

# CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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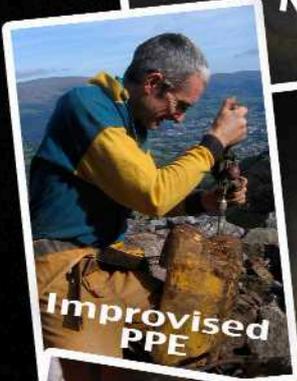
Strange Men with Masks



Search for a Cure

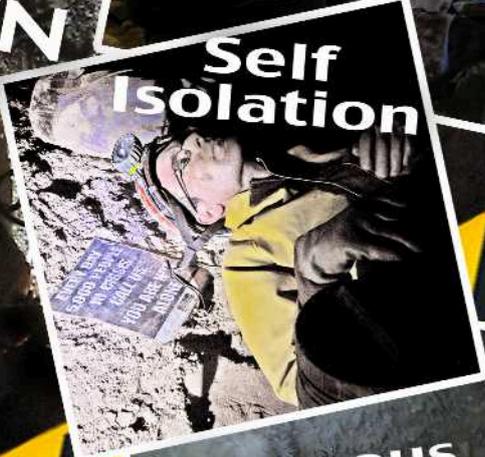


Dedicated Research



Improvised PPE

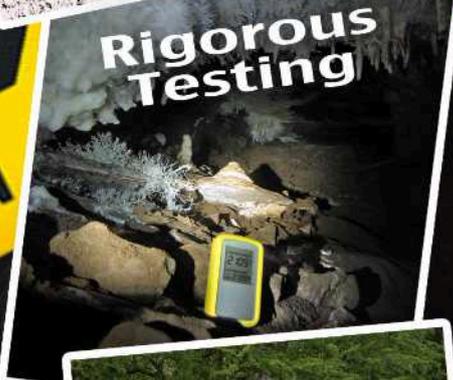
LOCKDOWN EDITION!



Self Isolation



Cabin Fever



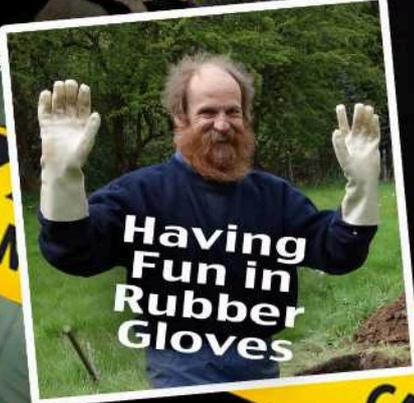
Rigorous Testing



Self-screening Hysteria



Getting ready for Post-Lockdown



Having Fun in Rubber Gloves





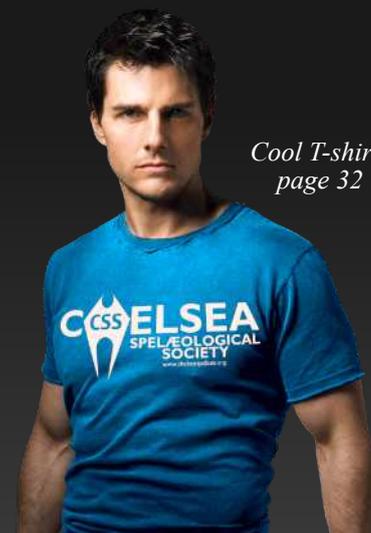
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Front cover design by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley

Above: Photo by John Stevens

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Cool T-shirts  
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## Whitewalls Access

Once lockdown restrictions are sufficiently eased we will be able to allow limited use of use of Whitewalls in compliance with social distancing requirements. If you are planning a visit it is essential that you contact the hut warden John Stevens ([hut.warden@chelseaspelaeo.org](mailto:hut.warden@chelseaspelaeo.org)) in advance to ensure that space will be available – and that goes for camping in the garden as well as staying in the cottage. Whitewalls will be available for use by members only while these restrictions are in place. Details of the current access arrangements are available on the CSS website and will be updated as the situation changes.

**Editorial** Despite lockdown restrictions preventing caving activities for the last three months we are proud to present another fun and feature packed issue for you. Thanks to everyone who sent us material.

Please submit all items for publication in this newsletter to [cssmattv@gmail.com](mailto:cssmattv@gmail.com)

Remember that as well as trip reports we welcome items of news or general interest, gear and literature reviews, technical/scientific articles, historical accounts and reminiscences, fun stuff, entertaining stories, and anything else you can come up with. Send high resolution photos in JPG or TIF format. For very large files or collections of items upload them to Dropbox or Google Drive and send me a public shared link to the folder, or ZIP them up and send via MailBigFile.

A **FULL COLOUR** electronic version of this newsletter is available to download from the members area of the club website, the Facebook group and the club forum. Also, if you would prefer to go paperless and receive electronic copies of the newsletter by email in future let me know.

*Editors: Matt and Mandy Voysey*

# SMWCRT Update

*by Tom Foord*

## Fundraising Appeal

As part of our 2020 modernisation program we are upgrading our radios and incident control equipment, as well as replacing our stretchers. Unfortunately, our expected funding has been diverted to COVID-19 causes, leaving the team with a shortfall of £15,000 in our finances to cover the cost of these essential purchases.

Our existing stretchers are currently over 10 years old and need replacing. The new stretchers have been developed with our input to give improved functionality. The switch to digital radios will allow for improved communications during a rescue and integration with other Teams and emergency services. Digital incident control will make our base of operations mobile, allowing access to SARCALL and online resources from anywhere.

We have just launched a Fundraising Appeal which includes a crowdfunding campaign to raise the money required and have already raised over £6,000. We are asking for your support to help us reach our target.

If you feel you would like to make a donation then you can do so via the website [www.smwcrt.org](http://www.smwcrt.org). Every contribution, whatever it may be, will make a difference.

## Changes to Rescue Team Operations

Historically, SMWCRT has been able to temporarily 'co-opt' non-team members onto the team for the duration of an incident or training exercise. This has allowed us to make use of experienced cavers who happen to be at the scene and willing to help, or to give prospective new team members a taste of a rescue practice before they actually commit to joining the team. These 'co-opted' individuals would then be fully covered by the relevant insurance policies for the duration of the specific rescue or exercise they were co-opted for.

Unfortunately, as a result of some recent changes to insurance cover for Cave Rescue, which is provided by Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW), we have been advised that the insurer will now only provide cover for individuals who are current members of an MREW/BCRC affiliated Cave Rescue Team.

The result of this is that with immediate effect, SMWCRT can only deploy an individual on a rescue or training event, either underground or on the surface, if that individual is either a current Team Member or Probationary Team Member of SMWCRT, or a member of another MREW/BCRC affiliated Cave Rescue Team.\*

We are working closely with the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) to navigate a way through the implications of these changes and others related to insurance, and I will let you know if there are any further updates. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

*\* There are two exceptions to this situation which apply for the purposes of training exercises:*

- 1. The 'casualty' on a cave rescue practice does not have to be a team member.*
- 2. Surface-based 'observers' are permitted from outside the team. However, these must take no active role in the exercise, and would likely be limited to one or two observers agreed in advance, rather than being open to general non-team members.*

## Membership

### Current rates:

**Full: £30, Joint: £40**, plus BCA subscription per person of £17 for cavers or £6 for non-cavers.

**Associate: £18** to receive publications, plus £6 for BCA non-caver insurance.

**Provisional: £10** for any 6 months plus BCA active caver insurance to Dec 31<sup>st</sup> at £4.25 per quarter.

Members who have BCA membership via another club need not pay twice but should reference their BCA number and membership club with their payment. Full membership information and an application form can be downloaded from the CSS website [www.chelseaspelaeo.org](http://www.chelseaspelaeo.org)

Please send all subscriptions to:

Andy Heath, 28 Brookfield Road, East Budleigh, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 7EL.

Email [csstreasurer@chelseaspelaeo.org](mailto:csstreasurer@chelseaspelaeo.org)

# Ogof Ffynnon Ddu II

Saturday 22 February 2020

Joe Duxbury, Helen Pemberton, Paul Tarrant.

by Joe Duxbury

This was a gentle examination of less-travelled areas of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. Although such trips are not particularly outstanding, they deserve to be written up as a record of the club's activities.

We agreed to Paul's first suggestion of looking at some cave pearls in The Bedding Chambers. Paul put a rope down the steep slope of Speedy Caver climb, which was useful to use. Then we wandered along this upper passage, keeping clear of the huge drops off to the left. There are several areas with attractive formations along the way, and Helen took the occasional photograph. I have to say, the cave pearls, when we got to them, were not that impressive. Never mind. Back at the top of Speedy Caver, we continued across to passages I've never been to. After going through a hole between boulders, we popped out in a chamber I recognised, being on the route from The Mini Columns back to The Brickyard. Seeing as we were there, we took a look at the Mini Columns for Helen to photograph.

Then we made our way back to the usual entrance route, where I persuaded the others to try and find an alternative exit route. Usually, when you get to the Wedding Cake, you carry on to the left to the top of Gnome Passage. But you can go right, towards the top of Arete Chamber, and turn off left somewhere. It was that 'somewhere' that I wanted to find.

The left turn is just before Arete Chamber, and we followed this to a T-junction, which Paul and I recognised. You turn left again towards Big Chamber, and usually traverse above a rift. But it's actually a lot easier to drop into the rift and simply walk along the bottom. The climb up at the end is only small. And then we continued across Big Chamber and out, heading for Penwyllt and tea!

*Photos by Helen Pemberton*



## CHELSEA T-Shirts

by Mel Reid

Please let me know via email or the forum if you would like to order the new CSS t-shirt, giving size and colour. Helen has put a size chart and colour list on the forum and facebook page. The cost is £8.50 including P&P (for mainland Britain), but anyone lucky enough to get it by hand will pay £8. Payment should be done electronically to the club account and MUST be referenced as T-Shirt plus your name. The treasurer prefers this method. Anyone wanting to pay in cash or cheque will need to email me.

Thank you to everyone who has already paid. Please let Mel know if your address is different from the CSS members list. There are a few extra shirts coming in this batch and we can order extras if anyone wants a particular size and colour.

So if you would like to look as cool as Tom Cruise (pictured on contents page) contact Mel ([melrei@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:melrei@hotmail.co.uk))

# Caving Hot Pants

by Charles Bailey

Mark's article on caving briefs in the last CSS newsletter caused much merriment in the Bailey household. It also prompted a memory. Just before the first time I met Mark (at The Restaurant in Daren) around 1990, Huw Durban and myself had an intrepid two person camp there. Daren regulars will tell you that you never forget your first camp, and this was definitely true for me. Notable from this trip were –

**A.** Huw's carbide light going into 'full blow torch mode' when he lit it just after the entrance crawl. 30 seconds at maximum blast and that was Huw's carbide supply gone. The rest of the trip was done on a Petzl gloom.

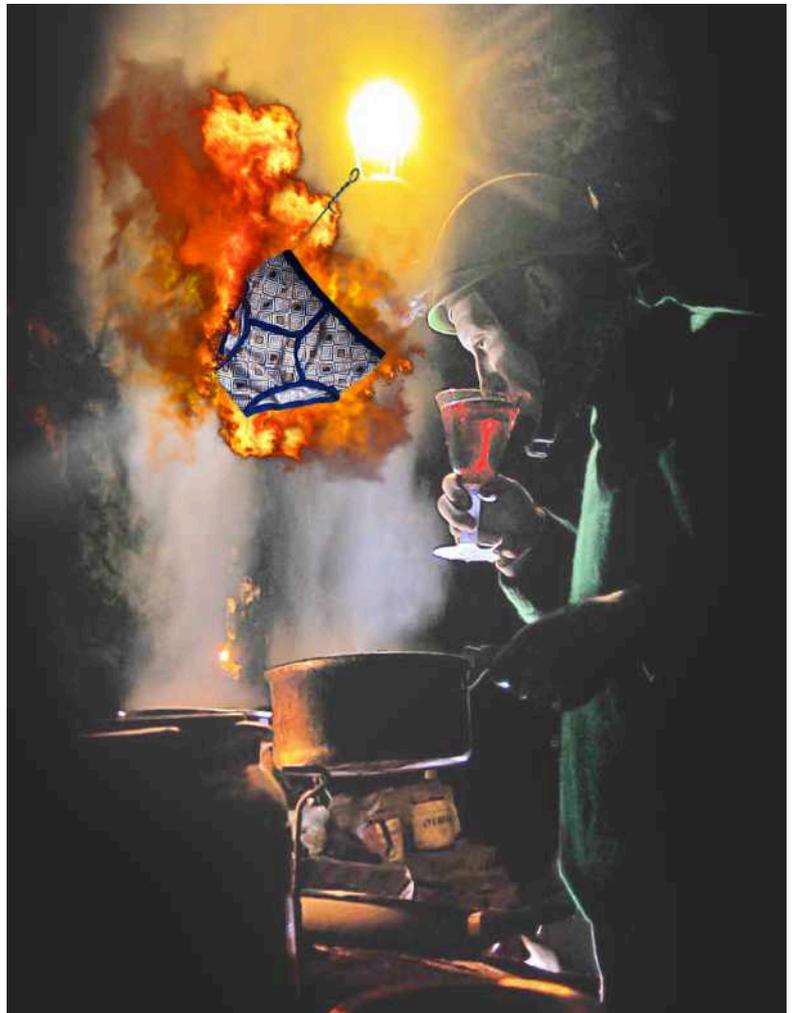
**B.** Despite having four timepieces between us, they were all telling a different time having gone through the Time Machine. Spooky? No, just useless!

**C.** Working from a sketch survey from Andy Cave, I pushed through what I thought was a tight squeeze into a final chamber in Dweebland. Unfortunately, I'd already passed the final squeeze and this was a dig beyond. With no chance of reversing, and no room to turn around, things looked grim – including for Huw who would have faced a solo trip out with a feeble light to get help, and a return trip as guide. Tediously, moving spoil around from one place to another I effected the slowest 180 degree turn in history and emerged over an hour later.

**D.** With the customary good soaking just before The Restaurant, I thought it'd be a good idea to dry my wet 'caving' undies in an alcove above the tilley lamp. As a tilley novice in those days, I didn't quite understand how hot they got, and how combustible nylon underpants can be when they're dry. That was a cue for toxic fumes at REU, burnt bits of nylon, and commando caving.

The smell lingered, and this was non-human for a change – my Daren cooking was yet to hit those highlights. The remnants almost went on display in Brent Durban's caving shop, but common decency prevailed.

Boys will be boys! Happy days though.



*Artists impression based on photo by Gonzo*

## CSS Virtual Pub Meets

Though we are currently not able to have official club meets, the drinking and social banter still continues on the weekly virtual socials

using Zoom. All you need is a computer/laptop/tablet/smartphone, plus your tipples of choice to join the fun at 8pm every Tuesday. See the CSS message board, members facebook page or contact Helen for further details.



# Caving Replacement Therapy

by Helen Pemberton

There's quite a few things I miss about caving weekends during lockdown. Obviously, there's the actual caving. There's the people, the laughs and random chat, my friends being rude to me, even the snoring and bad air in the bunkrooms. The other night I dug out my collection of rocks (I know I am not the only caver/mine explorer to have a rock collection, I promise I have seen other people's collections, there are more weird nerds out there than just me). It was a little trip across a few countries and "several" years, involving a few ponderings about my sanity and hand luggage weight allowances, and many memories of being in the dark. I miss the dark. Although I am very lucky where we live, it still cannot match that inky, velvet blackness of waking up in a cave, especially when there are no other people with torches, lanterns or dancing cocks to wake you up.

I live near a track leading to the Kennet and Avon canal, and the track and towpath is busier than ever, and being a grumpy old bat, I just want to prod people into the canal with a sharpened snooker cue. However, I have discovered not-caving is a much better plan. The grockles all seem to have to go home and watch whatever dross is on TV in the evening, leaving the local lakes, towpaths and woodland empty. The local lakes can have some rather "interesting" characters visit after dark in normal times, but places that bit further afield are too much effort for them to get to.

Not-caving involves a quick shuffle down the track, to the stream and the beech trees where Bert and Ernie the pipistrelle bats live, then through the reedbeds. To form reedbeds, the reeds need their roots constantly under water to thrive. It's a low-lying floodplain area and is fed by wonderful clear water from local chalk streams with trout in, and we have rare demousin snails in the reeds. The bats roosting in houses on the edge of town use this area to get to their feeding grounds, and there are some very weird sounding birds. You can often see cormorants flying to their roost sites at dusk, and listen to the honking geese and the squark-bird regularly interrupting the dusk peace. The reedbeds are not quiet at dusk, but there are no people. As the moon rises, the temperature drops and you walk through pockets of cold, damp air. It's quite similar to the cold damp air of caves. When you have been in Daren for a while, you really notice the air change on your way out, you can smell and taste the outside world from a few hundred metres away. It's the reverse leaving home – within a few hundred metres of small-town residential sprawl, you can stand in pockets of cold damp air, you

can smell the clean-ness, and watch the bats or celestial goings-on in the open skies.

A quick scuttle further along brings you to the canal, railway and river Lambourne junction, where you can watch the daubenton bats feed over the water if it's still enough, or watch them and the pipistrelles forage amongst the trees. Crossing the canal takes you across floodplains and rough grazing with more open skies, then following a farm track takes you up and away from the floodplains and towards ancient woodland. The track is enclosed by trees on both sides, and is a key navigation route for many bats. The air is cold, it is very dark, and you can hear the gentle trickle of the stream beside you. If you stand still, you can almost feel the air move as bats whizz past you.

At the top of the hill, you can enter the lush darkness of the woodland, after navigating the posh house with the very noisy and quite huge dogs. The twinkles of lights from the posh houses and the town in the distance are soon hidden by the thickness of the ancient oaks, ashes and towering "fern tree", filled in with some thick hazel coppice and a heavily scented carpet of bluebells, violets and periwinkles. It smells so much better than rank caving kit, yesterday's beer, this morning's coffee and recent farts, which is what caving can too often smell like.

The change in habitat means there are many soprano pipistrelle bats, plus some brown long eared bats, and they are continuing to fly until late into the night at the moment. You may see them flit amongst the trees, and using a bat detector, you can hear them crackle crackle fart chop around, navigating the branches. Some of their calls sound like a ball has bounced off a pool table and is bouncing down a corridor. With a bat detector on, the woods are not quiet. Soprano pipistrelles are very similar to common pipistrelles, and were only formally recognised as a separate species a few years ago. In this wood, we do not tend to find the common pips, although we may have some hybrids.

After a short while in the darkness, and once your eyes have adjusted, you begin to see what's around you. Very similar to caves. Entering OFD top entrance I always find my eyes take a while to adjust, and it's the same entering a wood at night. After a while you can see all the tree trunks looming, the fungi coating the bark glints at you in the same way calcite reflects the light of your torch, and can play tricks with your mind. As can the lights from the posh houses on the perimeter of the woods, or reflectors on fence posts

The woodland nestles atop several shallow valleys

with tiny streams flowing through, and has been managed to provide dense tree cover mixed with open rides with small ponds for all sorts of wildlife to thrive. Turning up one of the open rides, the dark skies and new moon mean the view of the stars is wonderful – like looking at impressive and very ancient cave formations. It's a view looking back into thousands of years of history right in front of you. The realisation that there is a pair of eyes watching you from the depths of the undergrowth, and the knowledge of where the badger setts are, made me want to loiter somewhere else. Badgers have big teeth and are not always shy. The deer normally spot you and turn and move away during daylight hours. The foxes normally spot you and jauntily trot on, pretending they don't care you are there. These eyes just kept watching me. I climbed the next ridge and headed into the tarmacked tracked area of the woods - a hangover from the cold war era where the wood was used as an ammunition store – it neighbours Greenham Common. These tracks are always very busy with dog walkers, and if you see nobody in the woodland, you will always see somebody on the tarmac route. It's accessible for wheelchairs and mobility scooters and is really popular. I normally take deer tracks to cut out this section – but after dark, not a soul there except deer. The habitat in that small section is less inviting to bats, but is known for snakes and lizards basking on warm days, and I know where to find deer just off the well-trodden

paths even on busy days.

More ups and downs as the tracks cut up and down the ridges



and the valleys, more pockets of velvet blackness and open rides lit by twinkling stars and the dim orange light of the new moon. More bright eyes lit up in the undergrowth. Most likely deer that do not think to turn and move away, but possibly one of the resident foxes. More rustling sounds in the undergrowth – perhaps a disturbed dormouse or other small creature, and some larger rustling noises from the tops of the trees as the owls or buzzards are awoken and decide to move trees.

Following main tracks, I head back down the crest of the hill, back down bat alley (where thankfully biggest guard doggo is asleep) then back over the reedbeds towards home. The squawk-bird who is very vocal at dusk has been replaced by several birds with a far more beautiful song. The constellations have all moved in the few hours I've been out, so more to stop and look at.

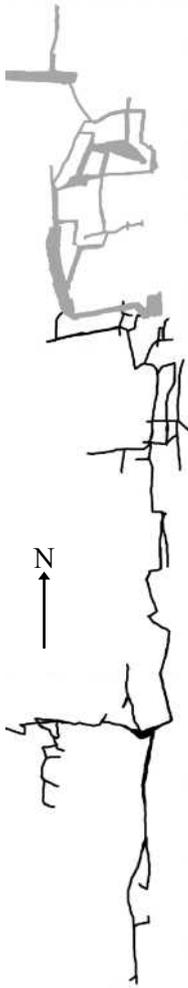
I realise I have come to know these woods better than I know Daren or Aggy these days. I can navigate the twists and turns and forking junctions without thinking, and can pinpoint individual trees from my window back home. The tree roots and knobbls in the pathways have become like the stones in the Aggy entrance, the fallen trees to climb over or under similar small obstacles.

It's not an ideal replacement for caving, but it's about the best replacement there is at the moment. If you want a bit more misery, just drop your coat in a big puddle or crawl around in the boggy streamy areas. Go out in the rain. If any of you have a local wood, you should seriously go and loiter in it in the middle of the night. Just don't get freaked out by any of the creatures of the night you may meet while you are there.

Note: a fern tree is one of them where the leaves don't fall off in winter – but I forget the word. A bit like a massive lanky Christmas tree but with no tinsel. They tower above most of the other trees.

# The Secret Extension to Ogof Dan y Lleuad Wen

by Paul Tarrant



This remotely situated cave, on the north side of Foel Fraith on Mynydd Du (Black Mountain) at around 580m altitude, provided much enjoyment to my friends Nig and Mary Rogers, the Garimpeiros Caving Club and myself between 2004 – 2010. This is a retrospective account of the discovery and exploration of the 700m extension made during those years and which I can recall from a fading memory.

The original cave was discovered in 1991 by Mark Withers and members of ISCA CC and Amman Valley Caving Club, who pushed the cave to 450m length, making it the second longest cave to Ogof Pwll Swnd in the western sector of Mynydd Du. The cave itself was good, having passage you could largely walk along plus pleasant formations making it an attractive place to visit if you were happy to make the 45min walk in, carrying gear from Herbert's Quarry near to the mining town of Brynaman.

Nig Rogers and I did trips during the 90s in Ogof Dan y Lleuad Wen (Cave

Under a White Moon) looking at possible leads but we were not successful in finding anything significant, although we found an isolated section of rift passage that went for about 20m. We had a very dramatic moment whilst exploring a passage below the Lon Drury pitch near to the entrance passage when something very big collapsed behind us whilst we were digging beyond a tight rift passage. Initial thoughts that we were going to have to be dug out proved baseless when on retreating, we saw zero evidence of the calamitous collapse we had just heard rumbling for the better part of 10 seconds behind us. There is possibly a lateral shaft nearby that needs to be looked for as to my knowledge, no one has ever been back to investigate.

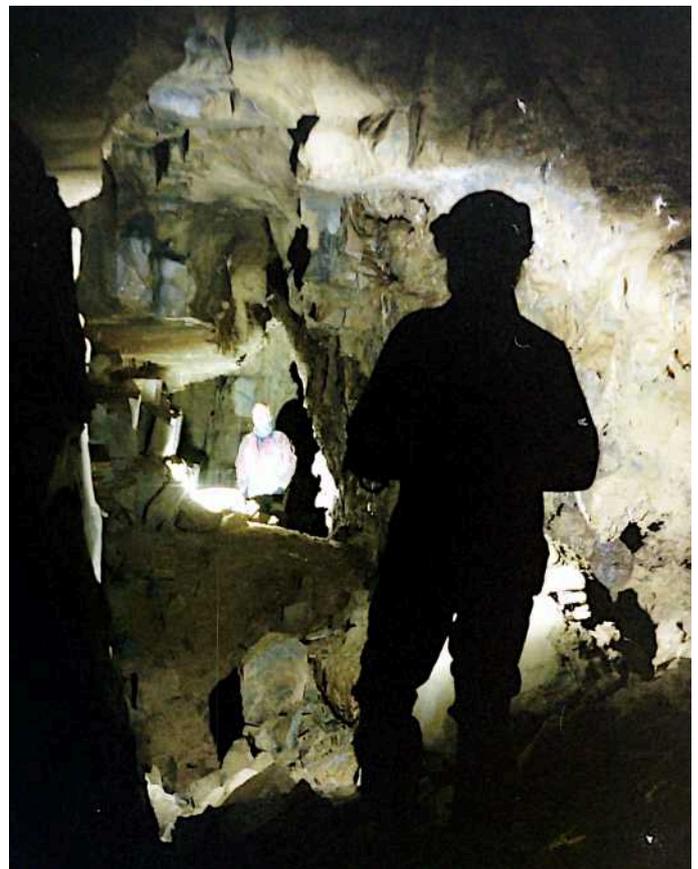
Time and circumstances were to dictate that we would not revisit ODYLW as Nig broke through at the end of Southern Discomfort Passage in Ogof Carno, eventually finding over 2km of new passage, whilst I took a two year break from life in Wales when I went to work in Luxembourg and Edinburgh in 1993. Then there was the small matter of Ogof Draenen, which consumed much time with Nig finding Underworld Series (along with Stuart France), named after a popular PC game of the time, and lots of other stuff such as Last Sandwich and

Galeria Garimpeiros.

Caving went on the back burner for six years due to me studying for a part time degree at Swansea Uni in 2002. One day, Nig invited me to the cave with a promise that 'We're definitely going to find new open passage' and it was this promise that had me push my books aside and pack my caving gear!

Saturday 23/5/2004 was a fine day for the long walk over to the cave. We descended the entrance which led to the slightly constricted passage before the 7m ladder pitch dropped into the large main passage. We followed the main series to the end where a high rock arch exists by a large choke. The point Nig was digging was just back from the choke and in a low rock filled chamber on the right when looking towards the rock arch. Some of these boulders had been moved and a constricted draughting hole could be seen.

Nig started going through whilst relaying explicit instructions on how to negotiate the choke and what not to touch! I tried my best to push through but was distinctly put off by the small dimensions and the collapsing nature of the roof which seemed to consist mainly of loose gravel and loose shale stuff. I was unable to get through, which earned me Nig's admonishments and warnings on how I was going to miss out on the second trip of a lifetime (I was present at his first



Above: Line survey with the extension shown in black

breakthrough trip in Carno, but declined to climb the traverse over the sump due to the lateness of the hour on the then New Year's Eve). With the state of the roof I suspected that the 'lifetime' could indeed be short and so let Mary go through, and after wishing them both 'Good Luck', I made for the entrance.

I later learned that Nig and Mary had enjoyed a ten hour trip exploring much new passage and at this point I was sworn to secrecy with regards to revealing anything about the extension. All who subsequently joined in on this dig project were subject to Nig's 'Non Advertising Clause'! The reasons for this have been reported elsewhere so I won't repeat them here.

The following weekend Nig, Les Welch (Garimpeiros CC) and I returned to the cave and I got through the choke to the extension with no dramas as Nig must have enlarged the hole during his previous trip. My recollections over 16 years are a little hazy but on this trip we explored up to a 10m pitch. My diary recorded that 'The new extension is loose in parts, big in others. This is a very impressive find with the main passage trending south.' From the breakthrough choke a large rift passage went on into the distance heading south west, but the passage we followed dog legged left from the choke and then started heading due south, much in the same way as passages do in the nearby Ogof Pwll Swnd. The 10m pitch we reached dropped into a large rift passage with very big car sized loose boulders. We let Nig have all the glory of dropping the pitch and looking at the loose boulder pile which threatened to carry him off, surfing down into the dark distance. A rather large block had a short pitch for which we had no gear to descend so we retreated, calling it a day, and being thankful that the breakthrough choke had not further collapsed too much during our return through it. We did a 12 hour trip and it had been an excellent day.

There were several follow up trips made to the cave over the years up to 2010 and others joined us including Chris Duroe, Martin Hicks and Martin Laverty who all worked at BT Cardiff and were the core of the Garimpeiros Caving Club.

A follow up trip saw us finding a passage that bypassed the 10m pitch although it was quite small and tight then,



*Mary Rogers in a decorated oxbow passage in the new extension*

involving a 90 degree ascending bend, although I have heard that this has been recently engineered to more commodious dimensions. This led to a crossroads with the large boulder pile from the 10m pitch area coming in on the left hand side. Les Welch and I explored the area to the top of the boulder pile on a later trip and we found some interesting large boulder chambers that contained good displays of calcite and flowstone.

A passage on the right hand side went for about 50m and contained a large dried up crystal pool which was attractive. The way on however, was straight ahead at the crossroads with a descending passage which we tackled on subsequent trips with traverse line on the left. It looked like an old dried up waterfall where the passage linked back to the higher passage at the crossroads. This was the key passage, as it still headed south, further into the



*Nig Rogers climbing in socks on the largest formation of the extension*

mountain. A short 8m pitch had to be climbed up by Les Welch using his rock climbing skills. The delay doing this resulted in Chris Duroe becoming nearly hypothermic by the time he came to climb up the rope that Les dropped for the rest of us.

The passages above seemed encouraging at first but diminished to a sandy crawl which would have to be left for another day. Nig and Mary returned to look at this, and utilising the only tool available to him, Nig dug through the sand blockage using a bolting spanner, which cleared sufficient sand to enable him to break through into the roof of a very large rift passage which was found to be the largest passage in the cave with dimensions of 10m wide and about 15m high. Nig and Mary gave the place a quick explore but time was pressing and they returned to the surface in jubilant mood and informed us of the find so as to set up a quick return trip.

On the next trip, on descending into the blackness of the rift passage after the 'Spanner Dig' I got the distinct impression that this was the main passage that would take us right through the mountain to the Twrch river gorge after first joining up with passages coming in from Ogof Pwll Swnd to the south of us. Sadly, this was not the case as the big rift passage closed down after about 50 – 60m without reaching our hoped for potential, but certainly it is the biggest void under the western sector of Mynydd Du!

The passage continued smaller but very negotiable and then the cave teased us by offering compensation for the disappointing close down of the big rift by giving us a magnificent flowstone formation which we found in a well decorated oxbow passage and which Nig climbed in stocking feet and without oversuit so as not to spoil it, to reveal no passage existed above the formation. This was the best formation we had seen so far.

Beyond lay another major junction of passages which reached quite lofty heights. Straight ahead led to a choke which Nig suggested leaving for a future day, so we followed the passage left which took us to two pitches, with one being a wet tight rift dropping 15m into a very constricted stream passage. Not far from there a further pitch of about 20m gave a fine abseil but was sadly blind, but well worth descending in any case.

My caving trips to ODYLW with Nig and Mary dried up around the end of 2006 as the weather in 2007 was just too appalling and prevented trips that year, and Nig's focus of attention started switching to bodyboarding which became a consuming passion which he continued to do until his sad passing in 2018.

So what is the situation today? The cave and the extension is open, as it always has been, although I think it is safe to say that there have been very few visits to the cave from the time we left off exploration. So far the extension has added nearly 700m to bring the cave up to 1144m. Most of the passage in the extension is walking sized and there are many short climbs to add interest. There is lots of loose rock that demands care and attention. All of our trips were done using fairly low powered lights so it would be interesting to return there with modern day LED lights to see if we have missed



*The team changing above ODYLW. Chris Duroe bares flesh whilst Nig Rogers looks on with Mary Rogers and Les Welch.*

anything at higher levels.

Stuart France was invited to explore around 2010 as were some of the new younger friends Nig had made through his surfing trips. John Stevens and Mike Read have also started a high grade survey of the cave extension in the last year or two. Clearly there is potential for new cave to be found by those who are prepared to make the commitment.

Most of our trips were carried out during the Mynydd Du 'Open Season' which was largely from May to October when the conditions were generally favourable for the long walk over the mountain. Walks back made from the cave in the dark of autumn were made especially magical by occasional hoar frosts that coated the mountain in a myriad of glistening white crystals and sometimes with a full moon to light the way home. The cave is a joy to explore.

*All photos by Paul Tarrant, taken on either a Rollei B35 using slide film or Olympus C5050 digital camera*

## New Devon Cave?



All you need to discover a new hole is a strimmer!



While going about his usual daily business, CSS treasurer and Devonshire gardener

Andy Heath made an unexpected discovery. He hasn't actually descended it, but Andy anticipates that it will be around six to seven feet deep and thinks someone's been there before as he could see what looks like a bit of stone walling down there. There might even be remains of T'Owd Man at the bottom.

In the words of Mr Heath himself... "The ground literally opened up beneath my feet. Darn near pooped myself. Do you reckon it could go?"

# My Visit to Wawulpane Cave in 2010

by Andy Watson

I have done some good things over the years and this was most memorable. Rather off the beaten track I managed to get a Saturday off work when I was in Sri Lanka and a local employee had an elderly grandfather who knew of a cave he had visited as a child and would take us there. My colleague picked me up from the Colombo hotel at 5am in a beaten up 4x4 Isuzu and we set off towards Ratnapura about 100km away.

The journey took about 3 hours. We met his brother, I think, and the grandfather and his wife at an old rundown colonial house overlooking Ratnapura for some mid-morning curry and odd looking western snacks (white bread and what looked like battered fishes for kiddies?). After this we dropped the son, about 9, off for Muslim lessons at the mosque then drove into the rainforest another 75km or so, taking another 2.5 hours, with the brother, his daughter, the grandfather, my colleague and I. Passing through Udawalawa we finally turned into the foothills of some biggish hills with some classic limestone karst features. Driving along some steep narrow roads and eventually down along a dry limestone riverbed we stopped at a good well and a shop/stall in a small village/hamlet without electricity at the end of the road. Some pepper bushes and mostly jungle; very and hot and humid like the rest of Sri Lanka. A tourist poster rather surprised me (see picture) and my colleague bought me an aged bottle of Fanta in a rather battered glass bottle. Crumbs it was hot.

The grandfather asked in Sinhala if we could have a guide to see the cave. Two locals disappeared, and came back with two old beer bottles with rags hanging out the necks and an ancient Tilley lamp. We were walked down a dusty track for about a kilometre where a low concrete wall stood on a low cliff overlooking a small river that ran into a cave entrance about 20 feet below. After lighting the Tilley that kind of half worked and



the two rags hanging out from the diesel-filled beer bottles we were encouraged to follow them down the cliff. I had on grey trousers, a grey shirt and brogues – my work wear. The girl was scared so stayed at the top with her father. The grandfather, my colleague and I followed down to the cave entrance

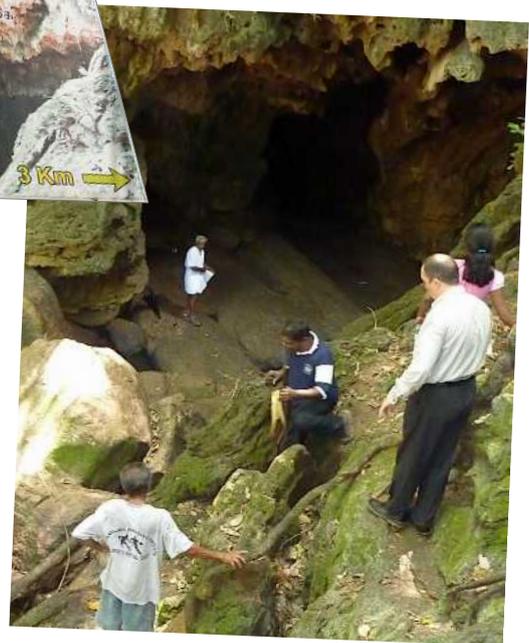
## The Tour Guides

where the grandfather stayed. We entered the cave carefully, sinking into guano and crawling with cockroaches etc.

Back at the hotel by 11pm.



Cockroaches and Guano



The Cave Entrance

# Isolation Cocktail Recipes

by Helen Pemberton

## Dark 'n' Damp

- Put some ice in the glass
- Add a large measure of rum and a dash of ginger beer
- Stir well using a bar spoon
- Add a wedge of lime



## Strawberry Da-Cavey

- Queue up outside Tescos for a few hours
- Fight over the last punnet of strawberries, until the losers last gasp
- Swear about the lack of mushrooms and baked beans on the shelves
- Go home, wash your hands, and hope you still have some booze
- Hit hard-won strawberries with a rolling pin
- Scoop into a receptacle
- Mix with whatever booze you have that isn't lager
- Hopefully enjoy
- Remember that this recipe is either a work of genius or a bit unpleasant, write down the genius before you forget how you did it



## Dirty Caver

- This is apparently a children's drink. I never tried it, and I take no responsibility for what happens after you feed it to your nieces, nephews or grandchildren
- Take 3 large measures of vodka, 1.5 large measures of grenadine and 1 measure of cherry liqueur, plus a 12 ounce can of 7-up. As we can't buy 12 ounces of much here anymore, scrap the 7-up
- Mix the first 3 ingredients in a large jug
- Pour into whatever glass you just used
- Add bitter cherries to garnish. If you don't have any bitter cherries, use whatever you have in the fridge, Brussel sprouts will do. These are Ready Steady Cook times



## Painkiller Passage

- Fill a cocktail shaker with ice
- Add 2 measures of navy rum, 4 measures of pineapple juice, 1 measure of coconut cream and 1 measure of orange juice
- Shake, and pour into the glass with more ice
- Garnish with grated nutmeg



## Chemical Wallbanger

- Essentially, make a large drill hole and plug it with a Galliano float
- Gather the ingredients (I think this means queue outside a supermarket for half an hour)
- Pour a measure and a half of vodka and 4 measures of orange juice into a glass containing ice cubes. Layer the Galliano on top by pouring it slowly over the back of a bar spoon
- These are hard times, any spoon will do
- In case the shops have no bog roll, pasta nor Galliano, Fanta will do. If there is no Fanta, buy orange or original Lucozade, and instead of feeding it to somebody else's children, make a Small Bang and a Hard Rock with it



## Sex in the Bunkroom

- Fill a tall glass with ice (I think this means put a few ice cubes in a pint glass)
- Pour 50ml vodka, 25ml peach schnapps, 50ml cranberry juice plus the juice of 2 oranges into a jug and mix
- Scrap the last instruction
- Add half a pint of vodka to a large glass
- Add a quarter of a pint of schnapps
- Add an ice cube if you happen to have an ice cube dispensing freezer. If not, don't worry, it only waters down the alcohol content
- Top up with cranberry juice
- Sod juicing 2 oranges, there are no oranges available for love nor money. Replace the juice of 2 oranges with vodka
- Garnish with cocktail cherries and orange slices (stand 2m away and see if you can throw a cherry and hit the right spot)
- Drink
- Hope everyone else is already asleep



## Small Bang

- Get some Lucozade, it doesn't matter which flavour
- Slosh some into the glass
- Slosh some vodka in too
- If it doesn't taste nice, slosh in a bit more vodka
- Garnish with an own brand Berocca tablet

## Hard Rock

- If you can find some, get some Brazilian flavour Lucozade (it shows off the rock better)
- Forget about ice cubes, put some blue skittles into the glass
- Pour vodka over the skittles, until they are completely covered
- Allow to settle
- Gently pour in some of the Lucozade
- Do not stir

## Mudslide

- Get a large measure of vodka, Tia Maria and Baileys, plus a large measure and a half of cream
- Pour into a shaker with ice and shake until chilled
- Pour into a glass (martini glass of course, regardless of what it says anywhere else)
- Garnish with chocolate
- Drink
- Try not to be sick

# Kings Road Cocktail

- ★ Take several bottles of Lucozade. Lucozade is ideal because you can't see through the labels. Throw away the contents or feed it to your nephews, nieces or grandchildren.
- ★ Go to Aldi and buy several cheap versions of booze, it doesn't matter if they taste nice or not.
- ★ Decant them into the Lucozade bottles, and be sure not to label them afterwards (or even before).
- ★ Fill a daren drum with several bottles, and pack less essential items around them. If there is not enough space, leave the one that might have ginger wine out. It'll be fine stuffed down your top or snoopy looped to your bag. Of course, to find the one containing ginger wine, you might have to taste several bottles. Hope you find the ginger wine before you find the liquorice liqueur that you bought on holiday 6 years ago. The odds are not always in your favour in Booze Roulette.
- ★ Take said daren drum of booze to Hard Rock Café, and stash for a bit. There's still stocks of gin and absinthe to get through first
- ★ Drink several nice cocktails. This is an important step. Possibly repeat a few times.
- ★ Take Lucozade bottle cherry, orange and original. Add a quantity of each to the glass
- ★ Add a splash of camp soda
- ★ Serve proudly to everyone else, while secretly regretting buying fake baileys and ouzo

Artwork by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley depicting Andy Heath the day after a particularly epic night of cocktails at HRC.  
Cocktails background by Mandy.

by Kieran Ryan

Need a quick and simple way of solving the age old cave digging problem of bad air? Don't want to lug heavy kit underground? The answer is simple – just use the CARE system.

Like many digs in Devon, myself and Andy Heath's weekly dig was becoming a bit stale. The gently inclined nature of this dead-end passage was a prime spot for CO<sub>2</sub> to collect, making work hot and tiring. Something had to be done to keep this promising dig alive.



There were two main hurdles in our way, firstly location. The dig not only sits at a low spot but is also beyond a number of tight squeezes which hampers air flow and space is at a premium. Secondly 'good' air was not easily accessible. Although the dig starts in a small chamber, with three people this soon gets a bit chewy after only an hour or so of digging. Thus the air must be brought in from beyond this point. The only problem was the next area with good enough air to sustain digging was beyond a fossil sump, and a steep sided tight one at that.

This left only two options, bring in dive cylinders or pipe it in. Due to not having access to dive cylinders and the cost associated with them this was out the question. So piping it in it was.

DSS for many years have employed the use of B.O.B. (British Organ Blower). Now although BOB excels at shifting air at a phenomenal rate, for our use not only is this too bulky but also power is a bit interesting (being a few hundred metres from the entrance). Thus a smaller, more compact solution was found in the form of 15m of hose pipe and an air bed inflator.

**So how do I make my own CARE System? Well read on...**

The pump used here is a cheap airbed pump, nothing fancy; this is then connected to a hose pipe. For this dig I managed to get hold of a 15m hose which was exactly the length we needed. Although mostly off the shelf, a few modifications had to be made. Firstly the batteries were removed and wired onto the end of a cable (which plugged into the main pump unit). This had two advantages, it stopped the unit from overheating and placed the batteries in a much easier to access location. Next up a power button was added, as I really didn't want to go through the squeeze every time I wanted to turn it on and off. Also included was some cut in half wall ties to pin everything to the roof.

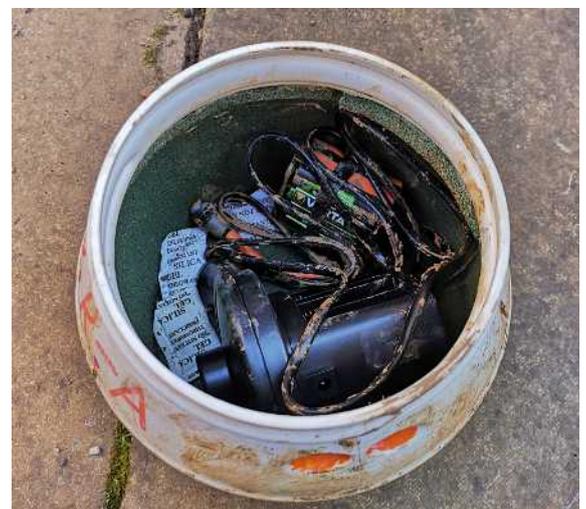
The system as a whole worked out great. The pump easily pushes air 15m and the air comes out with good power (the hose could easily be extended by double). It's extremely light weight and small. I transported it in a half sized padded Daren drum.



*V1.0 Before the Remote Operations Upgrade*



*V1.1 Proof of concept, before environmental proofing*



*All packed up ready for transport. The small compact profile makes this great for remote dig*

*photos by Kieran Ryan*

The box does say do not use for more than 10 minutes, but we ran it for 20 with no problems other than the batteries getting a bit hot. Realistically you should not have to run for more than a couple at a time. It also says “Do not keep/use in damp conditions” and “Never leave unattended when in use.” I didn’t read this...

*Left: John Boulton working at the face with the CARE hose behind him.*

*Right: The dig face with the hose on the left. Both pins (far left) and mud blobs have been used to secure the hose.*



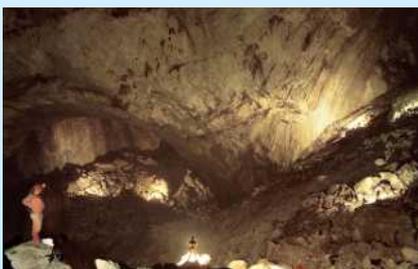
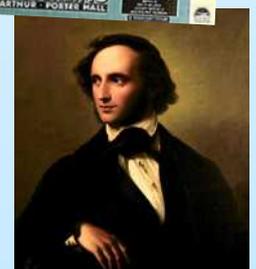
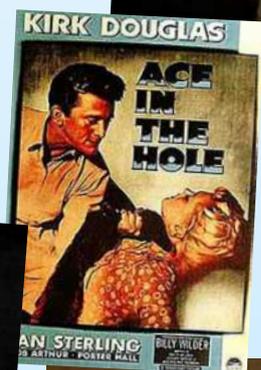
For your entertainment and erudition ...

*by Joe Duxbury*

# a Speleo Quiz

to alleviate coronaboredom

1. What is the longest cave in the world?
2. What is the deepest cave in the world?
3. What is the deepest cave in England?
4. Calcite is calcium carbonate. What is gypsum?
5. Which is the most endangered species of Britain’s bats?
6. What was Edouard Martel’s profession?
7. Which cave has had THREE replicas made, to preserve its prehistoric paintings?
8. Which country is famous for its ‘cockpit karst’?
9. What is a ‘Munter hitch’ more commonly known as?
10. What area was described as having not: “enough water to drown a man, wood enough to hang one, nor earth enough to bury him”?
11. In which country is the world’s tallest stalagmite?
12. In which country is the world’s longest stalactite?
13. The prolonged attempt to rescue whom was portrayed in the film ‘Ace in the Hole’?
14. In which cave is Sarawak Chamber?
15. In which country is the Naica Cave of the Crystals?
16. Who fell to his death in the Lepineux Shaft of the Gouffre de la Pierre St. Martin?
17. What gas is produced by the action of water on calcium carbide?
18. Which cave was celebrated in music by Mendelssohn?
19. What does Ogof Ffynnon Ddu mean in English?
20. Which major European country seems to have NO CAVES AT ALL?



*See page 49 for the answers to all these fascinating caving questions*

# Flooding in Crickhowell *by Mike Shelley*

People think the recent flooding in Crickhowell was bad but 1979 was even worse. Cracks had appeared in the Usk bridge in 1979, and a temporary bailey bridge was installed alongside for diverted traffic so the structure could be repaired.

The night of the peak flood height I stood about where the photographer was standing when this shot was taken. There were no lights on this side of the Usk and I used my caving lamp to illuminate the scene here and then a bit later from a field just upstream of the bailey bridge, which was being bounced up and down by waves.

In the second photo - surely this isn't 1979, as this is where the bailey bridge was during the repairs that were underway when the flood hit that year. **Can anyone clarify the date of this photo for Crickhowell Archives?**

Here's something else, prompted by high water levels in Aggy and elsewhere in about 1971 or 1972: A puzzle – fill in the blanks in this rap...

## “TALE FOR THE BOG WALL”

By Araw. B. Ginner (at Whitewalls, ca.1972)

‘Twere one Sat’dy night, beGod it were late,  
reet after’t pub we got changed to await  
the rest of oor party, right there, by’t gate.  
This new bloke called Jim, a no-vishy-ate,  
‘e wanted a trip, ‘e just couldna wait,  
‘eed aeven agreed to buy us a crate  
o’ beer to act on us all as a bait  
ter tak’ ‘im doon that night.

‘is wench coom along, reet smasher called Kate,  
bringing us up to a party of eight  
so, lest drunken courage start to abate,  
we entered that’ole at an ‘orrible rate.  
This led to the alcohol to operate  
summat akin to a stiff opiate  
on Big Jim, who started to oscillate  
then passed oot in’t first choke.

“I’m sure that ‘twere summat like wot I ate”,  
‘e said, as ‘e regained a conscious state  
an’ rose to ‘is feet like some po-ten-tate,  
“I really do fink dat dis cavin’ is great.”  
At this ‘e began to re-ju-venate.  
Not sparin’ a minute to meditate,  
nor even a second to cod-jee-tate,  
‘e shot off to’t next pitch.

Near to’t top ‘e begun ter vascillate.  
‘twere then that ‘is knees began ter vibrate  
an’ ‘is ‘ips really started ter gyrate.  
Then ‘is yellowin’ teeth began ter grate  
wiv ‘is mouth refusin’ ter salivate.  
Soon ‘e begun ter hy-per-ven-tilate,



for by now ‘e sure could anticipate  
‘is great plummet down’t rift.

‘e’d run out of power to elevate  
an ‘e’d never learnt to levitate  
so ‘e turned ‘is mind to in-ter-po-late,  
Or if that didn’a work, extrapolate.  
‘e might even ‘ave tried to integrate  
for the answer cum just like on a plate:  
‘e found ‘e was forced to jam ‘is oblate  
spheroids inter a crack.

We saw ‘is ‘ips starting ter undulate,  
you’d swear ‘e’d started ter \_\_\_\_\_(10),  
(though yer really orter say ‘\_\_\_\_\_’(8)  
for I don’ think that yer should underrate  
a pot’ole wiv which yer c’n \_\_\_\_\_.(9)  
But then ‘is ‘art started ter fibrillate  
for yer see ‘e’d discovered that ‘is weight  
was too much for ‘is groin.

Oor brave lad, Jim, as ‘e tried to rotate  
ter blow a last kiss to ‘is luscious mate,  
quite suddenly started to gravitate.  
Noo ‘ere cooms bit that’s so sad to relate.  
That crack couldn’a move and thus did \_\_\_\_\_(8)  
Poor Jim who, now from the rock separate  
An’ I’m sure stone cold sober, thus fell straight  
Doon ter the raging stream.

Dear Editor,

Following on from the reading the excellent article entitled Darn Near Killed I! by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley regarding all the Daren Cilau dig sites and locations which was a 'cracking read' I thought it would be good to recall the verbal complaint that the editor of the CSS magazine made when he was assisting the diggers at the salubrious Mendip dig known as Carrion Slocker. Which was that a cricket ball sized rock struck him during a midway digging session and the insinuation that he did not know how several of the large boulders were being held in place!

I would like to state that the regular diggers have made strenuous efforts with scaffolding and further steel mesh installations, the recent bypass drainage pipe installation to protect the safety of the various diggers, and I do not think that the unforeseen floor collapse followed by some large boulders moving is in any way representative of this cave dig which is probably equivalent to a soft play area when it comes to safety standards. The changes made are giving way to solid slabs that are probably a passage leading to caverns measureless to man.

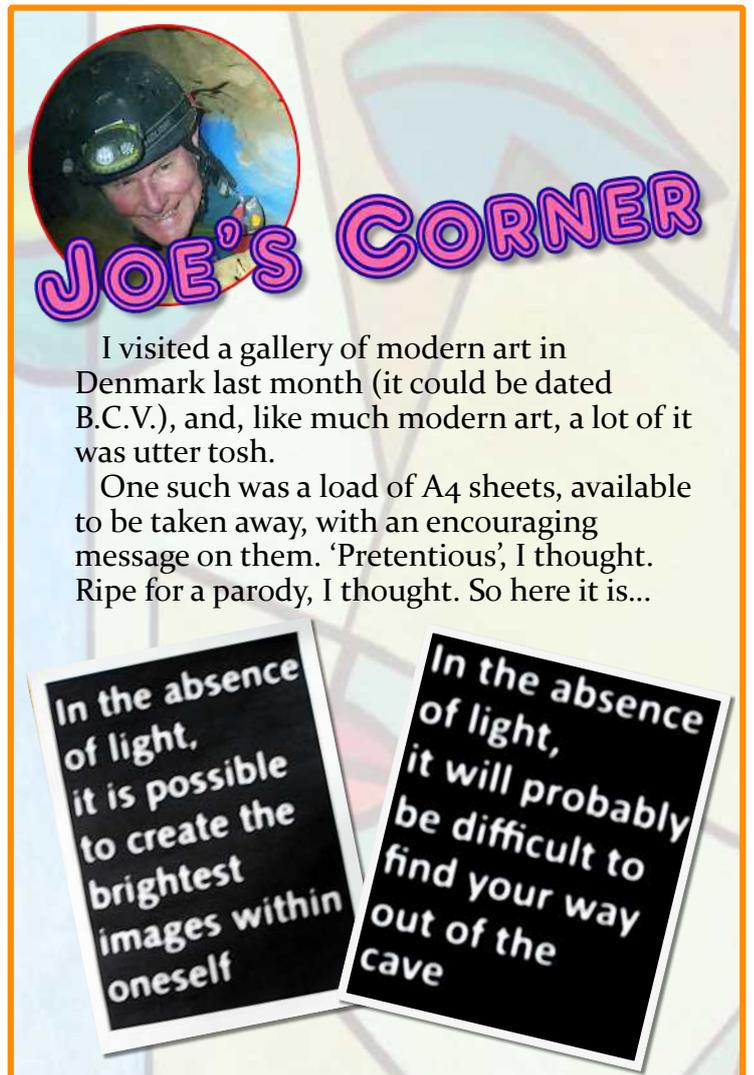
Regards your friend the east Mendip digger,

*Andy 'Vogon' Watson*

Falling doon, 'e didn'a communicate  
'is love for 'is woman – just screamed at 'is fate.  
But that young lass didn'a choose ter berate  
Poor Jim, oor new 'ospital candidate,  
She simply called oot ter invalidate  
The betrothal he'd no longer consummate.  
She'd not even try ter resuscitate  
'im if we pulled 'im oot.

Then came ter light an astonishing trait,  
We realised she 'ad a lust to sate.  
Oor faces all started to radiate  
As each of us saw 'er as 'is next date.  
"Let's 'av us a vote, I'm sure we're quorate,  
Let's leave 'im ter drown. We can vindicate  
So callous a fing –it's ter obviate  
A C.R.O. call out."

I can't say there were no malice nor 'ate  
when we done in Jim, when we "wiped 'is slate",  
it's really so easy ter terminate  
the life of a bloke as yer navigate  
through a pot'ole wiv a river in spate,  
or usin' some tackle you overrate.  
It's really so easy to deviate  
from safety when you're pushed.



# QUARTER WAY UP HOLE UPDATE

Fairy Cave Quarry - Mendip

by Nick Chipchase

On the last trip before Lockdown, we started to follow the bedding upwards from a point close to "Mr Trundle's I Scream Parlour." It was a pretty horrible uphill choke so Tony Boycott was called in to shake it up a bit. When the air quality had improved I managed to find a route up over the boulders passing a nice little grotto on the left. Immediately I was in a large (by our dig standards) walkabout chamber with blast shattered rock on the floor. The others came in for a look whilst I took some very poor photos due to backscatter from the flash. There was no obvious way on but plenty of places where boulders could be removed for a better look. At the highest point, there was a loose scree choke coming in rather similar to

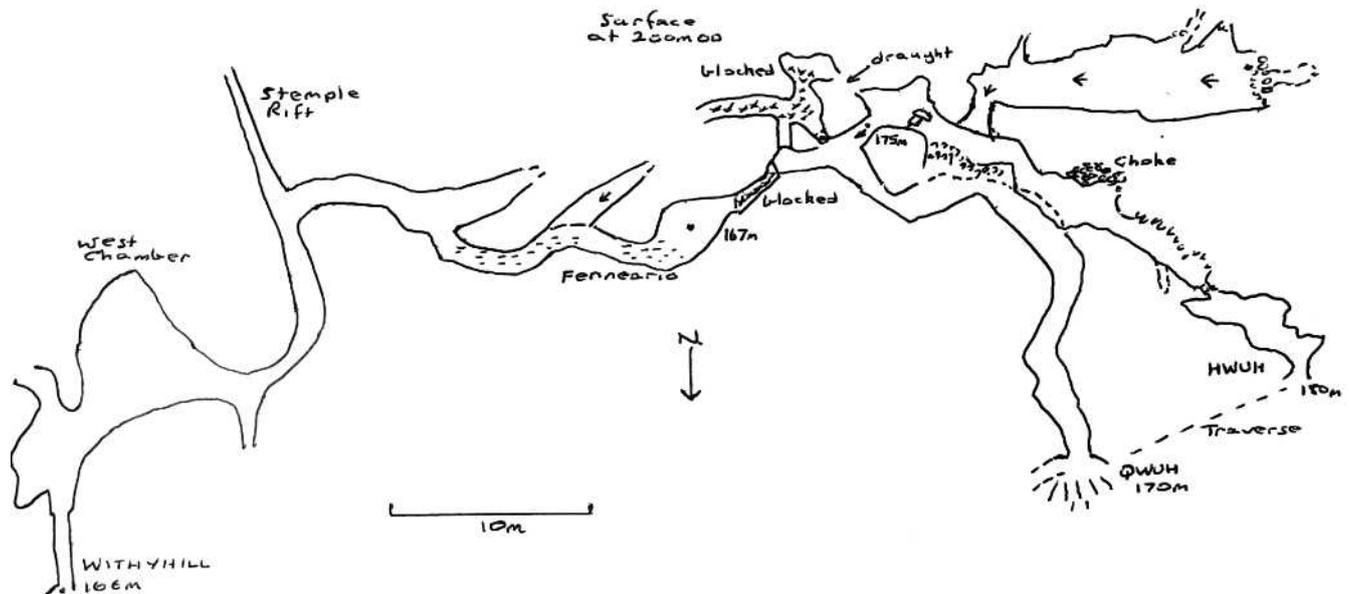


Tony and Peter at the bottom of the way up to the new chamber



Tony Boycott looks into the pretty little grotto

the periglacial scree seen lower in the cave. No bones were noticed in the choke though a good number had been seen in the lower scree chokes. Time was running on and Tony went out with Peter Glanvill to demolish some boulders blocking a way down in "Half Way Up Hole." I went out for a compass to confirm that the new chamber was running past HWUH to the west though a survey is needed to tidy it all up. My sketch here is the result. No name has yet been decided for the chamber but I have suggested "Three Quarters Way Up Chamber" as it fits in nicely with the two caves. We'll get back eventually I suppose.



## Dick Laurence

Members will be saddened to learn of the passing of Dick Laurence recently. Dick was a keen member of the Society between 1971-2001. A fuller article will be written for the next newsletter.



# Blast from the Past

by Mandy Voysey

With the digging activities of the ATLAS digging team temporarily put on hold during the Covid 19 pandemic, Rich Witcombe has been endeavouring to keep the team's enthusiasm alive with weekly instalments of nostalgia taken from the digging log archives. Amongst these epic tomes of Mendip digging mastery was a report written by me after our "breakthrough" in Balch Cave many moons ago which I thought was quite an interesting read as I'd since forgotten much of the details and even that I'd ever written it. Anyway for all you diggers out there, here's one situation of a breakthrough not quite going to plan...

## BALCH CAVE

**Wednesday 30th August 2006**

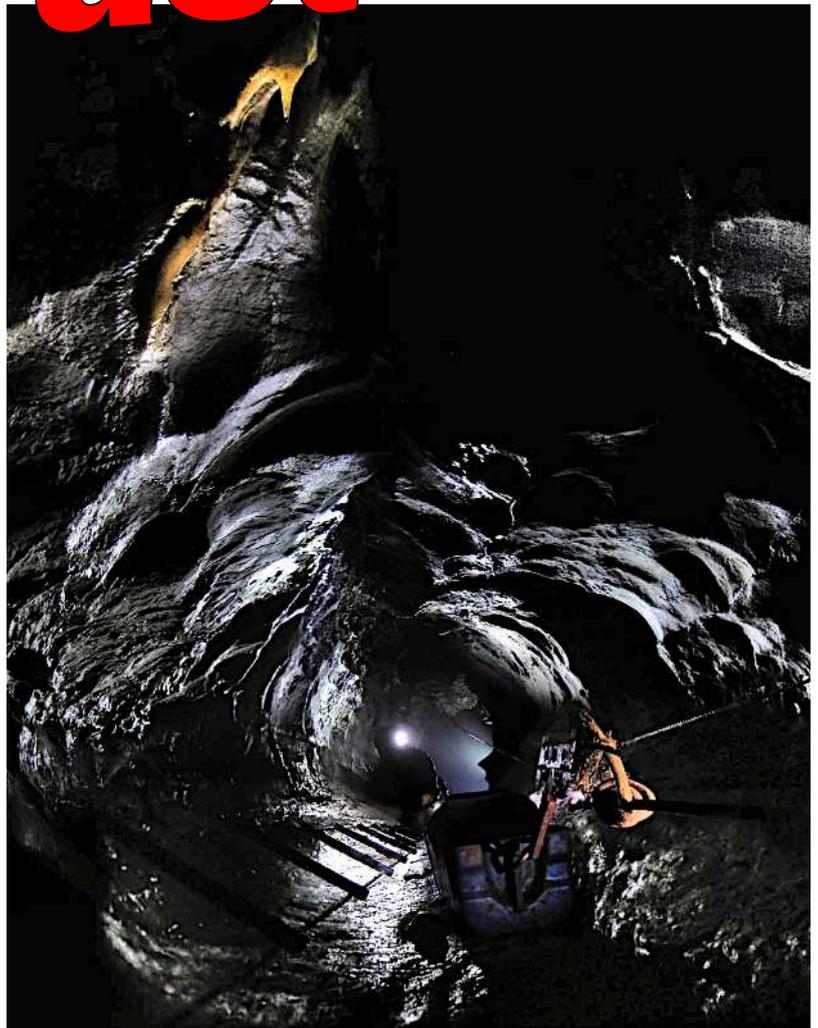
**Rob Taviner (Tav), Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Clive North, Dave King, Richard Witcombe, Mandy Voysey, Alan Gray and Ray Deasey (with a fleeting visit by Lee Hawkswell and Jacky Ankerman)**

There was much excitement in the air for this week's dig as we had previously left our hole on the point of breakthrough and we had all been anxiously waiting for the return of Tav before taking the plunge into the unknown. We all sat around in a most relaxed manner while Tav pulled out the remaining spoil and made the hole

big enough for us all to fit through. Having never experienced a break-through before I was chuffed as nuts to be sent through first, and quickly hopped through the hole, round the bend and through an additional squeeze to find myself in a large passage stretching off into the distance. Hmm... as I sat there waiting while the squeeze was being beaten into more of a Clive shape, I noticed that some of the boulders had the impression of being stacked and things just looked generally worn. We had a bit of a moot and concluded that we had probably broken into the lower section of Christmas Hole\*, but we should all keep an open for any obvious signs that others had been there before. Then it all got a bit weird... Tav and I, having just concluded that a flattened bit in the mud may indeed be a knee-print, lifted our heads to find a plastic bucket laying nearby, closely followed by a hoe. Much fun was had as Rich enthusiastically exclaimed that "nobody has been in this cave for 40 years", only for the bucket to be turned over revealing a shiny new bar code. We found a really impressive pit, and it was as I stood at the top of this that I realised that I had been there before. Bigger!! We had broken into the section of Balch previously accessed through a very tight squeeze from Erratic Passage! In conclusion... breaking into known passage, though not as good as making a new discovery, is quite funny and we all had a jolly outing regardless. We have succeeded in making an interesting round trip if nothing else, and Dave and I had great fun shoe-horning ourselves through the squeeze to Erratic Passage to exit through one of the upper gates.

*\*Christmas Hole was located very close to Balch Cave and was one the many caves both discovered and destroyed by quarrying.*

**Footnote:** We continued digging in Balch Cave below the pitch for another couple of years so this new connection did indeed prove to be very useful, particularly for those of dimensions not compatible with the original route connecting to this part of the cave. We even ended up making another round trip. However, fun though it was the dig was eventually abandoned due to problems with flooding and sandy infill.



*Looking down the pitch with spoil hauling cableway in action  
by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley*

# Fred Davies

by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley

Fred "caves be where you find 'em!" Davies sadly died in June in his mid 80s. A giant of the caving scene who was held in high regard by his peers, a fuller obituary will no doubt be written by one of his contemporaries who knew him better than I did, but our paths crossed on many occasions and he has significant connections with exploration beneath Llangattock mountain so here is an all too brief round-up of the caving life of a great man.

A member of the Shepton Caving Club, Fred was active on Mendip from the 50s - a familiar sight in his tweed jacket or old cotton boilersuit, with his trusty Premier 'stinky' carbide and a tin of waterproof matches and strikers. In 'Swildon's Hole 100 Years of Exploration' you'll find some great photos of him classic abseiling down Cowsh Avens or slithering down the chain in Blue Pencil.

As well as being a fiercely competitive digger and explorer, Fred became a cave diver in the 1950s and, as well as being active in Wookey Hole ("Wookey - of course it's interesting, it's the other end of Swildon's") pushed many of Mendip's sumps alongside fellow divers such as Mike Boon, Steve Wynne-Roberts and Mike Thompson. His era saw the transition from closed circuit respirators and lead boots to open circuit diving with fins, pushing the tight sumps through to Swildon's Eight with Boon and others using small 'tadpole' bottles like the one of Boon's that you'll see in pride of place on the Wessex CC lounge wall. You'll find much of Fred's old diving kit in the caving display in Wells and Mendip Museum and at Wookey Hole.

On Llangattock, Fred and Mike Boon dug in Daren Cilau, breaking through the entrance crawl and discovering the Old Main Chamber. On the same weekend he became the first person to dive the terminal sump in Agen Allwedd, turning back at a drop that he didn't think he would be able to climb back up in his lead boots.

In the 1980s he visited Hard Rock Café with Daren digger Graham 'Jake' Johnson, who was suitably impressed when Fred opened his BDH to reveal intact fresh eggs, cushioned in flour, with which he promptly made pancakes for the two of them. Some years later his grandson Matt also became a Daren digger for a brief period.

Fred was a kingpin of the Mendip Rescue Organisation and was full of friendly, useful advice and encouragement when I became a Warden and Training Officer, shortly after his retirement.

Fred lived with his family at Neighbourne near Oakhill on East Mendip, and we had many long, amusing chats while I was collecting keys from him for various caves in Fairy Cave Quarry. Even after retiring from caving he had a keen interest in digging activities. I last saw Fred a few years back at a reunion for MRO/MCR Wardens. He was complaining bitterly of being a bit weak in his legs in later life. When I rather patronisingly asked him if he was still managing to do any cycling he pointed out that he had cycled 100 miles earlier that day!

You'll find Fred's caving logbooks on the MCRA website [www.mcra.org.uk](http://www.mcra.org.uk)

In the unlikely event that there's a heaven I've no doubt that Fred will be prodding at the edges with his trusty crowbar to see what lies beyond!

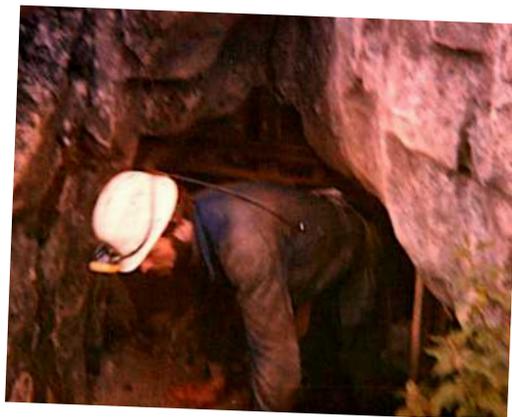


*Fred in Shit Sump (Cowsh Aven), Swildon's Hole - 1974  
Photo courtesy of MCRA*

## Can you identify this caver?

My friend Paul and I did several caves in Wales in the August of 1978, these included Little Neath River Cave and Eglwys Faen. I assume we also walked along to Agen Allwedd to look at the entrance, and as we did not have a key I think I must have taken this photo of someone coming out whilst we were there. I guess it could be anyone, but likely a member of CSS or Brynmawr perhaps?

*Andy Watson*



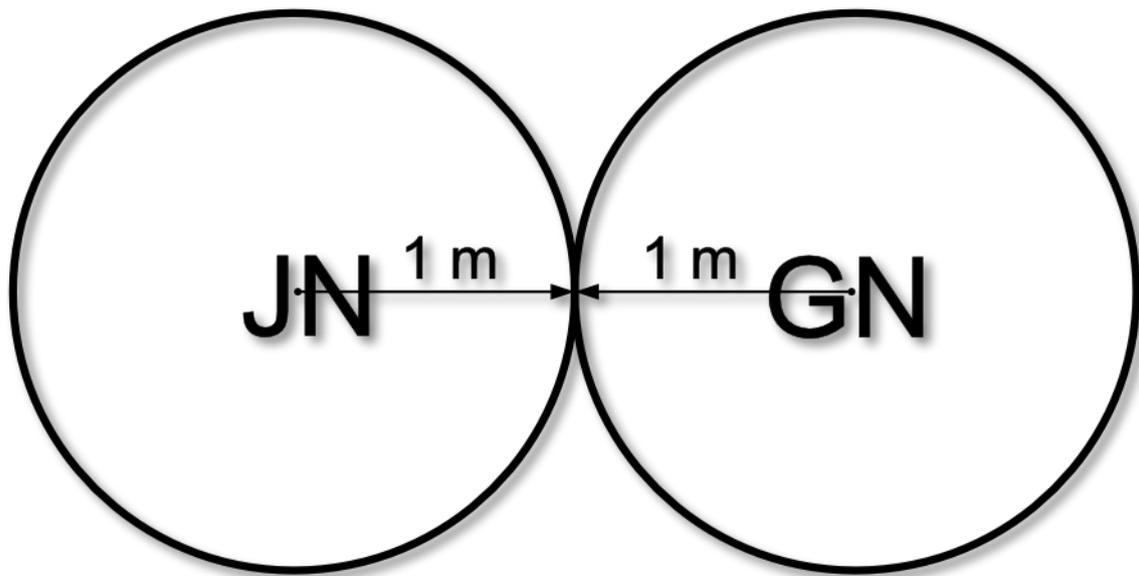
# Quantification of Separation

by Dr. Joseph Duxbury

It occurred to me that Chelsea Spelaeological Society will be particularly able to give the UK Government invaluable advice on how to instruct the public to maintain their social distancing during the Covid-19 epidemic.

It's all very well talking in vague terms about maintaining a 2m distance from everyone else (except those with whom you are actually allowed to come into contact), but it should be properly quantified. So here is a description of a precise Separation Unit, and, because it is defined here, for the first time, on behalf of CSS, it should be universally understood as the Chelsea Separation Unit, the CSU.

Imagine the situation, if you will, at Whitewalls. John Newton will stand in a circle, 2m in diameter. Beside him, Geoff Newton will stand in another circle of 2m diameter, but in order to maintain their minimum social distance, the circles must not touch other than at points on their circumference. This is clearly shown in the figure below.



The area of each circle is  $\pi r^2$ , where  $r$  is its radius. Because the radius of each circle is 1m, each of these splendid chaps occupies an area of  $\pi \text{ m}^2$ . So we have two instances of 1 Newton per  $\pi \text{ m}^2$ . Or  $1/\pi$  Newtons per  $\text{m}^2$ . Now a Newton per  $\text{m}^2$  ( $\text{N}/\text{m}^2$ ) is the definition of a well-known SI Unit of pressure, the Pascal (Pa). Therefore the minimum separation can be quantified in terms of a unit of pressure. But this will of course be most confusing to the general public, whose understanding of scientific concepts is rather poor. Therefore it will be much simpler to introduce the Chelsea Separation Unit, where  $1 \text{ CSU} = 1/\pi \text{ Pa}$ .

Manufacturers of scientific equipment can produce a cheap, miniaturised version of a barometer, calibrated in CSU, so that people can use one to determine if they are maintaining their correct social distance from other people. Such a device will be of inestimable value to the British public, and indeed worldwide.

It will have to be calibrated differently in areas of the world situated at great elevations, of course, but this will not be difficult.

Can a principle like this be patented? We will, at the very least, have to get the unit ratified by the General Conference on Weights and Measures (CGPM).



## Caving Quiz Answers

1. Mammoth Cave System, Kentucky, USA, 640 km
2. Varyovkina Cave, Abkhazia, 2204 m
3. The Three Counties System, 252 m
4. Calcium sulphate (dihydrate)  $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$
5. Apparently this is the grey long-eared bat. Not the greater horseshoe.
6. Lawyer
7. Lascaux
8. Jamaica
9. An Italian hutch
10. The Burren, in Co. Clare (said by Edward Ludlow, English parliamentarian, 1617-1692)
11. Vietnam. In Son Doong Cave, more than 70 m high
12. Brazil. In Gruta do Janelão, 28 m long
13. Floyd Collins
14. Lubang Nasib Bagus (Good Luck Cave)
15. Mexico
16. Marcel Loubens
17. Acetylene  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_2$
18. Fingal's Cave
19. Cave of the Black Spring
20. Denmark (I stress the 'seems to'! There is a sea-cave on the island of Bornholm!)

# Daren Cilau HRC Update

by Mandy Voysey

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, shortly before the UK went into lockdown, Charles Bailey, Kieran Ryan, John Boulton (DSS) and I journeyed over to Wales for a mid-week mini-camp in Daren Cilau. Our plan of action was simply to check out the condition of the camp and equipment after the flooding that occurred on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb and have a general tidy up. After a bit of travel confusion where I thought I was being picked up from Avonmouth Station while Kieran thought he and John were collecting me from Abergavenny (they both begin with A), we arrived at Whitewalls to find Charles already underground. We followed soon after and arrived at Hard Rock to find Mr Bailey already busying himself with stove repairs and fettling. None of us were really sure what we'd find when we arrived at camp, but overall it wasn't that bad at all. Adrian had already been there on a day trip and had warned us that everywhere was very muddy, which indeed it was, but luckily most of this was on the floor rather than the seating and other surfaces. Generally everything was quite messy and battered, but easily repaired and we spent the remainder of the day basically smartening things up. Damaged stone benches were rebuilt, food drums and other camp essentials were relocated to be (hopefully) out of the flood zone if it should happen again, personal kit was returned to the storage balcony and damp items draped around to dry out. We avoided using the usual changing area as its time spent as a lake had rendered it very slippery underfoot and somewhat muddy and precarious. The route from HRC to Bonsai (aka. the toilet) was also very slippery so to minimise the risk of another catastrophe like the drunken Charles Bailey broken thumb incident of 2006 this was covered in sand. Which entailed Kieran pelting sand down from the ledge above, while John and I endeavoured to dodge the sandy onslaught ferrying kit around down below.

So is the camp pretty much back to normal now you may ask? Well, the answer is mostly yes, but not quite... some of it is actually better than before (the seating looks smarter, foodstuffs reduced to only what's actually still edible, plus a fancy new waterproof logbook and posh bunting). However... though the communal sleeping bags seemed like they were *probably* ok when we packed them up before leaving, I'd advise against banking on them for a comfortable night's sleep at Hard Rock until their condition has been re-investigated. There's also still a bag of general rubbish hanging around at camp, which is unprecedented as normally all rubbish would be taken out of the cave but we just didn't have the capacity to take out everything abandoned (due to being submerged) on the camp before. Ordinarily this would all have been resolved by now and we'd have continued our quest for new discoveries, fantastic cocktails and a cave cleared of old crap, but a global pandemic has somewhat got in the way of all of that for the time being. Hopefully we'll get back soon.

# Caving with Trevor

by Nick Chipchase

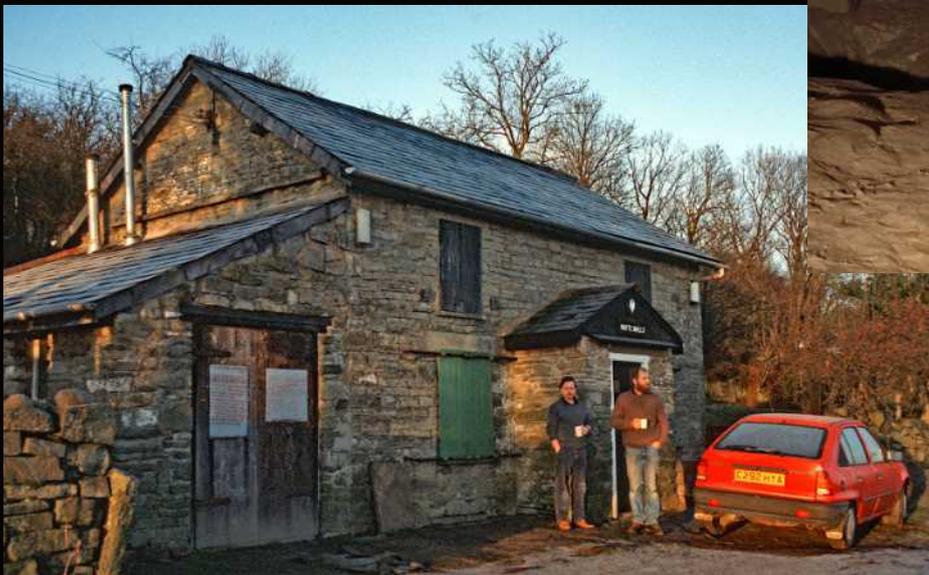
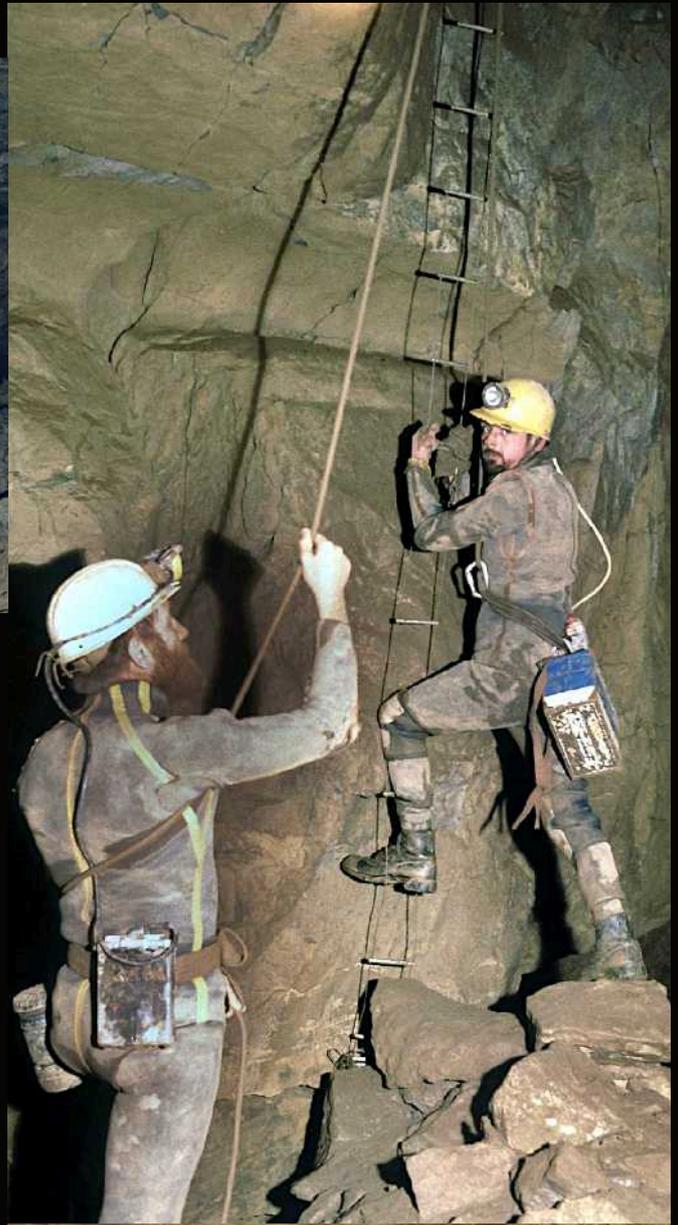
Well if you read Descent (274) you will find me rambling on about caving in the 1960s. This little reminiscence concerns the 1980s and 90s, when I often visited the Chelsea cottage with my friend and CSS member Trevor Knief. I joined Chelsea in the 1980s after leaving the Cerberus on Mendip (both were CSS). I am probably a rotten club member as usually I do my own thing with a few mates. Trevor found Pwll Y Gwynt, "whilst walking off a hangover" according to the Exploration Journal, in 1981. Well I know that to be untrue as though loving the ale Trevor never had hangovers. In fact, Trevor was super fit. A policeman and outward bound instructor for police cadets for six years. The big Daren Cilau extensions were found in 1985. A few months later Trevor and I donned four NiFe cells and found our way to the sump. It took us 13 hours and to be honest, I was knackered. Next came the big extensions in Agen Allwedd. We looked at Priory Road four days after the discovery in January 1987. Trevor broke a rib in Southern Stream but carried on with the odd groan. We returned in March to look at Resurrection but Trevor could not pass the entrance squeeze there (it was enlarged in April).

Trevor had a knack of getting on with folk. Back then the club was having issues with Mr Thomas who lived in the cottage by the gate. Trevor always made a point of chatting with him. He never gave us any trouble and sometimes came out to open the gate. We also caved with Arthur Millet who was like a greyhound underground. No point in trying to keep up with him. He looked less sleek when I saw him at Hidden Earth last year. Trevor never got flustered. Once I got stuck digging down a tube at Severn Beach in Priory Road. I panicked but Trevor refused to help (rolling a cigarette) until I calmed down. In January 1988 we returned to Daren Cilau to photograph The Time Machine. I had my huge ex-army steel ammunition box. Of course, that was



all pre-digital. We had big PF5 flashbulbs firing multiple flashguns manually with the camera on brief time (the old BLF rule but I won't explain). That ruddy great box in the entrance series! OFD came in April 1988, Craig a Ffynnon in March 1992 followed by Slaughter Stream Cave to photograph the dog. We had some great trips in Draenen in 1994 and 1995. I got down to Rifleman's Chamber in 1997. Sometimes Trevor's son Julian came along. I managed the Draenen round trip via Squirrel Rifts later, not really knowing where I was. In April 1997 I took my son on the Agen Allwedd round trip. Our lights started to go out at Fourth Choke. We came out on my single NiFe second bulb. That went out just after we got out. A close-run thing (the charger had failed to charge the lamps despite appearing to do so).

Time went on but trips got fewer as I took up deep wreck diving. I taught both Trevor and Julian to dive. In the end, progressive bends and the loss of some good mates curtailed that. I managed 25 years diving with the odd caving trip but returned to full time caving in 2011. We discovered The Frozen Deep in 2012. Trevor got older and lost his fitness. He did a few digs with us but finally had to pack it in. He nearly died recently with a medical problem. Time catches up with all of us in the end.



*Top Left: Julian and Trevor Knief at Windy Junction, Draenen  
 Top Right: Trevor at the pitch in Daren Cilau with Pete Rose  
 Above: The pitch head, Daren Cilau  
 Left: Happy days at the CSS. Pete Rose and Trevor.*

*Photos by Nick Chipchase*



*Cueva de Coentosa, Cantabria  
Photography by Paul Tarrant*

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