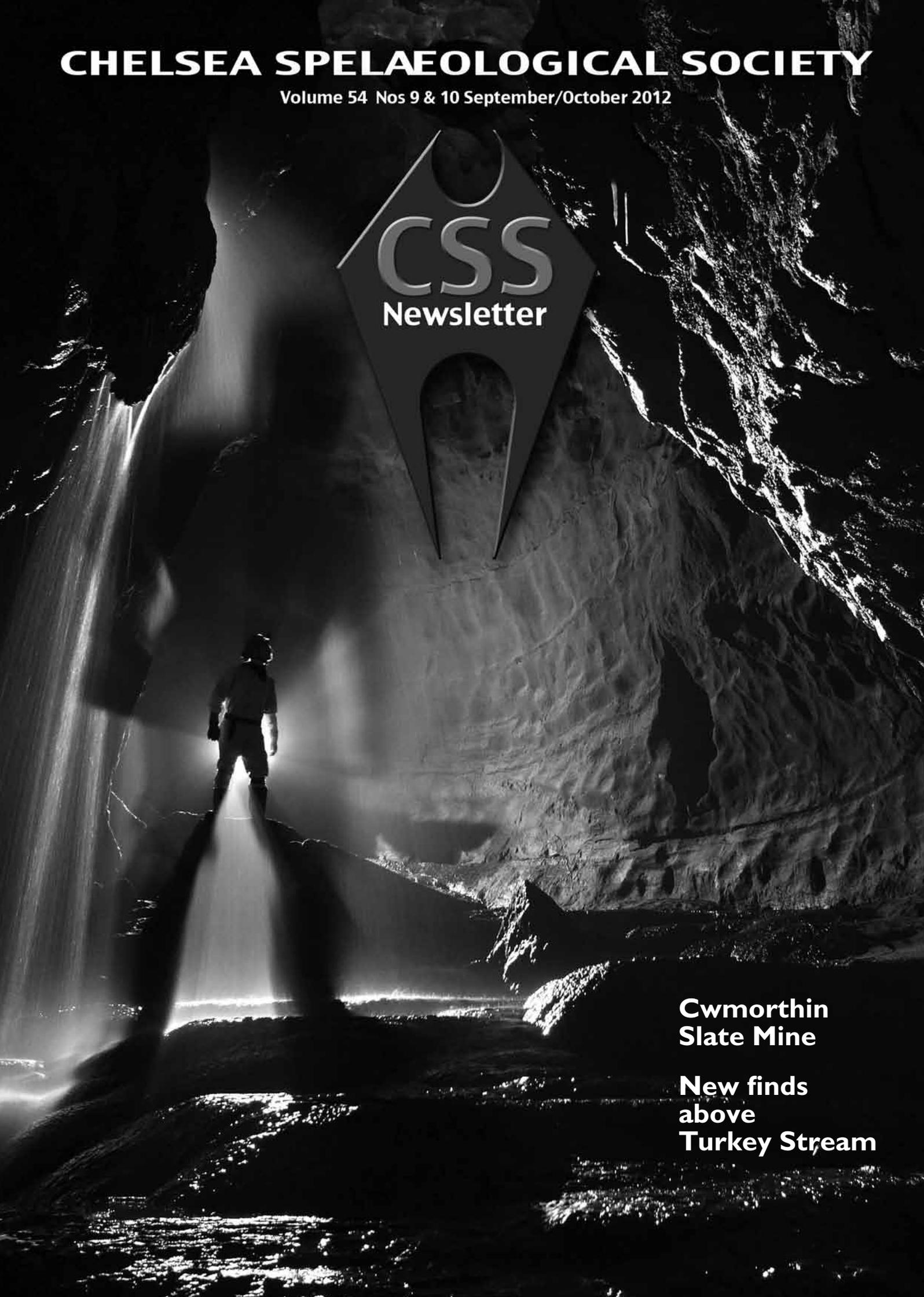


CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 54 Nos 9 & 10 September/October 2012



**Cwmorthin
Slate Mine**

**New finds
above
Turkey Stream**

Alys Rook by The Blockhead,
New Boots and Panties,
Daren Cilau.
Photo: Frank Longwill

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Cover Photo:
Section from a photo: Shadow on Waterfall, OFD
Photo: Rob Eavis

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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 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.

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 back to **Andy Tyler** as a full member,
and **Lisa Boore** as a provisional member

Editorial

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

 **Mark Lumley**

Please send all material to:

mark@creativeedge.me.uk

Mark Lumley,

**The Creative Edge
7 Langleys Lane,
Clapton, Radstock,
Somerset BA3 4DX**

The Council of Northern Caving Clubs has a long-standing agreement with the landowners of Casterton Fell that gives generous access arrangements to all BCA Member Clubs. Unfortunately on Saturday, 18th August, a day when none of the 5 available permits had been issued, the land agents visited the lane at Bull Pot Farm and to their amazement there were large numbers of cavers turning up and parking and a long procession then going caving on the fell. There are even two clubs with reports of their trips on the internet!

Unfortunately this is becoming a regular occurrence and, despite a number of requests to clubs over the last couple of years to respect the agreement, it seems many are not. Indeed, only 4 permits were issued for the whole of August and 5 have been issued for September. All this comes at a time when the whole access agreement is under review and pirating only serves to make negotiations that bit harder. The immediate result in the case above is that the CNCC Access Officer has been summoned to the Estate Office to explain what is being done to ensure improved compliance among cavers. We can only hope that it does not escalate any further in the longer term.

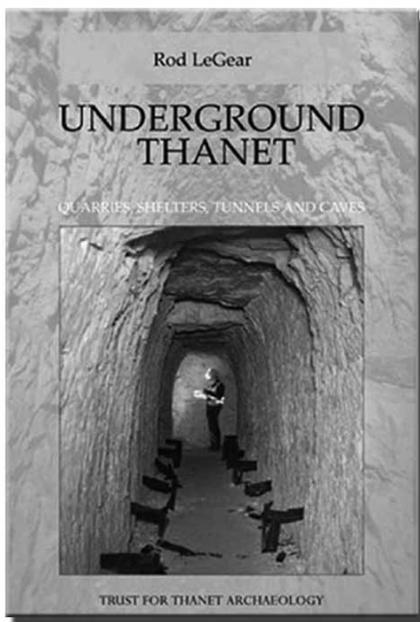
The various access agreements negotiated by Regions are based on the understanding that they will be respected. If necessary, BCA will take appropriate action against any Member or Members who act against the best interests of British cavers. We would, therefore, request that Clubs adhere to all access agreements, up-to-date details of which are available on the various Regional websites, or from the Regional Conservation & Access Officers.

Permits for Casterton Fell are readily available for any BCA Member Club by contacting Alan Speight by e-mail at: alanmavisspeight@btinternet.com or by post at: 8b, Springfield, Bentham, Lancaster LA2 7BA. Although ideally clubs will arrange their trips well in advance, last-minute permits are sometimes available, so please contact Alan and ask rather than just going caving.

BCA Executive (on behalf of BCA Council)
September 2012

New find in Reservoir Hole

Congratulations to the Reservoir Hole (Cheddar Gorge) diggers who have broken into what appears to be the extension of Golgotha Rift for 20m, down a loose 15m pitch into the largest chamber found on Mendip since GB Great Chamber, estimated to be 50m in diameter.



Underground Thanet

by Harry Pearman

With these credentials anything that he publishes is worthy of attention. Readers of *Underground Thanet* published by the Trust for Thanet Archaeology will not be disappointed and will be treated to 89 pages of meticulously researched material.

Rod LeGear is a rare combination. He is a qualified surveyor and archaeologist with an interest in underground exploration and recording. He lives in Kent and is a founder member of the Kent Underground Research Group and a part-time guide to the tourist-oriented chalk mine known as Chiselhurst Caves.

Thanet occupies the south-easternmost corner of England and has a mixed geology with chalk as the predominant stratum. Chalk is eminently diggable and has been excavated for agricultural purpose, for lime burning and brick-making or simply to provide cavities for storage, concealment or transportation. Thanet is well supplied with all of these and

Rod documents examples of most types, together with high quality surveys, coloured photographs and historical detail, written in an absorbing style. It lends itself to cover-to-cover reading as well as being a work of reference. I recommend that you get a copy while it is still in print. The only improvement that I could suggest would be the inclusion of a map of Thanet for the benefit of people whose geographical knowledge of its whereabouts and extent is hazy. One question is left hanging – could we hope to see a similar volume on the North Foreland?

It is £8.00 + £2 p&p and can be ordered and paid for on line from the Trust for Thanet Archaeology at: www.thanetarch.co.uk/

Earth Colours provides an historical record of ochre mining and the use of ochre on Mendip from the Roman times until the mid 20th century.

Neville concentrated on the technical and historical aspects of the industry and Marie looked at what the impact of ochre mining was on the towns, villages and people – her anecdotes of characters and life of the times give a human aspect to this book and some unexpected insights – not least of which being lies, theft and murder!

Tony Jarratt reviewed this book and stated that it will put an entirely different emphasis on mining on Mendip whereas it was thought that the majority of mining was for lead the balance will now be restored with half the mining being for lead and the other half being for ochre.

Alan Gray sourced the photographs and redrew all the maps and diagrams and wrote part of Chapter 12 which brings the research from the 1980's to 2011.

This book was researched during the 1970's and was not published. Unfortunately Marie passed away and during 2007 Alan was contacted by Josyane Clarke (Marie's daughter) who wished to publish the book as a tribute to her mother.

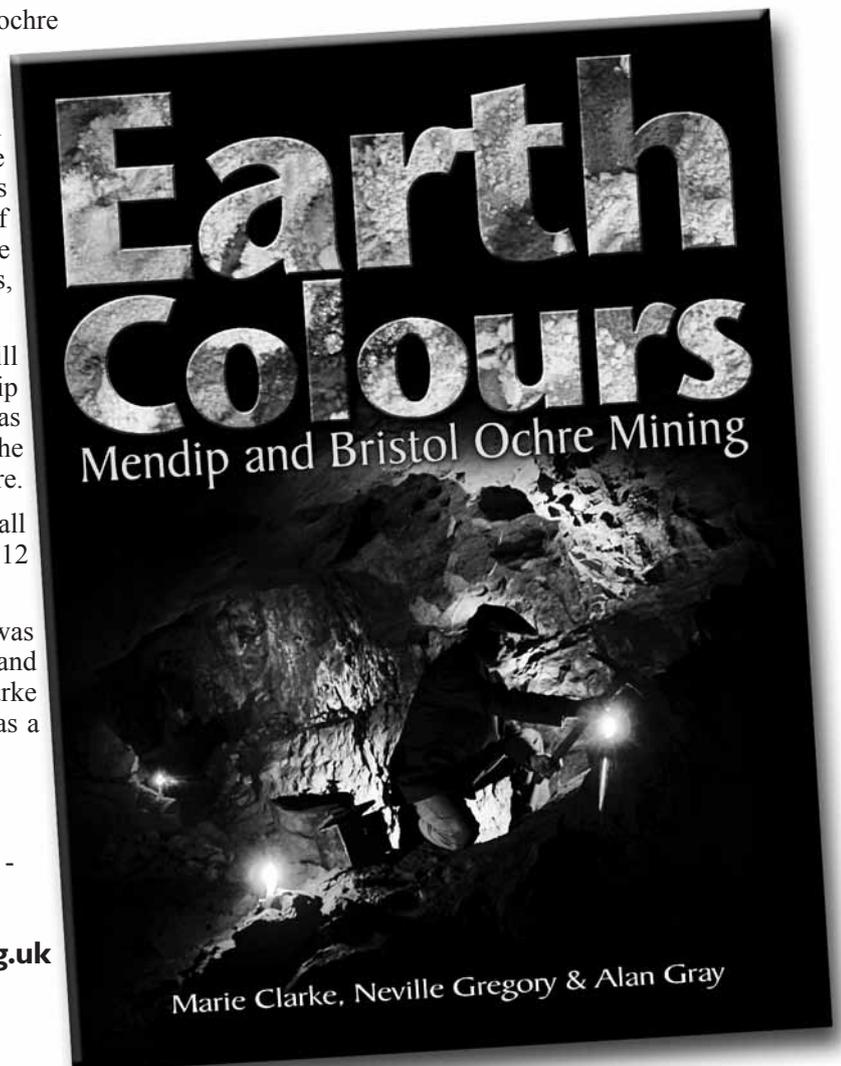
£20 + £6 p@p (UK)

292 pages long, hardback in full colour.

Contact or post cheques (Made payable to MCRA) to - Alan Gray - toursandresearch@yahoo.com

42, Maynard Terrace, Clutton, Somerset, BS39 5PW

or order online on the MCRA website www.mcra.org.uk



Mike, Dawn & Paul arrived Friday evening and launched a reconnaissance trip on the King Arthur hotel where food and ale were found to be good. The other bods arrived Saturday at 10:30 and arrangements were made to hire some kayaks at Oxwich bay which is where we set off from, steering due east. We had 3 hours to play with and we reached Three Cliffs Bay after an hour. Getting in here was interesting as there was a bit of cheeky surf to negotiate which alarmed a few. Thomas did particularly well considering there is no tradition of seafaring in Switzerland!

There was an opportunity for people to go for a swim through the very short through trip cave at 3CB whilst the rest of us rescued their canoes from the fast encroaching tide. Getting out through said surf provided a spectacle for everyone except Anna & Adrian who capsized about 6-7 times before they finally got out.

CSS trip to the Gower

by Paul Tarrant

Thomas Arbenz, Adrian Fawcett, Gonzo,
Anna Northover, Mike & Dawn Reid,
Paul Tarrant, Matt & Mandy Voisey



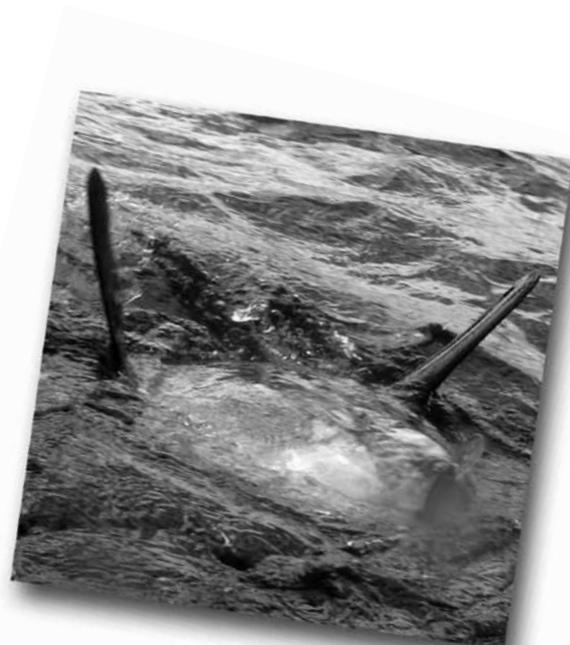
The return to Oxwich was frustrating for Gonzo as the bay emptied itself of fish and the playful boast of how many mackerel* he was going to catch did not bear fruit, or is that fish? We concluded our excursion by investigating a large landslip that had occurred on the west side of the bay where house sized blocks of limestone had fallen away from the cliffs 2 years ago. They must have made quite a splash!

Saturday continued with a walk from the campsite to the King Arthur where we enjoyed fine food and ale. Walk back in the dark was a sobering experience.

Sunday blossomed into one of those rare days this summer. It was warm and sunny. Gonzo, Matt, Mandy & Thomas did some more kayaking whilst Adrian, Anna, Mike and Paul visited Llethrid & Tooth cave. Paul made contact with a very friendly landowner at Llethrid Barns who was more than happy to allow us to go across their land to enter Llethrid. Sadly we did not get too far as the entrance series stream way has altered and become blocked after 40 metres. Paul must go back there when it is drier and warm.

Tooth Cave was squalidly mucky after the pleasantly decorated entrance chamber which required a ladder to descend. There was a tight descending squeeze which gave further access to a very mucky passage which was tight. Paul noted several mucky pools which indicated recent rain and flooding and shortly before the Razor Passage junction he decided he was not fit enough for this sort of commitment so decided to return to the Entrance Chamber. Anna joined him and spent a little time getting through the 2 squeezes, by which time Mike and Adrian caught up with them. It turned out that there was a sump beyond Razor Passage which prevented further progress which was not surprising due to recent rainfall experienced in Wales. Return to the surface was achieved without further problem.

All who attended confirmed they enjoyed the w/e and we will have to repeat the trip next year. The campsite got everybody's vote and 2 thumbs up! Gonzo is keen to return so as to catch some fish this time!



**50lb+ Sunfish, caught from his kayak and returned by the editor off the North Cornish coast on 11th August 2012 after a shameful lack of fish in the Gower due to Paul Tarrant's poor selection of fishing ground . . .*

Some small finds above Turkey Stream

by John Stevens

This all started with Pete Cousins' survey. Pete had given me a copy of his data which consists of a grade 6 centreline, left, right, up, down data and cross sections at every other station and an extended section down the streamway. What was missing from all this information was a plan. It seems that this was not taken at the time (1972). So in the quest to produce an updated survey, I would need to add a plan sketch onto Pete's data. I had already done this successfully with large lengths of his data. This meant pacing out his legs to estimate where his stations may have been, then sketching the passage. This works very well in twisting passages and where there are several prime points to check my estimates. I had problems with the straight featureless passage as I had tried to come down to Northwest Junction from Helicite Chamber, because I started the sketch at the wrong station. This was then resurveyed on 21/04/12 and my error became apparent. The next sections were easier but the guesses where some of the high levels linked in were off by a bit (Hedgehog, Needle). With today's bright lights several more holes in the roof and high level meanders were seen. Most could be eliminated by short climbs to see into them better. I continued up past Workers Passage, looking to see what gear may be required to climb into it. The main aim was then to do a survey of Shattered Passage to link to the Shattered Passage 84 Extensions. Unfortunately I forgot there was an exposed climb, which I didn't fancy without a hand line. So off I went looking for high levels.

The first proper find was on a 13 hour trip on 28/04/12 with Mike Read. We carried in a drill, ladder, SRT gear, rope plus our normal loads. This was a bit further upstream from Turkey Junction and seemed to show a passage leaving at high level on the west side. This would then be heading into a blank area. This I had spotted the previous week and again could not find any record of it. The idea of looking here was to see if a continuation could be found of the Sand Caverns – Turkey Chamber main conduit. After Turkey Chamber the passage reduces in size to Turkey Pool and then slowly increases in size as it gains Phreatic Passage and Shattered Passage. If a continuation

of Turkey Chamber exists, it may be somewhere to the west of the present Turkey Stream at high level.

After the first couple of through bolts that I placed, Mike took over and rather enjoyed clearing debris off the ledges as he bolted upward. Being on the other end of his lifeline, I did not have very many options to avoid the large splashes as the rocks tumbled down. It only took Mike another 3 bolts to complete the 8m climb, then an extra one to belay a ladder to so I could join him. 10m of virgin crystal walled passage lowered to a dig which could be seen to open up after a few meters. The 6m dig reached 2m of open passage to a bend in the passage. Unfortunately at this point it reduced in size and would take a lot more digging to make progress, as it is probably larger the further you dig down. We surveyed the find and linked it to the main survey at Turkey Junction. The climb was derigged, but I left the crowbar at the top of the climb by mistake.



Mike putting the last bolt in the climb on 28/04/12

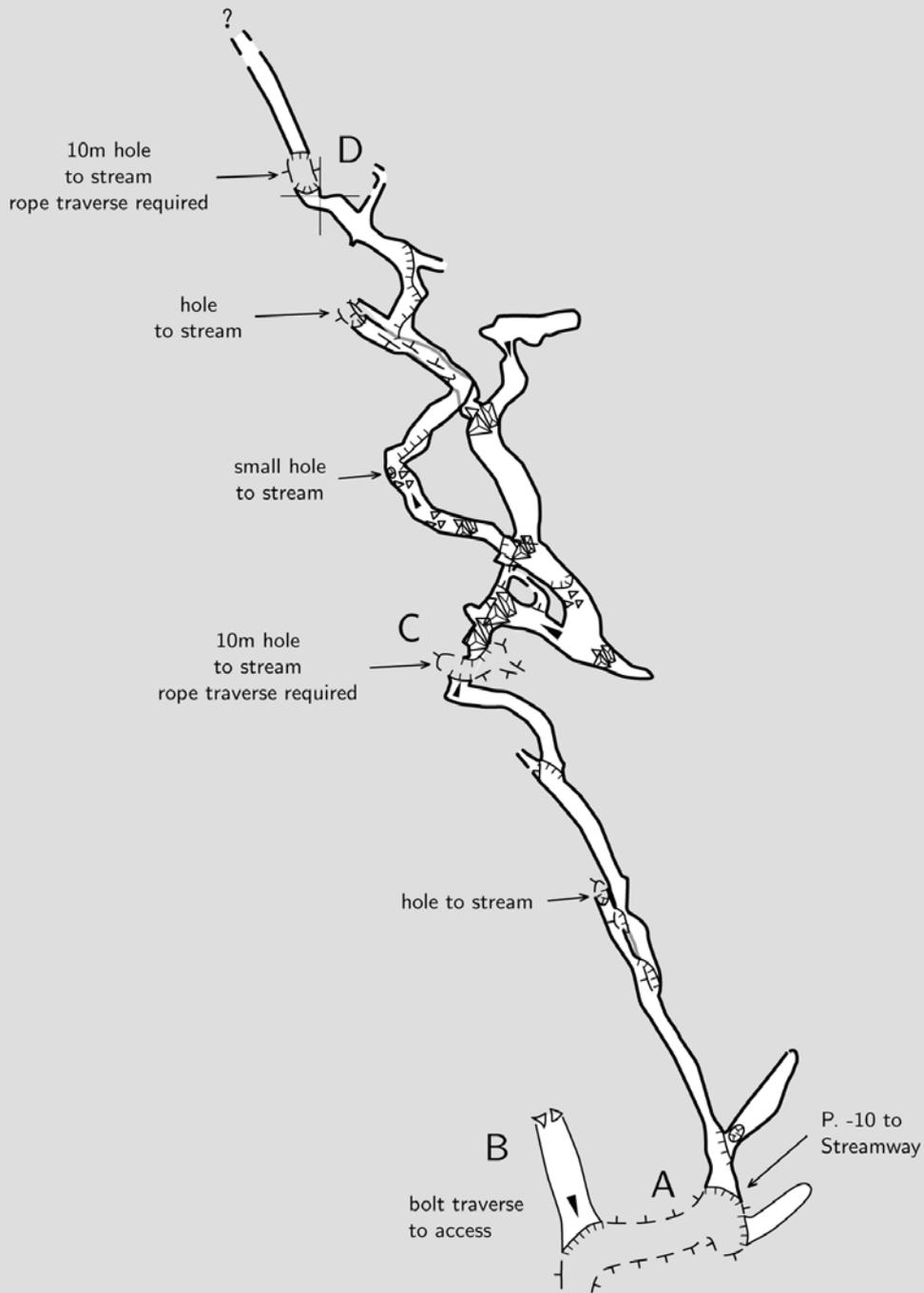
The following week (05/05/12) I had a 10 hour trip to finish off the survey of Shattered Passage to link in the 1984 Extensions to the main survey. (I had a rope this time). I then continued sketching on Pete Cousin's data up to Turkey Chamber. I also noted some more passages to look at and was wishing we had left some of the gear from last weekend.

19/05/12 was another 9.5 hour solo trip up Turkey Stream. This added sketches from Turkey Chamber all the way up to Terminal Chamber. I looked a various high levels in this section

and a bolt route was seen at one point (think this may have been Nig Rogers). On my way back downstream, I tried various climbs. A high level on the east side was just out of reach but the stream turned through two sharp bends, and in between these was a tight aven. This was reached on a ledge and an energetic thrutch popped out into a high level passage. Upstream led to the high level I had failed to climb up to but downstream went off for some way. A tiny crack in places linked to the stream but most of it was mud floored. It had had very few visits (a hand full at the most) and widened from the walking passage to a small chamber, with a drop straight back to the stream. From here I could see the top of the bolt route spotted earlier and thought how frustrating it must have been, after hand drilling all the bolts to find there was a free climb into the passage.

On the way back downstream I spotted another high level on the west side just upstream from the previous climb. This was at a change in roof height with another passage on the east side which looked easier to reach. Further downstream, just before Turkey Junction, from the top of a boulder, I spotted a passage that must have been maypoled into. It had in carbide '26/12/62 MD'. As it was close to Coal Cellar Passage, I thought it may be a high level oxbow into it. I assumed MD to be Mel Davis of the BNS (British Nylon Spinners). After looking in the library with help from Steven and Anna, the only gap we have in BNS records is one which covers the period, how typical.

The 21/07/12 saw me, David Stevens and Toby Willis heading back up Turkey to climb and bolt into various high levels. The first on the list was to climb into Workers Passage. This is just downstream of Turkey Junction and I had not been into it and I only had a grade 1 survey of it. As this was close to Calcite Gallery and Twin Avens Chamber, it maybe larger and more interesting than the survey shows. David managed to place one piece of protection about half way up but loose and fractured rock was found above this. I was lining him and was ready to leap backwards and down into the stream if he fell, in an attempt to



HL2 in Turkey Streamway



Length: 52 m

Depth: 11 m

Surveyed by: Mike Read, John Stevens 2012

take in as much rope as possible to stop him hitting the deck (if the chockheld). After much clearing of debris, David managed to pull up on the large blocks at the top. A ladder was fixed and we all ascended. It was then more blocks at the top became loose and were rearranged. (We later found it had been maypoled into and not climbed, this accounts for the looseness of the climb.) A small helictite was passed to a junction with the sound of falling water to the left and a second squeeze into a chamber. David went left through a squeeze to get to the source of the water. This fell down a 5m shaft. As he descended, clinging to one wall, his light went out and would not turn on again. Unfortunately the squeeze was too tight for Toby but by the time I was approaching to give him some illumination, he had it sorted. The base of the shaft turned out to be blind. At the chamber some nice stal and white curtains were found and a climb to an upper level with a small version of Swiss Village. The chamber also dropped into a series of crawls, which might be diggable and has some airspace.



Old carbide tin found near Workers Passage (probably was old when it went underground in the late 50's early 60's)

Next was the 26/12/62 MD, Boxing Day Passage, if that's what it's called. Looked like bolting was required, unless it was an oxbow at high level into Coal Cellar Passage. So I went upstream in Coal Cellar to the Junction with the route into Twin Avens Chamber. The roof was checked but nothing. (Only when I got back to Whitewalls was it apparent that it may come in at the next bend in the passage, so a return is required). But today we would be short of time and rather than bolting into known passage we headed for one that should be new.

This high level is on the west side of the streamway, just a few tens of meters upstream from our previous climb. It looked to be a larger passage with a high level also on the east side. The east section was slightly lower and was an easier route. So we would bolt into that (A) and then put a high level traverse into the western section (B). 3 bolts reached a ledge but I could not reach across so David took over and completed the route using another 5 bolts. David rigged the ladder and up went Toby to first foot some passage. By the time I joined them, Toby had found some of it tight going so David had gone ahead to reach a hole back down to the stream, which would need a rope to cross (C). By now time was getting on, so we left some gear in place to help reduce the loads next time and speed our exit. So just

9 hours had been spent to find 20m of new passage and we were not late for our roast chicken dinner that Helga had cooked.

Mike Read and I returned on 11/08/12 to bolt into the passage west side from the east passage. I started on the by climbing up towards the roof of the eastern passage before heading back out towards the stream. A natural eye started the route, bolts being put into the left wall as the right wall was a bit shattered. Once I was about half way across the left wall had a 2 cm wide crack in the next section so I swapped to the firmer right wall. I was bolting along a canyon, a bit too wide to bridge, in the roof of Turkey Stream, 10m below. A couple more bolts and I could see into the west passage (B). What a let down, three meters, sloping up to total fill. I didn't even bother putting the sixth bolt in so I could actually enter the passage.

Next, the hole (C), David had reached. Mike took the drill and an odd Y hang got him down and across into a continuation. I sat listening to hammering of rocks for quite a while and then was invited to cross the 10m hole. The passage on the far side was different in character, larger, with more twists and branches. Mike had hammered a jammed boulder to give access to a continuation, which he let me lead. A squeeze lead to a hole to the stream another route heading back over ourselves and a passage that reached a hole with a continuation visible across it (D). All the sides were pushed and a visual link made between two before we got out the survey gear and mapped all the finds from today and 21/07. This amounted to about 50m of high level passages and took us longer than estimated. 32 legs were needed.

Back in the streamway we could track our progress upstream by seeing all the fresh boulders we had knocked down through the various holes. Ahead we can see another hole before Turkey Streamway turns a right angled bend and we hope our high level will continue

Time was now very short as Helga was cooking again and I was meant to be back in 20 minutes! A rapid exit meant I was only just over an hour late, a 10.5 hours trip.

Photos by John Stevens



Curtains in Workers Passage



Swiss Village type formation, Workers Passage

We got quite muddy and found a rubber base of a carbide light, the sole of a hobnail boot and, at the base of the climb in Turkey, an old carbide tin. We left a light rope on the climb so we could return to survey it. But today we had a couple more climbs to look at.

POTTERING IN WALES

If you are free for midweek evening trips check the members forum on the website

OFD 2 Chasm Trip - Tuesday 22nd May 2012

by Paul Tarrant

Dan Thorne, Paul Tarrant plus 4 SWCC members

The purpose of the trip was to do a traverse from the end of Chasm Passage through to the junction of Salubrious Passage with the climb back up to the Corkscrew climb. This was a short 2 hr trip which was nevertheless fun as it involved an abseil at the end of the Chasm, dropping a 15m pitch. The remainder of the trip was reasonably straightforward and involved passage that I was familiar with. There were a few slightly technical climbs which we managed to get people up with combined tactics. Eventually we reached a passage that looked similar to the bottom end of Maypole Inlet and this passage eventually took us to Salubrious Passage just by the climb up to Corkscrew climb. A good short trip made the more interesting due to the inclusion of an abseil.

Ogof Gwaliau Gwynion and Fells Swoop

20th June 2012 – 2½ hours

by Tim Gibbs

Dan Thorne, Liz Witstanley, Chelsea Wills. Tim Gibbs

This was Liz's first trip as a CSS member. We visited Ogof Gwaliau Gwynion first and noted the stong draft in many locations. The formations towards the end of the cave exceeded our expectations (even those of us that had been there before). We then set off for Fells swoop and investigated the cave in its entirety. This wasn't too time consuming but enjoyable none the less.

Ogof Pasg – 3rd July 2012– 2 hours

by Dan Thorne

Tim Gibbs, Paul Tarrant, Lisa Boore, Will Kinder, Dan Thorne
We met at Herberts quarry car park in the mist, rain and howling wind to take an evening trip into Ogof Pasg. We had not visited the cave before, and Paul hadn't been there for a very long time. The cave entrance was located after climbing up the unstable quarry wall we all entered into the relatively more pleasant conditions underground. The cave is finely decorated although unfortunately shows signs of some historical vandalism. Water levels were high, and the sump appeared to be closed so we took the sump bypass pitch and descended by ladder to the canal. After wading through the canal another pool and some fine formations were revealed. And the trip finished with a crawl to the connection which was small, wet and uninviting. We decided to return retracing or steps taking some time to explore a couple of side passages and taking a swim into the sump which at first appeared it may be just a duck but quickly closed down. On leaving the cave the rain had eased but visibility had reduced even further.

OFD Top entrance Gnome passage, Salubrious, Trident and Judge - 10th July 2012 - 2½ hours

by Dan Thorne

Liz Whitstanley, Tim Gibbs, Paul Tarrant, Rhys ? , Will Kinder, Dan Thorne

We had a pleasant evening for a (beginners) Trip to OFD Top entrance with Liz, Rhys and Will on their first OFD trip. We moved fairly slowly, taking time to look at the formations and discuss cave formation. Aided by Will and Dan's new cave lights (Hope R4) which we had on test and illuminated the cave in a way

none of us had seen before. This probably wouldn't be strange to Scurrion users, but to us mere mortals it was pretty impressive. After a pleasant trip down Gnome passage we descended the corkscrew climb and through Salubrious to the Trident and Judge. We stopped for some photos before returning via the Big Chamber Near the Entrance.

Agen Allwedd - 1st Aug 2012 – 2½ hours

by Tim Gibbs

Dan Thorne and Tim Gibbs

The intention of the trip was to introduce Liz to Aggy with a music hall trip however, boiler problems prevented her attendance. Therefore, we decided to have a look down main stream and did a mini circuit near the second boulder choke. On our return we took a small detour to see the selenite crystals in main passage before exiting and wandering back to whitewalls. Again it was impressive to see the cave well illuminated using Dan's new cave light (Hope R4), especially the main passage.

Ogof Clogwyn - 8th August 2012 – 1½ hours

by Tim Gibbs

Liz Whitstanley and Tim Gibbs

Due to the short nature of the cave we took a leisurely pace examining the cave passage in detail. We discussed the formations, evolution and features of the cave particularly the excellent example of phreatic shelving found throughout its length . We also found numerous fossils in the limestone.

Chartist Cave – 15th Aug 2012 – 2½ hours

(including walk)

by Tim Gibbs

Paul Shea, Liz Whitstanley and Tim Gibbs

We parked at the barrier to the Trefil quarries and began the lengthy walk up to the cave across the moor. The wind was behind us on the way up. We entered the cave and had a good look around the short but interesting cave investigating current and potential dig sites. For those unfamiliar with the cave there are several large passages that look like they should go some distance but end quite abruptly. We exited with the feeling (similar to many previous visitors) that the cave has a lot more to offer. We left the cave and walked back to the cars with the strong wind now in our faces.

In **Ogof Cnwc** and out **Ogof y Darren Cilau** -

Wednesday 22nd August 2012 – 4¼ hours

by John Cooper

Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody

Took in a copy of John Stevens' description of the route but didn't need to refer to it at all! There's a lot of work gone into making and installing the chain ladders and the big footholds since I was last in Antler Passage! Well done! Only detour was into Urchin Oxbow to view the Urchins. Pete very impressed by his first trip under Llangattwg.

To the most remote spot in Britain

by Frank Longwill

Adrian Fawcett, Gary Kiely, Dave King, Frank Longwill, Mark Lumley, Helen Nightingale, Alyss Rock, Andy Watson,

A couple of hours after the planned start time we were ready. Delays had been caused by all the standard faffing and the extra faff caused by the need to pack supplies and sleeping clothes into Daren entrance crawl packaging. The M4 had refused Gary free passage but eventually at 10.30pm suited and booted we entered the crawl.

The entrance series is hyped as one of the ultimate caving nightmares. To be truthful it isn't that bad. It's almost impossible to hurt yourself in it, as you can't fall anywhere. True you spend a fair bit of time crawling in water but its barely moving so doesn't chill you to the bone. There are only a couple of short sections that involve wet ears. The vice isn't that bad... The alternative, Prices entrance, involves endless walking over boulders and numerous climbs. It requires a lot more effort and risk of injury. It's also further. Once you are through the entrance crawl you are in the best cave in the UK. So if you haven't done it its time to man up...

Free of the entrance crawl a quick breather and we gleefully transferred our tackle bags to our shoulders. The four of us split into two groups with Gary and Alys forming the faster advance party. After a bit of joyful striding another brief crawl took us through the boulder choke into Jigsaw Passage. This is a cool place. Its here that the cave fully first reveals its true splendour. I remember early in my caving career the wow factor that the place provides. A slippery muddy floor with pools of varying depth from ankle to knee provide entertainment. The attractive shape, space and small isolated formations draw you inwards. 700m of splendid walking, a brief crawl and an easy squeeze take you to a boulder slope and ascent into Big Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance. A rift traverse and series of easy smooth crawls lead on to Valentines Chamber. The cave is now getting special. The rock is pitted and colourful with thin shale bands. Crystals encrust the pockets.

Me and Helen catch up with Gary and Alys at the foot of the ladder up to Higher Things. 20m of ladder definitely requires a line, especially as the top is overhanging. At the top and we paired up again and set off across the nicely rebolted traverse. Down a series of climbs protected with cowstails and we enter the Time Machine. The biggest known passage in the UK is an utterly fantastic place. Crystals encrust the walls and floor so the place sparkles - it is an absolute 'must see'. Near the end of the Time Machine a boulder slope leads down to Bonsai Streamway. Me and a person who I believe to be Helen consider the route. The yellow arrow points down and the red one straight on so we go down. The familiar scenery of Bonsai Streamway with its fine helictites confirms our route. 1700m later the whiff of paraffin signals the proximity of camp. It is 3.30am.

Andy Watson, Dave King

Andy Watson is 'well refreshed'! Dave King immediately springs into action in the kitchen and starts sorting our dinner. The person I believe to be Helen heads off to get changed, while I catch up with Andy over a cocktail and a fag. Allegedly Helen returns to camp. As Helen arrives my brain stutters for a bit then updates my worldview. Allegedly Helen is actually Alys. I believe she used a budgie to transfer herself into Helen and assume her identity on the climb down into the Time Machine. This sort of thing can happen when you arrive at HRC at 3.30am. We make a half arsed attempt to catch up with Andy but given the late hour and tomorrow's schedule we retire at 5.30am. I sleep in my favourite alcove decorated by light crystal encrustations, near the stream and closest to the toilet.

Gonzo, Adrian

"Frank Longwill, how the £*(!&%% are you?" draws me from my slumber. I fumble for the fantastic red folding hat and place it on my head "^^%^&*%*^% Fine". I grab the tea Gonzo hands me. He had retired before we arrived.

10.30am. 5 hours sleep. It will have to do.

Adrian "Greased eel" Fawcett has arrived. He takes about 20 mins to get from the entrance to the camp and came in Sat morning. Coffee and endless bacon, pitta and potato cakes follow. Cheers Dave. Suitably fuelled we get back into our caving kit. Time to go to the end.

Andy has knackered his ankle somewhere so he is going to head out today. Gary feels ropey so offers to see Andy out over the pitches.

Me, Gonzo, Adrian, Dave, Helen and Alys set off. It's easy going through the fine passages of Rock Steady Cruise. Occasional sandy crawls are punctuated by roomy running passage

Reaching Brazil, a low chamber, the cave lowers and becomes a crawl, Miami Vice, a face-in-the-dirt rocky bedding crawl and things start to require effort again.

Acupuncture Passage is 150m of annoying passage. There is a bonus though. The passage roof is now covered in beautiful gypsum flowers. There are some pockets of crystals over 3 inches long. My oversuit ingests sand and crystal fragments as we crawl through this beautiful but somewhat arduous passage. Eventually we exit to a sandy-floored roomy chamber. The way on is down in the floor through the Micron. Gonzo suggests a quick photo trip to the Blockhead so me, Alys and Helen scurry along an easy sand floored passage. It's not the correct one but it houses a spectacular display of columns. Back in the correct passage we quickly find the Blockhead. A ball of white calcite sprouts multiple tentacles.



Frank Longwill at Icing on the Cake.
Photo: Frank Longwill

These spectacular formations are what makes Daren so special. Picture taken we head back. The Micron is an easy descending climb.

Ankle Grinder Bypass is an interesting passage in fretted rock. It's also pretty annoying with its numerous flakes, potholes, ribs, sharp bits and ankle-grinding floor trench. It's a pretty interesting place though. Gonzo assures me it is not as much fun with 2 tackle bags. The duck at the end isn't too bad as you only need get your legs wet...by placing your socks in your helmet you can keep them dry as well. Through it and an instant reward up on the right. The Icing on the Cake. Long straws and a fine column with some helictites. Another photo stop...

We have now reached the Restaurant at the End of the Universe toilet. The passage is roomy again. We top up drinking water from the upstream end of the bog. A 5m ladder leads up to the actual camp.

It's time for a food break. Cheese and chorizo pittas are the standard fare round here and they go down well. We lighten our loads, taking just minimal supplies for the final push to the end.

The next 5 hours is nice caving. There is nothing that nasty. A few tight squeezes, some climbs,

a beautiful array of helictites in Cordillera Blanca chamber. A lovely 10m pitch. Generally pleasing and colourful passage. A few route-finding issues. Eventually a 45 degree passage slopes up to a tiny chamber. The end.... There is a dig in the floor, the rock is nice. It's the remotest discovered spot in Britain if you don't dive. It's taken me 12 hours of caving, 1 hours drinking, 1 hours eating and 5 hours sleeping to get here. It feels good... really good. We head back....

At the Restaurant MadPhil Rowsell and digging crew are back from their dig. The camp was a state when Phil adopted it. It has been cleared of rubbish and turned into a well-ordered place. Phil feeds us endless tea and biscuits. This is partly because he's a nice bloke and partly because we like to try and seduce him and his crew with cocktails when they pass through Hard Rock. The homely nature of the camps provides a very comfortable refuge from the cave. They are nice places and life is easy in them. If you haven't been you should....

The others head out and me and Helen head up from camp to check out the Blue Greenies. There are 3 main areas and enough helictites to decorate the downstairs of Whitewalls. Absolutely breathtaking.

A truly out of this world place....

On the way back the consequences of filling my pants with sand and gypsum crystals start to bite. Rubbing sand and gypsum into your penis is a bad idea and I don't recommend you try it even if you are curious. Also attempting to solve the problem with a soda syphon back in camp doesn't work - it just stings.... Liberally coating the affected area in Savlon does however provide relief.

Me and Helen provide the rearguard on exit. We take it easy and spend some time photographing the Time Machine. We even take time to stick our noses up Red River Passage. Daren is without a doubt one of my favourite places in the world. It just begs to be explored and draws you in. There are still kilometers of passage that I haven't seen. Almost all the passage is interesting and pleasing to the eye. It is a giant crystal-encrusted beast of a cave, tough at times but immensely rewarding. On the way back through the entrance crawl we speculate on what day it will be when we get out. We finally exit. It's dusk, 48 hours since we entered.

During the week or so after the trip it slowly sinks in. I have joined an exclusive little club with less than 50? Members. I am one of the people that has been to ... *the end.*

Cwmorthin Slate Mine North Wales

by Richard Dewsnap

It was a very wet day when Stuart France and I arrived in Blaenau Ffestiniog, North Wales on a Friday afternoon in early July, the plan was to do a round trip in Cwmorthin slate mine. As we approached the bottom of the valley to the mine, all you could see was waste slate tipped everywhere from the numerous quarries that had just torn this hillside to pieces and exhausted all the slate possible from external means. There were not many trees left and it was not possible to tell where the original surface was. We parked the car at the bottom of the track that leads up into the valley, it was still raining and we decided to let it stop until we got changed. There was a river coming down the valley that was in full flood from the heavy rain earlier that day.

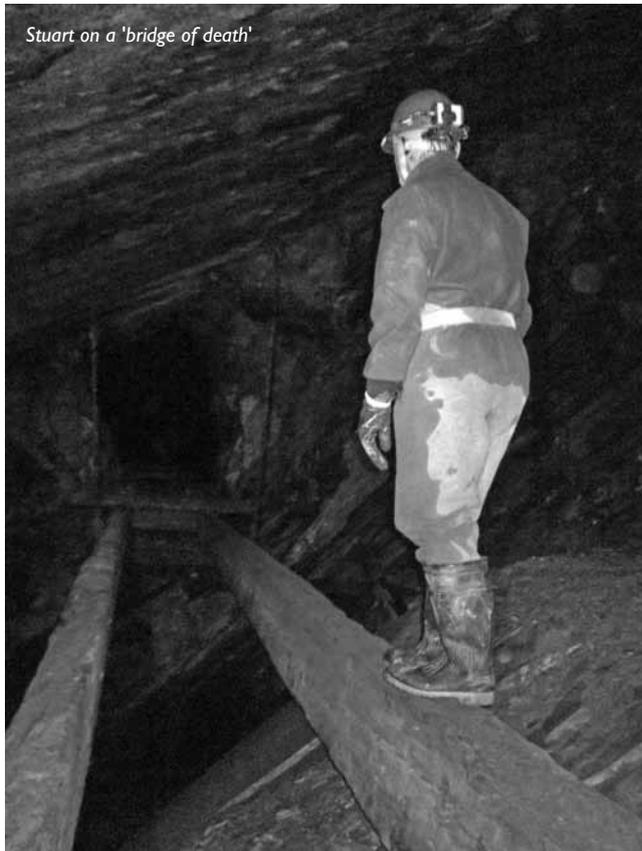
Cwmorthin slate mine was opened in 1860 and was worked up to 1901 before closing. It then flooded up to the level of the lake and many of the higher levels have since collapsed. The nearby Oakley slate mine was joined to Cwmorthin at the lower levels to allow the water to be drained away for safety reasons, before Oakley mine took over some of the Cwmorthin workings and carried on mining up to the 1970's when Oakley closed. There were numerous entrances when the mines were open but today only two adits exist and both are located near to the lake.

Eventually it stopped raining and we quickly got changed into our caving gear and headed up the valley, following the river towards the mine. We soon arrived at a lake with some ruined buildings at the side, these were probably old workshops for the mine and quarries. Stuart mentioned that further up the valley was Rhosydd slate mine, it's on my list for the future. To the right of us was the entrance adit to Cwmorthin, just above the level of the lake. There was a huge slate tip above this adit and god knows how it has stayed there for all these years, we didn't stand there long and headed straight into the adit and through a gate. After a short walk the mine opened up into a large space which turned out to be at the top of the main incline which led deep down into the mine. This

was probably the main marshalling area where the loaded wagons were brought up the incline and then sent out through the adit. We had a look around before we headed down the incline and entering all the passages that led off at each level. Alongside this incline the first chamber on each level that had been worked, had been joined to the ones above and below, and had stairs fitted which created a safe access/egress for the miners so they didn't have to use the incline where wagons were being raised and lowered. We did a couple of short round trips just to familiarise ourselves with the incline and numerous passages that led of it.



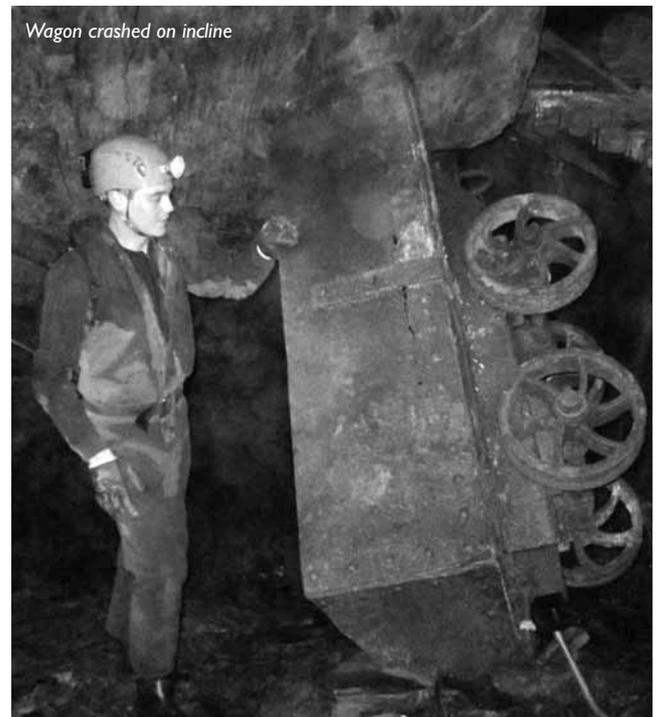
Redundant crane



Stuart on a 'bridge of death'

There were a few so called 'bridges of death' in these passages that passed high over chambers but they were all past their sell by dates. Many of these chambers near the main incline have been fitted with hangers presumably by locals to make SRT climbs and some fun short trips. It wasn't long before we came across a wagon which looked like someone had pushed it down the incline and it had derailed and ended up stuck in the passage. We passed this obstacle and carried on down the incline until we met a flooded part of the mine with passages to the right and left, we were approximately four hundred feet below the level of the lake now. There were some chambers below us but they were flooded. We took the passage to the left that headed under the lake, following a tram track through knee deep water and soon passing wagons loaded up with machinery parts that were ready to be removed from the mine when it closed. We soon came to a chamber that contained a crane, this was best part of machinery that was left in the mine as the majority of metal had been removed. We stayed here for a while taking photographs of the crane. This was the end of this passage and so headed back to the incline and off down the other passage which headed to the Oakley workings, following the tram track and a large pipe which was probably used to pump water from the mine. We noticed that someone had fitted a long scaffolding rail along this passage at water level which allowed people to explore the lower parts of the mine without getting their feet wet, but as hardcore cavers we just walked through the knee deep water which soon disappeared. There were passages and chambers that went deeper below the previous water level but we just kept following the tram track and large pipe passing chamber after chamber, soon we came to the top of the Oakley mine incline. This still had the winding drums in place mounted approximately ten foot above the floor in heavy foundations. There was a building here with a collapsed tiled roof, which seems all

passing explorers sign their names on the internal walls. We carried on following the obvious passage, passing more large chambers until one chamber had a stairway that allowed us to climb two levels. We quickly and quietly climbed the stairs as there was a large slab of slate on the wall which was ready to fall. We passed various passages and chambers following arrows painted on the walls until we arrived back at the top of the main incline. Stuart said that there was a second incline which we had missed and couldn't find. We decided to leave the mine through the adit that we had entered and find the second entrance adit which is located a little up the hillside. The second entrance adit looks like a house with a gate in the side. Once inside this gate, we walked along the adit until we reached a collapse which had been dug through, we passed this and soon we were in knee deep water which had backed up by the collapse. We continued to follow the adit until we reached a second collapse that also had been dug through. Again we passed this and soon we were back in the mine but at a higher level, with most passages and chambers collapsed. Soon we reached a passage that we had passed through earlier and then found the top of the second incline. We had a look around a few side passages and then we decided that would be enough for the day and headed back out of the main entrance adit.



Wagon crashed on incline

All photos by Richard Dewsnap

This was my first visit to any type of mine and found that it was all easy walking and felt quite strange not wearing knee or elbow pads. This was the first trip planned for this weekend with plans to visit another slate mine along with a couple of lead mines. Looking back at this mine, it must have been a massive operation, hollowing out this hillside, surprisingly it's still standing. I have a lot of respect for the men who made this place, which would have been a very dangerous place to work and there must have been a high death rate during the working years of this mine.

If anyone fancies a look round Cwmorthin slate mine then join Stuart on his North Wales mining weekend on September 14th - 16th.

Frederick J Fredericks

by John Stevens

On the morning of Sunday the 30th October [2011] I was busy repairing my dry stone wall by the tramroad when two people walked past pushing two wheelbarrows! I had to ask what they were doing and after a chat was given a leaflet and an invite to see an arts exhibition taking place on the mountain, ending up in Eglwys Faen. So after a late lunch I made my way over to the cave. By then I had missed a poetry reading at the base of the incline and another feature at the top.

As I approach Eglwys, there were 20 -30 people around with even more queuing to enter the cave.



In the alcove between the waterfall and oval entrances was an eyed satellite dish, while in the crawl route in just beyond the oval entrance was a visual and audio installation. This was one of the best pieces as it suited its environment very well.

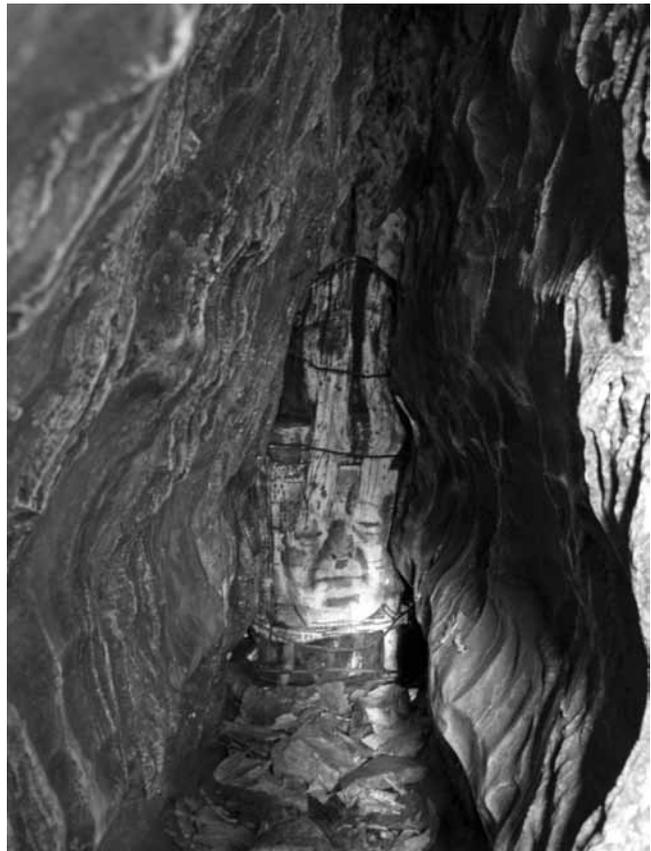
After jumping the queue, I made my way into the Main Chamber. Here there were a number of lit works, but the sound of music being played further in was more interesting. The musicians were surrounded by a hundred or so yellow led lights scattered as trails on the floor and into the boulders.

In the Eastern series I pointed out some of the old graffiti to some of the visitors, little did I know that the name of the exhibition had been taken from one of these names. As the weather at the time was still very mild for the time of year, only a couple of bats were noted and these seem not to be disturbed by the goings on. Probably less than the normal regular visits by school groups etc.

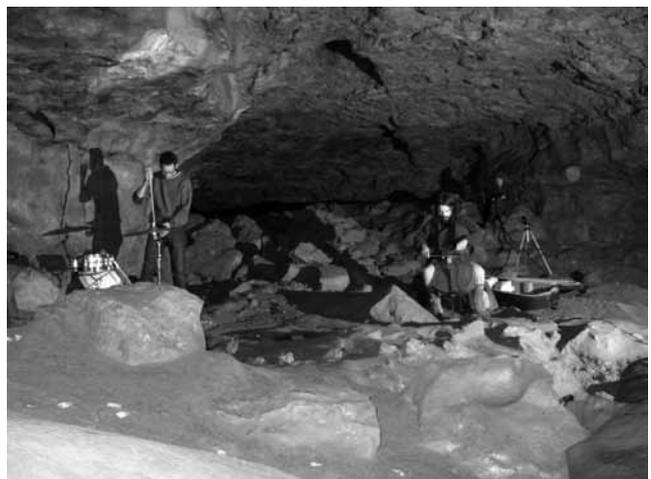
I did however suggest to the people that seem to be organising it, that they had been very lucky with the weather and a month early would help reduce

the likelihood of bats being around. It may also make it a bit less muddy and a bit warmer for the outside events.

But on the whole, a very pleasant afternoons excursion.



Left: The Eyed Dish
Above: The rift near the oval entrance
Below: Musicians in Main Chamber
Right: Artists and musicians in Main Chamber
Photos: John Stevens





Pottering About on Mendip

by
John Cooper

Bath Swallett

Sunday 26th August 2012.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver. In to ladder the pitches, Shower Pot, ready for the through trip from Rod's Pot – see below. ¼ hour.

Carcass Cave

Saturday 14th July 2012.

Pete Buckley (WCC), John Cooper and Ali Moody (WCC). As this was adjacent to Shute Shelve Cavern – see below – we had a quick look on our way back to the car. Took the middle entrance and followed it down to the big entrance. Crawled across the plank over the hole down and reached a descending passage which lead to a shored up shaft. Descended this to the chamber at the bottom then had a quick look round a short loop, a tight onwards rift and a low passage to a pool before climbing back up. Ignored the horizontal passage leading off from the top of the rigid ladder as it didn't look too easy to get back out of it (later informed it was easier than it looks). From the top of the shaft we headed outwards but before reaching the plank we took a roof level crawl off to the right. This went round in a big loop and appeared at the far side of the middle entrance. We then did the middle to top entrance loop just for completeness. ½ hour.

Charterhouse Cave

Saturday 7th July 2012.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody. Very wet weekend so decided to go and see what the cave was like in these conditions. The entrance rift was dripping well and there was a stream running both sides of the Gate Squeeze (separate streams). A nice stream running through Aragonite crawl and then more water in the middle of Chillout Choke. Lots of water coming in just above the Confluence and very brown water from the Confluence itself. Highway 120 had been scoured clear of footprints and the route into 100 Fathom was completely sumped, we'll probably have to dig the gravel crawl out yet again once the water's gone down. Ali was taking lots of photos but we could have done with Pete Hann and his big camera. The way the weather's going at present the exploration this season is going to be very limited. 3½ hours.

Saturday 11th August 2012.

John Cooper, Rich Marlow and Ali Moody. Had hoped to go and get detailed descriptions of the Rip Passages area for the new Mendip Underground. The gravel crawl into 100 Fathom did not need digging out, a surprise as it had been sumped on our previous trip (see above). However Portal Pool was full so decided it was too risky to go through for the length of time we needed. Started syphon going so hope it may empty and allow a draught through to clear any CO2 build up. Did a few measurements in the 2008 section and in the old cave to help with the description. 2½ hours.

Eastwater Cavern

Friday 27th July 2012.

John Cooper and John Newton. A short appetizer before the CSS Mendip weekend proper. A hot sunny day so we were perspiring freely before we entered and it didn't stop the whole trip! Down following the line through the entrance ruckle then took the Upper Traverse. Turned right at the end and went down through Hallelujah Hole. A little further down took the Lower Traverse. Checked the first and second left turns as I wasn't too sure of the route but they were both blind so ended up at the 4m drop down. Checked down passage on the right into 1st Rift Chamber before returning and going up passage, through the S-bend, to the Cross Roads. Continued on up Canyon passage before taking a left up towards Boulder Chamber and finally the Woggle Press back to the base of the entrance ruckle. 1 hour.

G.B. Cave

Sunday 24th June 2012.

John Cooper, John Gisborne (WCC), Lee Hawkswell, Chris Seal and Barley Turner. Yet another wet weekend so decided on a change from the usual Sunday morning down Swildon's Hole. In the Mud Passage Route to find a nice stream going down The Gorge. A little way down The Gorge both the inlets on the left were flowing strongly. Up White Passage to the end then back down and took the route into Rift Chamber and the Loop. Looked out over the Balcony before taking the Oxbow into Lower Main Chamber. There was a pool at the foot of the Ladder Dig climb and foam all the way up the wall and into Ladder Dig itself! Didn't climb up to check if it was sumped! Back up Lower Main Chamber but then I decided the top move on the free climb up the pitch was too tricky under the high water conditions so we went back up the Oxbow and took the route from the Balcony to the Bridge. A quick look into the route from Devil's Elbow. There seemed to be as much water coming in here as down The Gorge above this junction. Out via Mud Passage. 2 hours.

Thursday 9th August 2012.

John Cooper and Emma Gisborne. Mud Passage route into The Gorge. Over the Bridge into White Passage then a left into Rift Chamber and another sharp left into the Loop. Took the Oxbow back into the lower Main Chamber. Down to the bottom before returning up Main Passage and The Gorge. Finally out via Mud Passage. A rather warm evening outside and didn't cool down at all in the cave! 1½ hours.

Saturday 11th August 2012.

John Cooper, Rich Marlow and Ali Moody. A very short trip to recover a load of old plastic 4l bottles left over from an old UBSS experiment. They were down a rift in the Upper Grotto (top of fixed ladder). Whilst there Ali and Rich established a voice connection from the bottom of the rift to The Ooze. ½ hour.

Sunday 12th August 2012.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne and John Gisborne. Mud Passage

route in and straight down to the Ladder Dig. Climbed up and rigged ladder and lifeline then brought Emma and John up. Along and through the wet bits into the boulder chamber. Followed the wall along into Bat Passage to view the pretties. Out the way we went in. 2 hours.

Lime Kiln Dig **Saturday 25th August 2012.**

John Cooper, Pete Hann, Aubrey Newport and Barry Wilkinson. Whilst Pete installed another section of pipe at the bottom (Co2 removal vacuum system) then cemented things in place the rest of us hauled spoil out. 2 hours.

Read's Cavern **Saturday 1st September 2012.**

Pete Buckley, John Cooper, Pete Hann and Ali Moody. A trip to look at the digging possibilities. 1¼ hours.

Rod's Pot **Sunday 26th August 2012.**

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne, John Gisborne, John Newton and Barry Weaver. Down the entrance rifts, over the top of the pots and into the Main Chamber. Through a crawly bit over flowstone and down another crawl to the top of Purple Pot. The very greasy rope was still there so didn't need to use ours. Through the crawl at the bottom and into Bath Swallet. Up the boulder wall to the chamber at the bottom of the entrance pitches. Took the lifeline to the top of the first pitch whilst Barry stationed himself at the bottom of it so he could throw the lifeline down the second pitch for the rest of the party to use. Once the last person was up the bottom pitch and climbing the first Barry coiled the bottom ladder. Ladder and tackle sack then hauled up before Barry ascended the first ladder. Once Barry up he coiled the rope whilst I coiled the first ladder then out to join the others on the surface. As John Newton said - a good trip and one which Jason McCorriston could do when he's down this way. We didn't do any of the side passages this time. 1½ hours.

St Cuthbert's Swallet **Saturday 30th June 2012.**

Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody. Yet another wet day with too much water for Charterhouse Cave to be worth doing so decided on St Cuthbert's instead. When we arrived the dams were already closed and overflowing so we knew a party was already in and it would be damp. Took ladder and lifeline with us so, having dropped down the Entrance Rift and descended the fixed ladder into Arête Chamber, we took the northern exit into Pulpit Passage. We rigged the pitch and descended, leaving it to be derigged from above on our exit. We used a short handline on the Gour Passage Pitch rather than free climbing it. Followed the streamway down before taking a detour up into Lower Mud Hall to drop off the handline to be collected on our exit. Back to the stream which we followed down via the Water Chute into Lower Traverse Chamber. We looked at the wet crawl, The Choke, but decided to take Bypass Passage instead. Back in the streamway we looked upstream at The Choke and decided with a bit of excavation of the floor it would be passable. Spent about 10 minutes digging out the gravel before we were able to get through. Came back through it! Continued on down the streamway as far as Stalagmite Pitch then backtracked slightly and turned off into the Dining Room. Had a look into Dining Room Dig and Cerberus Rift before taking the U-Tube (dry) at the far end of Cerberus Hall and dropped into Mud Ball Chamber. From here took the Rat Run into Lake Chamber. Back

up a little way and took a cut through into Everest Passage. A short detour was taken to view the Fingers then up Everest Passage into Boulder Chamber. Up past Quarry Corner and Kanchenjunga to reach Mud Hall. A quick detour into Lower Mud Hall to collect the handline left earlier before ascending the fixed ladder of Mud Hall Pitch. Along the Wire Rift and up Ledge Pitches back into Arête Chamber. Back down into Pulpit Passage to retrieve the ladder and lifeline before returning to ascend Arête Pitch and the Entrance Rift itself. As the other party were already out we released the two dams. A pleasant 3 hour bimble.

Saturday 28th July 2012.

Alan Brady, John Cooper, Tim Gilbert, Ali Moody and Mike Read. A much drier day than last time. Nobody else in the cave so started by putting the surface dams in. Then down the Entrance Rift and Arête Pitch before detouring to look down Pulpit. Back to Arête Chamber and took the old route down via Ledge pitches and Wire Rift before dropping down the final fixed ladder into Mud Hall. Straight across and climbed up into Pillar Chamber then across and down past Kanchenjunga into Boulder Chamber. Stayed high to cross to view the Cascade before returning and passing The Octopus on our way to Everest Passage where a brief detour off to the left was made to view the Fingers. Then took a drop down on the right into Cerberus Series where we visited Lake Chamber before returning to do the Rat Run, Mud Ball Chamber, U-Tube, Cerberus Hall, a detour into Cerberus Rift to view the pool deposits in the roof, Dining Room and then into the Main Stream. Down the streamway, taking the 10ft climb rather than Stalagmite pitch, then through Sewer Passage to reach Plantation Junction. On down the streamway over the Beehive and Great Gour to drop into Gour Rift, putting the bungs in the dams en route. Through Sump 1 and down to Sump 2 before returning and releasing the dams. Under Gour Hall and Beehive Chamber this time before we turned off at Plantation Junction to follow the Plantation stream. Up into Rabbit Warren, dropped down the 2nd Stalagmite Bank then the 1st before continuing upwards to reach Railway Tunnel. Ignored the usual route up Harem Passage and continued along Railway Tunnel to take a small tube, Strike Passage, back into Boulder Chamber. Repeated our route back to Everest Passage and this time ignored the right turn into Cerberus Series, instead dropping down to the streamway. Up the streamway and through the Choke before climbing the Water Chute then taking a climb on the left back up into Mud Hall. Up the fixed ladders and out, releasing the dams after everyone was up the Entrance Rift but before they were into the entrance climb. 3¼ hours.

Shute Shelve Cavern **Saturday 14th July 2012.**

Elaine and Hugh Tucker (ACG) kindly acted as our cave leaders. Jude Vanderplank (WCC) was the trip organiser and the 11 other attendees were: Beth Berriman, Pete Buckley, Darren Chapman, John Cooper, Alison Crowther-Smith, Florence Crowther-Smith, Emma Gisborne, Ollie Halls, Ali Moody, Wayne Starsmore and Dave Walker. A short crawl lead into the first chamber, Reynard Chamber. First we went left up dip into Pit Prop Passage. Back into Reynard Chamber and a drop down through boulders, Corkscrew Drop, lead into another sizeable chamber, The Flat Room. To the left a short crawl lead into a small grotto with crystals on the walls whilst just before the crawl, on the right down slope, another small grotto with stalagmites and slatactites could be viewed. Leaving The Flat Room, just to the right was a step up into Jim's Attic, an old dig leading upwards. The main route continuing down from The Flat Room was a short climb, HD Climb, into a final chamber, Box Tunnel. At the end was a passage dropping down, handline and fixed ladder, to reach a very small stream and the end

dig. On our way out, on the left just before reaching the entrance, we looked into a 2m diameter chamber, Crystal Chamber – very pretty. 2 hours.

Swildon's Hole

Saturday 23rd June 2012.

Pete Buckley and John Cooper. Black Hole. Laddered the Twenty on our way in as we were the first in. Lots of froth about from the past couple of days with water at a high winter level (flaming June!). Lots of froth on Sump 1 and a good current through. At the Black Hole put down 14m of ladder so we could look at the bottom on our way out. Traversed over and went along past the Well to the dig near the first choke. It goes about 15m at 130 degrees and ends where there is a choice of continuing along or going down to the right. The passage has been dug out to a sensible size, about 1m wide by 0.5m high and is horizontal. Then went and checked out the second choke. Didn't go up the tight tube that had the bang wire in going over the top. Then back and down the Well to the final pool. Back to the Black Hole where we went down and checked out the two passages going down, both were carrying a stream. Back up and out. Used a rope to haul the tackle bags through Sump 1 after Pete got washed back on his first attempt to carry one through. 3½ hours.

Sunday 1st July 2012.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne, John Gisborne and Barry Weaver. St Paul's. In the Dry Way and Inclined Rift, out Barnes' Loop and the Wet Way. 2 hours.

Sunday 8th July 2012.

John Gisborne, John Cooper and Barry Weaver. Another wet trip. Dry Way in to Fault Chamber and out the Wet Way. 2½ hours.

Sunday 15th July 2012.

Claire Cohen (WCC), John Cooper, Emma Gisborne, John Gisborne, Olivia Rysniu and Mirek Kopertowski. Whilst Olivia waited at Sump 1 the rest of us visited Sump 2. Dry Way in, Wet Way out. 2 hours.

Saturday 21st July 2012.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody. Although the sun is shining at last it's still wet underground! Went to Lower Terminus Chamber in South East Inlets via Maypole Aven intending to look at a small tube then go up and look at the U-tube to the final dig. In the event we looked at the small tube which goes off half way up Lower Terminus Chamber. It goes off sharp right in an alcove but required a hammer and chisel so I climbed up out of Lower Terminus Chamber and retrieved them from the U-tube dig and dropped them down to Pete and Ali. Then I looked at the U-tube and it had a couple of inches of water in it, it was dry last time, so we wouldn't be digging it today! I dropped back down into Lower Terminus Chamber and then Ali decided to attack the alcove straight on instead of turning right into the small tube. This seemed to turn from an alcove into a small pneumatic passage with a mud, gravel and cobble fill. Dug until we'd had enough for the day then came out the same way we went in. Looks interesting and not a difficult dig, yet! 4½ hours.

Sunday 22nd July 2012.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne and Lee Hawkswell. Fault Chamber. 2½ hours.

Sunday 29th July 2012.

Alan Brady, John Cooper, Tim Gilbert and Lee Hawkswell. A working Short Round trip. We first bailed the Mud Sump dry and just as we were finishing "Bean" zoomed past us in a cloud of

steam. Alan transported a syphon tube from the Fault Chamber Junction to the Third Trouble. The First Trouble was already syphoning merrily when we arrived so we waited a few minutes to cool down before passing through and bailing out the Second Trouble for a while. Through and on to the Third Trouble where someone has built up the dam further since my last trip. Although there was airspace we bailed this Trouble back into the dam which was now high enough to force the water to flow away in the opposite direction. After a while we thought we'd done enough so went through and completed the Round Trip. 2¾ hours.

Friday 3rd August 2012.

Richard Carey and John Cooper. Short Round trip to ladder the Twenty, bail the Troubles and label the Glistening Gallery and Birthday Squeezes ready for the fiftieth anniversary trip on the 4th August 2012. 2¼ hours.

Saturday 4th August 2012.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper, Pete Glanvill, Ali Moody, Dave Turner (who was on the original breakthrough trip 50 years ago!) and John Walsh. The Short Round trip anticlockwise. After a photo session on Priddy Green at 11.00 am hoards descended on the cave. Our trip was not delayed, apart from getting some people through the squeezes and photography. 3 hours.

Sunday 5th August 2012.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne and John Gisborne. De-rigging the Twenty and pottering in bits of The Oxbows. Some sod had removed my karabiner from the rigging and gone off with it! 1 hour.

Tuesday 7th August 2012.

John Cooper and Emma Gisborne. Sump 1. In the Short Dry Way and out the Wet Way. 1½ hours.

Thursday 16th August 2012.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne and Jeremy Reeves. Sump 1. In Short Dry Way and Inclined Rift. Out Barnes' Loop and Long Dry Way. 1½ hours.

Saturday 18th August 2012.

John Cooper, Ali Moody and John Walsh. Went and continued the dig in Lower Terminus Chamber. Now in about 2m. Still layered with mud, gravel and clay, all very compacted. Digging in a slightly down sloping tube, about 0.75m diameter. There is a small rift in the roof at the current dig face. 4 hours.

Sunday 19th August 2012.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne and Barry Weaver. Went and peered down the Black Hole. In Dry Way, out Wet Way. Although it's now summer outside it's still normal winter conditions for water levels. 2 hours.

Friday 24th August 2012.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne and John Gisborne. In the Long Dry Way (with a detour to the Wet Way via Kennys' Dig) to Sump 1. Out the Wet Way. 1½ hours.

Wednesday 29th August 2012.

John Cooper and Emma Gisborne. In the Zig-Zags and Dry Way to Sump 1. Out the Wet Way. Lots of fresh foam after all the rain today. 1 hour 20 minutes.

Sunday 2nd September 2012.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne and John Gisborne. South-East Inlets to the bottom of the 42 ft rift. 2½ hours.

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Meets List 2012

15th-16th September 2012

North Wales Mining Trip
Gwydyr Forest near Betws Y Coed.
Organiser Stuart France

31st - 23rd September 2012

Hidden Earth Caving Conference
Thomas Whitham Sixth Form Campus
in Burnley
Organiser BCRA

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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Frank Longwill at Hard Rock Café. Photo: Steve Sharp