

Volume 67
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CSS
Newsletter

Vietnam
Meghalaya
Daren Cilau
Tunnel Cave

CHELSEA SPELÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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*Right: Joel Foyster in Urchin Oxbow, Daren Cilau
December 2024 - by Matilde Feral*

*Front Cover: Joe Duxbury in Ogof Clogwyn
February 2025 - by Paul Tarrant*

Upcoming Meets

17-21 April	Easter at Whitewalls
16-18 May	North Wales
23-29 June	Working Week & Summer BBQ

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For trip reports from all club meets see the News page on
the CSS website chelseaspelaeo.org/news

Lock up your food and get ready with the mop! It's
friend to the club and frequent visitor to Whitewalls
Bracken 'the danger sheep' sporting a new motif.

Photo by John Mazzezy

Editorial Once again a massive thank you to everyone who provided us with the great variety of reports, stories, news, articles and photos for this issue. Please keep sending it, and we'll keep printing it!

Please submit all items for publication in this newsletter to 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 a public shared link to the folder, or ZIP them up and send via MailBigFile or WeTransfer.

A PDF version of this newsletter is available to download from the club website and the club forum. If you would prefer to go paperless and receive electronic copies of the newsletter by email in future then let us know.

Editors: Matt and Mandy Voysey

Llanelly Quarry Pot Collapse



Above: Jamie being sad at the loss of a good caving trip while Andy points to where the entrance should be.

Right: The entrance in February 2024 for comparison.

On 24th January, on the Friday of the CSS Annual Dinner Weekend, a team comprising Mike Read, Andy Heath, Jamie Anderson, Mandy Voysey and Peter Smith headed to Llanelly Quarry for a caving trip. However on arrival at the location of Llanelly Quarry Pot, the cave was nowhere to be seen. The entrance was completely buried beneath a landslide, most likely caused by the recent heavy rains. This will require some digging effort to re-open, but plans are in the pipeline for CSS to improve the entrance to (hopefully) help prevent any further blockages occurring.



See chelseaspelaeo.org/caves/cave-and-access-news for updates on the situation.

STOP PRESS – The entrance was reported to be open again on 22 March.

A Week of Caving in Italy

Joe Duxbury is planning a combined club caving trip to Savona on the Mediterranean coast of Italy with Gloucester Speleological Society and Gruppo Speleologico Savonese. The region of Liguria, where Savona lies, has many caves and none are very demanding. This will take place on **6th-13th September 2025** and Chelsea members are very welcome to join the team.

Contact Joe if you would like to go along, or for further information at chairman@chelseaspelaeo.org

Membership

Current rates:

Full: £30, Joint: £40, plus BCA subscription per person of £24 for cavers or £8 for non-cavers.

Associate: £18 to receive publications, plus £8 for BCA non-caver insurance.

Provisional: £10 for any 6 months plus BCA active caver insurance to Dec 31st pro-rated 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

Subscription renewals become due 1st October yearly. Please send all payments to:

Barry Weaver, 55 Drake Road, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3LE.

Email csstreasurer@chelseaspelaeo.org

The Big Daren Clean-Up

by Mandy Voysey

11th January 2025

Deep inside Daren Cilau, a mountain of rubbish bags lay at the foot of the rope climbs in White Passage awaiting removal. The next section of their outward journey involved two rope climbs, a confined crawl, an exposed traverse, a 20m ladder descent and a goodly collection of climbs, crawls and squeezes in between. To get the rubbish through all this was going to take a larger team!

Luckily help was on hand and a fantastic squad of merry cavers assembled at Whitewalls on Saturday 11th January with a mission to shift the 40-50 bags from White Passage to Big Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance, then as much as possible out of the cave. Participants were welcome to enter and exit via whichever entrance they preferred, with many taking the opportunity to do a through trip.



The Team

L-R: Meg Stark (CPC), Dave King (CPC), Matt Voysey, Rich Smith, Adrian Fawcett, Rupert Massey, Tim Gibbs, Emyr Walters, Gary Jones, Andy Heath, Sam Hill, Alex Randall, Tom Jackson, Alex Hannam, Oli Hill, Mandy Voysey, Mike Read, Dylan Wase (CUCC), Ella Marcovitch (CUCC), Joel Foyster, Matilde Feral and Andy Ley.

Sharp End Report

by Alex Randall

After the tedious business of getting everyone in the same photo was complete the speedier cavers set off for the old entrance at a brisk pace, with good reason – nothing worse than being stuck behind slow people in the crawl! Sam Hill was first in, with me following armed with a new drag tray for the higher things crawl, since we'd stolen the one Mandy had left for digging activities.

The crawl passed quickly as any time Sam slowed down I threw the tray at him and it seemed like no time at all before we'd arrived at the rubbish mountain in White Passage. First on the scene were me, Adrian and the Hill twins. Adrian disappeared off to HRC to check the flood levels, leaving the three of us to set the sound system up and start hauling bags.

As more of the team arrived a human chain was started to move the pile back to the next rope climb and up to the Higher Things crawl. This was the slowest part of the cave as the skip could only fit one bag and only just fitted through the tight section.



Top: Alex Hannam pulling the skip through the crawl
Bottom: Tim and Dylan tossing bags towards the traverse



Passing bags across the traverse

This gave time for most of the remainder of the team to ascend the Higher Things ladder, giving us a human chain that reached from the start of the traverse almost all the way to the ladder. Obviously getting all these cavers back down the ladder would take some time, so the music was paused and people started heading down as the bags were first moved to the hauling side of the pitch, and then lowered down on the haul rope. Even so, the bags were all down the pitch long before all the cavers, leaving us to catch up with them at the choke to Valentine's Chamber.

Now with the full 22 strong team in place the bags were rapidly passed up to Eglwys Passage and along to Big Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance, no doubt aided by Sam's now infamous 'French as F***' playlist, consisting of four French songs played on repeat for the whole length of this section.

Once the bags were piled at Big Chamber it was a free for all, with everyone* grabbing a rubbish bag or two and dashing for their chosen exit and Oli's tasty chilli.

**except for the Cardiff students who were too tired to carry their rubbish bags out through the entrance, so left them at box 8 for another day. One of these students has since redeemed themselves by dragging out one of most unruly rubbish bags through the old entrance.*



Mandy and Alex at the pitch head



Passing bags through Valentine's Chamber



Big Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance



So where did all the rubbish come from?

by Mandy Voysey



Above: Piling bags in Valentine's Chamber
Below: Rubbish pile in Preliminary Passage
Below right: Valentine's Chamber



The Daren clean-up has actually been an ongoing project for quite a while now and included not only a thorough clear out of festering old kit at the Hard Rock Café camp, but also the complete removal of the long defunct Western Flyover camp established sometime in the 90s and unused for decades. This particular camp had become somewhat of a smelly eyesore in an otherwise fantastic and attractive part of the cave – so as we were planning a clean-up at HRC anyway, it made sense to tackle that at the same time.

Items cleared from HRC were a bit of a mish mash of ex-diggers kit, damp/mouldy communal sleeping bags (some of which were in use during the 2020 flooded camp) and a plethora of old abandoned kit left by persons unknown over the years. Anything useful was salvaged, while the rest was packaged in either Daren Drums or rubble sacks of a manageable size and weight and piled at the start of King's Road and at the foot of the rope climb from Bonsai. These were then transported bit by bit to the White Passage rope climb by the Daren digging team on the way out from camp. During this time a third underground campsite at the Epocalypse Chokes was also cleared by the team.

The next stage of the plan, once everything was relocated to White Passage, was to amass a bevy of helpers to chain gang them through the next, more obstacle filled section of the cave. Amazingly, whether it be due to the generosity and good spirit of passing cavers or merely thriftiness, almost all the Daren drums had already exited the cave before the January clean up. This did however still leave approximately 40-50 bags to shift, which due to the efforts of the 22-strong team are now either out of the cave or much nearer to it.

It is hoped that we can now keep on top of things at the Hard Rock Café to avoid another clean up. It would be appreciated if all cavers using the camp could take all rubbish out with them and consider carefully before leaving any personal kit in the cave.

I'd like to say a massive THANK YOU to everyone who took part in the January clean-up event, all of whom helped make it a fun day underground as well as a useful one. Also big thanks to Oli Hill for cooking up a cracking communal chilli, plus everyone who helped with the initial stages of the clear up and the many unknown cavers who have taken out rubbish when passing.

Photos by Matt Voysey



CSS MEETS 2025

18-21 April – Easter at Whitewalls

A fabulous four day weekend caving in Wales.

16-18 May – North Wales

Various mine trips will be on offer during this weekend, including a trip to Milwr Tunnel. Accommodation and location to be confirmed. Contact Andy Thompson and Hugh Wells for more information.

23-27 June – Whitewalls Working Week

Following last year's very successful and enjoyable week we'll be repeating the event.

27-29 June – Summer BBQ Weekend

A feast of chargrilled food in the Whitewalls garden washed down with a barrel of beer, plus a number of caving trip to work up an appetite.

25-27 July – Yorkshire Meet

Staying at the YSS caving hut in Helwith Bridge with trips to be confirmed. Additional days can be added to the meet for those who would like to extend their time caving in the Dales.

22-25 August – Bank Holiday at Whitewalls

Extended caving fun in South Wales.

26-28 September – Hidden Earth

A return to Llangollen in North Wales for the caving conference this year, see <https://hidden.earth>

17-19 October – Derbyshire Meet

Staying at the Orpheus Caving Club cottage near Monyash, with caving trips to include a Gentlewoman's Shaft to Youd's Level through trip.

31 October - 2 November – Whitewalls Bonfire Weekend

The annual bonfire festivities will take place on the Saturday evening, with a huge bonfire and fireworks to enjoy. A feast of dinners and puddings will also be provided (for a small fee) and a barrel of beer or two. Plus a selection of caving trips over the weekend.

5-7 December – Whitewalls Curry Weekend

The ever-popular Annual Curry Night sees a return on Saturday evening. Participants should bring along a curried concoction to share, be it a vat of curry, a spicy side-dish or some tasty sundries. Caving trips for this weekend are yet to be decided.

For further information contact the CSS Meets Secretary Andy Heath at meets@chelseaspelaeo.org

Additional club meets are in the planning stages and yet to be added. See the 'events' page CSS website for updates chelseaspelaeo.org/events

CSS Officers 2025

Chairman - Joe Duxbury

Acting Secretary - Adrian Fawcett

Treasurer - Barry Weaver

Cottage Warden - John Stevens

Meets Secretary - Andy Heath

Newsletter Editor and Webmaster -

Matt Voysey

Librarian - Paul Tarrant

Tackle Officer - Alex Randall

Social Secretary - John Mazze

PDCMG Representative - Chris Seal*

CRO Representative - Helen Nightingale*

Additional Committee Members - Emyr Walters, Catherine Gasnier

* Not committee

Aggy Mug News

by Mandy Voysey

It seems the Hard Rock Café in Daren Cilau wasn't the only victim of the heavy rains of Storm Bert, as the Thunderbirds mug at Second Inlet in Southern Stream Passage was lost, presumably swept away by high water. This iconic landmark, and perhaps the only nugget of joy along this notoriously awkward section of streamway, would be sadly missed... However, as luck would have it, an identical replacement was found on eBay and this was duly purchased by Paul Stacey. The Thunderbirds mug #2 was reinstated at Second Inlet on 25th January by Adrian Fawcett, taking a drill specifically to make a more robust attachment point.

A few weeks later on 15th February, Mandy and Matt Voysey with Andy Heath actually remembered to do something they'd been intending to do for some years and replaced the manky cup at the Ochre Inlets in Main Stream Passage for a much nicer and cleaner one (nabbed from Whitewalls).

Photos by Paul Stacey and Matt Voysey



TUNNEL CAVE

by Tim Gibbs

22nd Feb 2025

Adrian Fawcett, Mike Reid, Peter Smith, Tim Gibbs.

Adrian and Mike had been to fetch the key from Penwyllt and met Peter and I in the Dan-yr-Ogof car park. After kitting up and commenting that several of the weather forecasters had been overoptimistic with the no rain forecast, we set off up the steep hill to Tunnel Cave. Finding the entrance quickly, we started to get our SRT kits on when three curious hikers came to see what we were up to. After a brief conversation, they asked us to think about them on the cold, wet and windy moors while we sheltered in the cave. They set off to look for one of the WWII Wellington Bomber wreckages on the high ground. An information board in the car park detailed that there are six downed planes on the mountain, including two Wellingtons.

Adrian rigged the entrance pitch and one by one we descended, I was last in as I was having light issues. I got a good soaking when a squall came through but managed to get my reserve light working and descended, closing the lid behind me. The first pitch was straight down and I couldn't work out if it was entirely blasted or had just been enlarged. The rope work became more diagonal as we hit the cave proper with a decent length traverse that led to the top of the second pitch, which was not a free-hang but a steep calcited slope.



Peter on the entrance pitches

On arriving in the chamber after the second pitch, a team effort got my main light working. After swapping batteries and trying a few things, whacking it on a rock turned out to be the successful procedure. We set off further on into the cave. I would describe the cave as quite rifted, with plenty of bridging at higher level which was comparatively straightforward but sustained. Route finding was largely following the polish. We headed on, navigating a few obstacles including some flat out crawls to get to the gated air lock that leads into Cathedral Cave, which is one of the show caves of the Dan-yr-Ogof attraction. Cathedral cave is my favourite of the show caves with attractive waterfalls joining the passage. It is also the cave where they hold the weddings, presumably as it is the most picturesque. Through trips were once are possible with a DYO leader, but we concluded that the trip may be too short if we did that anyway.



Left to right: Mike at the calcite slope - Adrian and straw formations - Crystal gour pool

Photos from the trip by Tim Gibbs

Being at the far end of the cave we headed back but with the intention of taking a detour to find Christmas Grotto, which was duly found, taking a slightly different route back avoiding the flat out crawls. Christmas Grotto was worth the visit and was the prettiest part of the cave we saw, with straws, stal and dried crystal pools. On the way back to the entrance we explored a lower level leading to a sizeable chamber and some less travelled passages. Then regaining the top of the rift, we made our way to the pitches and out.

I was last out and was met with three smiling faces enjoying some, what felt like, rare afternoon sunshine, that the forecasters had predicted. This was an interesting cave and a thoroughly enjoyable trip. Many thanks to Adrian for organising and suggesting the trip and also to all the team members for a Saturday well spent underground.



*Above: Adrian, Peter and Mike above Cathedral Cave
Left: Wandering back in the sunshine*

Editors' Note: Following this trip, Adrian has updated his rigging topo for Tunnel Cave which can now be found on the Surveys, Maps and Topos page on the CSS website.

CSS Hoodies & Sweatshirts

Mel is ordering a batch of CSS hoodies and sweatshirts of the same design as the current club t-shirts.

These are available in a choice of colours at the bargain price of £16 for sweatshirts and £18 for hoodies if you're happy to collect from Whitewalls. Alternatively, if delivery direct to your home is preferable then the price will be £15 for sweatshirts and £17.10p for hoodies plus £5 delivery.

The colour options are: Black, White, Natural, Sky Blue, Azure Blue, Deep Navy Blue, Navy Blue, Royal Blue, Purple, Bottle Green, Kelly Green Classic Olive, Dark Heather, Light Graphite, Heather Grey, Red, Burgundy, Light Pink, Fuchsia, Orange and Sunflower. If you'd like to view the colour chart, see Mel's post on the CSS WhatsApp chat group or contact Mel.

To look as cool as Tom Cruise does in a CSS hoodie (or sweatshirt), please send your order to Mel by **14th April** with your size, colour and postage preference either via WhatsApp or email at melrei@hotmail.co.uk. Payments should be made to the CSS General Account. Female versions may also be available, though colours may vary.



Return to Vietnam

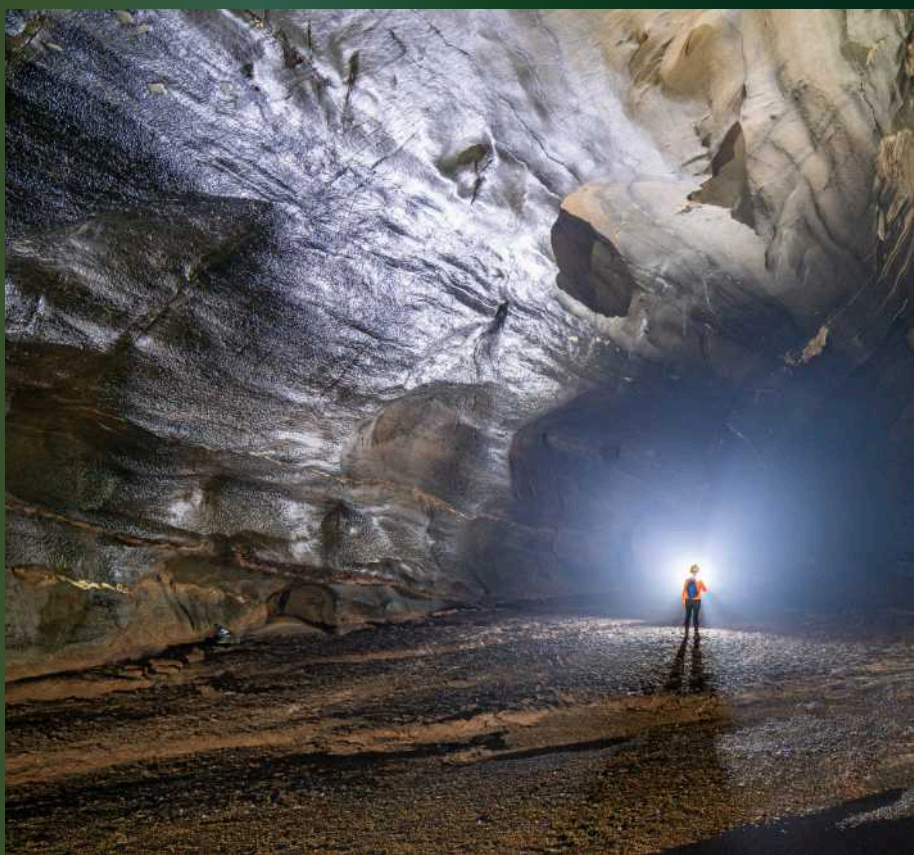
by Rachel Smith

Back just before Covid, Martyn and I were fortunate enough to visit Phong Nha in central Vietnam, taking part in a number of caving tours arranged by local company, Oxalis. The highlight was a four day/three night trip through Soong Dong, the largest cave in the world. We had a wonderful time and were delighted when the opportunity arose this year (2024) to return and participate in a new Oxalis adventure; the four-day Hang Ba Tour.

As we had experienced previously, Oxalis trips are impeccably organised and staffed. Hang Ba is more than just a caving tour, it is a chance to see and experience remote and beautiful places and view, via camera trap images, some of the wildlife found in this area. Mainly appealing to active, adventurous folk who care about their environment, we found ourselves joining a group of four fit young men and tour guide Anetta who we had met on our 2020 visit. We were allocated two staff (Huy and Jerry) to assist with the photography and enable us to operate a little independently of the main group of clients.

Day one started with a safety briefing in the Oxalis offices and then a chance to meet staff and other clients as we embarked on the minibus journey to the setting off point for our walk in. Once at the road-head we

shouldered our small day packs (Oxalis staff transport camping and cooking gear and all spare clothes etc for clients) and began ascending the trodden mud path. We had been warned that during the first two hours we would encounter leeches and indeed we did! I had never before seen them in dry jungle but on the path, waving as they sensed our passing by, were many of the little critters. Despite liberal applications of repellent



most people found a leech or two making their acquaintance and by lunchtime my more open weave walking socks had allowed four to gain easy access to my ankles. One, looking very fat and full, left me with a wound which bled liberally for ages. From here on we left the biters behind and, after cresting yet another hilltop, began to descend into the valley which is home to the Hang Ba system and a number of other caves.

By mid-afternoon it was hot and we were all beginning to feel the strenuous nature of the walk but Anetta set a steady pace that everyone could manage. Along the way, several stops were made to change the memory cards in various camera traps and these were then stowed for us to view later at the camp. Eventually we reached a place where the group of young men plus several staff headed off to an upstream entrance of Hang Dai Cao. Our photographic team continued on to the resurgence and our first night's campsite. This was a lovely spot with tents pitched beneath a rock overhang, the cave exit just to one side, and a picturesque river running nearby. Huy ensured we had a hot drink and few minutes rest then we and our two staff entered Dai Cao through the 'back door.'

A short walk with some scrambling over boulders led us to the cave itself. Dai Cao has an impressive and very large exit which allows daylight to illuminate well inside the cave. It was ideal for some beautiful images and we spent time here getting the feel of this area and the photographic challenges and opportunities that were on offer. A little further into the cave a huge

river passage, with ripple marks on the sandy floor, provided the setting for more pictures. Eventually voices were heard and the remainder of our party emerged from the dark having swum and walked their way through the cave. Together we made our way back to the tents where staff were busy cooking and making drinks for us all as we sat and listened to the quiet of the evening. After dinner, a chance to see the images captured by the camera traps, mostly a range of mammals passing by or pausing briefly in their nocturnal travels. A challenging but most enjoyable first day.



Martyn and I rose fairly early next morning and walked down to the river looking for birds or other wildlife that might be around. Failing on this we enjoyed the beauty of the early morning light and the reflections on the water before others came to join us. Breakfast was eaten and then we all set out along the river bank heading into Maze Cave. Here there was another daylight entrance and some fine calcite decorations. The inevitable pause for photos put our small party behind the main group. We headed into the cave with our main objective being two swirl pools joined by a rock bridge. Sadly, due to a bit of a misunderstanding, the first party had disturbed the pools and the photo opportunity was lost. After some pause when we hoped the water would clear we finally settled for a separate single pool, illuminating the clear water with a small LED light.

From here we returned to camp for lunch and then set out for the cave whose name is given to the tour as a whole. Hang Ba presents another impressive entrance with tumbled boulders and a lake just inside. We



*Above: The camp at Hang Dai Cao
Left: Hang Dai Cao*



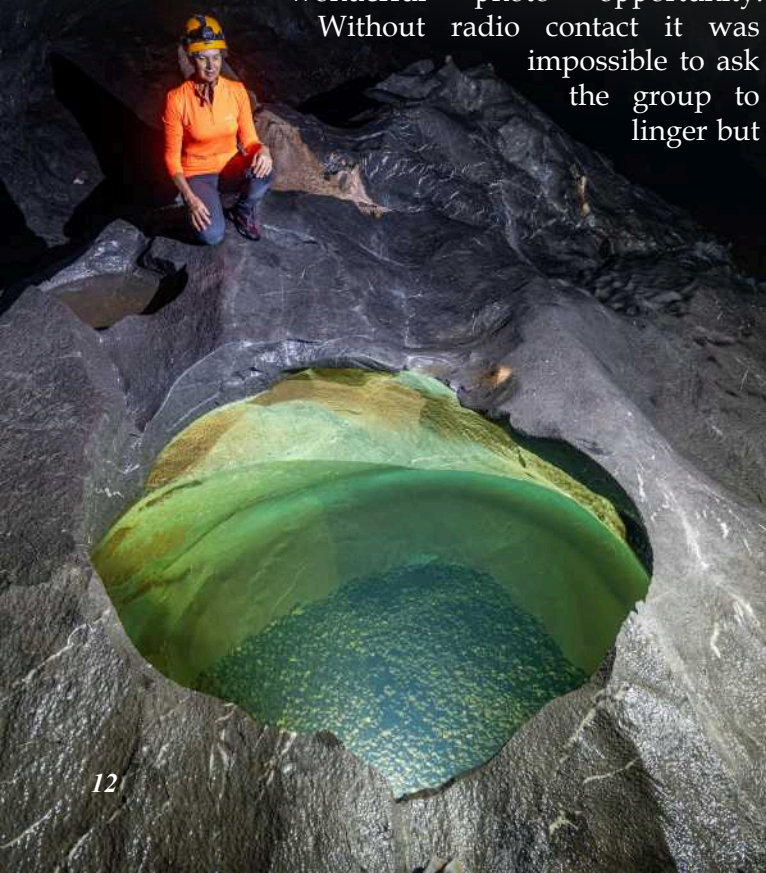
paused here for one photo but balancing the light from outside with the darker inner areas was challenging and we decided to move on, looking for other options. After a short distance, encumbered with some large rocks to climb over or around, we reached a vantage point where the main group could be seen clambering onto SUP boards. Some three hundred or more metres away they were silhouetted against the largest of three exits, lit by daylight that was streaming in and creating a wonderful photo opportunity.

Without radio contact it was impossible to ask the group to linger but

Martyn made the most of the time and captured images before they disappeared around a corner, heading to the second, slightly smaller exit. We made our way down to the beach and before long the SUPs returned and it was our chance to sit on board and be paddled serenely through the cave, quite a surreal experience!

At the exit we climbed over a few rocks and then out to our first view of Circle Lake... what a beautiful sight! A lovely circular lake surrounded by a clean sand and grit beach with big cliffs towering all around. Howard from Oxalis said we would love it and he was certainly right!

Our little contingent stopped here for some photos and then we made our way the short distance to Arch Cave and tonight's campsite. Tents were pitched on a great sand dune, above a large pool of water. It was a stunning site with big entrances on either side giving a photogenic backdrop to the camp. We crossed the river to the tents and settled in to enjoy some coffee and later, another excellent evening meal. Hoping for a night sky photo we looked out after dark but realised the moon was almost full and the stars would not be visible. A pity but perhaps we will return in the future to capture Circle Lake and the Milky Way; that would be a stunning shot.



*Above: Maze Cave
Left: The Wishing Well, Maze Cave*

Day three started with coffee and snacks beside the lake. The young men took the SUP boards out and enjoyed a water fight with plenty of falling in and laughter. After breakfast we parted company with the main group and we returned to Hang Ba Cave. It was total peace as we paddled across Circle Lake and Jerry deftly manoeuvred me into the landing place. We crossed the rocks and set off into the darkening entrance as Martyn set up a photo. Then on into the main cave passage where our morning was occupied positioning SUP boards and lighting the river for a number of other shots.

Lunchtime saw us back at camp with the rest of the group. We soon set off down the river towards our third and final campsite at Hang Vinh Dai. The path here followed a band of sharp and jagged rock where footholds were small and full concentration was required. We were both very aware that a fall would result in skin being ripped or much worse; in such a remote place this was not a prospect we relished! After several hundred metres the going eased and we followed a clear trail through the undergrowth to arrive at our final camp. This was set high up in an old gour pool looking down on a scenic lake below, the vast cave entrance framing it all in daylight.

This would be our last opportunity to explore underground, the great entrance tunnel being just a small part of a vast cave system. We made our way steeply down to the sandy floor alongside the lake and chose a place to photograph. Gradually we made our way deeper into the darkness and found some attractive calcite draperies which proved a challenge to light. Additional assistance, in the form of Jerry, provided enough hands to hold all the lights and finally feeling satisfied we made our way back to camp. Here the final camera trap pictures were being viewed over coffee and it was not long before we all enjoyed our evening meal in the fading light.

Waking the next day there was a feeling of apprehension within the group as we all knew the walk out was billed as hot and very strenuous. I had asked for extra water and carried my supplies with one



*Above: Hang Ba bottom entrance
Right: Hang Ba Cave exit*



bottle easily accessible to sip along the way. Our small party set out first knowing we would move more slowly than the others and soon it became clear that the early part of the day was a rock scramble rather than a walk. Fortunately, the rock was good for both hand and footholds and its rough surface gave excellent grip making upward progress relatively straightforward. I found myself enjoying the morning and we were fairly soon at the one tricky area which was equipped with a stout traverse line. Here we were issued with harness and cow's tails before crossing and arriving at a ladder with lifeline operated professionally by Oxalis safety staff. Then we continued upwards and eventually the rock gave way to a steeply ascending path. The going now became hotter and my pace certainly slowed but at least we no longer had to wear our helmets. Onwards and ever upwards until we reached a place where a cloth was spread and lunch was being served.

Here the whole group assembled and ate before shouldering our bags for the final time. Soon after setting off, we crested the final rise and began the steep, and in places slippery, descent. Both Martyn and I agreed it would be a very challenging path after rain when the surface would turn to greasy mud... Thank goodness we were blessed with dry weather! Steadily we continued down enjoying the last of the peace on these wooded slopes before finally picking up the sound of traffic as we approached the road and found our minibus waiting, cold drinks at the ready. Here we were even awarded Olympic style medals for successfully completing the tour! What a fantastic, full-on, experience. We would seriously recommend an Oxalis tour to anyone.

Above: Hang Vinh Dai

Left: Crossing Circle Lake on SUP - Right: Exiting Hang Ba



Photos by Martyn Farr

Recollections of Early Days in CSS

by Roy Musgrove

Discussion at the AGM about whether to celebrate 70 or 75 years since CSS was founded led me to think back over the 60 or so years that a few of us oldies that are still around go back to.

Like many cavers of my generation, I began caving with my university caving club. I first came to Llangattock in November 1962 travelling up the new three-lane Heads of the Valleys road up the Clydach, which was going to solve Brynmawr's traffic problems for the foreseeable future. Plus ça change...

We stayed at the Hereford cottage then known as Woodhouse (Ty Coed) about halfway from Intermediate Road to The Sunday School. This was uncomfortable as it had been double-booked to another party as well. We walked from there to Ogof Gam, which had recently been connected to Agen Allwedd by digging through at the low crawl. This had some sharp stones still on the floor and a trickle of water running through it. To help with this there were three cafeteria-type metal trays to slide through on. It nevertheless very quickly superseded the old keyhole entrance which gave the cave its name. It was our intention to do a Cliffs of Dover trip, but our leader's route memory proved quite inadequate, and we ended up spending 18 hours crawling round and round in First Choke. I still find it hard to believe that we spent so much time in so few bits of passage. I am surprised that I carried on caving after that experience!

I first visited CSS just before the Triglav expedition in 1964 with a view to carrying on caving after leaving university. At that time 60 years ago there was a weekly Tuesday evening meeting in the World's End Community Centre at the scruffy end of King's Road. The library cupboard (yes Paul, just one!) lived permanently there, and we had a tackle store in a room in the basement. At this date many of us were still using carbide lights and SRT was something mountaineers did. For Triglav, members made an enormous amount of aluminium ladder; perhaps as much as 2000ft. The other creation was a winch to handle a very long length of wet lifeline. It consisted of a bicycle frame from which the front wheel had been removed and the rear wheel had been replaced by a drum to wind the lifeline. The idea was that much more power was available from legs than arms and people would take turns pedalling to wind it up. The impression it made on Yugoslav cavers can be

judged from the fact that they gave it the obscene Serbo-Croat nickname "Kuratz". But it did what it was designed to do. I never did know what happened to it afterwards.

Having finished my degree the following year I became a temporary member and began to cave more geographically widely. Nevertheless, Aggy was "our" cave. It and Eglwys Faen were the only serious caves on the hillside. Daren Cilau was little more than the entrance passage which seriously deterred exploration. In Aggy, Southern Stream Passage was not known and Summertime had only recently been opened up by Hereford Caving Club. Turkey Pool was crossed on a rubber inflatable. This may have arisen from Hereford CC getting flooded in beyond the pool. David Leitch produced a full publication, describing and discussing this. It was Hereford CC who began exploring Summertime and tackled a boulder choke (later to be called Hawkins Horror) at the entrance to Sand Caverns. Kingsley Hawkins immediately attacked the choke and passed boulders backwards. After about half an hour there was a great rumble and many boulders collapsed on top of him leaving the way open. They had taken the precaution of having him on a stout rope with which they were able to pull him back out of the pile without too much injury.

In 1965 we were still using the Old Daren Sunday School (ODSS) to stay in since White Walls was not yet usable. The Friday routine was to go straight over at Brynmawr roundabout and turn right up to 6 King Edward Road to get the key before continuing up to Intermediate Road and turning on to the Tramroad. White Walls had already acquired the slider bars for the



Whitewalls when CSS first acquired and started to rebuild it

downstairs shutters, which were carriageway reinforcements from the Heads of the Valleys road widening. The stone lintel over the front door was claimed from a derelict cottage on the Hillside when a couple of members climbed onto the walls and freed it for about eight well-inebriated members to catch it before it landed and broke. There was also an early decision not to apply for planning permission which was justified many years later when we were able to claim over twelve years existing use to thwart a potential closing order from the planners. I still remember the first night half-a-dozen of us spent in White Walls. The "shell" was complete. The downstairs floor was concrete only and the upstairs was boarded over. To prevent anyone falling down the original spiral staircase, which some of you will recall, we placed a manhole cover over the top. We still needed to use ODSS for some time, but it was gradually deteriorating. On one occasion the cooker went awry and everyone was told not to plug it in to the wall socket. Inevitably, one member ignored the instruction, blowing the plug fuse, the ODSS main fuse, the fuse on the pole outside, and the fuse at the substation down in the valley. If you are going to do something daft, do it thoroughly.

Although White Walls took up a lot of time, we did keep up the caving. On one trip to Clapham we did a Long Kin East/Rift Pot exchange trip. Without previous experience we took the tackle listed in Pennine Underground. Remember there was no internet, only books. Unfortunately this resulted in Julia James ending up at the bottom of a long ladder climb about 20ft above the floor. We life-lined her up again. Fortunately we had sufficient tackle with us to ladder the whole trip properly. It proved to be quite taxing and those of us who went from Rift Pot to Long Kin East were assisted up the ladder by a team organised by Tich Morris who ran across the fell pulling the lifeline with them. It wasn't text book but it worked. A tired party of cavers wended our way back to the vehicles, only to find that we were one person short. As there were no mobile phones in those days we ended up with a line of us stretched over Ingleborough at half past eleven at night without finding him. It was eventually discovered that he had gone off at about 90 degrees to the right direction and ended up spending the evening in the pub at Clapham waiting for us to locate him. He was not popular!

At Llangattock we were simply extending Aggy wherever possible and Bill Maxwell began water tracing with Fluorescein to try to establish the drainage pattern. In Eglwys Faen there was a breakthrough dig for a short distance in St Patrick's Passage. It was very muddy. George Fletcher had a lovely photograph of three cavers standing about where the new ODSS manhole cover sits with the whites of their eyes all that is visible amid a uniform mud brown from helmet to boots. I can also remember standing up to my chest in water in Main Stream Passage holding a target for Pete Cousins to take a compass bearing for the new survey he was preparing.

At an early stage of my membership I had a Standard

Ten van which was so low geared that I astonished people by driving up to the tramroad without dropping into bottom gear. On one occasion I took Pete Cousins in it most of the way along the original single-track Heads of the Valleys road to the Coal Board Depot at Mountain Ash to collect 50 redundant alkaline miner's lamps which he had bought for onward sale to cavers. The Coal Board was going over to lead-acid lamps at that time. The van was also pressed into service for the benefit of the Pengelly Centre at Buckfastleigh. Clive Calder had salvaged a roll of heavyweight lino that was being scrapped by the Science Museum. This just fitted into the van with the front end against the dashboard and the back end against the rear doors. I could only just change gear and the journey was expected to be sufficiently slow to break halfway. Bill Maxwell arranged for us to stay at the Somerset cottage then owned by Brian Price, who started Llangattock caving with Brynmawr Scouts in 1946. I can thus say that I met him personally, even though it was only the once.

Do not think that Alan Thomas was the only problem when we were using White Walls. His predecessor at Travellers' Rest was Seamus O'Sullivan, an Irishman who taught English in Brynmawr School. (You couldn't make that up could you?) He was every bit as cantankerous as Alan Thomas and at one stage built a post and wire fence out into the tramroad about 4 feet from the wall in an attempt to prevent us driving up to the cottage. We demonstrated to him that this didn't prevent us driving past, though it did make it quite difficult. We actually uttered sighs of relief when Alan Thomas moved in. Little did we know!

We understood from Bill Maxwell that there were quite a few remains of the actual tramroad in the earliest days, and when I joined the club there was still a clear pattern in the ground where the sleepers had been, which I think has worn away over the years of boot wear. I can remember down the incline there remained some boundary markers installed by its last owners, Great Western Railway Co. These consisted of a short (about 1½ foot) T section stake capped by a cylinder, open at one end with "GWR" cast in the top. I assume these were cast iron. Somebody (Pete Cousins?) once found a complete section of the track. It comprised an inverted T section sleeper with integral chairs for the tram plates. The plates were of L shaped section with the vertical side towards the outside of the tramway. There were bosses cast on them to stop horizontal movement in the chairs in which they were secured with iron wedges. The only fixings otherwise were large iron pins which went through holes in the end of the chairs and were secured in the stone blocks by melting lead round them. I went to the National Museum in Cardiff to see what I could find out. They had three types of ironwork, none of which was anything like the Llangattock Tramroad version. Sadly, our specimen was stolen from the end of the field outside White Walls, along with all other local desirable items, by Industrial Archaeology collectors.



CLIVE CALDER

by Paul Tarrant

Clive, who passed away on 23/11/24, was a member of Chelsea Spelaeological Society in the early 1960s and was the tackle master from 1962 until 1971. Clive, like many others, was heavily involved in the building work that transformed Whitewalls at Llangattock from a roofless ruin to the palace it was to become in 1963. Clive was very involved in explorations of the then relatively new Agen Allwedd and took a hurricane lamp, fuel and other equipment to the temporary camp established in Turkey Chamber. He caved extensively in Mendip and Yorkshire as well as Wales.

Clive was heavily involved in the build of 1500ft of electron ladders, needed for the 1964 Triglav Pothole Expedition which, at the time, was considered a very difficult descent of an ice plugged cave system at high altitude in the Julian Alps of the former Yugoslavia. Clive was one of the reconnaissance group sent to bolt some of the entrance pitches and the 360ft deep Big Pitch ahead of the main expedition. The Triglav underground camp that was set up nearly became a death trap when ice javelins started falling due to rapid warm up caused by Primus stoves cooking food! Snow and ice deeper down halted further exploration.

The following views on Clive were made by people at his funeral and provide further insight to one of the Society's prominent members from the Sixties.

"Bruce Bedford always said that Clive was the most reliable team mate that he could ever have and whenever he was working with Clive he felt 100% safe."

"I too don't recall doing a lot of caving with Clive, but I do remember when he lived in West London being impressed by his trips to the launderette. He was very proud of taking all his muddy caving gear and bunging it into a washing machine together with his boots! I think he chose to go at odd hours to avoid the inevitable problems with other users!"

"I first met Clive at CSS in 1964, just before the Triglav expedition. He was Tackle Master and was organising the creation of a great deal of construction of ladders (this was before cavers borrowed climbers' abseiling and prussiking techniques) These were made of aluminium rungs fixed to steel wire rope sides by compressing Talurit sleeves. Working from our tackle store rented in the basement of World's End Community Centre, Clive was in his element doing this sort of thing. The interest in maintenance was becoming evident, even before he worked at the Science Museum."

Most of those who caved with Clive predeceased him, and today's memories tend to be ancillary to his actual underground activities. What everyone remembers is his solid reliability and the late Bruce Bedford remarked that you always felt safe underground with him. Just before his health began to fail he provided some replacement components for a WWII folding table bearing the name Brian Price underneath, which was used in the first caving hut on Llangattock Hillside in 1947. It proved to be a final contribution to CSS over 60 years since he first joined it.

Clive was still caving in the early 70s but reduced his caving activities, although he still attended CSS reunion dinners held in The Hunters' Lodge, Priddy until fairly recently. He leaves his wife, Beryl. It was Clive's wish that any donations made at his funeral, held on Tuesday 17th December, be given to South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team.



Geo Fletcher, Clive Calder, Bob Fish and Bruce Bedford



Clive making ladders with Tich Morris

Daren Cilau – Ovaltinees Flood Discovery

by Alex Randall

Over the weekend of 21-22 December myself, Alex Hannam, Sam Hill and Tom Jackson headed into to Daren to continue the dig near the meeting room. After a few hours of furious digging we were in need of a cuppa, so I headed down to HRC to get tea making equipment.

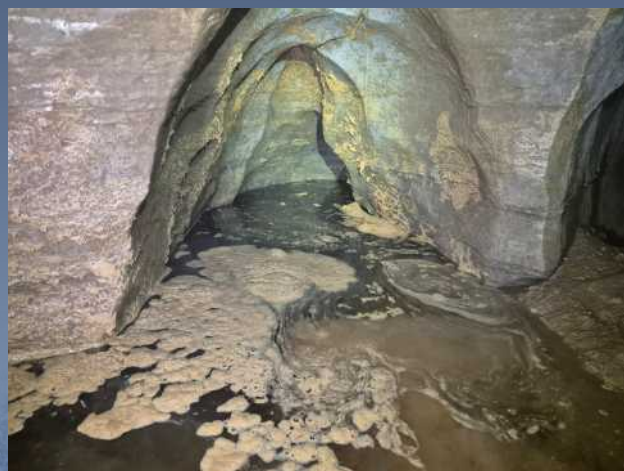
This was about a month after storm Bert and the first time anyone had been to camp since. Evidently the camp had been flooded to a level higher than the 2020 flood. Luckily, with the camp all packed away the damage to equipment has been minimal, but all the foam mats had been washed around 80m down King's Road beyond the area used as a changing room. Had the flood been a few centimetres higher the crockery would have been washed away.

The most significant find however, was that the Ovaltinees had flooded, sumping the first u-tube and cutting off non-diver access to the Hard Rock Extensions and the far end of the cave. This is the first time this has ever happened since the area was dug open in the 80s, so this must have been a record high for water levels in the Bonsai area for the last 40 years. Elsewhere under the mountain it had been reported that Biza Passage was also sumped, though this has been known to have happened before.

At the time of writing (14/02/2025) the water level had receded so the passage approaching the first crawl is dry, but the u-tube/crawl is still sumped and will require some excavation. It is hoped this can be passed on the next CSS Daren Camp in late February.



Alex in the flooded passage of The Ovaltinees



Closer view of the sump

Photos by Sam Hill



*Artwork of Llangattock in heavy rain
by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley*

HRC EXTENSIONS FLOODING UPDATE

by Mandy Voysey



Mandy pointing at the flood level in the passage beyond where Alex is standing in the photo to the left



Matt digging out the sloppy infill

On Saturday 1st March, while Alex Randall and the Hill twins Sam and Oli were furthering the frontiers of Speleology at the current dig, Matt and I braved the slurry in The Ovaltinees in a bid to reopen the route through. As expected, the arch to the first U tube was partially infilled. The washed in substance, which would once have been described as sand, was now transformed to sticky gloopy mud. This was dug out and relocated to higher ground where it should (hopefully) not wash back in.

The drop down to the U tube and first arch is now dug back to the original hard-packed surface, but the low crawl beyond remains sumped and will need further digging once dry. Bailing or siphoning the pool is logistically difficult due to the distance to anywhere suitable to put it, so perhaps the best approach would be to pass drums of water in a chain gang back to King's Road. However, it is hoped that now we've opened up the approach and removed the wet mud, the crawl may well dry out enough naturally for us to make it passable on the next camp in April.

See the Daren Cilau or Cave and Access News on the CSS website for updates on the situation chelseaspelaeo.org/caves/daren-cilau & chelseaspelaeo.org/caves/cave-and-access-news

Retro Gear Review

MyCoal Body Warmer Heat Pads

(from back in the day)

by Mandy Voysey

Looking through a bag of miscellaneous damp items on the last Daren digging camp revealed a collection of ancient MyCoal Body Warmer heat pads. The use by date was August 1991, but rather than just bin them, we thought we'd give them a go.

The Results: After a stony cold 10 mins or so, a comfortable low warmth was reached so the pad was promptly posted between the fabrics of my thermals as I tucked myself into my sleeping bag.

About an hour later I was rudely awoken from my slumber by the heat of pure hell's fire and a heat pad so hot I could barely touch it. Fearful it might burst into flames, I ejected it from my sleeping bag... but then put it back in again when I got cold... then took it out again... put it back in again... and so on throughout the night. Matt also did likewise. Judging by the snoring, Sam slept fine, though extreme heat was mentioned in feedback provided the next day.

Summary: Product has excellent heat properties and as none of the three us using one actually caught on fire it's probably quite safe.

Score: 11/10 for luxury heat
1/10 for restfulness and peace of mind



Items free to collector from the UK's only stockists of 30 year old MyCoal heatpads, Hard Rock Cafe, Daren Cilau.

The History of the Carrion Slocker Cave Dig

A cave dig in East Mendip dug by Andy Watson from 2016-2024 with occasional help from Paul Stillman (WCC) and Matt and Mandy Voysey.

The first visit to Carrion Slocker (swallet), after getting permission to clear the farm rubbish and dig to see if any cave passage was present, was on 13th November 2016. I agreed to pay some money to the farmer towards getting the swallowt fenced and having a small access gate. So in 2016/2017 we removed all of the farm rubbish, the scrap metal was recycled and all other waste was removed from the site and disposed of appropriately. A large tree stump was removed from the main sink point using a system of ropes and pulleys and my Suzuki Jimny.

Once cleared, digging commenced in the rift, which had some very hard red rock that was blunting drills during drilling and splitting using the plug and feathers. In January 2017 we noticed a slight inward draught. A small field surface water stream was flowing into the dig/pothole so we successfully installed a 4" drainpipe going down the rift to capture this water to stop it spraying down the pothole. By December 2017 we had an ~20-foot pot.

In the summer of 2018, we installed a robust scaffolding framework for hauling larger skips and rocks up to the surface. We also stabilised the entrance pot with two acro props, more scaffolding, a short breeze block wall and various meshes, and also installed a ladder for easier access. After this my 36v Bosch drill failed, after a £150 repair it worked but was never the same and failed again about 6 months later. I swapped over to a DeWalt 18v that has been very good. During November 2018 I saw the first bat roosting in the new bit of rift cave! We also made a few modifications to improve the drainage system during the year and it has been very reliable too.

In January 2019 we first noticed a small 3" dark hole in one side of the descending rift that became Bethlehem Pot in due course. In June 2019 some bullocks in the field pushed into the swallowt through the gate and one was injured. The gate was tied shut and we made a climb-over point to avoid further animal incidents. Later the gate was reinstated with a stronger bolt and a weatherproof 'Keep Gate Closed and Bolted' sign on both sides. Later in June I added a bat grill and a mesh door to the entrance of the pothole at the surface level to improve safety even further.

In July 2019 there were two options underground being dug, these were Nazareth (a sloping rift that eventually came to a dead end at Payday Chamber) and the side



Andy fitting scaffolding in the route to Sitting Room No. 1

passage into Bethlehem Pot which was draughting and still progressing (and eventually became the main route to the lower cave system). In October 2019 I added some scaffolding and mesh in Bethlehem Pot to make it more secure and safer.

In January 2020 an area known as Tombstone Rift below Bethlehem Pot was opening up and we started



Matt, Mandy and Andy on Bethlehem Pot breakthrough

scaffolding as the floor of this area was still moving slowly downwards! This was temporarily named 'The Pit of Doom' by Mandy. Unfortunately, in February 2020 I dropped a bag of tools into the floor cavity and had to rescue these on the next trip using Dave's super magnet. but one drill battery was sadly lost forever.

In March 2020 COVID hit the UK pretty hard and the last digging trip pre-lockdown was on the 18th of

March. After this first lockdown and in June the cave depth was about 14m. The top of the Fiat 500 Rift was reached and was descended with Paul Stillman using a standard caving ladder and we celebrated the finding of this reasonably sized rift with one can of Budweiser on the surface. Adjacent to the top of Fiat 500 Rift was The Stores area, which was also opened up and accessed. By July 2020 the depth was now 24m. Matt and Mandy kindly cemented the dodgy looking rock bridge at the bottom of Fiat 500 Rift which was named 'The Bridge of Sighs' like the one in Venice. With the cave progressing Matt got into Sitting Room No.1 in August 2020 (just off the west end of Fiat 500 Rift) with its mantelpiece and vase shaped rock. November 2020 led to another COVID lockdown so I went to review some local chalk mines instead. In December 2020 I found the top of Fiat 500 Rift now blocked by two large slipped boulders due to much heavy rain during my absences, and these needed breaking up and clearing. The area was also stabilised

with more mesh and more scaffold tubes. After a wet winter in March 2021 the surface and the cave all needed a lot of tidying up. A new strong galvanised ladder in two sections was put in the main entrance to the pot to replace the old aluminium ones in April 2021, and the area around the top of Fiat 500 Rift was also sorted to make it safe too. Some scaffolding was put in Sitting Room No.1 around the same time when we thought this might be the way on.

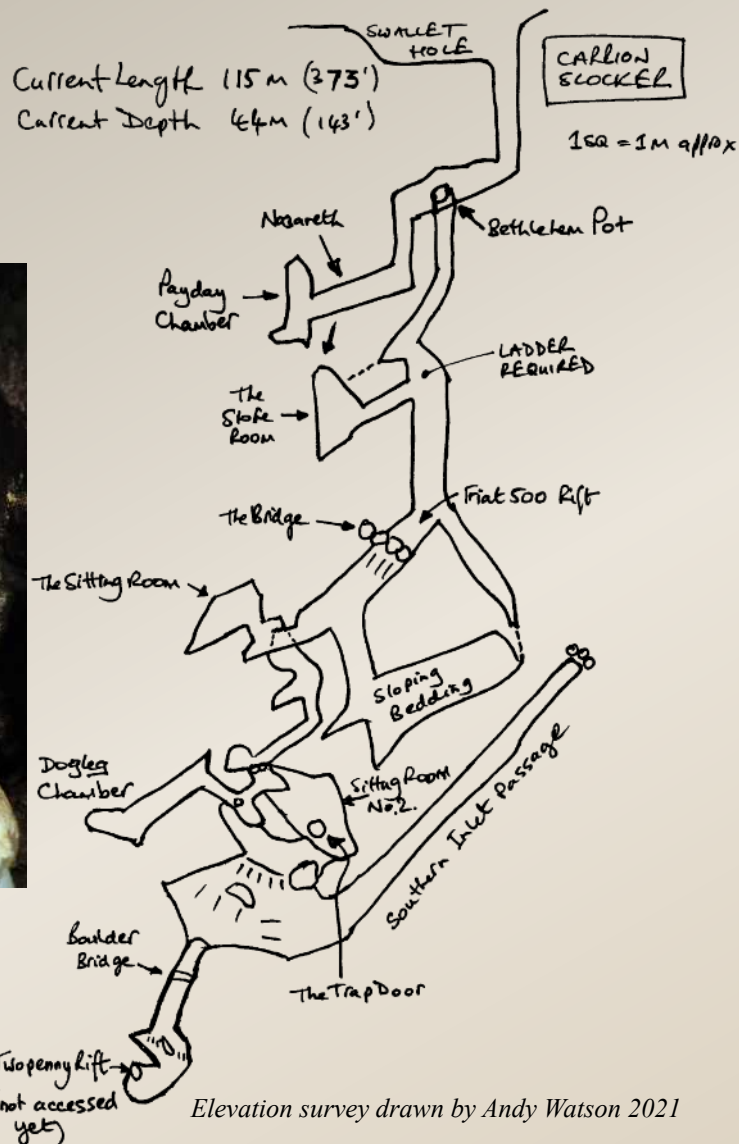
In May 2021 I carried out a basic Grade 1 survey and wrote a description; the length of the cave system was now 65m and it had a depth of 29m. In September 2021 a space below and adjacent to Sitting Room No.1 opened up, followed by a short climb down a 30° muddy slope. This led into Dogleg Chamber which was



Cementing the Bridge of Sighs

2m high and 4m long, but a just dead-end space. Digging downwards yet further I broke into Sitting Room No.2, a small sloping bedding area. The 'Trap Door', a large slab in the floor, was successfully split and opened by drilling and using plug and feathers. This enabled access to a good-sized sloping bedding chamber which Matt explored to the upward sloping Southern Inlet Passage for some 15 to 20m. Further digging in September and October 2021 and a short presentation: we came second in the digging awards at The Hunters' Lodge Inn. During November a bat was found roosting in Fiat 500 Rift for the first time. After further digging and rock removal during March 2022, I noticed a strong draught through a 2" round hole at the bottom of a new slope and the start of the new Twopenny Rift. In July 2022 I fitted some Rawl bolts on Fiat 500 Rift climb to remove the need to use an electron ladder going forward and further mesh was fitted down at the new Twopenny Rift digging point.

In March 2023 I kindly rescued a small frog from the start of Twopenny Rift and put him back in a surface stream. April 2023 I thought might be the 'last knockings' at the cave as I assumed I'd reached end of the digging potential here. But in July 2023 I revisited the site to



check its general condition and agree the visiting access arrangements for other cavers.

In September 2023 I had a partial knee replacement so I was out of caving action for around six months. However, always the optimist, in February 2024 I took in two strong fence post metal angles and made up a square frame and meshes for the dig's final small chamber and slope prior to the mud 'archway' that could be seen. I also installed a 4" drainpipe along the side of this slope to divert the stream water over to one side in April 2024. During August-October 2024 I inserted more scaffolding and cementing/meshing/steps before the archway to make the area safe, and continued over the next four months to fit a further scaffold frame under the arch after much work enlarging the archway. This was followed by some careful assessment of the bedding plane, and drilling and using plug and feathers to remove two sloping roof slabs which were blocking the view and the potential way on where the water was flowing. The cave ends here, in this low bedding plane section where water flows and finally disappears down a very small hole at the southern end at the lowest point. I believe this really is the end of the Carrion Slocker Cave dig – as of February 2025.

Andy in Twopenny Rift

Photos by Matt Voysey



EXTENDING KREM AMARSANG

MEGHALAYA 2025

by Peter Allison

Characters mentioned:

Mike Zawada, USA: organiser & supplier of BRIC5 surveying equipment

Peter Allison, UK (CSS)

Ben Church, UK (RFDCC & CSS since the trip)

Colin Rogers, UK (ACC & UBSS)

Andy Tyler, UK (CSS)

Brandon Blain: camp cook, organiser, driver (MAA)

Elgazer Blein ('Boiboi') (MAA)

Brian Daly: founder and General Secretary of MAA

Lindsay Dienghdoh: expedition organiser (MAA)

Louis Momin: local guide and resident of Amarsang

Cesar, Paila & Ricky: all St. Anthony's College, Shillong

A brief chat with Andy Tyler about Meghalayan deluges being more like waterfalls, and the lightning unrelenting all night, resulted in an invitation to a space on a trip to explore a cave in Meghalaya. Although there were scant details, I jumped at the chance to go caving during the dry season. I'd explained to Andy that my previous visit to Sohra and Mawsynram in May 2024 was at the beginning of the monsoon – not an ideal time for caving as both locations vie for the Guinness World Record for the wettest place on Earth (a possible report about this later).

That was last summer. Details slowly trickled in. Andy said bring a wetsuit and buoyancy aid as we'd need to swim, and a tent, sleeping bag and mat for the campsite. With my photographic gear and a laptop, the tent was over the flight allowance, but Andy said I could borrow one from the Meghalaya Adventurers' Association (MAA) in Shillong. Conveniently, MAA has a tackle store with tents, thin mats, buoyancy aids, helmets, lights, oversuits and boots for use on trips.

Sunday 28 December: Bleary-eyed and jet lagged with bag brimming, I took a taxi from near Guwahati airport, 51m up the zig-zaggy road to Shillong perched on a plateau at 1,525m. It was a week before the main trip, leaving enough time to limber up in Krem Mawpun near Mawsynram and pay a visit to Brian's house in central Shillong. I'd last visited MAA 28 years ago, but Brian's son Lindsay recalled how I'd popped up in September and he'd volunteered to be my guide. I may have forgotten Lindsay's face, but I still recall the sharp pain of the hot carbide chamber against my bare leg. We reminisced about carbide lamps, swimming in Krem Lymput and other flooded caves during the monsoon and how sunny January and February with an average of one or two days of rain were really the best time for caving.

Saturday 4 January: A crisp bright morning with a deep blue mountain sky and I was back in Brian's house at 8am where two four-wheel drive jeeps were being loaded with supplies. Andy, Ben and Colin were there, but not Mike. Customs had discovered his GPS satellite device – an illegal Indian import – with the US embassy intervening to get him released from detention.

We chose additional supplies from the store, such as plenty of roll-up ground mats and tents. Soon, with Brandon at the wheel, we were powering south towards the South West Khasi Hills, a journey of some

173km. From congested Shillong, a smooth, tarmacked road led across rolling hills with beautiful mountain vistas. We had a lunch stop. Later, turning SW off the main road, the going became much slower along a long stretch of rough unpaved road widening, which eventually ended in a narrow, steeply undulating dirt track only suitable for four-wheel drives. Clouds of receding dust billowed behind us. It got dark. The jeep lights illuminated shimmering water as we plunged carefully through rivers and long fords along the rutted track that climbed up and down steep slopes, through secondary forest and bush, with no discernible landmarks. A few hours later, passing no other vehicles and just as we were wondering if this was the right road with Ben saying 'are we nearly there yet', a few solitary houses appeared peeping through trees in the gloom. This demarcated the small spread out village of Amarsang.

Bags offloaded at our campsite – the spacious field of the primary school closed for the winter holidays – and we began erecting tents in the dark. There were two toilets at the field's edge requiring Brandon's team to bring in water daily in large plastic barrels from a nearby river. Soon Brandon and his helpers rigged up lights to the generator, lit a roaring fire with chairs from the school to sit around, and started preparing dinner. Enticing smells wafted by. Simple food tastes so good when you're hungry or after a long day caving. Brandon and the cooking staff always prepared varied snacks before the evening meal, a welcome boost upon arrival, and concocted different delicious dishes every day.

Amarsang at 430m was warmer than Shillong, but cool enough to discourage mosquitoes. The nights went down to between 8 and 12°C. Andy's warning of a possible low of 2°C meant I was over-prepared – any warmer and my down sleeping bag would have been way too hot. The morning sun shining into the tent was the alarm clock, risking a cooking if

you didn't exit rapidly from a peaceful slumber devoid of the more typical night barks and early cock crows of village life. After breakfast, with Mike and Boiboi due later that evening, Ben, Colin and I were driven 4km down the road to a point a few minutes' walk from the entrance to rig the cave. The dirt track passed signs of previous deforestation from slash and burn cultivation, exposing scenic karst scenery. Brandon attributed the environmental changes since the last expedition in 2018, primarily down to logging.



Peter at his tent

Waving Brandon goodbye, Louis guided us the 100m to the opening of Krem Amarsang at an altitude of 380m. Whilst Ben and Andy forged inside, Colin and I followed later, after we'd squeezed into our wetsuits and I'd fiddled with the slow lacing on my canyoning boots. A short simple 2m climb down a narrow cleft led into a 6m wide, 3m high boulder strewn entrance showing collapse of the original cave walls and ceiling. A further 35°, 70m steep descent down a bouldery slope reached the main passage, 10m wide and 12m high at about 25-30m metres below the entrance. An assortment of small and larger loose breakdown and massive blocks covered the floor.

I soon realised my mistake of changing into a wetsuit. I later measured the temperature and humidity in the lower chamber at 21.2°C, 93%. Colin and I were now feeling like we were in a sauna, dripping with moisture seeping to soak through our neoprene. A cry from Colin. He lay in a crack, having fallen heavily. Following this, our progress was even slower, with both of us dehydrating rapidly. We proceeded along the main passage, passing many boulders with a light frosting of glittering pure white calcite. There were numerous cave crickets, and hand sized giant huntsman spiders which were endemic throughout the entire cave.

Taking care not to slip amongst the loose rock, we descended slowly until about 150m from the entrance we came across signs of flowing water, issuing from beneath the boulders covering the floor. The gurgling streamway was visible in places through the breakdown. Further down, some 250m in, the stream emerged from the left through the rocks. The passage became narrower here, where it was easy to cross the water and follow alongside in a shallow decline. Across a bend in the rapidly flowing river we reached the first good formations in a beautifully adorned chamber with flowstones, curtains and a rich wall of stalactites. Ben and Andy were waiting 350 metres in, having changed opposite the gallery at a convenient and relatively flat, gravel, sand and rock raised area above the water we called The Beach. Colin collapsed into a pool to cool down whilst I waded deeper to immerse myself into the river. Ben and Andy had also sweated profusely, saying they'd taken half an hour to cool to a comfortable level. In the future I always changed into my wetsuit at The Beach. Colin was clearly in no position to carry on after his fall, so Andy volunteered to accompany him out. This just left the two of us, Ben and me, to continue in a cave neither of us had been in before, which was quite exciting.

The Siju Limestone was rich in ammonite fossils. It was a pleasure to cave alongside Ben, who was always enthusiastic about disseminating his vast geology knowledge. He had already pointed out the fossilised colonial corals and nummulites on the way in. Near The Beach, a short branch, the 'B survey' passage, climbs 8m up into mud-choked continuations. We waded and walked down the 'A survey' passage, the active streamway. Beyond The Beach, the character of the cave changed remarkably. We had to wade and swim through a series of potholes, some extremely deep. They were all a beautiful colour, every shade of green, blue and crystal clear. Many of the isolated potholes were perfectly circular and very pretty. Between the potholes, the boundary was often a razor sharp thin flake of limestone, which needed caution when negotiating. I was glad to be wearing gloves and knee pads, but my shins with just a wetsuit covering were taking a bruising. It required care to navigate the bottom of deep pools, sharp edges and serrated sides, with the distraction of passing beside beautiful formations in a narrow, tall rift passage. We continued along the streamway through multiple pools requiring swimming, carefully

hauling ourselves over the razor lips into the next pool with sharp uneven limestone projections on the bottom. The sides were often smooth, with some smaller exposed rocks between the pools and others underwater.

We could cross most of the pools by simply pushing away from the wall whilst wearing our buoyancy aids (essential in this cave). Some of the larger potholes – many with diameters frequently exceeding 3 metres – indicated the substantial volume and velocity of the water. These and sections with interconnected potholes required swimming. My 70N buoyancy aid made a real difference in that I could relax feet forward, paddling using hands, on my back through the deeper pools whilst soaking in the atmosphere of beautiful formations gliding past above me. I admired the rusty brown flowstone curtains and layers of higher stalactites passing by. The pale nummulitic limestone reflected my light well, allowing me to appreciate the alluring curves of the meandering river passage. Unlike some other Meghalaya caves I'd been in, such as Krem Mawmluh, where the force of the water during the monsoon destroys and inhibits the growth of delicate formations, the speleothems higher up appeared intact.

The first significant obstacle was a bold step about a metre and half above a small roaring waterfall where the water plunged from one pothole down into another deep pothole where the swirling waters went under a rock to a razor lip before disappearing down a hole. This section had been bolted on a previous expedition. Ben stepped across with ease and rigged a knotted tape for me to grasp whilst I carefully stretched one leg towards the opposite rock, glad of the excellent traction from Vibram on my canyoning boots. Although the limestone with its small scale scalloping provided good grip, I was slightly nervous that if I slipped I'd get spun around in the pool at the bottom, too far down to be grasped before being swept down towards the lip and hole.

A short way further on we reached another bolt, which enabled Ben to rig an electron ladder to descend a 4 metre waterfall. I made a bit of a hash of the descent by swinging into the waterfall and receiving a powerful ear syringe, though my poor excuse was that I can't remember using a ladder since Giant's Hole in 1995. At the bottom, there was a short swim to another series of pools. Progress was always a balance between expending our energy traversing above the potholed streamway, then getting wet in the pools and having to warm up again. Navigation was easy along this one main passage, but there were several side passages and oxbows, with some of them waiting to be explored. Before long, we reached the junction of the A and C survey passages. Here the underground river bifurcates with the northerly A branch taking most water.

We took the southerly stream, which, although discharging less volume, was still a sporty wet trip. The streamway was usually 2-3m wide, 8-12m high, and even though it wiggled slightly, the general trend was fairly constant. Further on, Ben installed another short ladder down a pitch. There were a few places where natural belays or bolts were necessary, allowing the installation of tape slings or etriers to make it easier on the return journey when cavers were tired and battling upstream. The passage was beautiful and frequently made even more so by the continuation of large and often spectacular flowstone formations. Occasionally we encountered huge blocks of orange flowstone in the streamway where erosion had revealed the attractive banding of their internal structure. In one gour pool, Ben spotted and filmed a small fish. His waterproof GoPro was ideal to record our progress, and I resolved to buy a Dji Osmo Action 5 with

its better low light performance to try in the future underground. We felt compelled to continue pressing forward, pulled in deeper by such an aesthetic passage until we realised the others may wonder about how long we had been underground. Our rigging trip ended at the final rigging point of the 2012 trip, where we left the tackle sack hanging off the bolt.

We managed to maintain a comfortable temperature, but were both well aware any slight stop would result in us getting cold rapidly despite the relative warmth of the water, which I'd measured as 20.4°C back at The Beach. Ben had an undersuit and oversuit, only because he thought wetsuits were available at the MAA store. He told me that on a future trip he'd bring a thick wetsuit. I had a 3mm neoprene wetsuit and short wetsocks, but because I felt chilly when stationary, I decided that I'd need my oversuit next time for protection and a little extra warmth.

A third of the way back up the shorter ladder, I found my boot wouldn't come off the ladder. However much I tried twisting, turning, and moving up and down, it was inexplicably stuck. I shouted out to Ben, who came up and spent a considerable time freeing it. He reported the top large metal eyelet had got wrapped around the metal cable of the ladder and also caught slightly on the lacing attachment. I thought myself lucky it hadn't happened higher on the longer ladder beside the waterfall. This was the first serious issue with my Bestard boots. Wellies would have provided better protection for my shins, but I'd decided on canyoning boots so I'd just have one pair of footwear capable of taking on the plane, walking around town, trekking across the countryside, performing well in hot climates both in and out of water and with good traction.

Although not cheap, the Bestards had felt comfortable with my wide feet right from the moment I tried them on (compared to other canyoning boots). In fact, I'd happily worn them all the way from my home, on the aeroplane (cf. luggage allowance), for the first week in Shillong on the Krem Mawpun trip, and just removed them for bed. They were light, with good ankle support, and I found I could use them comfortably for an extended time with either a thin liner for hot weather or change into a thick neoprene sock when needed by adjusting the laces. Any single-sized pair of wellies felt either too tight or loose when changing socks and wearing them all day. Above ground, wellies are too hot and heavy to traipse around all day in tropical climates. I had seen no recent warnings about boot entanglement, probably because of the infrequent use of electron ladders on the continent. However, further investigation showed it had been flagged as a potential hazard on UK caving forums way back in 2017. At home, without loading the ladder, I couldn't reproduce what had happened as it seemed the eyelet always came out easily from the metal cable of my ladder.

Mike and Boiboi had arrived at our camp by the evening and I noticed Mike had a pair of Bestards too. After listening to Mike, still stressed from his police ordeal, I mentioned the ladder entanglement. He said he'd used his for canyoning, but this was the first time for caving and he'd let me know what he thought. I realised my oversuit leg covered the top part of the boot and would minimise any potential issues. Colin's injury meant he wasn't going back into Krem Amarsang. His old wetsuit was exceedingly tight for him and, in the kind and inventive way Colin has, he suggested I cut up the neoprene legs to use as shin pads. These extended high enough to give an essential extra added layer of protection to the lower part of my knees.

On the second day, Mike suggested we all practise using

the BRIC5 survey tool for cave mapping. After his demonstration, we tried out the functions indoors, had lunch and went down into a large chamber in Krem Amarsang to calibrate the device. This required at least 14 different readings from stations at varied height and angles from a central point. Near the entrance, Mike pointed out a granite plaque he had put in place in 2018 in memory of a fellow caver. We then noticed the roof area here looked very unstable, with cracked blocks and one section poised to fall at any moment. We marked this off with orange tape and discussed relocating the plate to a more robust location.

The third day was rigging the A passage and exploring it into the unknown past the last station in 2018, whilst mapping our progress. The structure was very similar to C, but larger with more water. There were more waterfalls and cascades, making it much noisier and quite difficult to hear the others nearby. In the future, a whistle would be handy. Reaching the uncharted section with two BRIC5s between us, Ben, Boiboi and Mike surveyed the main passage whilst Andy and I surveyed an oxbow loop to the side. On the way out, it was noticeable that the larger volume of water and many potholes with short cascading climbs made the trip quite strenuous and tiring. At the knotted tape past the confluence, Boiboi didn't have confidence to step back across the waterfall gap. He took the much riskier high steep climb up and around the smooth side with no obvious edges, cracks or holes for foot or handholds whilst I watched nervously, expecting him to slip and have a serious fall at any moment. Mike was intently watching too and gave Boiboi a support down for the last part, where he paused with no safe way on. This experience made Mike realise we'd need cows tails clipped to an extra rope as a lifeline for future trips. By the time we reached the longer swimming sections past the confluence, Andy was struggling with the buoyancy aid he'd borrowed from MAA, being too small for him and impossible to zip up. In the end, Mike helped by attaching rope and pulling Andy through some of the deeper and faster flowing parts like an inert stranded turtle whilst I floated behind, thankful I'd squeezed in my buoyancy aid from home.

Back at camp, Mike added the BRIC data to his laptop programme, which showed our progress since previous trips. He liked the grip of the Bestard boots, but wondered about part of the material below the lacing, which wasn't as thick as the rest of the boot. I'd noticed the gravel guard gaiters were doing their job of keeping out debris – great to minimise holes in neoprene socks.

The following day, Wednesday, Louis guided us to two other local caves, Krem Sujon and Krem Peter. These lay off the road near Krem Amarsang. The dark rock and large caverns within Krem Sujon sucked the light from our headlamps, making it difficult to appreciate the expanse of the bigger chambers. Without all our gear, we didn't push the unpromising continuations – a tight squeeze passage through breakdown that Boiboi, Louis and I crawled in through, which became very constricted, and a static water-filled channel close to the entrance.

On Thursday, the plan was for Ben, Boiboi and Mike to map further into C whilst we waited for extra MAA members to join us on Saturday to fortify the group for the more difficult A passage. Splitting into two small groups mapping A and C simultaneously was asking for trouble. Andy and I would survey Krem Sujon using the other BRIC device. The way to Krem Sujon was a short walk across a ribbon of half cleared land with signs of a new plantation. I followed Andy, having paid little attention the previous day whilst chatting with others. Andy, professing he knew the route, began asking

me if this was the right direction. Maybe, like me, he'd been too garrulous the day before. He decided we should go left down a track into the forest. The path continued for some way before Andy, sounding more confused, said we should now leave the path and head down into the valley. I happily followed, not really having a clue where the cave was and relying on Andy's waning confidence. Soon we were scrambling down over rough limestone rocks, boulders and thick vegetation, with no sign anyone had been here before. Andy admitted this wasn't the way, but said we might as well go on. He seemed galvanised to find something, speeding up as the terrain became more difficult. My progress slowed as I clambered over increasingly larger boulders, got entangled with vines trying to trip me up, and entered a series of small limestone gullies with promising holes and cracks hinting at caves. Andy forged ahead to scout for a route. A shrill cry of 'I've found a cave' made me scramble down a narrow cleft where he was pointing at a tiny, deep opening. Andy had a peer in and confirmed it continued steeply down and seemed climbable without tackle. He suggested we may as well map it. He marked an arrow with nail varnish on a higher rock, showing the cave, and I left a large bottle aligned towards the way back.

It was now I am and prudent to let Brandon at base camp know where we were, except I only had the vaguest idea. The mobile signal on one bar kept cutting for long periods and I couldn't decipher Brandon's reply. I climbed higher out of the gully and, whilst waiting for the brief periods of a signal, with a mixture of texts and truncated conversations, let Brandon – whose voice had an unusual sense of anxiety when I said we'd placed a bottle in the gully – know what was going on. The mapping engrossed us as the narrow cave kept descending in a series of loops through crawls, squeezes, and short drops. Eventually, it reached a channel of static water running from left to right. It would have been very awkward to map further because both directions narrowed down to only a thin gap between the smooth cave roof and the deep water surface. Up to here, the cave was 41.3m long and 14.9m deep. We ate snacks and crawled slowly up, checking any possible side continuations. Andy declined my suggestion to call it Krem Andy, saying he'd wait until discovering the big one. In the meantime, he temporarily named it Krem Sujon 2.

We wriggled out. After a brief scramble from the entrance, I saw my bottle, helpfully pointing the way back up the gully. But Andy firmly said he thought it would be quicker to take a shortcut to the right because that would soon reach the road near Krem Sujon. I felt uneasy about a 90° switch in direction, heading into a thick forest full of limestone outcrops and boulders, following no path. Before I could voice my concerns, Andy strode off resolutely, as if this was his daily commute. I followed in Andy's wake, trying not to trip entangled in the mass of vines or slip into leaf covered holes between sharp jagged rocks. The dense foliage, deep valleys and rising pinnacles made it impracticable to keep in a straight line or see much ahead. I soon felt we were veering to the right and circling in the opposite direction to the way we had come to the cave. I shouted to Andy to slow down and suggested we turn left. His commuter confidence sapping

after taking a few tumbles, he called back that he was looking for a 'good path'. I couldn't imagine there was any path and thought we should logically try to keep straight, even as the rough terrain thwarted all attempts. Andy yelled if I had a phone signal to call Brandon. Zero bars confirmed my fears – we were deeper in than before. I suggested we could use the trace of a broad expanse of dim light, indicating the vague direction of the setting sun behind and below the trees and mountains, as a NESW guide if Andy knew which way the road or village was. After a pause and thinking a while, Andy said the road is west. He suddenly realised we could orientate using the azimuth function. My BRIC reading confirmed we should be going more left towards the pale expanse of light from the hidden sun.

With renewed vigour, Andy strode on, saying I should check my mobile signal so we could call Brandon for help. I tried to keep up with Andy, reminding him we should keep together and go towards the fading light as he scrambled off again to the right, saying he was looking for a 'good path'. Desperately, I shouted out there's no path in here; we have to continue in one direction or we'll need to sleep in the forest. By now, I was quite resigned that we might have to stay the

night under the canopy. I wondered if the cold weather was enough to keep the poisonous snakes dormant and how I'd be warm with just two thin layers when the temperature dropped. I made a mental note to conserve my water and snacks. Sleeping in the forest seemed to shock Andy to return to a more westerly direction.

However, the terrain was getting more and more difficult, with tall vertical limestone ridges interspaced and crisscrossed with deep, narrow impenetrable valleys making navigation in a single orientation unfeasible and dangerous.

One bar appeared on my mobile – we were moving the right way. I shouted to Andy 'we have a signal' before quickly phoning Brandon. The phone kept cutting. Andy grabbed the mobile and at 4pm texted Brandon: "We are lost heading west call some boys to help." I managed to garble a few words to Brandon, who got in a quick reply confirming going west was correct. Unknown to us, Brandon was alone – there were no 'boys to help' at the camp. He had raced to the vehicle and drove down the road, encountering two random local villagers on the way who he shouted at to get in and help. Perhaps Andy had intuition, for we'd now entered a maze area of impenetrable high, narrow, weathered karst valleys with vertical sides and blocked ends. Brandon phoned, asking if we could hear him, he was coming. I listened, but there was no sound. It was getting so dark that I needed my headtorch to avoid falling. Every route I took reached a risky, precipitous dead end. I couldn't climb down from the tops nor climb up from the valley bottoms. I could find no way through. Whilst Andy was looking for his good path, we got separated. Frustrated and nervous, fearing a night in even more unforgiving terrain, I heard some faint shouts in the distance. I called loudly, shining my torch on full beam through the gloom. Brandon phoned and confirmed he could hear me, to wait, he was coming.

In fact, Brandon had encountered the same difficult landscape and couldn't go on, thinking he'd need ropes to



Ben, Mike, Peter and Andy around the remains of the campfire

continue. With luck, the two locals, like Himalayan tahr goats, left Brandon clinging to a ledge and climbed in through the mountain maze. They helped guide Andy through the rocks before one of them returned to me. Perched higher up, he indicated me to climb up a rock face. But when I tried, I could find no proper hand or footholds with the sheer drop being too risky. Returning, I again unsuccessfully attempted to find a route around the pinnacles towards Brandon, somewhere out of sight. I phoned him, saying I was stuck and the person couldn't speak English. Brandon calmly said I should follow where the guide indicated; he'd send him back because there's no other way across.

The man reappeared, climbing down to slightly above me. It was now dark. I had to imagine I was caving. With my light on full beam, I was even more careful with each foot placement, ignoring the right hand drop to the hidden valley floor. Slow, measured steps and stretches, with the guide pulling me up when he could reach me, and the other one assisting later, we inched across and over the worst of the rockface until we reached Andy and Brandon. Plenty of tension releasing laughter followed whilst we slowly traversed through the dark forest towards the road, with Brandon recalling how lucky he'd been to find two startled people on the roadside to help him on the way down. Many lessons from our experience kept revolving around in my head. But I resolved when meeting the others to cast all these temporarily to one side and to focus on what had happened to the others in the C passage, to avoid diverting too much attention away from the main venture.

At the campsite, Ben, Boiboi and Mike related their successful progress down the C passage. The cave continued similarly, with no end in sight. We now waited for more gear from MAA and a group of their cavers to strengthen the team before making a push down the more demanding and larger A passage. The next day, Louis showed Andy and me the correct way to Krem Sujon, leaving orange tape markers on trees for our return journey. We mapped it to a length of 210.6 metres, 8.6m deep.

On Saturday, whilst still waiting for the MAA group, Mike thought it helpful to locate Krem Sujon 2 as we had no GPS position for the cave. On another typical clear sunny day, Ben, Boiboi, Louis, Mike and I strode off, trying to find the lost cave. Orange tape wrapped around trees periodically gave us confidence at unclear points to avoid a repeat situation. Though without Andy – who firmly said he was going to have a rest and walk around the village – I was soon unsure about the route he had taken. We couldn't find a way into the steep confusing terrain and after Mike took a tumble, left it to Louis to search for it during the following year. I felt frustrated at this loose end and determined if it wasn't located by the next trip, I'd find it then with Louis' help.

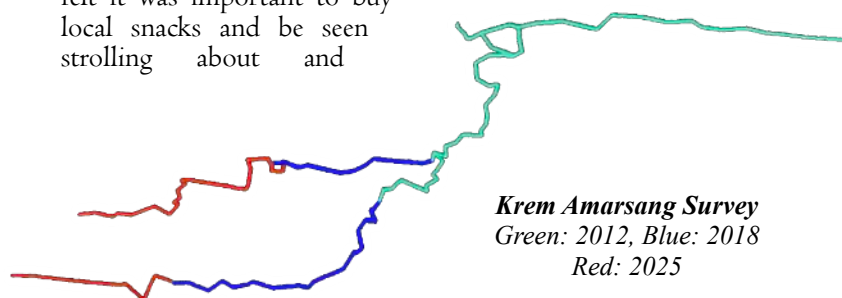
To round the day, we walked to the tea shop in the nearby market, consisting of a few shops spaced around a dusty square used as a parking place for long distance lorries. We felt it was important to buy local snacks and be seen strolling about and

enjoying other parts of the village, rather than be segregated colonisers accompanied by sepoy, exploiting the school grounds and extracting resources from the caves. We smiled and nodded at the few customers who murmured politely at photos on our mobiles. By the time we were back, the MAA contingent had arrived and was settling in.

Sunday morning started off with BRIC and ladder training for the newcomers. Some of the group included students from St. Anthony's College, Shillong. They had established the first college caving club in Meghalaya. It was good to see the extension of their skills is increasing local involvement in caving. Following this, the trip into Krem Amarsang was to evaluate capabilities for a big push into A during the next day. Mike's recent dodgy stomach and my sprained knee ligament meant Ben and Boiboi required a couple of confident MAA members to accompany them all the way. Mike guided the group to point them down the easier C passage at the confluence whilst I waited at the ladder, and then we both returned. Meanwhile, Andy had mapped Krem Sooling-Moror, a cave Louis had identified nearby, to a length of 440.6m and depth of 37.5m.

On Monday, Ben, Boiboi, Cesar and Ricky were ready to tackle the A passage. Mike and I, with a few St. Anthony's College students, helped remove the plaque from the unstable entrance and relocate it deeper in the cave near The Beach. Whilst Mike was attaching the plate higher up, Paila modelled for my first photo inside Krem Amarsang, showing the formations opposite The Beach (see back cover). In the evening after dark, we waited with anticipation for news from Ben's group. The call came, and when the jeep arrived we rushed to hear their report. Excitedly, they told us the river passage just went strongly on and on. They had run out of tackle and didn't want to risk climbing back unaided when tired, even though a beautiful long straight section beckoned. Mike's data showed we'd surveyed an extra 420.7m, with Krem Amarsang now 1,564m long and 61m deep. With no end in sight for both passages, the cave clearly has lots of future potential. Pleased with progress but sad there was no more time (Mike has a busy university schedule), our 10 days were up. We had measured and mapped a total length of 1,340m and 76m depth of passages since arriving. Tuesday 14th was the long drive back to Shillong.

Later in Brian's house, I recounted the ordeal of Krem Sujon 2. They laughed, saying don't I know it's well known Andy gets lost on trips to Meghalaya? Ben's priority next time might be a wetsuit, but mine would be a compass and a GPS app ready for the big Krem Andy.



Mike loading data onto his laptop

Peter relates his experience with acknowledgments to Ben for input with the Krem Amarsang description.

Trevor Kneif

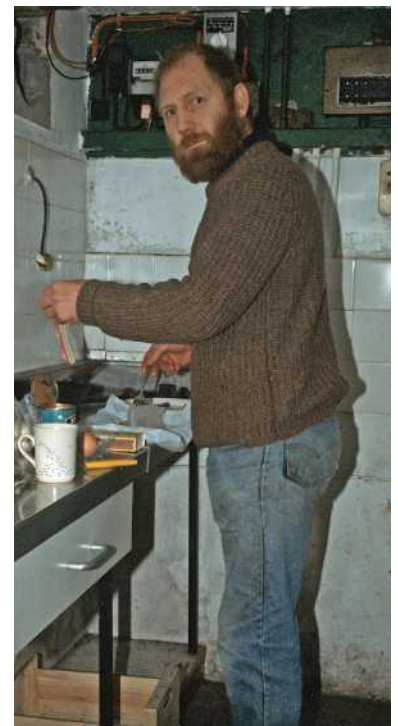
by Nick Chipchase

21st February 2025 – Sad news today that Trevor died peacefully in hospital after a long illness. Trevor was a Chelsea S. S. member during the 1980s and we had many fine trips up in Wales, usually picking the keys up from Arthur Millett and staying at Whitewalls. Trev and I got to the sump in Daren Cilau not long after the extensions were found. It was an epic thirteen hour trip and I was well gone on. Trev's quiet persuasion kept me going. We were carrying two nife cells each.

Digging at the end of Priory Road I got stuck nearly upside down and during my panic session Trev said "I will go and have a fag while you calm down then help." For a few years Trev was an outward bound instructor with the police. He loved that job. He got a life saving award for trying to rescue a cadet who had fallen into the sea. He was a qualified yacht rigger and an excellent seaman; I taught him to dive with his son Julian. We went out on his catamaran which had a habit of breaking down. I was never worried as Trevor could fix anything. When the police cadet job finished he returned to the beat as a PC, but never liked it. His final days in the force were as custody officer as he liked dealing with people and could diffuse any difficult situation.



Nick and Trevor in Pridhamsleigh Cavern, Devon



Trevor in Whitewalls

Trevor is seen here with my great mate, the late Pete Rose, in The Time Machine, Daren Cilau in 1988.

Photos by Nick Chipchase

Editor's Addendum: Trevor was also the discoverer of the unique and interesting cave of Pwll y Gwynt. The tale of this discovery is told in the CSS Vol. 19 publication "An Exploration Journal of Llangattwg Mountain" and is also related in this extract (below) from 'Pwll y Gwynt' by Arthur Millett (CSS Newsletter Vol. 23, No. 6, April 1981).

"A new hole was discovered by Trev Kneif on an afternoon's foray in the escarpment above Agen Allwedd, on the 14th March 1981.

Trev found a small hole with a large inward draught and after a little prod came back to Whitewalls for some digging tools. He then proceeded to make the entrance larger. A somewhat surprised John Cooper, upon exiting Aggy, was confronted by a very excited Trev wanting a ladder and rope for a pitch. This was later measured at 68'3" from scaffold tube to belay. Trev went down and found that it ended at a second aven in a narrow rift with a draught going in. A blind aven was found by hauling up the ladder from the halfway ledge and lowering it down the other side and ends about 10' below the ladder pitch."

