismayed at the state of the camp, neglected from the glory days he remembered and now a derelict scene of rubbish, rotting clothes and sleeping bags. We both decided we should do something about it, as this was not a good face for British Caving.

to be a great laugh, and at the end of the camp we had amassed a huge pile of rubbish – some 37 BDH's rammed full of metal work and plastic, and over 20 bin liners of rotting clothes, shoes and sleeping bags, the pile was quite amazing.

Sadly that was the last time 'Jake' came in to the Restaurant. I however, was fascinated by the place and promptly dragged friends in to dig beyond the restaurant. Initially it was just a few dedicated souls (known as 'the Fat Belly Boyes') who came in for a weekend's dig. On their exit,



Photo: MadPhil

cleared and the restaurant has finally been cleared of rubbish. My thanks to everyone who has participated in help taking out rubbish from the restaurant including the divers. It has been a long project and one I don't really want to go through again. Who will take on the Hard Rock legacy is a brave man!!

N.B. The camp now is an operational digging camp regularly used by 'the Fat Belly Boyes', we would like to keep it this way. We run a tight shop inventory wise, and we do not want to turn up to camp and find our food/equipment etc compromised due to misuse by other people. As you will appreciate, we have spent a long time sorting the place out and we don't want to have to do it again. For this reason, we would appreciate the camp not being used for tourist trips but if you want to come digging let me know and I am sure we can fit you in.

Editor's Note

As one of the original diggers I am only too aware of the issue of rubbish left at the camps. Over the past few years the recent wave of Hard Rock regulars, together with a number of divers have been systematically clearing out old kit from HRC and have also helped to ferry out kit from REU. Little of the original explorers' kit remains at Hard Rock but there is still a daunting mountain of rubbish from subsequent tourists camping at HRC which is in varying stages of decomposition.

If you've left kit at camp in the past then please come down and remove it.



Photo: Rob Eavis

Rather than going digging as originally planned, we spent the time sifting through the mountains of crap lying about salvaging what was useful and binning the rest. Too often the silent work, was interrupted by the sound of one of us wrenching from the stench of a recently opened BDH/Daren Drum, and the screams of laughter from other. 'Mongos socks I will never forget!' Our other delight was laughing about what we would be feeding the divers that night as we poured endless amounts of rotting food down the toilet. Despite the grim work, it turned out

they would politely have their tackle sacks rammed with as much rubbish as it would hold to take out. It was a very demoralising affair, as despite many camps, the piles of rubbish never seemed to go down. More recently our numbers have grown from 3-4 to regularly having 8-10 people in at camp, meaning both digging has accelerated (two fronts (digs) operational), but also rubbish removal.

Finally, on the camp of the 21st Jan 2012 (my birthday), after some 35 camps, the legacy left by the 'Rock Steady Cruise era' has been

A Welsh's Wet Sunday

by Andy Watson

On March 4th Sue and I visited Welsh's Green in heavy rain. As we walked down the bridleway path we both commented how much water was flowing down the track and how brown it was. As we got closer to the swallet (NGR ST54/5505.4773) it was apparent that there was more water around than we had anticipated and when we got to the cave the old entrance with a metal framework was completely full of water and most of the water from the track was running into the adjacent, abandoned Wessex dig.

And so we reached the entrance pitch (one ladder rigged off the scaffold bars) climbed down this taking the other ladder, rope and emergency kit with us and in the squeeze after the first pitch there was water coming out the side of the wall. This did not bode particularly well and we crawled along past brown foaming water and got to the second pitch noting that there was a rather large amount of water going over the pitch, and 'in for a penny, in for a pound' I sent Sue down the second ladder first. As she climbed down she made some fairly serious yelping noises, probably due to the vast amount of water flowing down the back of her neck and on top of her head. I confess, I followed her down making similar brave grunting noises.

The chill factor in the chamber was quite something with a swirling draft and water spray.

Once down and along the crawl and short drop into the clay-filled bedding plane I decided we would not go any further than the first aven. Water was pouring down the walls. I had not seen the cave this wet before.

After climbing up into the aven we turned around for our return journey and Sue went up the wet pitch first on the wrong side of the ladder with a rope wrapped around her leg.

After de-rigging the pitch and dragging the heavy bag up the water filled crawl which was rather hard work as the water backed up on the bag, we got to the bottom of the main pitch rather sportingly tired and we were both glad to be out of the cave after two hours of wet and strenuous caving.

FOSSIL PASSAGES

The following first appeared in CSS Newsletter Vol 1 No 5 February 1959.

A further visit to Aggy Aggy was arranged for the weekend of 17th January. In fact a worse weekend could not have been chosen as the sudden thaw on the Saturday made conditions in most caves very difficult and resulted in a tragedy in Swi(l)don's. Sixteen people attended and divided into six parties three of whom give accounts of their activities.

(Ed note: This is the second of the three.)

NEAR MISS

The party:

Angel Vila, Chelsea (leader), Rob Hall, Cheltenham, Ian Standing, Cheltenham, Titch Mercer, Cheltenham, Trevor Dore, Chelsea

The party entered the cave at 12.45 p.m. loaded with three dinghies, food and spares. Objective, to penetrate the third boulder choke at the end of the main stream passage. Outside it was raining and the snow was beginning to melt. The usual entrance puddle was covered with ice, now cracked.

Proceeded slowly to Barons Chamber where we brewed a hideous, but no doubt nourishing stew/soup. Here Trevor Dore, who had a bad cold before he started, left the party for fear of slowing it down. However, we were joined by Angus Watkins from B.N.S. and proceeded downstream without further upset.

When we reached the first mud bank the dinghies were inflated. There it was noticed that the level of the water was unusually low. We walked to the second mud bank, where we left Ian, and Rob. Angus, Titch and myself paddled off. At the narrows, Titch's dinghy went phut. The stop cap was sheered off by the sharp edges of the walls. He was left at a suitable spot and within 40 feet Angus and I reached the spot where the roof comes to within two feet of the water. We decided not to go through. Wisely as it turned out.

We returned to Titch. The dinghy was beyond immediate repair. Titch and I oozed into the dinghy. Halfway across a pool we capsized. We stood with the water up to our shoulders. Titch clambered in and paddled ahead. I walked behind holding onto the dinghy. The water was getting deeper and when it reached my mouth I started swimming. We reached the mud bank where we had left the others and were told that the water had risen by about two feet. It had indeed. We deflated the dinghies, slung them over our arms and made haste upstream, with Angus leading and myself bringing up the rear. Where half an hour previously the water lapped our ankles, it now reached our knees and thighs and it was a struggle to move.

The noise was deafening. Underfoot was uneven and the force of the current threw one off balance and into the stream. At some spot, about 1,000 or perhaps 500 feet below Cascade Passage, the dinghies were abandoned. They were stowed up high in the hope that the water would not reach that level. At North-West Junction we breathed. Things were still very difficult as far as Keyhole, where we had some glucose, dates and chocolate. We were somewhat relieved to find ourselves in a dry place. Our only fear now was the narrow, low passage along the stream before Mud Rose Chamber. Would that be passable?

Though considerably swollen with water, it was passable and we felt happier. Here we caught up with Ian Morgan and Bryan Scott who had been looking at Cascade Passage. We joined forces and pushed on towards the exit. Had some more fodder at Barons Chamber and got out at about 10.00 p.m. It was raining.

Croesor – Rhosydd Through Trip

by Paul Tarrant

Wales is not only blessed with some pretty amazing caves in the southern parts of the country. It also boasts some interesting trips that can be done in the metaliferous and slate mines of mid-and north Wales.

We've done club trips in the Olwyn Goch – Milwr Tunnel in the recent past, this being a truly incredible place where access has been temporarily lost. I have done some trips in the lead mines of Cwmystwyth, Rhyndirmwyn as well as smaller affairs at Trellech in Carmarthenshire. They all have a degree of charm and interest about them.

Slate mines are places I had not previously visited before and when SWCC had a club trip arranged to Croesor, I was well keen to go, having read about the massive chambers, the 'Bridges of Death', and boating trips across black, icy cold waters that have never seen the sun.

The club booked the Cave & Crag hut above the small town off Tremadog and this proved an excellent choice although it's a bit of a walk to the pub! We split into 2-3 parties to affect the through trip from Croesor slate mine to Rhosydd and we parked in the pretty village of Croesor, and commenced a long walk up the side of the valley opposite the peak of Cnicht, known as the Welsh Matterhorn due to its appearance from a certain viewpoint.

The mine workings are reached in about 40 minutes and they are very obvious with huge structures made out of waste slate adorning the mountainside. We quickly located the main adit by a fan house and soon we were in! The main gallery went more or less straight for about 6 -700 metres and was four metres wide. The gallery then entered an area where other passages came in although we carried on to a backwall which we had to climb up and which gave access to another high level of mine passages which went off to the right. A gallery gave access to passages to a very large chamber that had been worked out. The floor of this chamber was flooded to some depth.

Going up the ascending roadway we were eventually blocked by collapse, but the main way on was via a passage on the left which gave access

to the top of a huge chamber. There were good fixed ropes at this point and we abseiled them, very quietly to the floor of the chambers some 25 metres below. [NB we took our own ropes in to do this trip as well as an inflatable dinghy. Each person had full SRT rig as well as a buoyancy aid for the watery bits.] We were told not to make any noise in this area as this could cause parts of the roof to lose the fight with gravity and we did not want this to happen!

The chamber was huge and the blackness of the rock just sucked in any light-it must have been an awesome and incredibly dangerous scary place to work in just using candle light. I think at this point I understood why most men working these places were devout Chapel goers...

We moved across the chamber floor and came to a second pitch of similar dimensions and again this was well roped and these were well protected from the slate which can quickly wear a rope. From the bottom of the pitch the size of the chamber diminished slightly and we reached a rather exhilarating zip wire which transported us over a dark lake. This required the use of Petzl pulleys to traverse the wire. The recommendation is not to use the cheap nylon sheaved pulleys like I did as they get totally chewed up by the wire.

This sector was where the fun really started as we were soon presented with a 'Bridge of Death'. When mining slate, it was necessary to put in railways to remove the slate from the underground workings to the surface. The railway was always put at the top of the slate strata that was to be mined and practice was to mine downwards so that the platform upon which the rails ran was eventually removed or became unstable. This problem was overcome by placing massive rods of iron into the roof of the mined out chamber with huge baulks of timber attached to the rods. Several of these hanging U-shaped structures were put in place across the chamber roofs and rails were laid on top of the connecting timbers. They ran wagons across these structures in an 'Indiana Jones' type affair. Some of these structures are left in place and it is possible to climb over them, clipping into safety lines running along what remains of the bridges. Doing this traverse over a black noisome

Bridge of Death, Croesor Mine
Photo: Paul Tarrant



Bridge of Death, Croesor Mine
Photo: Paul Tarrant

SWCC Changing by Croesor Fan house
Photo: Paul Tarrant



lake certainly proved an interesting but safe experience.

We continued over these interesting places until we reached the last 'Bridge of Death' only this time there was a little of the bridge still left hanging and we had to totally rely on traverse lines. Very interesting!

The finale consisted of a huge chamber with a flooded floor. Any vestige of a BOD had totally gone at this point and the only way on was by abseiling down eight metres into an inflatable boat. We had to pull ourselves across the surface of the murky waters by a continuous loop of cord allowing the next bods to pull the boats back. Fortunately no one had to put their buoyancy aids to proper use. A short climb up at the other side of the chamber gave access to easier passages which required no further gear.

At some point we came to a section of mine that had a concreted wall. A hole in this apparently led us into Rhosydd mine although the difference between the two was a little difficult to discern. We came across a fine high chamber which had several rail tracks and a large wooden rail turntable. My memory of this section was not great but I recall an ascending passage which had some interesting artefacts of a continuous chain used to shift slates to the lower chamber.

The rest of the trip through Rhosydd was straight forward with huge holes in the roof opening to the surface and allowing shafts of sunlight to lighten the gloom there. The holes are massive collapses known as the West and East Twll. No way out here! The way out for us was via No. 9 adit which led straight as a die to a damp, grey gloomy mountainside, littered with crumbling surface buildings that were deserted in the 1930s. Up until then, the buildings provided barrack accommodation to slate miners.

I really enjoyed this trip, not only for the sport of the traverse itself but also for the realisation this place was all made by the hand and sweat of men and what men they must have been to make such caverns by just the light of their candles! It seems hard to comprehend in this day and age when we take for granted the power of the lights we now use. Such technology was not available to those miners. It must have been a scary and dangerous place to spend your life working there and all for a pittance that allowed the workforce no pleasures greater than a pint or two in the pub. But not on Sundays!*

* Pubs in most parts of Wales and especially so in north Wales, were dry on Sundays until the 1960s – Porthmadoc, just up the road from Croesor maintained its 'Dry' status until 1996.

In 2009 Chris Pollard, a caver from Shepton Mallet, started digging in Ham Woods Rock Shelter (Ham Hole), a choked entrance in the escarpment of a wooded valley above Croscombe.

Over the next three years, with considerable perseverance and occasional help from friends he pushed the end of the cave horizontally through a constriction and then followed a slight draught down through boulders for four metres, then under an arch and down through more boulders to a well-decorated, open rift.

At this stage a more heavyweight approach was clearly needed, with occasional boulders requiring some persuasion and the increasing distance to the entrance making solo digging impractical.

In 2011 assistance was given by some of the ATLAS diggers, with the full team joining in for regular Wednesday nights through the autumn. Progress continued with Chris and his team from Shepton putting in long hours over the weekends. A way down through more

boulders was engineered, requiring some delicate shoring to keep the roof in place, and in January 2012 Chris was able to see through a small hole in the right hand wall into a low continuation. This was enlarged on Wednesday Feb 1 enabling Chris and local caver Tosky to go through and push on for 5 metres, and further enlarged on the Saturday to allow access to cavers of more generous proportions!

Sunday Feb 5 saw Chris and friends at the dig face and, after removing some of the ubiquitous, glutinous fill, Chris was delighted to be able to squeeze up into the start of a low, well-decorated chamber.

A follow-up trip on Weds Feb 8 enabled us to photograph, survey and

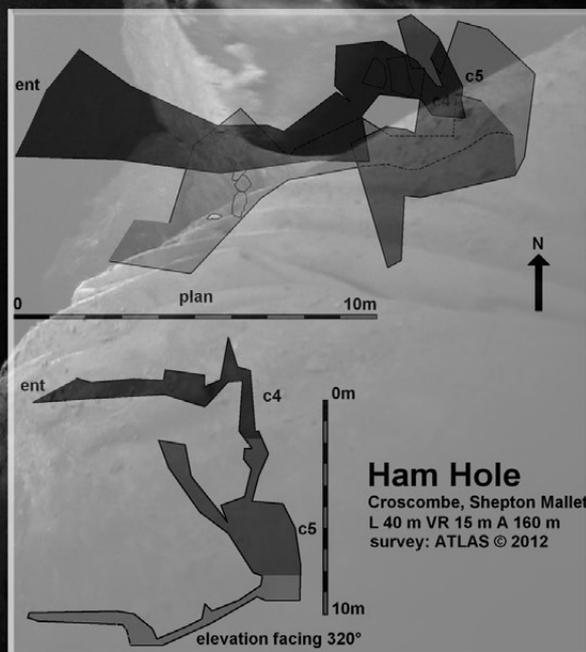
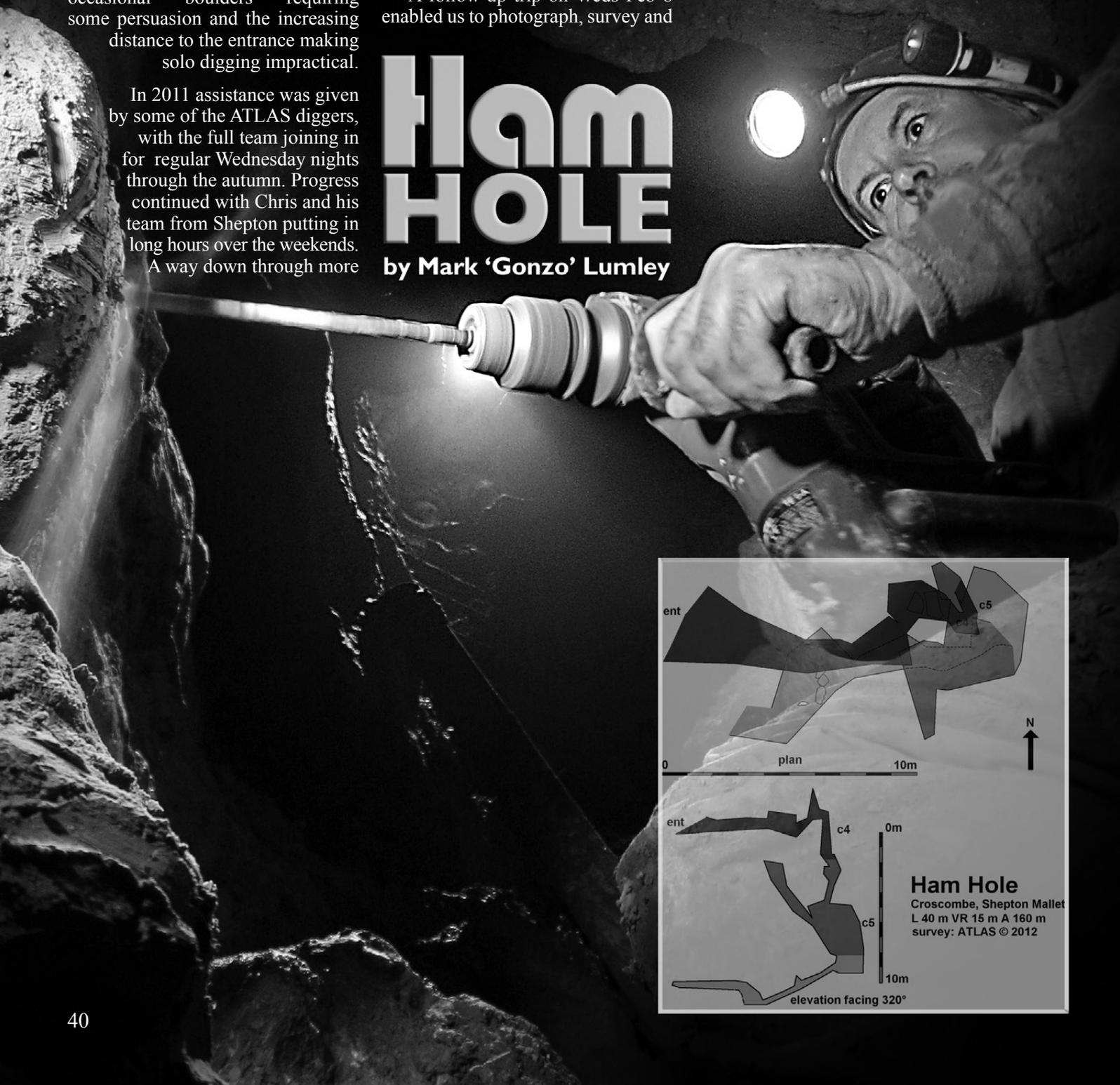
continue the dig.

Work continues to extend the cave through calcited boulders beneath the chamber with the ultimate goal being to intercept the drainage from the Windsor Hill area to St. Andrew's Well, over 3 miles away in Wells.

The diggers would appreciate it if people stayed away until the site is stabilized and formations taped off.

Ham Hole

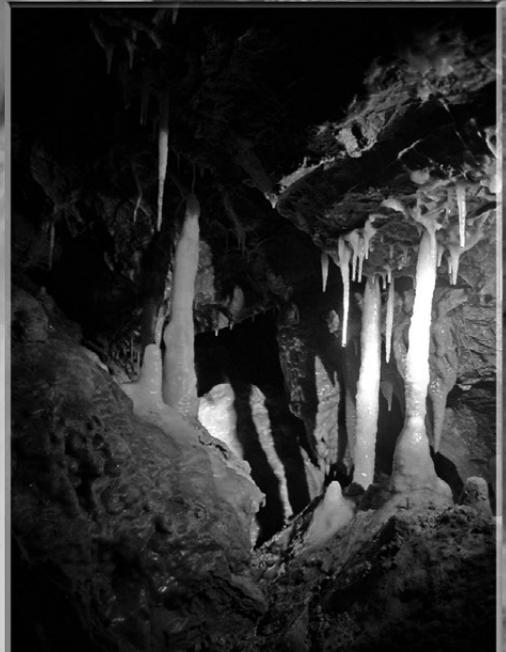
by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley





Left: Duncan Price working at the bottom of the 5 m engineered shaft.

This page clockwise from top left:
Ham Hole entrance, The low chamber, formations in the low chamber
Tony Boycott and Duncan Price working on the boulders in the shaft.
Photos: Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley



Picnic at Chelm's Combe Quarry

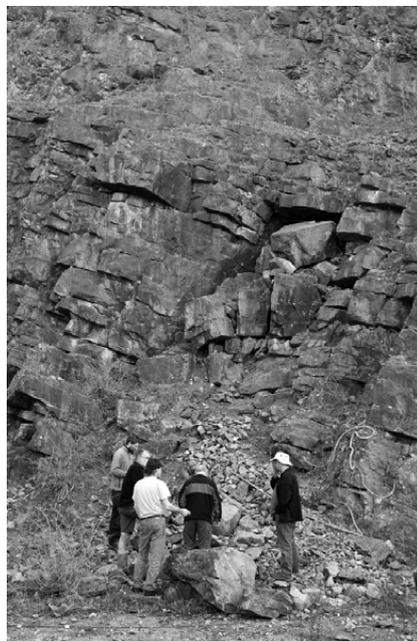
by Andy Watson

A day's work had been arranged by the ATLAS diggers at Chelm's Combe Quarry, Cheddar. The Charterhouse digging team were having a day off and offered to join us and help with the surveying. On the agenda was the unearthing of the entrance to Reynold's Rift, buried under rockfall in 2010, the surveying of Chelm's Combe Quarry Cave, Box's Cave and Reynold's Rift and a photographic session for the forthcoming update of Mendip Underground. Andy Watson takes up the story.

We were unsure of the way so we tailed Dave King *MNRC* through Cheddar to the Quarry. Several people were there already, Andrew Atkinson *UBSS*, Tony Boycott *UBSS*, Chris Caton *ACC*, John Cooper *CSS*, Gonzo, Alan Gray *ATLAS*, Alison Moody *WCC*, Robin Sheen *Burren Crawlers*, Paul Stillman *ATLAS*, Robin 'Tav' Taviner *ATLAS*, Richard Witcombe *ATLAS*. Sue and I went with John to the entrance of Chelm's Combe Quarry Cave.

Inside a downy rift awaited us; using the chain I climbed down the 5 metre entrance into a rift chamber where a squeeze (yes, it was pretty tight on me) allowed me to continue down to a crawl into a low chamber with some quite pretty stalactites on the gently sloping roof. Proceeding down through further muddy twists and turns and a series of low chambers we came to a nicely decorated rift with a selection of interesting flowstone formations, at the base of this rift chamber a short muddy wriggle led into a larger chamber with a lovely decorated aven. We checked out all the leads, some of which have some digging potential so I

suspect this interesting and pretty cave may well be extended in due course, access permitting. As we came out the CCQC surveying team (John, Alison and Andrew) had just started their work. I needed a cup of tea.



Gonzo, Richard, Robin and Tony had started work earlier to uncover Reynold's Rift. They seemed to be making good progress and as the Box's Cave surveying team had already gone in we decided to join them, having never been in the quarry

before. The quarry was used as a National Tower Testing Station (Pylon testing) from the mid 1960's and some of the employees were cavers.

Box's Cave has two entrances, the original higher one that was dug open by John Aylott, one of the NTTTS cavers, who arrived with his granddaughter after lunch, and a lower one at quarry floor level that is now used for easier cave access. A climb down and then up into a large impressive chamber where there is a pylon type ladder leading to the top entrance now overlooking the quarry. Looking around there are some nice formations on the walls. Down slope and carefully following a hand line chain down a stone strewn slope you can lower yourself to the floor of the main chamber some 40 foot lower down. Up to one side is a high aven that can be accessed carefully by a climb and then an aluminium ladder just secured at the base, the top is not fixed and it is very wobbly, and so were the contents of my stomach as I ascended it, as it is 60-80 foot to the floor of the main chamber

(just don't look down or lose your balance!). At the top of this there are lots of loose boulders, a couple of scaffold bars, a wire and pulley arrangement and a short climb into a dead end rift. Back at the bottom of main chamber there are a couple of squalid muddy low bits going nowhere (but the coral in the walls is impressive) and an up and over climb (Dave King fixed a ladder over the top as big people like me can't get through the lower squeeze) that leads to a very pretty descending passage to a muddy floor.

Back outside again Gonzo suggested we looked at Reynolds' Rift while we were there, so ladder in place, Sue, Tav and I descended down the narrow shaft to a flat out crawl, across a muddy traverse with a deep rift below us into a small aven that probably connects to Box's. Back the other way was a squeeze that Tav and Sue went through to a pretty bit of rift, I did not quite fit, it's me ribs you see. Back up and out we all made various grunting noises especially Sue.



Opposite centre - The buried entrance of Reynolds's Rift.

Photo: Paul Stillman

Above - Richard Witcombe, Mark Lumley and Robin Sheen working on the entrance.

Photo: Paul Stillman

Below - Cloford Quarry from above.

Photo: Paul Stillman.

Other photos by the editor



Great Douk Cave 9th April 2006

The Old Soaks in the Yorkshire Dales

by Barry Weaver

John Addison, Rick Box, Chris Tomlin
and Barry Weaver

Vital surface support Cath Addison and Judith Mullington

It was a really grim day, a few degrees above freezing plus very wet and windy, with patches of snow still on the ground. So unable to bear another surface soaking we decided to get wet underground for the second time this weekend. Unlike the previous trip we had no problems finding the entrance to Great Douk as it's clearly signposted.

The older members of the party avoided getting wet at the entrance climb by using the open bedding plane partway up the side of the depression.

Then we had a very pleasant stroll up this easy but classic cave with its little cascades and clean washed passage until we reached the crawls that lead to Middle Washfold, where, as on previous trips, we stop. Here we met a scout party, and one of the leaders who knows and sent his regards to Harry Pearman. A steady walk back down the streamway soon saw us back at the entrance where the usual water fight didn't take place, it being too damp and miserable for such antics.

Changing after the trip was as wretched as ever with fingers and other parts numb with cold.

We then met Cath and Judith in the Hill Inn who thoughtfully had reserved a table near the fire for us, and after having a couple of pints things felt a lot better.

Underground time approx. 1 hour.

Social section Easter report and statistics 5th to 9th April 2012

Members taking part .. The above plus Dave Hargreaves, Dave Ramsey and Paul Tarrant

All taking part in caving drinking and walking. As this was probably our last Easter weekend in the caravans at Ingleton, a toast was drunk to Joyce who sadly passed away earlier this year and will be missed by all.

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

Pub visits: 9: to 6 different pubs

Homeguard detachments: 1

Peaks climbed: 1

Hard Lithuanian Caver met: 1

Caves visited: 3

Average m.p.g: 10.7; ...a good result, the overall result being too close to call, but with Chris Tomlin, Rick Box and John Addison at the top of the leader board.

The Awards

Committee have recommended that consistency prizes be awarded to John & Rick for yet another good all round performance, well done all.

Paris Catacombs

by Helen Nightingale

I tried not look too shifty as I headed towards the metal detectors and scanners at Luton, on the way out to France. Plenty of people in front of me were getting stopped and further searched. With my rucksack containing battery packs with little wires sticking out, and myself with the typical caver/terrorist watch, I had to hope I wasn't emitting even the slightest whiff of anything from the EUG course I'd been on recently. Thankfully, I was through no problems, and had a lovely snooze on the plane. The next problem came when trying to meet up with the others. I know with urban exploration you are not supposed to give away too much about how to find sites, but my directions were proving to be cryptic. I was given a picture of a station entrance with a clock nearby, and was told to meet there. It turns out Gare de Nord has many entrances, and platforms at several levels. Eventually I met up with the others, and we set off towards the catacombs. There was a couple of people who had been there before, so they had planned plenty of interesting places to take us to, and knew how to get in. We all chickened out of wearing our waders until the very last minute. Wandering around Paris like that would have made us look silly!

Once inside the catacombs, or more correctly, Grand Reseau Sud, we headed off the beaten track as soon as we could to avoid les flics, the specialist police force of the underworld. The Mines Inspectorate still classify all of the mines of Paris as working mines, so it is illegal to go in them. In 1774 there was a large mine collapse along a Parisian street, which paved the way for the formation of the mines inspectorate. As measures to prevent further roads from collapsing into the mines, inspectors tunnelled under the roads at risk and reinforced the area with masonry. The date of the consolidation work and the name of the street was inscribed upon the walls. Typical French style blue name plaques can also be found. The Inspection Générale des Carrières (mines inspectorate) was officially founded in 1777, and you can still see inscriptions dating back to then. We even found some plaques with the names of the mines inspectors and engineers who had done some of the work. There was also lots of graffiti adorning the walls. Near to the plaque, there was a large pig excreting skull-and-crossbones up the walls of a long, calcified-over staircase, leading to a sealed up entrance complete with coat hooks. The mines of Paris is quite a mish-

mash of centuries old history and modern activity.

After we had finished looking round the de l'Aqueduc area, complete with water to splosh through and mirrored arches, giving pretty reflections in the flooded tunnels lit by carbide, we scuttled off to the next area, in the knowledge this was the most likely place to meet les flics. Far down the tunnel behind us, we saw torchlight, so we were not going to pause for any photos until we were certain we had lost them. We were guaranteed to come across other explorers, but we were not prepared to find out whether the distant lights were friendly or fine-issuing. We stopped for a rest in a little room where people had built a castle from lumps of stone, and carved gargoyles in the walls. We were soon joined by a small group of French explorers, so we stayed for a chat, then headed off to look at the gardens, and to find the Sex Room. Apparently this used to contain a very large pink stuffed rabbit which had been subject to certain physical alterations. It was gone, but legend lives on. We continued on, via many twists and turns, through halls containing a giant robot and murals on the walls, until we met somebody else. This was a cataphile, one of the people who spend large amounts of time in the system, and know the place very well. He took us to a concert – a couple of people playing guitars and singing, with a fair crowd of people sitting listening, then back to the hall of murals. I had been called away by the others for taking too long exploring this area, and fortunately for me it turned out they hadn't realised I was close to discovering the old cinema. Here were murals depicting film characters, and the remains of a fully functional cinema. This caused quite a furore when it was discovered by the police and was picked up on by the journalists.

From here we headed north, and deeper into the system away from the easiest to access entrances. There would be less likelihood of les flics disturbing our dinner and a well-earned night's sleep. It wasn't until dinnertime I realised what I had forgotten to pack – a mug, plate and cutlery. Oops! Evening entertainment was provided by those who had brought hammocks to sleep in but who had failed to think about how to get into a sleeping bag while suspended by eBay's version of a hammock, which was more like a string vest with baler twine at the top and bottom. I was very comfy on my nice flat piece of rock with just a sleeping bag and liner on the outside to keep it clean. Our room for sleeping was circular and had a shaft to the surface in the middle. The authorities realised people had been using the shaft to enter the tunnels, so had a water feature built over the top! They can be very determined at times to keep people out. There are so many ways into the system, there is no way the powers that be can build water features over all of them. We had heard about a manhole cover that was able to be opened nearer where we slept than the entrance we came into the system, so we were able to stay further north and explore more on our second day underground.

The part of grand reseau sud we covered on day 2 was older, as indicated by the consolidation dates, and there was more pencil graffiti which dated back far beyond the modern aerosol scrawl. The style of the lettering is beautiful, both the carved and pencil markings. In some areas the modern murals had incorporated the old inscriptions to form part of the artwork. I was enjoying looking at all the old markings, and was surprised to hear noises aside from footsteps, splashing footsteps or conversation. It turned out the place I had stopped for photographs was directly underneath a railway station platform. The ceiling above me suddenly changed from old to crumbly poor-grade concrete, and was probably alarmingly thin. You could feel the passing trains vibrate the surfaces you were touching, and feel the trains come to a halt and move off again. It was like being in the basement toilets at Earls Court, where you can hear the tube announcements rather than feel the presence of the trains.

We looked around a Nazi bunker, with toilets, electrics and a mosaic floor still in place, and the site of an old brewery. The route around the brewery involved some rather interesting ladder climbs and clambering through holes in the walls of the large beer vats, which were normally at a rather precarious height. The mines of Paris have certainly seen a myriad of uses over the centuries. To see them all, caving skills come in handy. We saw an area that had been used for practising stone carving, and also an ossuary. The Catacombs that are open for public tours is where you will see neatly stacked piles of bones and skulls. There are no such niceties in the netherworld of the ossuaries not on the paying public tours. The rapidly overflowing cemeteries were a problem which was solved by removing skeletons and literally tipping them down some of the shafts. Those of us with stronger stomachs saw large amounts of bones and a long-handled shovel which must have been used for heaping up piles of bones at the bottom of a shaft still chock full of entangled bones. It was quite spooky so we soon joined the others waiting for us back at the main tunnels.

All too soon our weekend under Paris was over and it was time to whizz up a shaft and we popped out a man-hole into the drizzly suburbs. The passers-by seemed to find the sight entertaining. We were rather weary and grubby, and really couldn't be bothered to change out of our waders, so headed back to Gare du Nord as we were. Our fellow passengers on the metro were rather less than impressed by our good dress sense and fragrant odour. Our shower-in-a-can did nothing to disguise the smell emanating from the carbide generators. At the restaurant we had dinner in, the waitress was rather keen to get rid of us quickly, and I discovered arriving at a hostel looking rather dusty and dishevelled, wearing waders containing enough water to make puddles on the floor was a good ploy to get sent straight to the front of the queue for the shower. The Lynx effect sometimes works in mysterious ways.

Cloford Quarry Big Cave

by Andy Watson

Cloford Quarry Big Cave was reopened by ATLAS in 2003 and there was a short article in Descent late in 2004. This is a very rare and unusual unconformity cave, developed along the junction between the massive Carboniferous limestone and a much later thin deposit of Jurassic inferior Oolite. The cave is primarily formed along this horizontal layer between the rock types. I first visited Cloford Quarry (The quarry itself is a SSSI) in May 2007 and became interested in the area after seeing the interesting rock formations and checking out the various obvious caves (Zulu Cavelet and Cloford Quarry Cave No.3 and a couple of other potential holes). I was initially told about the hard-to-find entrance of Cloford Quarry Big Cave by Dave King.

I started digging and looking for leads in the cave in August 2008 and opened up the back rift of Double passage and over the next few months I took Andy Snook (thinner than me) and a ladder in to see if he could get down the narrow rift. He refused too! In early 2009 after we had reopened Heale Farm Cave (by kind permission of Agg Ind) and had been playing around in TJ's Swallet I went back to CQBC and attacked the rift in another area and managed to get down some 2m and squeeze into a virgin piece of rift and then a very small rift chamber. This was at the base of what appears to be a Triassic fissure infill with fossils; these are known as Neptunian Dykes and larger ones can be seen in to quarry face around the Zulu Cavelet's. Due to the intriguing draught in the committing entrance tube, that Richard Witcombe put down to

the 'road drains' I again ventured in autumn 2009 and into 2010 to progress a number of small leads in the cave including progressing the horizontal dig that Robin 'Tav' Taviner suggested was interesting. After about 2.5m and squeezing my head into another fissure chamber it closed down and was probably just another water inlet route. The Trench area is rather interesting and I did spend some time here moving rocks from against one wall to see if this would go down further in an attempt to get down to a lower level, but after 2 metres this appears to be fairly solid bolder choke in the floor. I have taped a few of the areas where I thought delicate formations on the floor and side rocks could be damaged. In March 2010 I then found a new lead just off the Entrance chamber, dug this and managed to extend the passage for 6 - 7m until it went too tight. Again this is clearly another water inlet passage. When I discussed this with Tav he thought he had explored this when they had reopened the cave back in 2003; if they had some further collapse had occurred that I dug out. In September 2010 I visited the cave with Richard Witcombe and Jo Baker, a surveyor from Agg Ind to discuss the possibility of occasional access. We agreed that it could be a 'leader cave' due to its location close to the quarry face and the bat roosts in the entrance chamber and main unconformity chamber and due to the special geological interest within the cave. She was keen for it to be gated and within a couple of months I took Philip to the surface entrance to measure up for a gate. Since then I've

been working on another dig, but decided that I will have another go at CQBC for 2012. Over the last couple of months and after several trips I have managed to get down the initial back section of Double rift at floor level that was initially too tight and by using various wooden wedges, trench props and some other adjustable screws borrowed from Dave I am now down some 8m into a small, but more spacious rift section (now named Old Lorry Damper Rift due the supporting metal work in one area). The dig bottoms out at 12 metres with nowhere for spoil stacking and little room for hauling. A ladder is helpful for getting out of the rift, a knotted rope is in place. Please ask me re-access as it has the potential to be very sensitive and it would not support a big digging team.

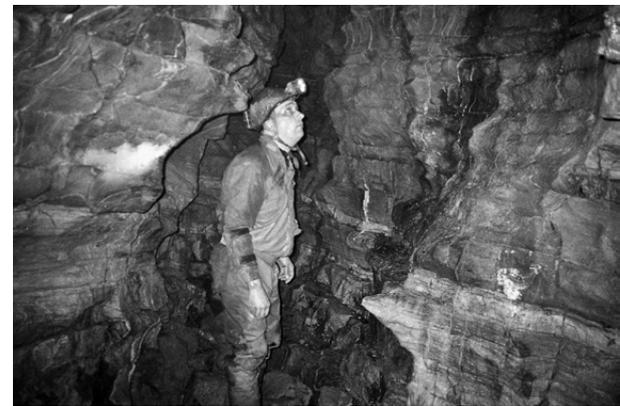


Photo: Andy Watson

Wet Sink

- A Cast of Thousands

by Joe Duxbury

Saturday 24 March 2012

Richard Dewsnap, Matt Dunn, Joe Duxbury, Tim Gibbs, Jason McCorriston, John Newton, Stephen Newton, Mike Read, Chris Seal, Dan Thorne, Mandy Voysey, Matt Voysey.

Well, what a turnout! From a modest four or so, we ended up with a round dozen. The keenest were two of our newest members, Tim and Dan, who got to the meeting point just before me.

A Forest Club group were digging at Pirate Passage, and had already laddered the two pitches, but a good suggestion was made to rig a rope on Pen Pot, so we could have two people ascending at once. Mandy and Matt arrived just before we set off, but they easily caught us up. We rigged a rope on each of the pitches, and soon had a conga line of cavers in the entrance series.

We all gathered at Cross Stream Junction, and I outlined our route: through the Three Deserts to Dog's Grave; up the slot into Hull Passage if people were inclined; then round Coal Seam Passage to complete the

loop. I don't go into Wet Sink enough to know the cave very well, so I did take a wrong turn, and had to confirm the route at one junction, before we arrived at the start of the Deserts.

Here John and Stephen, and Jason, dropped out, as they had visited Norman the dog before, and didn't want to endure the sandy crawling in the Deserts again. Which is odd, because, as everyone knows, there's no crawling in Wet Sink. Another mistake-ette resulted in us doing a small loop and ending back at The Vittals Stop, the junction of Dog's Grave and Flow Choke Passages, but I persevered and we did visit Norman and pay our respects. Most of the party (being stalwart CSS members) elected to try the slot up into Hull Passage, but Dan and Chris figured they wouldn't fit, so they retraced their steps, to wait for us at The Vittals Stop.

The slot (called the Norman Invasion) was quite snug, and I needed some support from below to get up it. Most of the rest managed it without too much bother. After Dan had referred to the survey, and advised us which way to go, we made

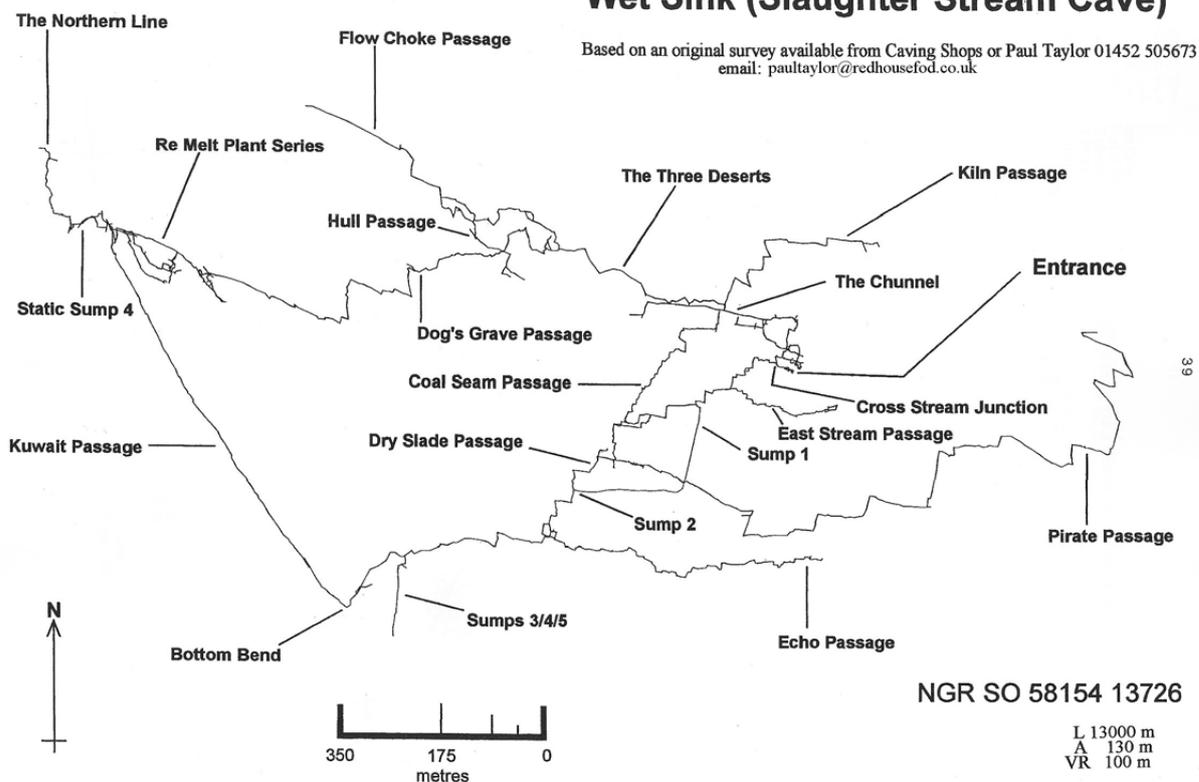
our way along Hull Passage and through the boulders to Flow Choke Passage. I must have missed a turn, as we went on for an awfully long way and ended up at Flow Choke itself. Well, it's something else to see. The junction was obvious from the other way, so we got back to Chris and Dan without losing any more people.

Back through the Deserts, to where J, S & J were getting very impatient, and into the rift on the right (as you head back to the entrance) for Coal Seam. No, I don't know why it's called that. This led us back to the streamway and a straightforward walk back to Cross Stream Junction. Here, there was a pale fish swimming around, until he swam off, disturbed by our intrusion.

Once back at the pitch, most people had left their ascending gear behind as they had decided to use the ladder, but some helped speed up our retreat by using the rope. Jason helped me derig, and we emerged to find the sun still shining. Most of us then left for Whitewalls, and the promise of some whisky sampling. A fine trip, far better than watching some mediocre football match.

Wet Sink (Slaughter Stream Cave)

Based on an original survey available from Caving Shops or Paul Taylor 01452 505673
email: paultaylor@redhousefod.co.uk



Pottering About on Mendip

by
John Cooper

Agen Allwedd

(I know it's not Mendip but it was the Annual Dinner & AGM weekend!)

Saturday 28th January 2012.

John Cooper, Lee Hawkswell and Tim Morgan joined Duncan Price and Naomi Sharp on a trip to Turkey Sump to recover 2 cylinders which had been rusting there for several years. Duncan was very careful to empty them before the carry out started! The streamway floor is still very slippery. A nice steady trip of 4½ hours before a very pleasant Annual Dinner.

Box's Cave.

Saturday 24th March 2012.

Andrew Atkinson, Tony Boycott (UBSS), John Cooper, Mark Lumley, Ali Moody, Rob Taviner and Robin Sheen. A quick trip in at the end of the day to help Mark with a photograph he wanted to redo. We used the lower entrance and I carried on down the entrance instead of going back up the U-tube! Ali squeezed through the hole below the chain to rig a ladder for the rest to go over. I followed Ali to remind myself of what it was like. 1 hour.

Charterhouse Cave

Saturday 4th February 2012.

Andrew Atkinson (UBSS), John Cooper, Pete Hann (WCC), Ali Moody (WCC).

First digging trip of the year to the Riser. Ali lay on her left side in the pool and dug ahead whilst I filled the bag in the trug and dragged it back to the top of the calcite slopes. Here the bag of mush was transferred to a tub and lowered down the top slope to Andrew who transferred the tub to the lower rope and slid it down to Pete. We repeated this until Ali got cold and decided bang was needed in the calcited rocks ahead and right. This is where a good trickle of water comes in – not sure where it leaves the pool? Came out to a couple of cm of snow! 3½ hours.

Saturday 25th February 2012.

Pete Buckley (WCC), John Cooper and Pete Hann. A photographic trip but there was no draught so many of the picture sites were too misty. Had a look up the passage at the bottom of Gloop Pot. I think it looks interesting; you can hear the stream on it's way from the Gorge in GB to the Confluence in Charterhouse but can't quite reach it yet. Not sure it will be dug in case it does go to GB! 3½ hours.

Saturday 3rd March 2012.

Josh Bratchley (Plymouth Uni), Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody. Whilst Ali took Josh on a tourist trip to the Timeline (Portal Pool still full) John prepared the dig face of the Riser. When Ali returned a charge was set up and fired. On the way out a visit to The Citadel, Chiaroscuro Passage and Midsummer Chamber completed the tourist bits for Josh. 4 hours.

Saturday 10th March 2012.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper, Pete Hann and Ali Moody. Clearing the spoil from last week's session. The pool had gone but after an hour or so it returned. Much slurry removed before the rocks appeared and sufficient were removed to allow access to a cross rift up on the right. To enter it was necessary to lie on ones back and squeeze up into it. Far too tight to do anything with in both directions. The way on must be straight ahead but it looks low and dipping down. 4¼ hours.

Chelm's Combe Quarry Cave

Saturday 24th March 2012.

Andrew Atkinson, John Cooper and Ali Moody. Surveyed the cave. 101m long but that included surveying up an aven. As we were surveying in met Andy and Sue Watson on their way out and Rob Taviner doing a description for the next Mendip Underground. 3¾ hours.

Eastwater Cavern

Saturday 11th February 2012.

John Cooper, Aidan Harrison (WCC), Duncan Price, Wayne Starsmore (WCC) and Clive Westlake (WCC).

In the entrance leaving the cold and snow behind us and down through the boulders into the 380ft Way. Took a left into the Upper Traverse and popped out at the far end. Turned left to go up the bedding as there was a party ahead of us who were going down it. (We had initially planned to go down and visit the Lower Traverse.) From the top of the bedding we took a tight hole down, Baker's Chimney Bypass, into the Canyon. Followed the trench down until a bedding on the left proved easier and led to the Crossroads. Here we went left and then another left to reach Dolphin Pot. We rigged a handline on this. Straight on down and the 35ft Pitch was reached. A 10m ladder was rigged to the in situ bolts and a short rope used as a lifeline, we didn't have a long enough one for a double lifeline. At this point the other party caught us up and followed us down the pitch. (We later met them on the surface. One of them had taken his helmet off to detach his spare light for someone else's use. At this point he went flying, getting a nasty gash to his head, so the party retreated.) For us a crawl up to the right gained Harris's Passage and a trench leading down. We followed this down until a tube on the left gave access to the bold step. Across this and down via the Muddy Oxbow until a turn right led to the 13 Pots streamway. A quick look downstream into Sand Chamber (lots of sacks of spoil here) before heading up the streamway as far as the bold step. At this point our other party were just rigging the 2nd Vertical. We waited then alternated one down / one up, good job there were 5 in each party. It was best to do this as it meant people could remain on the lifeline whilst tra-

versing along the ledge between the bottom of the ladder and the climb down to the bold step. Once our party were all up the 2nd Vertical we derigged (oops – accidentally left the hangers as we didn't realise they belonged with the tackle and weren't permanent.) and climbed up to the 1st Vertical. This had a double lifeline rigged so the first person up was safely lined from below. He then lined the remainder from the top. Once we were all up this it was derigged and we continued on upwards taking a right turn to reach the S-bend. Continued on up the Canyon until Wind Tunnel and the Woggle Press led back to the entrance boulder choke. A nice 2¾ hours.

Priddy Green Sink **Tuesday 28th February 2012.**

Andrew Atkinson, John Cooper and Ali Moody.

A trip to check out the state of Virgin Series as part of the Mendip Underground review. We put a ladder on the entrance then followed Fault Plane Passage down to the left turn up to RAF Aven. From the aven we continued descending through Hanwell's Hall and Blasted Bastard. Rather than continue along into Barrel Passage we turned left into Virgin Series. It wasn't far into the rift before it was necessary to squeeze sideways along the top for a couple of metres, I could only just fit when I exhaled and my ribs hurt for a week afterwards! Another couple of metres and the top of Virgin One was reached. We removed the old tape belay (20 years old?) and rigged our belay round a wedged boulder and hung a ladder down. The bottom of Virgin 1 lead straight onto Virgin Two, same ladder used. From the bottom of Virgin Two an awkward wriggle round a protruding knob of rock lead steeply down to Virgin Three and then Virgin Four. I believe these climbs are nowhere near as slippery as they used to be. From the bottom of Virgin Four, Bar Code Crawl lead off. Ali and Andrew fed themselves feet first along this to check out the animal population, many leeches were noted. Andrew gave up when it became necessary to dig out a gravel bank but Ali reached the sump. On the way out Ali and Andrew checked out the various side passages whilst I reserved my energy for the squeezes! 2 hours.

Reynold's Rift **Saturday 24th March 2012.**

Andrew Atkinson, John Cooper and Ali Moody.

Having been re-opened earlier in the day we intended to survey. However only a few legs in the Disto-X started to misbehave so we just explored the place. The entrance is a free climbable rift of about 7m total. Short flat out crawl drops into cross passage. Turned right and traversed over rift to chamber with ongoing dig at far side. Dropped down the rift to the bottom dig. Back to crawl and left passage taken through some narrow squeezes to larger passage, aven above entrance and boulder blocked a few metres further on. 1½ hours.

Swildon's Hole **Saturday 21st January 2012.**

John Cooper, Pete Hann and Ali Moody.

In the Short Dry Way and the first party met at the top of the Twenty. We overtook them whilst they were rigging their lifeline. Up at Tratman's Temple and along

through St Paul's Series, very good inward draught today, through the Mud Sump and into Paradise Regained. Just before reaching Shatter Pot we took a boulder gully up on the left into South East Inlets. Took the dug out crawl to the foot of the 42ft Rift. I tied on the rope we'd brought in with us and climbed the initial groove, 7m, (it had a knotted line on it which was removed when we came down). My thread belay at the top was still in place so I used it as a runner before moving back out into the wider part of the rift and continued on up the final 3m to the top of the rift. The piton runner was ignored, it's half way up this top section. My hanger was still there at the top so once safely ensconced in the top of the rift I pulled the whole of the rope up, to get it out of the runner, before dropping an end down. The ladder, unrolled, and karabiners were attached and I hauled them up, attaching the ladder to the hanger. [We had taken in a 10m and a 5m ladder for this but 10m was all we used.] Ali then climbed up and was followed by Pete who complained that the ladder wasn't in the widest part of the rift! Followed a crawl down to a three way junction where we turned right and followed the ascending Swynne-Puke passage until Terminus Chamber was reached. It's always further and higher than you think! We went through Terminus Chamber into the rift on the opposite side, ignoring the two holes down. Then came the U-tube, Ali looked at it feet first but decided it had to be head first to get up the slope on the far side. Pete said it was ridiculous so I had a go feet first and was hauled up the far side by Ali! Fortunately the passage was larger again and a climb down of a couple of metres dropped into the flooded dig. The water was only a few cm deep over a silty floor, not sure if anything has washed in since it was last dug. Would need to syphon out the water, it could be fed into Lower Terminus Chamber. Once back through the U tube Ali dropped down the second hole (first going out) and slid down a rift into Lower Terminus Chamber. I followed, it was fun getting back out of it! There was a length of syphon hose here, possibly used to drain the dig? Back at the top of the 42ft Rift Ali pulled all the rope up and slid down the tight part of the rift (removing the karabiner I'd left as a runner and the knotted rope). Pete said if he tried that he'd still be there so pulled the rope back up and fed it down by the ladder. Once he'd slid down the rope I undid the ladder and dropped it to be coiled at the bottom. I used an old steel karabiner to attach to the hanger then slid down the double rope, finally pulling it down behind me. A welcome drink and chocolate bar were then consumed before we started the trek out. Met a party at the bottom of the Twenty who said two other groups were doing the Short Round Trip ahead of them but we had seen no sign of them. Out the Wet Way. 3¼ hours.

Sunday 22nd January 2012.

John Cooper and Lee Hawkswell.

Short Round Trip taking in Sump 3 and 4 via Blue Pencil. Didn't bail the Troubles, they were still low from yesterday's parties. 2¾ hours and still made the Hunters for lunch.

Sunday 12th February 2012.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver.

Went and bailed the Mud Sump. Only saw one other party in cave. 1¾ hours.

Saturday 18th February 2012.

Andrew Atkinson, Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody.

Digging the link from the top of Maypole Aven to Lower Terminus Chamber. Charge set and BOOM! Came out. 3½ hours.

Sunday 19th February 2012.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver.

Went and removed gravel from the Mud Sump. Lots of parties in the cave but we were not held up at any time. 1¼ hours.

Wednesday 22nd February 2012.

John Cooper, Osama Gobara (CDG) and Christine Grosart (CDG).

Christine filming a trip, she was camera operator, Osama was diver and I was lighting. Shots as far as Sump 1 today. 2¼ hours.

Thursday 23rd February 2012.

Osama Gobara and Christine Grosart went in early to film beyond Sump 1. Clive Westlake and I went in later as far as Sump 2 and helped carry gear out. 2¼ hours again.

Sunday 26th February 2012.

John Cooper and Lee Hawkswell.

Vicarage Pot to look at the end dig, it's still a sump! The pot has an in situ ring bolt on the right wall about 2m from the head of the pitch to which we fastened a 5m ladder using a rope belay. With the top rung on the lip of the pot the bottom rung was just on the floor. There is a large chockstone in the roof above the pitch which can be used as a belay for a double lifeline if required. The climb up the spikes on the far side is fun as is the low crawl up beyond the U tube (Lee said it was much easier coming back down it!). Two large parties of youngsters en route to Sump 1 were met on our way out. 2¼ hours.

Sunday 11th March 2012.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver.

Sump 1. Lots of parties in the cave but we were only held up at the old Forty drop. 1¼ hours.

Saturday 17th March 2012.

Andrew Atkinson, John Cooper and Ali Moody.

Digging the link from the top of Maypole Aven to Lower Terminus Chamber. Spoil from last time cleared, holes drilled (one bit left in as it was stuck!), charge set and BOOM! Came out. 4¼ hours.

Saturday 31st March 2012.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody.

Digging the link from the top of Maypole Aven to Lower Terminus Chamber again. Spoil from last time cleared with Ali showering Pete and I with rubble then slurry. Eventually she was able to squeeze through into Lower Terminus Chamber and push spoil back to me so I could shower Pete with it. Finally charge set and BOOM! Perhaps it will be large enough for the rest of us now? The drill bit from last time was recovered but it is curved so no use. Came out. 4¼ hours again.

Sunday 1st April 2012.

John Cooper, Lee Hawkswell and Barry Weaver.

All down Shatter Pot. John and Lee went as far as the first duck before deciding they didn't want to get really wet. 2¼ hours.

Thursday 5th April 2012.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Stuart Hagley.

Went and peered down the Black Hole. Took the Approach Passage route in to add variety and as neither Pete nor Stuart had done it before. I think they enjoyed it. Sump 1 back to summer level, it's got a couple of cm airspace through! 2¾ hours.

Saturday 7th April 2012.

Pete Buckley, Richard Carey (MCG), John Cooper and Ali Moody.

Digging the link from the top of Maypole Aven to Lower Terminus Chamber again. More bang required! 2¼ hours.

Tuesday 10th April 2012.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody.

Digging the link from the top of Maypole Aven to Lower Terminus Chamber again. Boom! Met Chris Seal, Barley Turner and Barley's two daughters going in just as we were coming out. 3 hours.

Saturday 14th April 2012.

Pete Buckley, Richard Carey, John Cooper and Ali Moody. Digging the link from the top of Maypole Aven to Lower Terminus Chamber again. Once the spoil was cleared we all got through into Lower Terminus Chamber, climbed up into Terminus Chamber then out via Swynne-Puke and down the 42 ft. Rift using the rope we'd brought along from Maypole Aven. Then went back to the bottom of Maypole Aven ascended and replaced the running rope having removed our ladder. Bang wire also removed. 4½ hours.

Sunday 15th April 2012.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver to empty the Mud Sump. 1½ hours.



Decomposing bat, Eglwys Faen Photo: Frank Longwill

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Whitewalls

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

Meets List 2012

Bank Holiday 2 – 5 June 2012 Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend.

Sunday 3rd

Whitewalls

OFD 2 Columns Open Day

23rd June 2012

Daren Cilau. A trip to the far end

Organiser Gonzo

30th June 2012

Whitewalls

Summer BBQ weekend

Dan Yr Ogof [BCA Insurance needed]
Organisers Messrs France & Tarrant.

14th July 2012

Camping on Gower

Sea Canoeing, Caving, Walking, Climbing on the Gower Peninsular – Not sure time will permit us to do all these things but we'll have a bloody good try. Sea canoeing will involve easy bay hopping trip along the south Gower coast which is reasonably safe, easy and scenically excellent [*plus a spot of kayak fishing*]. We have at least 5 canoes amongst club members plus it should be possible to

hire them locally – We'll be staying at the excellent Nicholaston Farm Campsite and with the beach just a short walk away and the pub [King Arthur] a slightly longer walk over the mountain.
Organiser Paul Tarrant

27th July 2012

Mendip Caving

– Staying at the Wessex.

BBQ Saturday night.

Caving to be arranged by John Cooper

8 – 9th September 2012

North Wales Mining Trip

–Gwydyr Forest near Betws Y Coed.
Organiser Stuart France

September 2012

Hidden Earth Caving Conference – Yorkshire Dales – Venue and precise date not confirmed as yet.
Organiser BCRA

6th October 2012

Whitewalls **Carno Adit**
Further excursions to this fascinating cave.
Organiser Adrian Fawcett

3rd November 2012

Whitewalls

Bonfire weekend

Caves of the Sychryd Gorge – Will's Hole, Bwa Maen, Ogof Pont Sychryd, The Silica Mines.

Organiser Paul Tarrant

17th November 2012

Derbyshire Peak Cavern, Bagshawe.

Organiser John Newton

7th December 2012

Whitewalls **Curry Night**

Organiser: Stuart France

29 – 31st December 2012

Whitewalls **New Year Celebrations**

26th January 2013

Whitewalls

Annual Dinner and AGM Weekend

28th February 2013

Whitewalls

Trip to be confirmed



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Matt Voysey, St Patrick's Passage, Eglwys Faen Photo: Mark Lumley