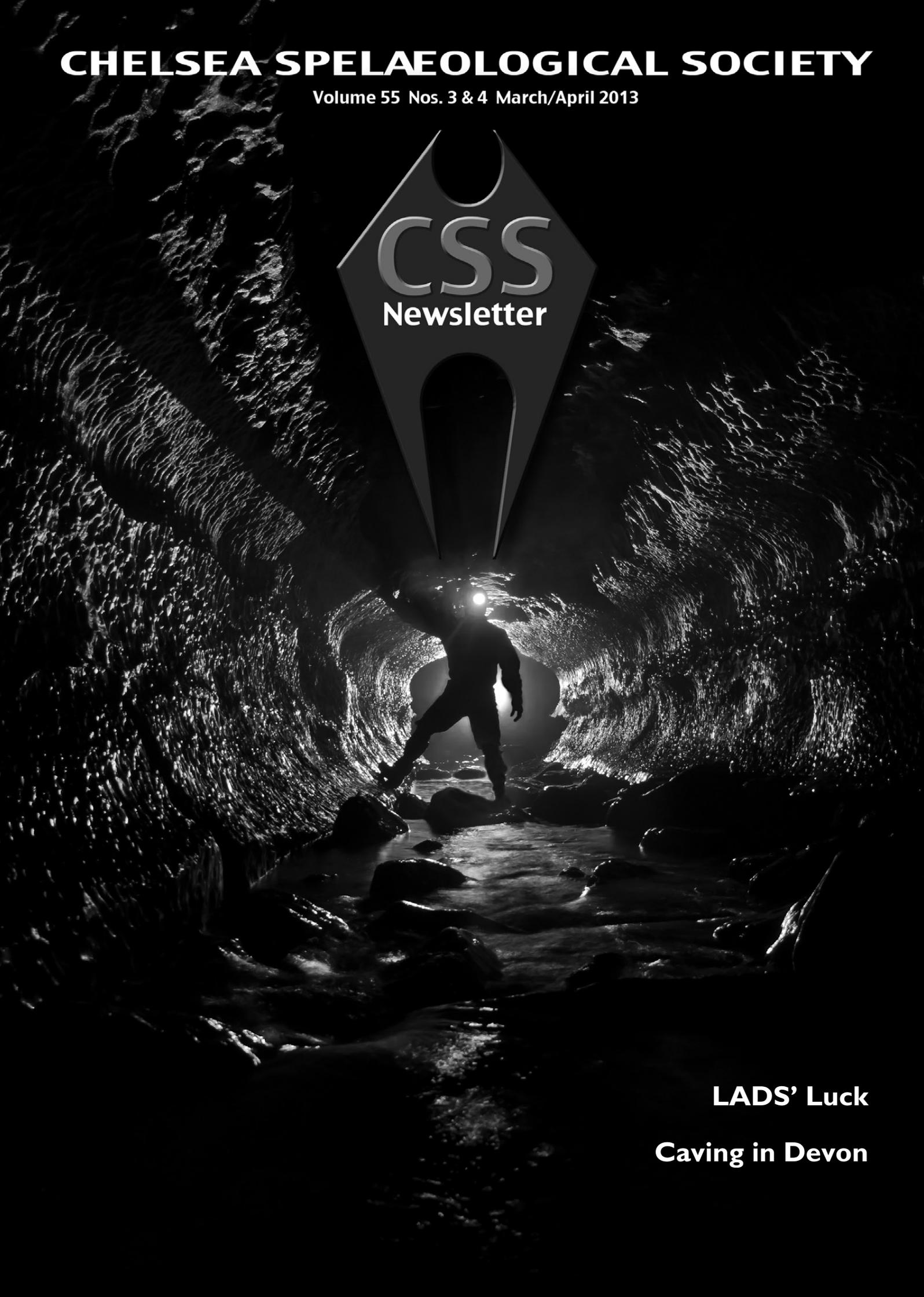


CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 55 Nos. 3 & 4 March/April 2013



LADS' Luck

Caving in Devon



Ben Kent and Alister Partridge
in Marble Stream, OFD
Photo: Steve Sharp

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Cover Photo: Paul Dold in OFD 2 Photo: Steve Sharp

Membership

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

Current rates are:

Full £25
Joint £33

PLUS your BCA subscription per person of £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 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.

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

Membership

Welcome to new full provisional members:

Richard Batten
Jason Fenn
Bob Keep
Niall Sheridan

Belated welcome to
Nicholas Leftly
and congratulations to
Liz Winstanley
who is now a full member

Caves and Global Warming

by Rob Murgatroyd

I'd like to draw members attention to some research published today by Anton Vaks, post-doctoral research fellow in the Department of Earth Sciences at Oxford University.

By radio isotopic dating of stalagmites and stalactites in six caves ranging from the Gobi Desert to northern Siberia, he has been able to identify global warming and cooling over the last 500,000 years.

I accessed the reports via New Scientist: <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn23205-major-methane-release-is-almost-inevitable.html>

The caves visited are as follows:

Gurvan-Ze'erd	Gobi Desert	Mongolia
Lovon-Chombo	Gobi Desert	Mongolia
Shar-Khana	Gobi Desert	Mongolia
Okhotnichya	by Lake Baikal	Russia
Botovskaya	Southern Siberia	Russia
Lenskaya Ledyanaya	Northern Siberia	Russia

Googling Anton Vaks Oxford gives you more background, including Dr Vaks underground and the actual research paper is published in Science Express but the full text is available only to subscribers.

CSS Ladders on Mendip

There are two CSS ladders stored on Mendip for use by club members. If anyone would like to use them please contact the editor who lives ten minutes from Priddy.

Another Chelsea Wedding!

Hi all, we're getting married on Friday 10th May!

The wedding will be just outside Farnham in Surrey. Any Chelsea members who would like to come and join us in the evening for our fun filled and probably drunken ceilidh, are more than welcome.

For more details and to give us an idea of numbers just drop us a line at garyrobertjones@tiscali.co.uk

Maybe see you there! **Gary Jones and Lucy Northover**

Old Tacklebags for Daren clean up

The Hard Rock and REU Diggers are planning a major clearout of Hard Rock. With about 300 rubblesacks-worth of old kit left there over the years by occasional visitors there is much to do (750 rubblesack-miles to surface!). Anything left unused for more than 5 years is going out. If you have old stuff there then it is now mouldy - **take it out**, we have enough to do.

If anyone has any old tacklebags that are past their best and surplus to requirement we'd be grateful if you could leave them at Whitewalls as they will be useful for ferrying kit through the crawls. Broken and missing straps are not a problem.



Baker's Pit
Photo: Andy Rumming

Caving in Devon

by Andy Rumming

As a CSS member who lived in Devon for 12 years up until July, it was great to read Andy Watson's article in the November newsletter. As a Devon SS member and as someone who has poked around some of the caves mentioned in the article plus a lot of others in the county, I recognise some of his experiences particularly with Tony Oldham's *Concise Caves of Devon* and general tricky access. Also up-to date access info, full descriptions and surveys can be difficult to locate. With this in mind I present some up-to date info and very short descriptions/pointers on the more interesting (in my opinion), popular and well known caves in Devon. Grid references are also given. (be particularly aware that a significant number grid references in *Concise Caves of Devon* are wrong enough to waste hours!)

On the subject of detailed descriptions, particularly for the larger caves there are bits on the web, in *Concise Caves of Devon* and in Des Marshall's *Top of the Pots*, but for Baker's upper series and Reed's upper series nothing is currently available, and they are complex and difficult to navigate.

On the subject of surveys, *Concise Caves of Devon* has bits, but in some cases these have been "simplified" and are hard to interpret. The clubs mentioned below should be able to help. DCUC (Devon & Cornwall Underground Council dcuc.org.uk) are scanning a range of surveys and its hoped these should be available soon. A survey of Bakers upper series is currently being finished off so hopefully this should also be available soon.

Area	Caves	Grid Ref	Description
Afton	Afton Red Rift*	SX 838/632	An excellent sporting round trip. Key from DCUC.
Berry Head	Corbridge Cavern	SX 942/566	One for the cave scientists. Leader and key from DCUC
	Hogberry Cave	SX 946/566	Small but interesting, close to Corbridge. Leader and key from DCUC
Brixham	Coleman's Maze	SX 925/565	Good formations. Open access, but delicate. Do not disturb residents, Yacht club not currently very co-operative
Chudleigh	Bruce's Rift	SX 865/787	An excellent 20 minute work out. Open access.
	Chudleigh Cavern	SX 864/787	Worth a look. For key call at the Rock Garden centre
	Clifford's Cave	SX 866/788	A damp gem, most un-Devon like, lots of crawling allow 2hours. Open access, but may need excavating as badgers and floods regularly block just inside the entrance
	Kerswell's Cave	SX 886/807	Interesting, not long. Treated as open access as no formal access agreement in place.
	Pixie's Hole	SX 865/787	Surprisingly roomy and vertical, a lot of bats. Seasonal access, key via DCUC.

	Skullcap Cave	SX 867/787	If you haven't had enough muddy crawls and mammal droppings from Cliffords, it's just around the corner and shorter. Open access.
Dean	Bunker's Hole	SX 735/651	Well decorated with aragonite. Worth a look. Leader and key via DCUC, payment to farmer.
	Potters Wood Mine aka Whitecleeve Mine		Part mine, part cave, quite interesting, access unclear
	Shakey Cave	SX 735/651	Damp and bouldery, worth a look if you are doing Bunkers. Payment to farmer
Durl Head	Durl Head	SX 937/557	A brilliant shortish through trip. Massive chamber with beach and exciting swim along passage to open sea. Open access, take great care!
Higher Kiln	Baker's Pit*	SX 742/665	Lots of excellent caving, many different routes, complex upper series, access via contact local club for a guide
DCUC,	Dart River Cave	SX 743/668	Wet and short, open access
	Joint Minton	SX 743/664	One for the archaeologists, Leader and key via WPCST
	Reeds Cavern*	SX 744/664	A fine cave with good formations and sporting round trips, 2 hours plus. Seasonal access, leader and key from WPCST
	Rift Cave	SX 743/665	A fun squeeze, right next to Reeds and worth a look. Seasonal access, leader and key from WPCST
Newton Abbot	Coombsend Chasm	SX 885/741	An interesting round trip. Requests for access will not be granted
	East Ogwell	SX 848/696	Biggest cave entrance in Devon, shame there's not a lot of cave behind it, worth a look if in the area. Talk to business in quarry during working hours for access, although recently this has been refused.
	Rocky Acres		Extensive DSS long term dig. Access via DSS diggers
Ilfracombe	Napp's Cave	SS 565/475	Well decorated and squeezey. Talk to Napp's caravan site for access
Plymouth	Radford Cave*	SX 502/527	A fine round trip in urban Plymouth. Key via DCUC
Pridhamsleigh	Dog Hole*	SX 749/678	The Dog leg extensions are very good. Key via DCUC
	Little Prid		A bit of prid next to prid. Access as Prid
	Pridhamsleigh*	SX 749/679	A very well used but excellent cave. Payment to farmer
Torquay	Kents Cavern	SX 934/641	An excellent show cave well worth visiting
Yealmpton	Kitley Show Cave	SX 575/514	A currently closed show cave

* this denotes one of the "big 6" sporting caves.

These are the largest 6 caves and a 2 hour plus trip is found in all of them.

Closed caves – ones that I can confirm are not recently accessible

East Devon	Festival Cave	Absolutely no access due to active quarry
	Raiders Rift	Absolutely no access due to active quarry
Brixham	Windmill Cave	Absolutely no access due landlord of house above and insurance issues

Further info

DCUC - www.dcuc.org.uk **DSS** - www.devonss.org.uk **PCG** - www.plymouthcavinggroup.org.uk

WPCST - www.pengellytrust.org **DSS hut** - www.southdartmoorbunkhouse.co.uk

Or if you get stuck try me andrewrumming@me.com

Boreham Cave Part I by Gary Jones

For those that don't know, Boreham Cave is located in the Yorkshire Dales and is normally near the top of most cave divers to do list due to the excellent formations to be found beyond the sumps in the likes of the China Shop.

Sadly though, there has been no access for many years. Recently however the northern section of the CDG along with English Nature have managed to arrange a very restricted and tightly controlled series of visits. Seizing the opportunity to visit this caving classic, I got myself on a trip last October. Unknown to me at the time, various other diving friends were also on the trip including Clive Westlake and our very own Duncan Price. So the scene was set for a good day out.

Alas for me, my trip into Boreham was not to be quite as expected!

The first sign of things not being quite right was when one of my cylinder attachments broke after the first sump. I managed to bodge it together in true CDGstyle with a snoopy loop but

it did remind me that I'd not done a lot of diving recently and really needed to overhaul my kit - just as soon as this trip was done...

Another sump has a tight bedding which has been the source of fun and games for more than one diver in the past. The line has since been better positioned and closely following Dave Ryall's instructions on how best to pass it saw me on the other side of it without too much drama though it's definitely a bit snug!

The real problem started when I surfaced from sump 3. At this point, I was greeted with an almighty noise of escaping air and a maelstrom under my armpit. On closer inspection, my entire second stage including the hose of one of my cylinders was nowhere to be seen! (For those not familiar with diving kit, the second stage is the bit you put in your mouth and breathe from - it's generally considered not to be an optional part of your frogman get up!)

Fortunately, Clive was behind me and upon his arrival, I enquired if he minded awfully popping back into the sump to see if he could find my AWOL kit. He

duly submerged and very quickly returned triumphant.

It appeared that the hose had completely detached itself in a manner it's most definitely not supposed to do.

A few minutes reattaching things gave me two functioning cylinders again, however on closer inspection, the hose was gradually making its way loose again...

With still further sumps to reach the pretty stuff and conscious of the sumps already passed including a squeeze, I reluctantly headed out quite literally holding my kit together!

Fortunately, all went well on the way out, the remaining kit continuing to function and the squeeze was easier now the viz had cleared a bit.

So I can't comment on the pretties but I was assured by Duncan that the cave does indeed live up to its reputation!

Oh well, gives me a good reason to go back and hopefully produce a Boreham part 2 but only after I've actually got round to that session of diving kit TLC!



Photos: Lucy Northover

Ogof Craig a Ffynnon

Tues 8th January 2013 - Hall of the Mountain King
Tim Gibbs, Liz Winstanley, Jason McCorriston, Paul Tarrant

This was a post Christmas trip to blow away a few cobwebs. Liz had not been to OCAF before and so we decided to do a trip to Hall of the Mountain King since this is straightforward, scenically very attractive, and gives access to one of the most spectacular sights that can be viewed in south Wales.

There was rain in Swansea (Surprise!) but surprisingly water levels in the entrance series of the cave were very low, although the approach passage to First Choke showed foam at least 2 metres up the walls! Gasoline Alley water was very low.

The climb up Anne's Pantry was made a whole lot easier with Stuart France's new Via Ferrata and the party soon traversed the Second Choke to emerge into the big stuff. A quick nod and a wink to Bill Gascoine was made here and thanks rendered for the hard work he and Parker, Franklyn and Phillips put in here back in the late 70's.

The rest of the trip needs scant description as it is well known. Suffice to say, Travertine Passage amazed us and the large breakout domes in the roof looked very impressive lit up by Jason's Scurion. FX2s were what I used

to use, and quite frankly they did not give much illumination in places like this. Liz was ordered to look straight ahead when entering the final chamber by Third Choke so that she would not spoil the surprise of seeing the spectacular formations up in the roof. She enjoyed this bit as did we all even tho' we've seen them many times. They never diminish in their magnificence!

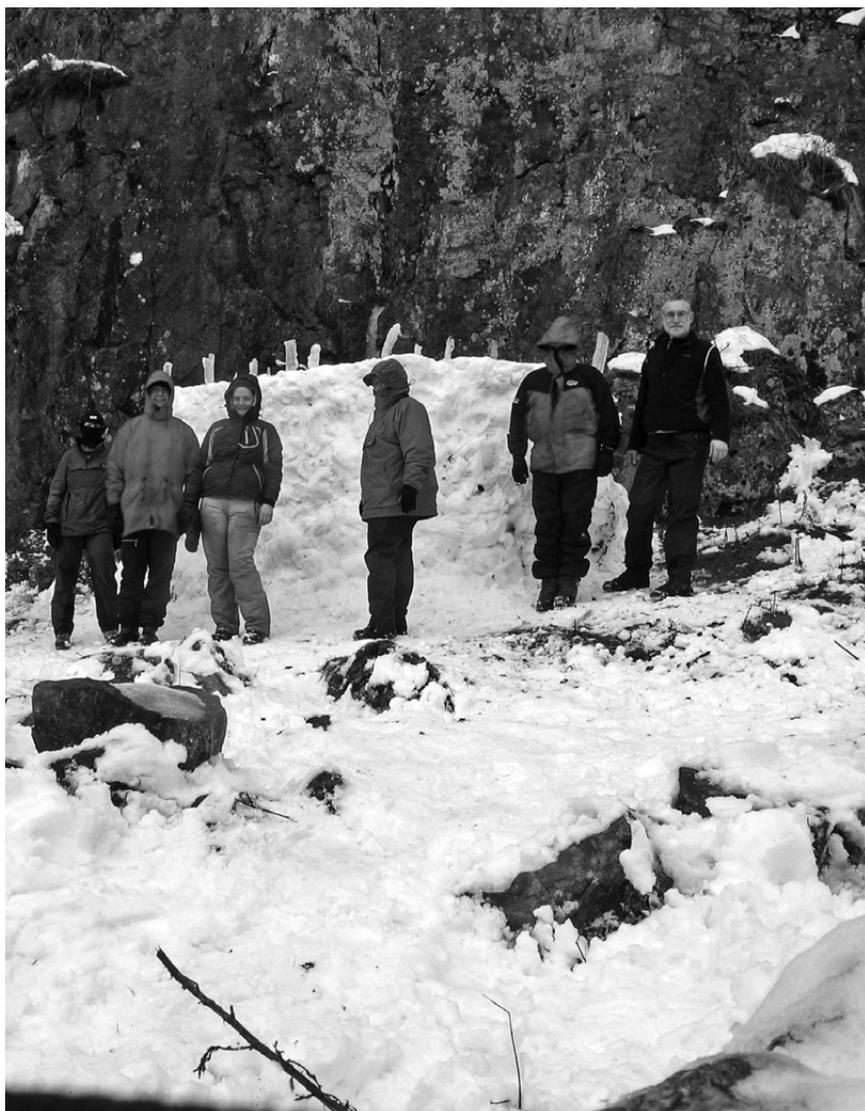
Return was uneventful and the entrance was reached 3 hours later. A fine short evening trip giving a good introduction to this remarkable system.

CSS Dinner

by Paul Tarrant

Well, the dinner was a great success with 43 people getting to the Bear in spite of snow drifts on the Tramroad (people still went into the ditch even with snow chains!) and folk even managed to go caving (*including John Stevens' Agen Allwedd bat count of 730 lesser horseshoe bats including 2 albinos, 3 greater horseshoe bats, 1 Brown long eared bat & 3 Myotis bats*) in spite of the diversion created by Duncan and his snow board and sledges! The snow wall created by the Aggie entrance by some devious CSS b*****s so as to hide it must be washed away by now as the rainfall and fast moving thaw has made things extremely damp here in Wales.

I'd like to thank all those who managed to make it under trying circumstances and make it a good weekend.



Digging in Read's Cavern

by John Cooper

Those of you who read my "Potterings" may have noticed several recent digging trips into Read's Cavern in Burrington Coombe. In case you are wondering about this I will give some background on the cave, which is already well known to the Newsletter Editor!

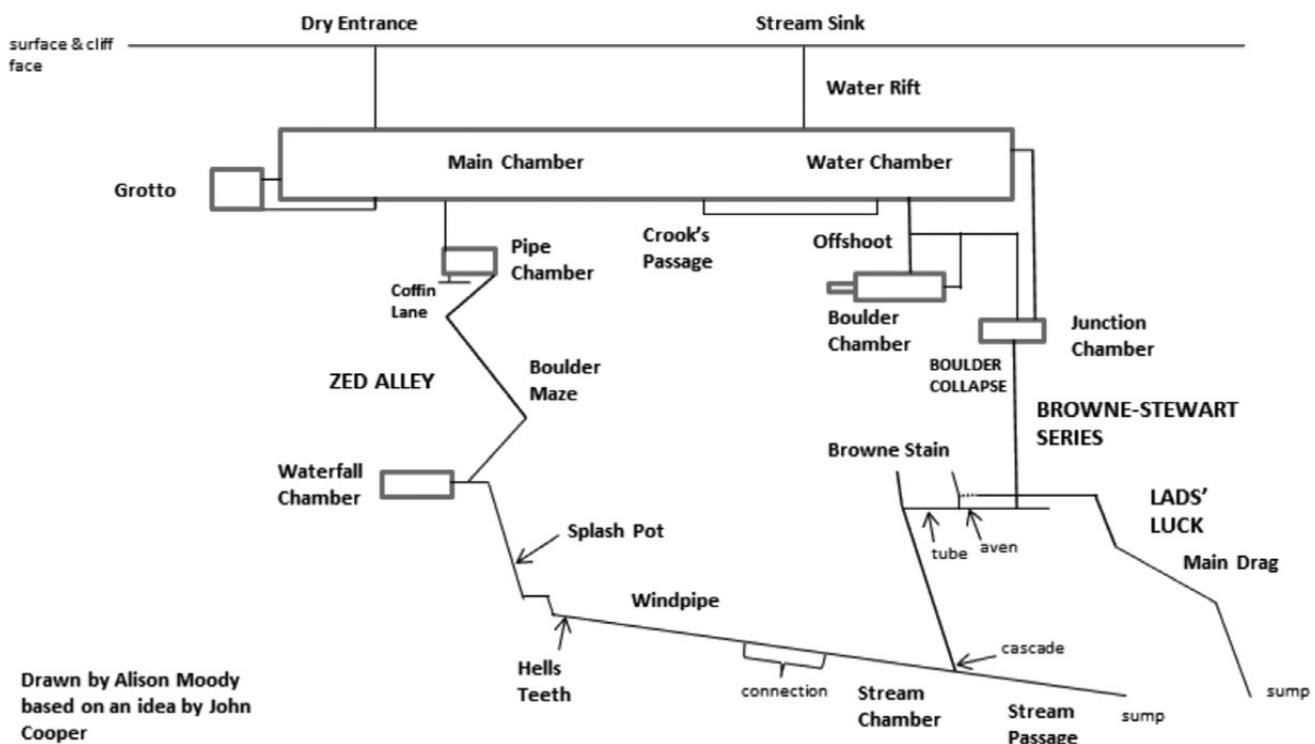
In the early 1980's a group of cavers known as the LADS (Let's Ave a Drink Speleos) did a lot of digging trips in the cave. The LADS were:

Pat Cronin, Steve 'Pothead' Emery
Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley, Michael 'Trebor' McDonald
Steve Milner, Neil Scallan, James 'Smartarse' Smart

They didn't manage to find the master cave they were looking for but did manage one significant extension, **LADS' Luck**, and another nasty one in boulders, **Browne Stain**. Unfortunately a collapse, see following caving log, blocked access to the lower part of the cave. It's that we have now accessed, but via a safer route.

The simplified schematic cross section below illustrates the cave.

Read's Cavern – Schematic Diagram



The stream sinks at about 161m OD and the water resurges at Rickford (58m OD and about 2.5km away – slightly North of East) and Langford (47m OD and under 1km away – slightly West of North).

Flow time seems to be a bit over 2 days, although the time to Rickford can be double that in higher water conditions.

A Close Shave

Caving Log 5/1/84 – Steve Milner

On Thursday 5th January 1984, Steve Milner from the LADS with Martin Beckett and Dave Frearson decided to check out the new extension, as it had been very wet during the previous month or so, and we wondered if the Lads' Luck extension was taking a stream

Although the cave was unusually wet and the stream was pouring down amongst the boulders providing an almost continuous shower, we had an uneventful journey to the Junction Chamber. Because Dave had not been in the cave before, we joked about the potential for collapse and about all the hapless Iron Age men and women who got squished in the Main Chamber above. At the squeeze, Dave at the rear, got stuck and while he was extricating himself, I continued on for a while to show Martin the way, but had difficulty as the route did not seem familiar even though I had been that way over 40 times before. I became concerned as there were fresh loose rocks on the floor, and there was also some movement around us.

Sensibly, we turned back and Dave managed to reverse out of his predicament. I went back through the squeeze to direct Dave back towards dryness, but the way out looked different. A void in the floor (only 4ft deep) and a side passage had appeared. I led the way out, and Dave following, seemed to disturb many stones around him. Martin, who was still at the squeeze waited until we were clear of the new loose stuff. Once we were clear, he started to move and then there was a massive movement of rocks and boulders . . .

I heard the collapse first and then Martin's screams. Mart became silent and the movement continued. After no more than 10 seconds, the boulders stopped moving, and I thought that Martin had become trapped. Quickly, I got Dave out of the way and went cautiously back. I was relieved to see Martin's light and to see him moving out. Amazingly, he was only bruised and shaken, as in his panic during the collapse; he kicked everything off him as it fell and climbed the slowly funnelling boulders. While the immediate problem seemed to be over, we could see another boulder in an extremely precarious position, which Martin had to squeeze by to get back to relative safety. Once past the danger, and back at Junction Chamber, we calmed our nerves, as it had been a very close shave.

We heard later from Brian Prewer (MRO) that a party went down on the previous day and reported some "loose stuff", but he didn't realise the extent of the movement. Smartarse, Neil and Pothead checked the cave out on 11/1/84 and reported that it was impossible to reach the squeeze below Junction Chamber. They checked out a new route for a short distance, but it was too unsafe.

Dave never went caving again.

Because of the collapse detailed above it has proved impossible to revisit and produce a detailed description for the new Mendip Underground. Over several trips last year we (see my Pottering

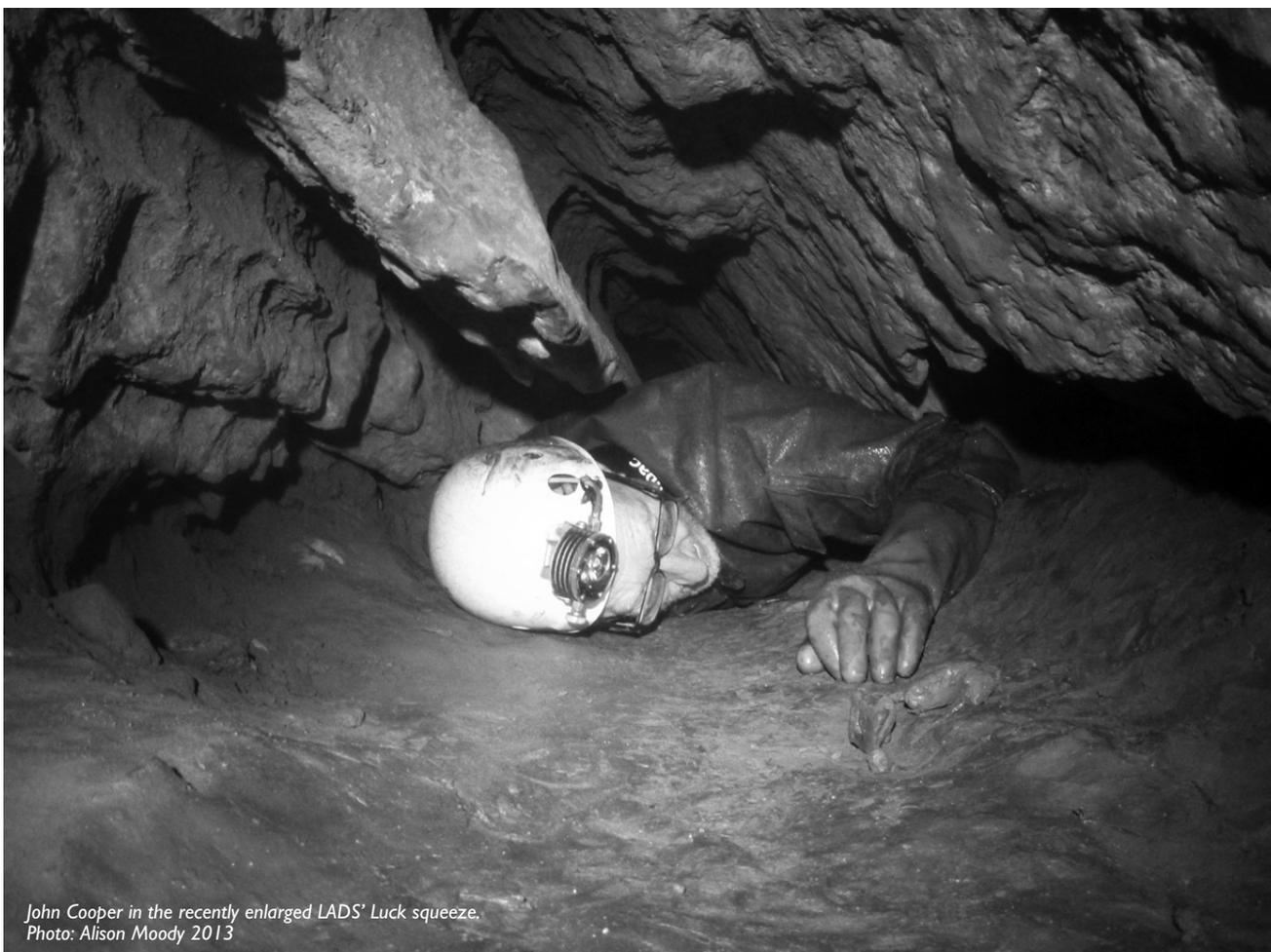
in the 2012 & 2013 Newsletters for the various participants) checked out the route via Junction Chamber and decided it was still too dangerous, so decided an alternative route to the end was required. Ali Moody (Wessex Cave Club) managed to obtain permission for a dig to be started that would provide a route to Browne-Stewart Series and LADS' Luck via the rather safer ZED Alley route. The survey indicated ZED Alley ended not far away; in fact in Willie Stanton's caving log he reports hearing a party at the bottom of ZED Alley whilst he was surveying in Browne-Stewart Series. We had to start by enlarging a route into ZED Alley, bypassing the tight squeeze, and then worked on enlarging the tunnel, the Windpipe, at the bottom. Once we had completed that connection we worked on the entry into the LADS Luck extension and having now finished that we are completing the description for the new Mendip Underground. Both the two lowest points, shown as "sump" on the schematic, are currently just cobble floored pools in rifts. I think lots of rock gets moved about in wet weather!

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John Cooper washing off in Hunter's Brook outside Read's Cavern. Photo: Alison Moody



John Cooper in the recently enlarged LADS' Luck squeeze. Photo: Alison Moody 2013



Pete Buckley, John Cooper, Alison Moody and John Gisborne Photo: Emma Gisborne



Photo: Steve Milner, 1981

Editor's note:

Martin Beckett (Bristol Polytechnic Caving Club) - stylishly framed here by myself (!) and Bill James (WORMS - Cirencester Agricultural College Caving Club) retired from caving immediately after the event described in Steve Milner's log. On his wedding day we presented him with a sealed, clear spaghetti jar filled with glycerine, rock chippings and model cave diggers with tools. For many years it had pride of place on his mantelpiece where, when shaken up like a snow-scene paperweight, Martin and his wife Alison enjoyed in slow motion a miniature re-enactment of the event that nearly cost him his life. Who said tasteful wedding presents are hard to come by?



Mark Lumley emerging from the squeeze into LADS' Luck. Photo: Steve Milner, 1983



Photo: Steve Milner, 1984

Pottering About on Mendip

by
John Cooper

Charterhouse Cave

Wednesday 6th March 2013.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne and Mark Helmore.

Emma's first trip into Charterhouse. Took in all the sights as far as Grotto of the Singing Stal, some on the way in and some on the way out. 1½ hours.

Eastwater Cavern

Friday 15th February 2013.

John Cooper and Emma Gisborne.

Stream still flowing into the entrance. Followed the string through the entrance ruckle then Upper Traverse, Hallelujah Hole, Lower Traverse. Then continued down cave to pick up the climb into the First Rift Chamber. Ignored the first left and took the second, a crawl into the Second Rift Chamber. Climbed up above the entry point and continued up a vertical tube to reach an in-situ hand-line which was used to drop down into Unlucky Strike, containing the broken curtain which gives the series its name. Continued down through the flowstone wriggle to the head of the final pitch. A 10m ladder belayed to the in-situ hanger just reached the floor. Dropped down the final rift to admire the clear water in the sump pools. Out up the Canyon via the S-Bend and the Crossroads before taking the Windpipe and the Woggle Press to reach the entrance boulder ruckle. A very pleasant 2¼ hours

Read's Cavern

Saturday 9th February 2013.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper, John Gisborne and Ali Moody.

Two weeks ago (the CSS AGM and Dinner weekend) the final barrier into Browne-Stewart Series was opened but was very tight. Pete Buckley, Richard Marlow and Ali Moody were able to squeeze through but didn't go further, enlarging it again before leaving. Today it was cleared and is now negotiable by an average sized person. We explored down the streamway to a cobble choke, wet. It looks as if the bit at the bottom including the sump pool have been lost under washed down cobbles. Back up and climbed up an unstable boulder slope (grand piano sized) looking for the entry to LADS Luck. Eventually this was located by Ali and Pete. The existing survey isn't much use in finding your way around! Next time we intend to enlarge the entrance to it; it looks like just mud and cobbles on the floor. 3½ hours.

Saturday 16th February 2013.

John Cooper and Ali Moody.

Spent nearly 3 hours digging out mud and cobbles from the crawl leading to the final LADS Luck squeeze, which is rock flakes on the left wall. Pushing at the silt on the floor with my feet would not propel me through! The flakes need hitting with a proper hammer! 4 hours.

Saturday 23rd February 2013.

Pete Buckley, Richard Carey, John Cooper, Richard Marlow and Ali Moody.

Measured the Windpipe crawl on the way in, it's a bit over 13m total. Hit the LADS Luck squeeze hard then cleared and went through. Whilst RC waited in the cold on the outside of the squeeze (yes Mr Editor, it's still a squeeze!) the rest of us went to the bottom of LADS luck, a boulder floored pool, and investigated the potential higher up. One nice draughting rift that's too tight to get along at present, blocked by a boulder as well. 4¾ hours.

Saturday 2nd March 2013.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper, John Gisborne, Richard Marlow and Ali Moody.

All into Browne-Stewart Series via the Zed-Alley/Windpipe route. After a photo session in the streamway, water levels much reduced, we climbed up the boulders and the two John's turned round at the first awkward crawl whilst the rest continued, writing up the description of the route to the end of LADS' Luck. 1¾ hours for JC & JG.

Reservoir Hole

Tuesday 12th February 2013.

Pete Buckley, John Cooper and Ali Moody

re-doing conservation tape in preparation for the tourist season that starts in about 6 weeks time. Nick Chipchase and Nigel Cox also in doing other work. We re-taped Grand Gallery then up to Topless Aven before finishing with Resurrection. Finally a tourist look around Frozen Deep for Pete who hadn't seen it before. I had a quick look into the SW Rift dig (see Newsletter Vol 54 No 11 November 2012 p104/5) now renamed Skyfall. 4¾ hours.

Tuesday 26th February 2013.

Chris Binding, Tony Boycott (UBSS), Nick Chipchase, John Cooper, Nigel Cox and Ali Moody.

Nigel climbed Skyfall Aven with me belaying him and Ali Moody on the camera (it was a bit tight to get Nick through). At the top Nigel squeezed along but in backing out knocked off a stalagmite, which fortunately hit me squarely on the helmet so didn't damage me! A double rope was left in situ for the survey team when Andrew Atkinson gets back. Then continued with another couple of hundred metres of taping in Frozen Deep. 5¾ hours.

Tuesday 5th March 2013.

Chris Binding, John Cooper and Ali Moody.

More taping in Frozen Deep. 4 hours.

Swildon's Hole

Thursday 31st January 2013.

John Cooper and Emma Gisborne.

Down to Sump 1 then back and up to the Mud Sump. Sump full but water not up the side of the dam, which was empty. The Moles dig was full and overflowed into the main passage down as far as the dam. No sign that it had overflowed to the Mud Sump. 2¼ hours.

Monday 4th February 2013.

John Cooper and Emma Gisborne.

To the Mud Sump with a new bucket for the top dam. Need to get the correct size fittings now to couple it to the existing pipe work. Whilst there bailed the top dam. The Moles dig has drained, just the usual small pool at the bottom now. 2 hours.

Sunday 17th February 2013.

**John Cooper, Emma Gisborne,
John Gisborne and Barry Weaver.**

Spent half an hour bailing the Mud Sump, allowing the middle dam to overflow into the Moles Dig. Will take several hours of bailing to get a decent airspace. 2 hours.

Wednesday 20th February 2013.

John Cooper and Emma Gisborne.

The Mud Sump was lower than we left it last Sunday, either it had drained naturally or some else has bailed for a while. We spent 1¼ hours bailing, four dams full, allowing the middle dam to overflow into the Moles Dig. Remade the dam then went through the Mud Sump and peered down Shatter Pot before coming out. 3 hours.

Sunday 24th February 2013.

John Cooper and Barry Weaver.

Having met Joe Duxbury and a Gloucester group at the Wessex to sort out a GB key and Charterhouse Caving Company permits for them we were a bit late starting. Only managed a token bail from the Mud Sump before having to leave for the Hunters'. 1½ hours.

Thursday 28th February 2013.

John Cooper and Emma Gisborne.

Back to the Mud Sump and completed the task of bailing it dry. Took another hour and it was left with the bucket in the floor empty. How long it stays dry will depend on the weather. 2½ hours.

Sunday 3rd March 2013.

John Cooper, Emma Gisborne, John Gisborne, Jude Vanderplank and Barry Weaver.

Whilst JG turned round at the top of the Twenty and BW rested at the final low crawl the rest of us went to the Sidcot U-Tube. It was sumped as expected. The Mud Sump was still dry. 2¼ hours.

Saturday 9th March 2013.

Richard Carey, John Cooper and Emma Gisborne.

First Short Round trip for Emma.

The Mud Sump was nice and dry, just a film of water on the floor, and the Troubles were already syphoning before we arrived. 2 hours.

Upper Flood Swallet

Saturday 2nd February 2013.

**Pete Buckley, Ben Cooper (MCG),
John Cooper, Ali Moody.**

Bumped into Andy Tyler and family at the entrance as we arrived; it was a nice sunny day for a walk but we were scheduled for another digging trip to work on the Neverland bypass. Carried in Peli case containing 5 batteries and Ben's food whilst PB carried in haul sack with Darren Drum of "stuff", drill bit and our food. Ali had another bag with her food and camera. At the dig face Ali discovered the spoil from the last session was still there; we thought it had all been removed. In the end we cleared the spoil using hammer, chisel and crowbar and completed the connection. Once Ali was through it was a simple matter to enlarge from both sides. We'd come out of a side rift about 3-4m above the floor of the main Neverland passage. Whilst digging we were visited by Julie Hesketh (MCG) and a couple of students she was leading. Once the connection was complete we were visited by Peat Bennett (MCG) and Tim Francis (MCG), who came through the connection with us. A short trip up and down passage, not very far as we were very muddy. The place will now need a lot of conservation work doing! Carried out the batteries unused, as was the rest of the "stuff". 5¾ hours.

Auction OF CAVING KIT

Tom Foord reports that SMWCRT will be holding a couple of auctions of recently retired equipment, and have asked if one of these could be held at Whitewalls (the other will be at Penwyllt). The kit will all be good quality stuff, in good condition, and is only being sold off due to being identified as surplus to requirements when the stores were recently cleared out. The evening of the CSS barbecue (Saturday June 29th) has been suggested as a suitable date but watch the forum for updates or changes.



*Paul Tarrant in the frozen entrance of Agen Allewedd,
26th January 2013.
Photo: John Stevens*

Officers of the Society:

Chairman

Tim Morgan
53 Coldershaw Road, London, W13 9EA
Tim@TerminalSump.com

Secretary

Stuart France
The Smithy, Crickhowell, Powys, NP8 1RD
(01874) 730527 (Home)
css@linetop.com

Treasurer

Gary Jones
4 Glebe Close, Bookham, Leatherhead, KT23 4DJ
(01372) 454776 (Home)
07979 854059 (Mobile)
garyrobertjones@tiscali.co.uk

Cottage Warden

John Stevens
14 Kiln Close, Hermitage, Thatcham
Newbury, Berks, RG18 9TQ
(01635) 200879 (Home)
john@k-stevens.co.uk

Tacklemaster

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

Newsletter Editor

Mark Lumley
7 Langleys Lane, Clapton, Radstock
Somerset, BA3 4DX
(01761) 419246 (Home and Work)
mark@creativeedge.me.uk

Librarian

Paul Tarrant
10 Llwyn y Golomen, Parc Gwernfadog, Morrision
Swansea, SA6 6SX
(01792) 795600 (Home)
07867 820507 9(Work)

Meets Secretary

Paul Tarrant
10 Llwyn y Golomen, Parc Gwernfadog, Morrision
Swansea, SA6 6SX
(01792) 795600 (Home)
07867 820507 9(Work)
07812 110291 (Mobile)
ptpeaty@yahoo.co.uk

Records Officer

John Cooper
31 Elm Close, Wells, Somerset, BA5 1LZ
(01749) 670568 (Home)
csspub@googlemail.com

Web Master

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

Rescue Liaison

Tom Foord
138 Habershon Street, Cardiff, CF24 2LD
07766 605827 (Mobile)
tomfoord@gmail.com

PDCMG Liaison

Chris Seal
c/o 28 Cockney hill, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4EU
css@chrisseal.net

Committee Member

Mel Reid
3 Bryntirion Terrace, Llangollen, LG20 8LP
07711 943492 (Mobile)
melrei@hotmail.com

Committee Member

Jason McCorrison
72 Christchurch Road, Penmaen Estate
Oakdale, Blackwood, Gwent, NP12 0UX
(01495) 221479 (Home)
jason_mccorrison@talktalk.net

Meets List 2013

March - Easter 29/3 - 1/4

Whitewalls with trips based from the cottage.

Note some members are heading up to the Yorkshire Dales for walking, and easy caving (we did Heron Pot last year) and will be based at The Railway bunkhouse, Ribblehead. Contact Paul Tarrant if you are in the area.

May- 3-5th May Early Bank Holiday.

Caving in Wales based on Whitewalls.

24 -26th May Whitsun Bank Holiday

Llangollen, North Wales Pandora Slate Mine and Ogof Hesp Alyn - Trip booked Provisionally.

June 28-30th June

BBQ Weekend and 50th Anniversary Celebration of Whitewalls. Caving in Dan yr Ogof.

July 26-28th

Mendips - Staying at Shepton Mallet Caving Club Hut.

August 23 - 26th Bank Holiday

Caving in Wales based on Whitewalls.

September 13 - 15th

North Wales Mines - Organiser Stuart France.

September 27 - 29th September

Caving in Wales based on Whitewalls

November 1 - 3rd

Bonfire Weekend.

December 6 - 8th

Curry evening

New Year

Whitewalls.



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Duncan Price, Dave King and Rob Taviner in Hillier's Cave. Photo: Mark Lumley