

# CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



*Steve Tomalin*

*Frustration and Boredom in Bale Herculane*

*Caving with a sexy Russian*

*Neverland*

*Another small find in Agen Allwedd*

# Chelsea Spelæological Society Newsletter

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Sluttery Cave - Photo by Nick Chippchase

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The views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the author of the article and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society. Photos and illustrations not accredited are by the editor.

## Membership

It's the end of the financial year so subs are due at start of October. Members who have become Full during the year should contact the Treasurer to find out how much to pay.

Please send all subscriptions to:  
Gary Jones, 6 West Down, Bookham, Leatherhead,  
Surrey KT23 4LJ

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.

**Cover Photo** - Matt Voysey  
in Eglwys Faen

Photo by Mark Lumley





# Editorial

Thank you for all the material sent in this month I would encourage you all to contribute to the journal. With around 125 readers in our distribution list, the CSS journal is a great place to share your adventures.

Please send in your photos and trip reports etc  
Please send all material to:

*Steve-Sharp-Photography@virginmedia.com*

Or put on a CD and send to:

*Steve Sharp*  
43 The Crescent  
Sea Mills  
Bristol  
BS9 2JT

Send your text for your article in Microsoft Word format or email.

Convert photos, surveys and other images to decent sized .jpeg, .tif, .psd files

You could alternatively zip your work and send in as a .rar file using [www.mailbigfile.com](http://www.mailbigfile.com) (Free version)

*Steve Sharp*

*In the science fiction novel '2312', by Kim Stanley Robinson, he writes "darkness reigned. It was as black as could be, the black one would find inside a cave deep inside the earth."*

*Is he suggesting that a cave not so deep inside the earth wouldn't be as dark? So that it gets darker as you get deeper? There's an interesting concept. How do you measure blackness?*



*Surely, once enough black air has accumulated it can't get any blacker?*



*Another Fine T-shirt to add to the collection.*

**CSS members are planning a curry evening on Saturday 26th September at Hidden Earth. Check out the forum for more details**

<http://cssmembers.proboards.com/>

 **The UK's National Caving Conference**   
**Leek High School**  
Staffordshire  
**Hidden Earth**  
**2014**  
26-28  
September  
Photo:- Steve Sharp  
The Waterfalls ~ Lower Main Stream passage  
Agen Allwedd  
[www.hidden-earth.org.uk](http://www.hidden-earth.org.uk)

# Steve Tomalin



Steve Tomalin died on 20th July at the age of 55. He was a CSS member for several years, one of the driving forces in the digging of Priory Road in Agen Allwedd.

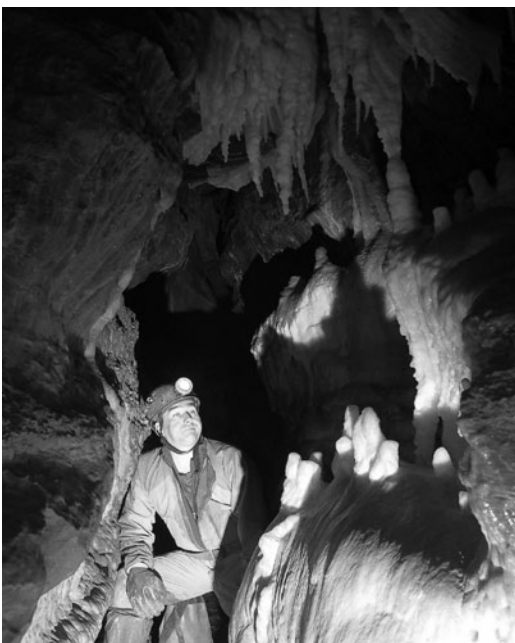
During that time, he was having breakfast in Whitewalls one morning, when Alan Thomas came barging into the cottage shouting and swearing, ranting on about “Cars parked here, and cars parked there ...” Steve turned to him and said “Do you mind? I’m trying to eat my breakfast here. Get out! Just fuck off!” (or words to that effect). Thomas was not used to getting a taste of his own medicine, and quickly left. It must have seriously disturbed Steve because he wrote a letter to the CSS secretary; getting Steve to put pen to paper was always an uphill struggle. The letter was published in CSS newsletter Vol 33 No. 5 April/May 1991. Steve wrote:

*I am personally sick and tired of their [the Thomases] continual winging at persons staying at Whitewalls ... we should not tolerate this any longer ... especially when I am eating my breakfast, it upsets the digestion terribly.*

*Let’s hope the present unhealthy situation can be resolved and these people will leave us alone. We have proven that sucking up to them does not work, perhaps we should try another way. A SHOTGUN!*

Which was typical of Steve’s direct approach!

## **Joe Duxbury**



# *“Frustration and Boredom in Băile Herculane”\**

## **The EuroSpeleo Forum 2014, Băile Herculane, Romania**

When I saw the announcement for the EuroSpeleo Forum to be held in Romania in August, with the prospects of caving trips during the preceding week, I thought that the chance of caving somewhere I'd never been was too good to miss, so I signed up. The details of all the caving trips were available on the forum website, and many of the caves looked really attractive. There were fees for most of the trips, and although these were very high (around €70), I contacted several of the trip organisers and registered my interest.

Connections to Băile Herculane were not straightforward, and after flying to Bucharest on Friday 15th August I ended up spending 9 hours overnight in the Bucharest Gara de Nord railway station. When I reached Băile Herculane railway station about midday on the 16th, there was no obvious bus, and it was just as well I took a taxi to the Afrodita Hotel, where the forum was being held, as it was halfway up a steep hill; the buses only went to the town centre down in the valley. At the hotel, there was no sign of any cavers. It wasn't until the morning of Monday 18th that I met Jean-Pierre Bartholeyns, from Belgium (a UIS secretary, who I recognised), and Ira Yuniat, from Indonesia. They, too, were unimpressed with the forum organisation. None of the Romanian cavers arrived until the evening of Tuesday 19th. The event organisers had been over-optimistic. They had initially offered all the trips (some 15 or so) on all the days 16th – 22nd August. In the event, many were cancelled, or just didn't happen.

In the intervening days, I visited the old town of Băile Herculane, with its sadly dilapidated 19th century spas and hotels, and its roadside hot (40-50°C) springs;



Imperial spa



Hercules spring

walked along some of the marked paths in the hills above the town; and went on a tourist excursion that included a boat ride on the Danube.

On one of the paths, I came across signs for 'Grota cu Aburi' (Steam Cave), which I followed until I arrived at what was only a large rock shelter. But below the main opening was a vent blowing hot air and steam, and a roaring sound could be heard within. I thought this was a bit odd, because all the other hot springs were down below, in the valley.





Grota cu Aburi

When the Romanian cavers did arrive, I was not impressed with their attitude. They were the most unfriendly and unhelpful cavers I've ever met. I've met cavers in Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, and America, among other countries, and the local cavers have always made me very welcome. But there was no "Hello, sit with us, have a beer, where are you from? ..."; all they were interested in was whether I'd registered. It turned out that most of the trips that had been on offer had been cancelled (it would have been nice to have been told), ostensibly because of the lack of interest. Jean-Pierre thought this could well have been because of the high costs that had been asked. If the prices had been in Romanian Lei, they would have been reasonable, but in Euros, they were silly.

On Wednesday morning, I invited myself onto a trip to **Peștera Epuran** ('Peștera', Romanian for 'cave') with Jean-Pierre, led by 'Dragoș'. Although the cave was only a few kilometres over the mountain as the crow flies, it was a 1½-hour drive down to the Danube and back up to the Mehedinți Plateau. First we had to arrange to collect the keys from the local key-holder, and then Dragoș received a message to say that the rope for a short traverse had been removed. We met the guardian of the keys, and he and a friend chose to come with us. Dragoș was concerned about their ability, but at least they had some decent equipment. The gate was some way into the cave, and was a complicated double affair with bent bits of metal for keys. The route took us up and down through a series of boulder chokes to a large, well-decorated but dry, chamber, with bear bones at the back. The traverse was next, about 25 m along a deep rift. Fortunately Dragoș had a rope that was long enough, and he had a sufficient number of slings to fasten it to. That took us into the fossil series, which was along beautifully-decorated straight passages – stalagmites, stalactites, columns, curtains – like the OFD Columns several times over.



Entrance to Epuran Cave



Epuran Cave (photo Polytechnic Speleo Club, Cluj Napoca)

It ended in a wet section, still full of stal, that was only tens of metres from another cave, **Peștera Topolnița**, that we visited next.

We drove round the hill and walked down to a river flowing into a huge entrance.



Topolnița entrance



Topolnița exit

We followed the river, in a fine canyon, and when the water got too deep, I said I was not up to swimming, especially back against the current. Then I was told it was a through trip; I hadn't appreciated that fact! So I was given a Daren drum in a bag as a flotation aid, and with a lot of help from Dragoș I floated/swam to the other end. The roof was tremendously high, and the others' Scurions lit up some bats flying way above. We then had a steep walk back up to the car. On the way, I found my jaw ached a lot; throughout the deep water sections Dragoș kept telling me to 'keep calm', and although I thought I was, I must have been really tense.

On Thursday 21st Ian Chandler turned up, involved in the speleo art session. I got a trip to **Peștera Curecea**, led by Valerika, a caver from Bucharest. With us were Anka, from the same Bucharest club, Ira, and Teresa from Brazil, who I'd been in Ukraine with last year. Again we had to drive a long way round to get to the cave. On the way we were shown Peștera Izverna, which had been on the list of visits, but the village mayor had taken the key and was not letting anyone in. The entrance to Curecea was at the bottom of a small doline, and a rope was necessary to get to the bottom, from where a big river tunnel led off in both directions. Going right, we entered a fine phreatic river passage, that didn't go very far before we reached deep water. We returned to the entrance area and followed the left side, which started in the same way, but it got bigger, and well-decorated. It then narrowed, becoming an active river, leading again to deep water; lovely clear water leading off between stal-covered banks. We also encountered bats in this cave: too big to be pipistrelles.

Valerika told me about his diving exploits in the cave next to the nunnery at Tismana. The nuns used to collect water from the cave, but when the river had been dammed, the water level dropped, and they had to go deeper into the cave to get water. I think he was carried away by the idea of nuns in neoprene.

The forum officially started on Friday 22nd.





Sales stands



Poster displays

It was all rather haphazard. The opening ceremony was given after the lectures had already started. The registration documents were distributed well after the event had started. The event banner only appeared on the last day.



Rescue dummy



Forum banner

I went to a few of the lectures, but on Saturday afternoon there was not much going on so I suggested to Ian, and Ira, and Tony Penney, a walk to **Grota cu Haiducilor** (Robber's Cave), up the valley. This was another cave with open access to the public, with lots of 19th century graffiti. There were also bats here, and Oana Chachula (from Bucharest, who I'd met in Brno last year) told me they were the common bent-wing bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*). The bats in the other caves could well have been the same – they looked similar.



Grota cu Haiducilor



Grota cu Haiducilor graffiti



The forum ended in the usual way, with speeches and prizes. Then the closing ‘traditional dinner’ was a farce, probably because the hotel had double-booked, with a wedding reception going on at the same time. There were no tables and chairs set out, and in a room that was just not big enough for up to 200 people. There was only one person doing the serving, so a long queue developed. Some people got so fed up they walked down to the town and ate in a restaurant. Then they got soaked in a thunderstorm on the way back.

Oana had organised a lift back to Bucharest for me, with Valerika and his wife, and we went via Turgu Jiu, where we stopped to look at a couple of sculptures by Brancusi. They took me to Oana’s small flat, where I was grateful to have some floor to sleep on for a couple of nights.

On Monday morning Oana and I went to meet Jean-Pierre and Ira in town, and Oana fixed a back-door visit to the National Museum, which was officially closed on Mondays. After they left, I took a tourist bus, which went to all the major attractions. Quite by chance, I met Ian, who had just arrived in the city, so we went for a couple of beers, then he joined me on the tourist bus. I earned my keep at Oana’s that evening by editing the English of a scientific paper on bats that a friend of hers had written.

On my final morning in Bucharest I took Oana’s advice and visited the Peasant Village Museum before catching the bus to the airport. Then it was back to Heathrow and a coach home.

Prices in Băile Herculane were low – eating and drinking was very cheap. For example, a half-litre of beer cost only about 80p. Bucharest was about twice as expensive. One of the handouts I got from the forum was a catalogue of Romanian caving clubs, so if any of you would like to organise a caving trip there, this booklet has all the contacts.

**Joe Duxbury**

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## ***Charterhouse - by John Cooper***

**Pete Buckley, John Cooper, Pete Hann and Geoff Newton-Saturday 6th September 2014.**

The objective for this trip was to check out the Diesel Duck, Quicksand Chamber and Skeleton Passage area to see the effect of the high water of the past couple of years. A steady entry through the Old Cave and the 2008 Series saw us at the syphon for Portal Pool in fifty minutes. We started the syphon going, probably not required but we gave it 15 minutes before we went through. Diesel Duck had about 30 cm of airspace through it and the water level was constant along the recently dug out channel through the remains of the dam. I used the first entry to Quicksand Chamber and found the water was right up to the near side in a big arc and the second entrance was completely sumped. We continued on to Skeleton Passage, the first time for Pete B and Geoff. I had forgotten that the small tube at the top has to be done feet first so Pete B reversed out to calm himself down whilst I went in feet first. The tube gradually slopes over into a vertical rift but is too small for most people to turn over before descending it. The place hadn’t got any better since my last visit and the final mud floor looked virgin. Eventually we got to the pitch which I rigged to the in-situ hanger with a 6m ladder leaving the tackle sack and food boxes at the top. At the bottom of the pitch the up cave passage was sumped immediately. We all went down cave to the static sump at the end, passing one of Ali’s purple buckets wedged in an undercut on the right. This had originally been left at Diesel Duck and has been washed through by floods! I felt about in the end sump with my legs and it seemed open and large enough underwater for a diver. I had carried in a 2.5 kg lead weight which I left on the right hand wall just down cave of the pitch. Back up the pitch and packed everything away. I think Geoff was starting to tire on the climb back up the rift into the small tube. On our way out Pete H tried to take some photos of the Diesel Duck area but it was rather misted up so I don’t think they will appear in print anywhere. We washed off at the usual place just upstream of The Crossing, except for Geoff who wasn’t wearing a wet suit. Portal Pool had drained nicely and we stopped at Frozen Cascade for a chocolate break. From here we made slow progress out as Geoff was very tired and he was having problems with his knees. We took twice as long to get out from here as it did to get in. I don’t think anyone wants to help divers carry in gear via the high level route into Skeleton! There is an alternative which is to dive the connecting sump between Quicksand Chamber and Skeleton Passage. I did that once when it was low and had an airspace through. On today’s trip I carried a tackle sack with ladder and food boxes for the whole trip and the lead weight just inwards. Out after a 5¼ hour trip.

# Caving with a Sexy Russian *Nick Chipchase*



more metres of well decorated cave somewhere up there. Shatter cave does not even reach the Black Rock limestone so its end is still a long way from the shales boundary. The final passage in Shatter is large and fault controlled heading into a big choke. A low passage leads off to the right ending in more chokes and scalloped passage. I seem to remember draughting here from visits back in the late 60's and early 70's. We did a bit of digging there back then but not much only discovering a high level roof passage. Today greater conservation controls would have to be exercised.

I also looked at a very old dig of mine in WL cave. Recently resurrected, it's a low passage leading east off Hammer and Chisel Rifts. I could not detect any draught there. Lots of work in progress though. Nat enjoyed the thrutching through the horrible choke up there. An enjoyable day all round and thanks to Laura and Nat for the support.

Photos by Nick Chipchase.

My good friend Laura had promised me a drop dead sexy Russian model for the trip. Yea, Yea - Cant fool me Laura.

Heck she did. Up draws this gorgeous creature in an open top Boxster. All harassed and longing for a freshen up after a three hour drive from Guildford. Er , sorry only woods around here. She dons a figure hugging wet suit me hoping she will get far too hot in it. No such luck. She has to get back to Guildford the same day so it will have to be another photo bomb trip and hope that something comes out. ( Photos I mean ). Final tally 70 out of 200 in five hours and the slave flash worked every time. My model was called Natalia, hence forth Nat. She was very camera conscious and snapped into a pose the minute the camera came out. Ooo er. I'm not used to such stuff. I also wanted to do an inspection trip to the end of the cave and check for draughts. Nat was an expert climber and had done some caving and scuba diving. It all went pretty well. Nat allowing me to position her long braided hair in the shots. When she came out it all undid and flowed down to her waist. I was too scared to ask for more photos. The crawl below the Plug Hole was draughting well signifying unexplored cave somewhere beyond the terminal chokes. A similiar draught hammers through the old Cerberus dig beyond Jonathan's Chamber in Withyhill Cave. Perhaps the two sections are linked. Some smoke testing definitely required now the easy use canisters are available. In any case there should be a good few





# Neverland - Upper Flood *Nick Chipchase*

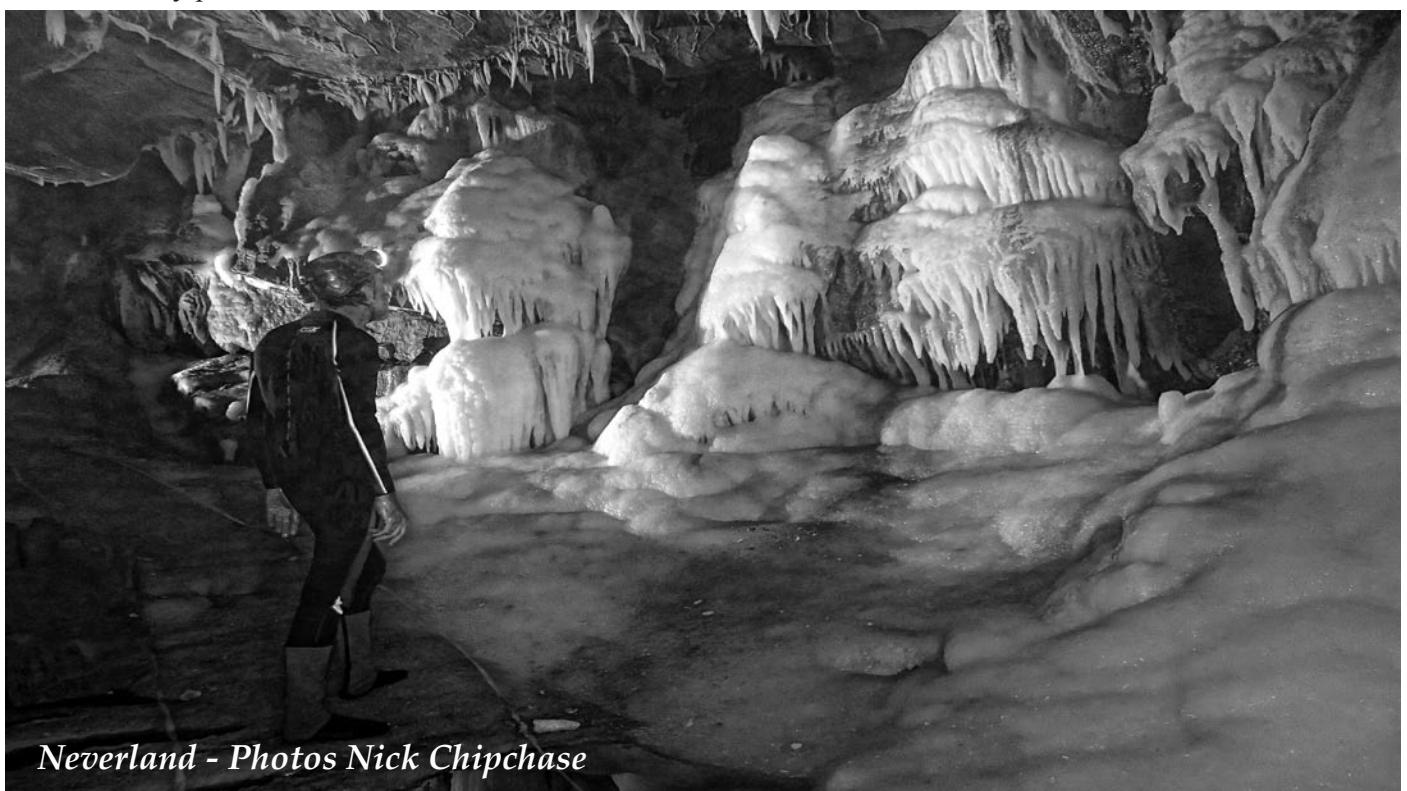
Well I admit to putting this trip off. Getting old and crooked now a bit. Horror stories of endless crawling and tortuous chokes abound.

Well me and old Nigel thought OK now or never to Neverland. First find the most kindly and sympathetic cave leader known to man. Yup enter Mr Christopher Binding . Er perhaps we could do it in stages Chris and see how we go. Yup agreed. Pull out any time. Suggest no cameras to save time. ( er ). Yup too says Nigel no hanging around taking photos. A seven hour trip in that case says Mr B. Mr B. advises on kit. Darn I have to buy a 4mm wet suit. It was perfect for the wet parts of the trip with an oversuit on top. Also necessary for the de kit at Neverland. The camera? Ah yes that went in my tiny peli box disguised as a pickle sandwich. Also got in a flash gun and firefly slave. Mr B. carried my box most of the way secretly denying me the use of the camera. Ha ha. That didn't work.

We made good time down the cave. (See Mendip Underground for description) Crawling not too bad. Lavatory Pan not too full. Choke indeed tortuous in places but the ever kindly Mr B. showed exactly how to do it. Now that made a huge amount of difference. If you dont know ask then you don't end up tied in a knot. Cave passage superb. Bedding at 5 degrees through the limestone shales until limestone proper is met. Lots of hanging stal and blocks suggesting wet dry phases of activity. The new Neverland by pass was a bit tortuous but gains a large chamber with pools in which to de kit for the "Neverland Experience". Huge mistake. Forgot wet suit booties and had to do it in socks. Ooo my poor tootsies.

Well the " non photo trip " turned out well. All the Neverland stuff was on the move and done in twenty minutes. 120 photobombs giving 35 good images. Well I usually do it that way anyway. You cannot fail in this passage. So much stuff. Perhaps the best decorated passage on Mendip. White out! Not possible to light the " Pork Pies " in a hurry now that the passage is taped. Just squeezed them in though.

Stretching out the survey Neverland looks to be about a mile into Upper Flood Swallet. Mostly easy going except the choke and entrance crawls. We got out in under six hours. Not bad for two old crocks with one taking photos. Could not have achieved that without our esteemed leader though. I offer him our esteemed thanks for his fortitude and patience.



*Neverland - Photos Nick Chipchase*

# Another small find in Agen Allwedd

It was way back in about 1992 that I had a conversation with John Parker, he said that he had climbed up in Southern Stream into about 200m of passage. This was between 200 and 400m upstream of Waterfall Chamber. During my many traverses of Southern Stream, I kept an eye open for this climb and I soon identified one that led to a squeeze almost immediately upstream but a passable but small rock tube in the downstream direction.

This is how the position remained until I started on the redrawing of Agen Allwedd. In February 2010, I went on a solo trip to see if I could find anything else in the area. This led to the discovery of a second climb up. This was more exposed but did reach a larger section of passage. This was followed upstream towards the other climb but reduced in size. Downstream acquired a solid floor and passed a fault before I gave up at another tight squeeze. I started to get the survey gear out, but thought that this passage would be very hard to survey solo.

This passage would be interesting as it is about 100m upstream of the Waterfall, so if there was about 200m of passage, then it should intersect the fault that crosses at Waterfall Chamber. A dig on this fault may make a reasonable find. The fluting in Waterfall Chamber has suggested to me that there must be something above this chamber, but how much?

On the 2 August 2014, Mike Read and I decided that the 15mm of rain over Friday night may have mucked up the water levels to do the top part of Flood Passage. After a bit of thought, we opted for Southern Stream, with the plan of doing the high level passage mentioned above, and then finish the day with a resurvey of High Traverse Passage. Water levels were still very low, the ground must have soaked all the rain up, rather than being so dry, that it all ran off. We had a steady trip in, picking up a crowbar, just in case we find a choke to have a go at. We reached the first climb up and Mike was soon passed the squeeze and awkward bend in the upstream direction. As he had to move a few loose rocks, it seems we were already in new passage. This passage had cracks in the floor to view the stream below in places. On the whole it followed the course of the streamway but uncomfortable going. The passage shape was a vertical oval with a pointed top and bottom. This point at its base was so narrow that it squeezed the sides of the knee, which is painful. It eventually has a couple more squeezes before splitting and getting too small after 50m of new stuff. In the downstream direction from the climb up, was still this nasty shaped passage with many small scallops on the walls. Being slightly larger it was easier going and had a solid floor for most of its length. Again a squeezezy rift was followed by a tight bend and squeeze where the passage seemed



*Southern Streamway*



to be splitting up. After a couple of attempts at the corner we left a survey mark and made our way back to the stream.

At the next climb up, we headed in the upstream direction towards the previous climb. It was easier going and we soon found the survey station we had just left. Mike then past the squeeze to complete the circuit, while I chose to return along the knee wrecking passage. This loop was 128m, containing 40 legs with an error of 0.34% (or 1cm per leg). Considering the type of passage this high level is, we are pleased it is still well within the BCRA grade 5 standard.

Once reunited, we continued the survey towards Waterfall Chamber. The going was now solid floored with the streamway out of earshot for most of it. It was still small but occasionally we could stand/crouch. We past a fault, which I had also picked up in the streamway survey. Unfortunately there had not been much development on this fracture, so we continued and hoped for something better on the waterfall fault. We reached the place I had been to previously, a standing point with a crack in the floor which kept threatening to eat equipment as we needed to rearrange stuff to get through the next squeeze. I made it on my second or third attempt but what followed was worse for me. Mike being slightly slimmer was able to shuffle vertically along the rift and round the tight bend. For me the rift was too tight so I approached, feet first at an angle, but then my legs would not go round the bend. This seems to be the previous limit of exploration as Mike could not find any signs of a visitor beyond. There was the odd bat poo in many places in these high levels. Mike continued the survey for another 25m to reach another squeeze.

Mike had had enough of small places that day and he could see forward for 2-3m before it turned left. The lower part of the passage was too narrow but it was slightly larger at the top, however it did slope down hill and there was no signs of being able to turn around. It did not look to hopeful as the height was increasing and Mike recalled that it would at the very least be a real struggle but he certainly did not completely rule it out.

In the mean time, I was having fun reversing the previous squeeze as I had used gravity to help me get though it. Pushing back up through it was altogether a lot more work, and not dropping stuff down the floor crack to boot. Mike returned and we double checked a couple of legs through the squeezes, before heading back to the huge passage called Southern Stream.

Even though I had dragged a crowbar all day we never used it once, nearly lost it several times in floor cracks but the choke on the waterfall

fault eluded us. We had been some 7 to 8 hours crawling in high levels, no time to go to High Traverse now. We exited after 11 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hr trip.

The survey now shows the end squeeze is only about 6m from the fault (if it is in the vertical plain). Sound of water can be heard at the end, so we will look to see if there are any climbs up to high level in Waterfall Chamber. I had done one previously that seemed to get too small but it may be useful to have a fresh look at it now we know about the high level passage.

So in conclusion, John Parker may have over estimated the distance upstream from the waterfall but got the length about right at 200m instead of the 150m that we surveyed. To this we added another 75m. The name needed to be descriptive and we had various words to juggle to get the name: Southern, Upper, Middle and Lower. So it is Upper Lower Southern Stream Passage.

At the upstream end it is only about 2m above the streamway but slowly increases this distance as the streamway falls faster. This enables it to get a solid floor and meander off route, until it is some 7m above the streamway. The end squeeze is in an intriguing place with the fault so close by. More to follow ??

## John Stevens



*Waterfall Chamber*

## CSS Meets List 2014- 2015

*By Paul Tarrant-Meets Secretary*

This year's Meets List includes details of other events that CSS members may wish to participate in. Apart from Hidden Earth, rescue practices held by SMWCRT, and the NAMHO conference and associated field trips are listed as members may be interested in these events

26/9 - Hidden Earth Leek.

4/10 - SMWCRT rescue practice 'Wargames' at Penwyllt.

17-19th/10 Peak Cavern  
staying at TSG hut at Castleton

1/11 - Bonfire Party at Whitewalls.  
Bats and fireworks.

6/12 - Curry evening.  
Whitewalls. Caving in the local caves or a trip over to OFD to participate in the SMWCRT rescue practice in OFD.

24/1/15- Annual Dinner -The Bear and AGM on the Sunday

21/2/15 - Whisky Evening

Mike Read is prepared to arrange a w/e in Dorset, dates TBA.

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## MINES WEEKEND

Richard Dewsnap and Stuart France are thinking of visiting Bryneglwys Slate Mine near Abergynolwyn and also the Corris area on some weekend in October. Bryneglwys is on the list of NRW sites to be covered by the forthcoming national access licence so essentially we are making a reconnaissance trip to underpin a site access management plan. This mine was worked in the Victorian era mainly and has underground chambers with abandoned equipment, deep shafts (30m or so), a river running through it to a drainage adit which is chest deep in water, so I am told. Taking a good selection of gear including SRT and a wetsuit seems advisable as I'm not sure what to expect, not having seen these workings before.

As there are no club huts in this area that we know of, we are thinking of B&B or the bunkhouse at Corris if it is open to individuals rather than groups, or simply camp if we pick a period of settled weather. Anyone interested, please contact us. I will leave a couple of interesting mining history books in the Whitewalls library for reference, but please do not take them off the premises as we want them to be available for this trip.

## Reservoir Hole Update

*By Nick Chipchase*

22.07.14.

Four to Skyfall. New tactics now required. Mud is brought down from the dig in a skip and put into a large bag. Three skips per bag. The bags are tied up and dropped down the ladder pitch where they are used to build retaining walls in the steeply sloping rift passage. Ten bags dropped today so that's 30 skip loads. Another end on slab in view.

05.07.14

Two to Skyfall to demolish the slab. One at The Silo to inspect proceedings. The Silo has been dug downwards for three metres or so following the water. Sadly the bottom is now bed rock. Talk of "The Silo Plan B Dig". That requires opening up the choke on the upstream side of the gorge just below Happy Snappers to see if any passage heads that way.

12.08.14

Three to Skyfall carrying in a ladder section. Only a part of the slab in the roof was removed. Another 11 bags filled and dropped down the pitch together with several rocks and boulders. Sadly some idiot ( ahem ) breaks a rung on the ladder. Visitors beware as its near the top. Slab still hanging out of the roof but a change seems imminent in the fill. It seems dryer now with more rocks and scrappy stal in view. A slight upward draught detected. Nice layered stal deposit removed and sent for dating. Everything left tidy with two retaining walls now built in the rift. Smoke test and hopefully slab removal next time.

26.08.14

Nigel our engineer is off with a bad back so just two to "The Silo Plan B Dig". The roof scaffolded securely ( ? ) and a hole made in the choke opening up a view to the far wall of the passage about a metre in. For the moment it seems to be bending away up gorge.

Nick Chipchase.



*Bag dropping at Skyfall*



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## Cottage Bookings

17/10/2014 Bristol EC ( 10 bunks)



*Send in your trip report  
with pictures, the CSS  
Newsletter is a great place  
to tell your story. Old  
or new we'd love to read*

# *Neverland - Upper Flood*

*Photography - Nick Chipchase*

