

Journal of the Wessex Cave Club

Vol. 30. No. 315

April 2009



The next Wessex generation
Heading for their first caving trip, into Goatchurch
Joseph Adams, Bethan Adams, Chloe Mason, Jessica Mason
Photo: Dave Mason.

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Editorial Musings

Noel Cleave

Editorial.

This issue is not exactly late. I've skipped a complete journal. For the first time in my 2 years I lacked sufficient material, in February, to justify the cost of publication and postage. My aim is to produce a Journal every other month - 6 a year - and I have been so generously provided with articles that the sudden dearth took me by surprise. December sees non-caving demands on our time, and winter weather can deter even the most dedicated cavers. But..... enough caving is still being done to make entertaining reading.... *if*..... you write up your trips in the Log Book or the "Trip Reports" in our on-line Forum. Transcribing from the Log Book is tedious and hard work. People who type up their trips and then paste them into the Log Book, could I ask you, please, purrrrrlease to Email them to me. For once, however, I have no problem with choosing our cover photograph. So a belated welcome to 2009 and another generation of Wessex Cavers (account on page 268). The downside of a postponed Journal is that caving accounts and news are more likely to be out of date. Then, and I'm not sure that this is a "Downside", there is a *surfeit* of available content. I am certain that my successor in office could scarcely manage things worse.

Club & Committee News

The Driveway We now have a fine concrete driveway. It cost the club a lot of money, but after so many years of axle threatening potholes and puddles, we hope that the members will appreciate it as a worthwhile expenditure of club funds.



Photo: Brian Prewer

The Under-Stairs Cupboard

The committee are looking to appoint further 'under-the-stairs' key holders to make it easier to the issue cave keys, permits and similar. More 'under-the-stairs' key holders also means easier access to Black Wal's cupboard. People wishing to hold a key should apply in writing to the committee. Remember you will have to be prepared to help others who don't have a key if you are around the hut so we can make improved access effective. A list of key-holders will be put on



Photo: Brian Prewer

the notice board. The committee have agreed that the following people should have a key to the understairs cupboard to enable you to access cave keys, permits and keys to locked areas in the hut.

Dave Morrison
John (Tommo) Thomas
Noel Cleave
Aubrey Newport
Pete Hann
Lou Biffin
Ian Timney
Les Williams
Phil Hendy
Christine Grosart
Charlotte Kemp

Kevin Hilton
David Cooke
Stuart Waldren
Alison Moody
Pauline Grosart
Brian Prewer
Simon Richardson
Jude Vanderplank
John (Hatstand) Osborne

Possession of an understairs key in no way absolves members from the requirement to "Book out" other keys. In recent weeks the Craig a Ffynnon and Agen Allwedd keys have been taken (and returned) without any record, and the GB key is a longstanding problem. Every understairs key holder will shortly receive a formal letter detailing their responsibilities.

"Black Wal's Cupboard" The committee is also willing to relinquish Black Wal's cupboard to a club member for them to run in their own right. That club member would take full responsibility for the cupboard. This includes access to it; stocking it and taking account of all monies involved. Anybody interested should apply in writing to the committee.

Lockers Charlotte and Lou are in the process of naming and numbering all the lockers. If you have a locker, please ensure that your name is clearly legible on it. Very shortly any remaining "Anonymous" lockers will be opened, emptied and their contents treated as auctionable winnings for club funds.

There is also a small set of lockers in the Ladies Dorm. If anyone knows where the keys might be or what the system is for having the keys can they please let Lou know?

Overdue Subscriptions. It's unfortunate that subscriptions fall due in the middle of the Christmas distractions, and there are always a mass of overdue subs. Legally speaking, however, you are not a club member and your "Green Card" insurance is invalid if your sub is overdue, so this is not a minor matter.

Fire Extinguishers The club has to have a number of fire extinguishers, the details are a matter of professional advice and the extinguishers are expensive to buy, and scarcely less expensive to refill, so a "High Spirits" misuse is not a minor matter; the period between an abuse discharge and a refill may leave Upper Pitts both legally and practically unprotected.

The Living-Room Redecoration This is now complete and Lou wishes to record a formal (and heartfelt) thanks to everyone who worked so hard there. There has been a lot of effort put in to decorating the lounge over the last few weeks and it's now looking great. Thank you to all those who contributed, it was a good team effort! Special thanks goes to the plasterers especially Ian, Tim who did a magnificent job all on his own painting the ceiling, Carmen for the loan of the scaffolding, and Sarah, Jude, Brian, Brenda and Phil for helping me mid-week to do various finishing off sessions.

Auditor Jane Wittaker, who has done a sterling job auditing the Club accounts, has decided that enough is enough, so we need a properly qualified Auditor. Please rack your brains, suborn your friends and come up with some suitable names!

The Drying Room The Club's electricity bill has rocketed from £154 last year to £272. One item where an easy economy could be made is the Drying Room. At present, when the switch is made, the dryer runs for 8 hours, and there is a tendency to keep it running regardless of need. The timer will be changed to give four hours on selection. It was felt that the provision of the drying room is a basic caving club facility, so the idea of a coin-operated system was dismissed as a non-starter.

Pen Park Hole Leaders We need some volunteers for this onerous task. Those of us who have enjoyed the charms of Pen Park Hole suspect that there will not be a rush of applicants, but the cave is undoubtedly dramatic and in a unique location. Perhaps some Bristol dwellers might be persuaded to accept this responsibility?

75th. Anniversary Celebrations Plainly our 75th. Anniversary celebrations will centre around the AGM and annual Dinner. A post-dinner Sunday Mystery Event is in the planning stages, but any and all ideas would be welcome. As a starter, we would like to enclose with Journal 318, the October issue, a DVD with as many photographs of Club events as possible. The emphasis would be on the development from the more distant past to today, so this would entail members with old photographs scanning them, and some altruistic volunteer producing the master DVD. Your editor can start the ball rolling with half a dozen CDs of recent summer camp images. So do I hear "some altruistic volunteer" offering a name?

The Anniversary Journal, 318 The intention is to produce a celebratory Journal, in colour, and with as many "Blasts from the Past" as we can solicit, cajole or blackmail. So look through your CDs, albums, and old slides. Most can be scanned or copied, and we'll find a way to incorporate them into the Journal..

"Mug Shots" Recent visitors to Upper Pitts, particularly infrequent visitors, may well be 'mugged' by Ali. Her intention is that for our 75th. Year the will be two (locked!) photo display cabinets in the kitchen passageway showing every current member of the club in 2009. This is a lot of work for Ali (surprise, surprise) and your co-operation would be welcome. In particular would absentee and overseas members please Email Ali (aadmoody@talk21.com) a facial photo.

An Anniversary Celebration "At Home" Another event for our 75th. Year will be a Wessex "At Home" day on Saturday 5th. September. Our guests will be all the local farmers and landowners who allow us access to our Mendip caves. The basic plan is for an all-day barbecue, bar, teas etc. at Upper Pitts, and we may have a small marquee to cater for bad weather. Needless to say we will need lots of Wessex members to host and make our guests welcome.

Journal Editor Your Editor would like to relinquish his post after Journal 318. Why? It's a fair question and I think that simplest answer is "Battle fatigue". Also I'd like to spend a lot more time caving instead of typing and DTP. I will happily volunteer to help and instruct my successor into the arcana of DTP (and provide software), or stand aside if someone would like to start on a high note with 318 itself, but three years is enough, for me, and at very least I need a break.

Lost Elbow Pad Jon Beal reports that: "Following the weekend 17/18 January at the hut, I appear to be missing a velcro Warmtex elbow pad. It was with a pile of kit on the backseat of the car and may of fallen out when someone got in the car on Saturday evening after dark. Its return would be duly rewarded in a liquid fashion".

A New Book Project The Wessex Cave Club publishing phenomenon looks set to continue beyond Swildons and Avelines. Tav says: "As part of J-Rat's legacy, the rights to Mendip Underground were left to the Mendip Cave Registry. He was very keen to see a fifth edition published and we intend to carry out that wish as soon as practicably possible. As part of funding that process I am collecting peoples Caving Yarns and Anecdotes - the sort of amusing and/or bizarre tales told in the pubs and clubs, with the intention of publishing a book of the very best. The profits will go towards funding MU5 and any other future MCRA publications. So if you have a tale to tell, no matter how long or short, and would like it to be included for posterity then I'd be delighted to hear it. All cave or caver-related stories will be considered although for obvious reasons I won't be able to publish anything defamatory or incriminating (mind you if they're really good I could always leave peoples names out!). You can contact me on :-

email : rtaviner@hotmail.com

Phone : 01373 812105

Snail Mail : 7 Roman Way, Coleford, Radstock, Somerset, BA3 5PX.....or come and find me in the Hunter's"

Rob 'Tav' Taviner

The Penderyn Weekend - South Wales meet - May 1st to 4th 2009 (May Bank Holiday)

For the Annual Wessex South Wales meet we will be staying as usual at the WSG Cottage at Penderyn. We will be visiting some of the superb caves in the area and also socialising at the cottage, and the Red Lion.

Leaders will be about, to lead trips to some of the less accessible caves in the area such as OFD I and Dan Yr Ogof as well, so this is a good opportunity to meet people in the club and also to visit some of the best cave systems in the UK.

The Cottage is well equipped with all the usual home comforts, so all you need to bring is your food, bedding, a change of clothes and your caving gear. Camping is permitted in the garden if you prefer, with reasonably level pitches. The kitchen is very well equipped and there are plenty of shops and cafes nearby. Most of the pubs in the area do food as well but you normally need to book well beforehand, particularly at the New Inn. We will most probably have a barbecue one night as well.

Lava Tube Caves on Lanzarote.

Saturday December 13 2008 **Cueva Los Naturalistas, Lanzarote**



Photo: Carmen

Carmen Smith. Chris Binding.

Menacer and me had some unfinished business at this cave after our previous trip in June, which ended at a "blowing a hooley" too-narrow hole that required a pushing trip involving the wielding of a large hammer combined with an absence of brain cells.

Nice wide open passage with good lava flows present; a couple of entrances to the surface allow a through trip and both ends of the cave close down in impassable crawls.

On arrival at the cave I instantly pretended that I knew exactly where we had to go to locate our previous digging spot and then took the wrong way entirely, leading us to a flat-out gnarly crawl which didn't look anything like I'd remembered it 'cos it was the wrong place but I carried on regardless thinking that Carm wouldn't notice. She did.

Anyhoo, it looked like it should be possible to wedge myself hopelessly into this lacerating cheese-grater of passage and so after getting togged up in my warmbac, pads, helmet etc. and rummaging around gingerly on the pointy stuff, I set off with hammer and chisel into an immediate dog-leg which needed some smashing to yield for my girth. A happy few minutes soon gave me the confidence to attempt to get stuck and some ripping and tearing noises accompanied the centimeters of movement which followed. Backing and forwarding and sideways eventually resulted in forward progress of 20cm around the sharp bits and I could see ahead; reporting back to the patient Carm that I had a flat out sharp horizon of about 15 metres which appeared to pose no problem, I set about wriggling ahead, zig-zagging for the high(er) bits and dry-stone-walling the moveable lumps of charcoal-ish lava to one side to aid my comfort; slow hot work, this. After a couple of minutes, the hammer was required once more to knock out protrusions in the floor at another ledge and this was awkward.

Lying on sharp lava, tearing chunks out of a warmbac, while sweat courses into your eyes and you are velcroed to the floor and ceiling simultaneously, pretty much on a solo mission into committing claustrophobia-inducing territory, gives pause for thoughts such as "Why am I here? Is this really going to lead anywhere? What if I get stuck/knocked out?.... etc." but the breeze beckons and the dehydration headache means such unwelcome thoughts mercifully become sidelined by more pressing immediacies, like "Blimey, I'm hot", "Cripes-a-lawkey, I'm thirsty", "Flippin' ecks, my eye is stinging!", etc..

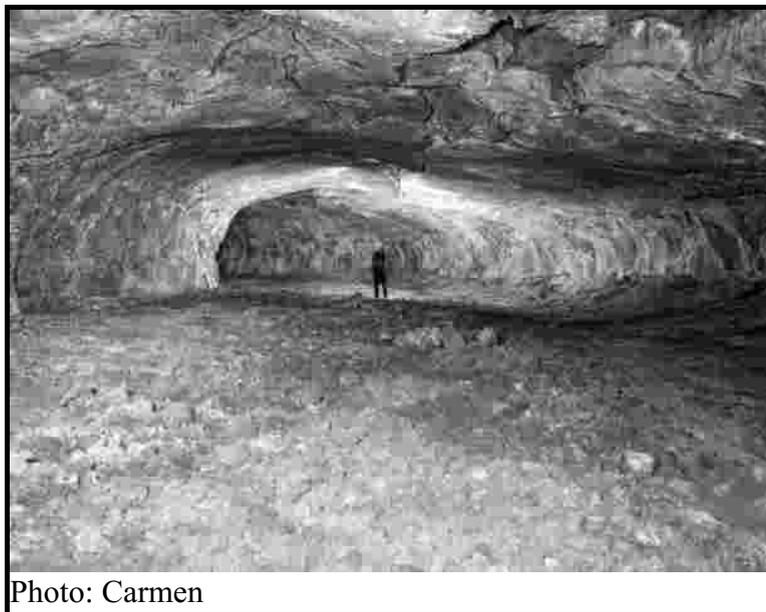


Photo: Carmen

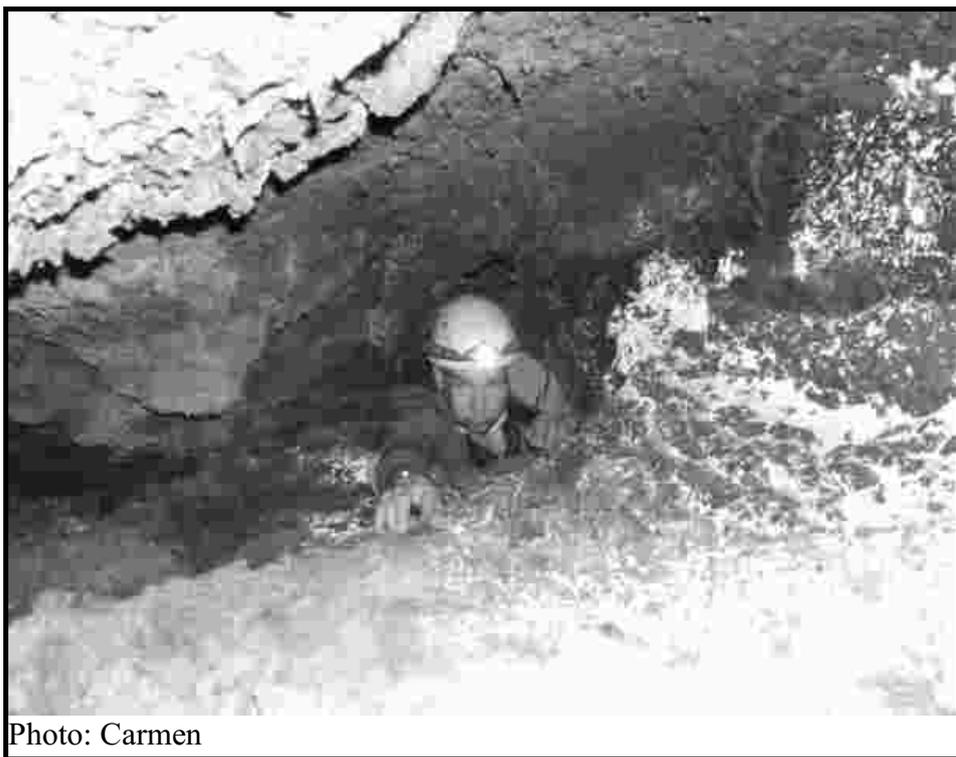


Photo: Carmen

Breakthrough! - er,.... not so hasty!.... I've managed to get a blockage snapped off and shifted to the side wall which allows me to progress into even tighter passage, clearly no-one has been here before (after all, who'd want to, I thought un-reassuringly to myself!), as I meander microscopically across the razorland, heading towards a corner of black space ahead; the breeze continues to cool me somewhat, as sustained flicking of moveable lava chunks enables less painful progress - the complex, yet dull gray, lavamites convolute their way, like solidified blackened toothpaste squeezings, from the ceiling, glistening here and there with pristine dustings of gypsum, salt-ponds of which sticking like plaster flakes to the roof and the fine specks of white glide past, picked out like miniature stars in the powerful white light of my helmet-mounted XP LED. I lie on my back, breathing hard from the muscular exertion required to inch ahead, gingerly laying my weight only

on my pads for fear of puncturing skin lest any other parts of my body dare come into contact with the rock needles which bristle about me. I can't hear Carm any longer, and I guess she's gone off for a wander somewhere to relieve the boredom as I chip, chip, chip my way half-pathetically, half-effectively, to enable another centimetre of painful pioneering to occur.

After a few more minutes any expectation of easy glory evaporate with the observation that the ceiling and roof are closing in on each other, the passage becoming wider but lower; the perceptible draft trending upwards into a 5 centimeter gap, wide.... but impossible. That's that, then. At least I can head back.

Such thoughts don't really equate with the reality, though, since "returning" isn't a case of re-turning. Turning is impossible, for starters. It's a case of trying to blind guess where you've come from, little realising that pads, suit edges, belt etc. all conspire to snag on thousands of rock pointlets, like some kind of agonising playground slide made by sadists from swarf and cheese graters. "This is a brand new warmbac suit, ruined on a single trip", is the thought which keeps flagging up as every ripping noise emanates from each sweating writhe.

Soon I find a wide section where a 360 turn can take place and I'm pretty much on easy territory now as I can see the meandering route I need to follow; the headache prompts me on, knowing that the sooner I get out, the sooner I can rehydrate... and the dog-leg ledge is ahead - I can see Carm's light in the distance and that spurs me onward, albeit at a snail's pace. In fact, probably not even that fast! Soon I reach the sanctuary where Carm is waiting and I can crouch once again, taking the weight off my tendernesses - what a relief. My expressions of effort can cease, too, so the place becomes less noisy as a result!

Eventually reaching daylight, drenched in sweat, the glory of being the first to notch up 25 metres of "new" lava tube fails to match the exertion of the endeavour. Matienzo is far nicer!

Chris Binding and Carmen.

A week up north...

The gang :Chris Grosart, Clive Westlake, Paul Gamble, Carmen Smith, Chris Binding, Elaine Hill, Barney. The week began with me travelling up to Paul, my better half's place in Cheshire on 30th Jan, to travel over to Snowdonia. There was a lot of snow on the tops, minus 2 at sea level and a very strong wind, dropping it to minus 10. We spent 3 hours of Saturday afternoon climbing Moel something or other and catching some particularly good scenic views and watching the rescue chopper plucking people off Snowdon.

After a night in a comfy B&B in Betswy Coed, we set off for Y Garn, Glyders Fawr and Fach and despite struggling to stay upright in the wind and having to deploy crampons and axes twice, had a cracking day and the sun showed it's face for most of it.

We returned to Cheshire late, to pack our caving and diving gear and head off to the snowy Yorkshire Dales, where we received news from Carmen and Chris (they were rigging Juniper Gulf, we were to de-rig) that the usual road was impassable so we would have to walk in from Clapham. Sad.



Barney, Christine, Elaine, Clive, ascending Trow Gill Photo: **Paul**

Elaine, Clive, Paul, Barney and I got snowed on but yakked away happily and found the pothole - much to Carmen and Chris' relief !!! We met them on the way out at the traverses and went to the bottom, Clive taking some pictures of the big pitch, which should be successful due to slaves - both human and mechanical, to quote Clive: "Working impeccably".

Juniper Gulf had been on my hit list for some time and did not disappoint. The entrance shaft was pleasant, once we had negotiated the small boulder climb which would normally be a non-event, had it not been covered in sheet ice. We met

Carmen and Chris in the middle of the traverses and had a quick chat before they headed out and we continued heading in. The 9mm rope was pleasant, if rapid, and we bottomed the awesome final pitch, gathering on a ledge to arrange photos, slave drivers and models. I got the choice job of dangling on the rope on my way back up, whilst posing for photos from below and got the opportunity for a leisurely prusik and a good look around from the best seat in the house.

'Bad step' on the way out was not much more than a little awkward, though we were regularly reminded of the various routes of yesteryear when the trip was frequented on ladders, missing out some of the traversing, to which Elaine took a passionate dislike. Ascending the final shaft and Clive deployed his camera again as, when the electric blue sky faded into a deeper hue, large, silent snowflakes began to fall on us as we craned our necks back to watch Barney prusik out first. Unfortunately, once on the surface, this turned into a night-time blizzard and conditions began to get a little threatening and navigation back to Clapham, somewhat tricky.

We de-rigged and set off back to Clapham in the dark and an ensuing blizzard, taking a slightly creative route, before getting back to Greenclose to meet Carmen and Chris who were beginning to have kittens and inventing



Clive. The picture of innocence at Alum. Photo: Christine

allsorts of nightmarish mishaps which could have caused our delay ! We fed on spag bol and mulled wine, finished off by cheese and biscuits before lounging in front of a very impressive log burner.

Day two and our intended trip to Malham Cove was thwarted for several reasons. My legs were still complaining about the crampons on Sunday, John Cordingley decided against diving due to there being too little water for his purposes and without the luxury of his landrover, which has exclusive access to getting a bit nearer to the entrance, we decided that lugging gear over ice and snow wasn't the best idea in the world. Instead, Clive set off up Ingleborough in persuit of photos which failed to present themselves and Paul and I ran some errands dropping off gear all over the Dales for people and wound up diving in Joint Hole to test my new Otter Brittanica drysuit - which was fortunately, dry !

Next day and we decided to do Alum Pot 'Super Direct', more accurately, the North West route. Paul was volunteered to throw himself over the edge first and much heckling evolved on the surface whilst we opted for the wrong sort of tree....being an arborologist (or whatever - tree surgeon to the rest of us !) Paul was insistent on picking the right tree - which was just as well or else we would have ended up in some ungodly bush tangle!

I rigged the last pitch and we started re-ascending whilst Clive took photos. He was to ascend last and de-rig and we began to wonder, after half an hour, what had become of him - especially as he prusiks at around the speed of light. His delay was not, as we generously assumed, due to him not hearing 'rope free' over the crashing water...but for another reason which I won't disclose.....but prusiking Alum direct 1 ½ times means he is unlikely to forget it again !!

The next day we elected to photograph Rowten Pot, a cave neither Paul nor I done and Clive again photographed efficiently - and I de-rigged more efficiently than I rigged !!

Next day and we elected to have our customary dive in Hurtle pot. Paul and I dived together while Clive dived afterwards on smaller cylinders and the use of my mask !!

The viz was about 4m and we patched up a bit of line at Jingle junction before continuing to just short of Jingle pot, when a line break and poor viz turned us around. the continuing line could not be seen and loose, downstream floating line was getting hazardous, so we tidied it up and headed out.

Saturday - and via a comedy of errors, Clive, Paul and I ended up in Home Bank mine in Derbyshire, taking underwater photos. None of us knew what we were doing, so it is hardly a surprise that only a few were passable.

Sunday was spent packing gear, having a Sunday roast and doing the square root of bugger all before a dull, spray lashed journey home. All in all, a real fun week. About time we went back to work for a



Paul & Christine. Hurtle Pot. Photo: Clive Westlake

rest !! **Christine**

Goatchurch Cavern The next generation of cavers

Monday December 29 2008

Dave Mason, Mark Adams, Jessica Mason (12), Chloe Mason (9), Bethan Adams (10), Joseph Adams (7). With the Christmas holidays upon us it was time for me to fulfill a promise I made to the kids some time back to take them on their first caving trip. Mark had taken his kids a few times before and they were raring to show Jessica and Chloe how it was done!

So it was that we found ourselves meeting in the car park at Burrington at 10am on a very cold and frosty day. We soon had the kids all kitted up and ready to go with all manner of spare kit we had amassed over the years. Mark decided to take a slow walk on up to the cave with the kids whilst I finished sorting myself out and moved the car to somewhere a little safer from the car thieves!

I then hurried up to the cave ready to catch up with our merry band. I arrived at the entrance to find no-one there? must have started without me! So I headed in to the cave but still no sign.....mmmmm?

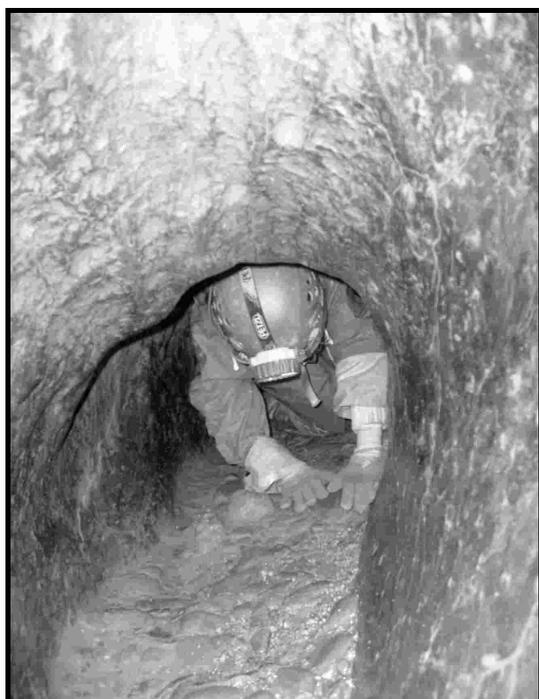
After a bit of routing about I soon heard a shout down the Tradesman's Entrance from Mark and met them back at the main entrance. Apparently they had stopped to have a "practice" in Avelines whilst I raced on past them! We were soon underway caving proper and our wannabe cavers wide eyed and keen to press on. Chloe however

was a little more nervous and had to be coaxed along. We made steady progress into the Boulder chamber (you don't realise how steep some of the passages are until you take little people with you!) and soon had them all geared up for the climb/slide(!) over the "Coffin Lid". We lifelined Bethan first, Joseph second, then Jessica and finally Chloe. We headed slowly down the next steep section into the top of the "Water Chamber" where we branched off right to the "Drainpipe". Mark headed in first with Bethan and Joseph close behind and Jessica bringing up the rear. Chloe at this point decided that was a step too far for her first trip and waited with Dad for the others to come back out!

We then took a slow climb out with a quick detour to look at "Bloody Tight" but even the kids thought it was too bloody tight! Steady progress was made to the "tradesmans entrance" where we again lifelined/hailed the kids up the steep slippery climb and into the cold frosty air!

An enjoyable morning was had by all getting dirty and clambering around in this great little cave. Its ages since I have been in Goatchurch and the trip reminded me of my first exploits under Mendip. I wonder how many of us over the years have started our passion for caving in Goatchurch Cavern?

Dave Mason



Jessica Mason in the Drainpipe.

Photo: Dave Mason

From the Log Book & the Wessex Website

Thursday November 13 2008 **Read's Cavern** Phil Hendy, Rich Hobbs, Nicky Dennis.

A nice stream flowing. All routes investigated. Several black moths around the Water Chamber. Certain parts still have an aura of impending doom! **Phil**

Saturday November 15 2008 **Swildons Hole** Nik Nak, Adrian, Clive Westlake, Cookie, Rich Carey, Andy Snook.

Adrian NikNak and Clive went down the streamway and met Cookie and Andy, who'd come overland, in Swildons 4. All dived sump 4 and eventually sump 5 - The Tumbledown retaining wall had tumbled down and

the spoil had washed into the channel downstream of the sump. It took most of an hour's digging to produce a useable airspace. Three dived sump 6 and three went through the by-pass. Cookie, Rich and Andy went to sump 9, While NikNak assailed some boulders in Jenga with a crowbar. The dig now looked so caver-hostile that Adrian deployed a bomb which detonated with a rather loud Bang. We returned via our different routes to Swildons 4 where we met up with the CDG Welsh section. They dived sump 6 in zero visibility and found even worse beyond - bang smoke and fumes, so soon caught us up. Much inter-sectional abuse enlivened the trip out. Safely on the surface we became lost in the mist and couldn't find the hut. When we did, we found that the water was off..... not showers in prospect, but suddenly the water was 'on' and so to the Ratfest celebration at the village hall. 7 hours. **Adrian**

Thursday November 20 2008 **Cuckoo Cleaves** Phil Hendy, Rich Hobbs, Kay Chambers, Nicky Dennis (Cheddar CC).

Negotiated access with the gnome at the entrance; a straightforward trip taking in the Upper Grotto. Suspicions of bad air here were confirmed at the bottom. Only a half-hearted attempt by Rich on Lake Chamber. Puffed and wheezed out. It got better above The Canyon. **Phil**

Thursday November 27 2008 Swan Mine. Steve, Paula, Bob Scammel.

We were a bit late starting, after a huge fish and chips in Batheaston. The mine is still in very good order, and someone has made a concerted effort in constructing a heavy-duty protective entrance tunnel, as the stone above and around the entrance is in a very poor and loose state. Since Carmen and I cleaned off the stupidly sprayed dashes and dots throughout the mine in 2004, thankfully nothing more has been added and the place is pleasantly original. Even the cart tracks have sharp sides where visitors are obviously taking care where they walk. The "Visitors Log" is still there though the pages are damp and falling apart and the pens no longer work. The horse-shoe boot prints and hob-nailed boot prints have been surrounded by further stones to save people stepping on them, and the crane is still standing at the end working, albeit that the wooden top bearing is well and truly rotted now, as also is the jib. Fine radiating cracks in the ceiling from the crane socket tell of a future possible large collapse when the crane finally comes down. The small notice I placed on the crane in 2004 advising people to look at the top bearing before attempting to move it, is still there and appears to have been adhered to! Out at 2250 after a good look around and photos. **Bob**

Thursday November 27 2008 **Swildons** Dave Upperton, Paul Kirk

First trip in 3 months due to paternity leave; was nice to get back underground, especially nice as early in the day it was quiet, with no waiting at the twenty.

Saturday November 22 2008 **Swildons 7 & Jenga Rift** Adrian VdP, NikNak

Return trip to check on the results of our chemical experiment carried out during RatFest. The results were magic - quite literally. Several unstable boulders had completely disappeared. We were able to climb up into a void, 10' long and 7' high: one solid wall with flowstone, hanging death on all other sides. The entry up into the void is restricted. Using a crowbar in there would be suicide, so another bang is required. Will return soon. **Adrian**

Friday November 7 2008 **Kingdown Mine** Ali. Phil Hendy.

A reconaissance trip prior to the Christmas Mince Pie and Sherry party. We checked the passage, finding a suitable chamber for the festivities, and organising lunch at the "Swan Mine" where we intended to leave the cars. **Phil**.

Friday November 28 2008 **Waterwheel Swallet** Phil Hendy, Rich Hobbs, Kay Chambers, Chris Castle, Nicky Dennis (Cheddar CC).

A cold night with colder water! We decided against pulling the bungs from the canals. Laddering the pitch, Phil lifelined while Rich went down first, landing in chest-deep water. The others followed but did not go beyond the dam. **Phil**

Saturday December 6 2008 **Charterhouse Cave** Ali, Nigel Graham.

Clearing stal and installing ropes below the breakthrough point but still on the slopes of Chill Out Choke. 'Fraid

we've still more cementing. A large boulder decided it would like to get close-up and personal with Ali, who in her word "Squeaked" and moved very cautiously up and past it. Otherwise a very useful conservation trip.
Nigel

Friday December 19 2008 **Rhino Rift** Dave Mason, Andy Jackson. We raced down to Mendip on the Friday evening to get in a last trip before the Crimbo festivities. Andy has been splashing out and bought a new SRT harness and was keen to try it out. I was keen to go back to Rhino having not done it for a few years. Last time I did it was quite early in my SRT training and I have to admit that I was a little nervous at the time. So having done some bigger stuff in Derbyshire since, I was keen to get back and have another go.

We met on Mendip, grabbed some string and the key and set off for the Longwood valley. The weather was wet and windy and getting changed was a chore. We soon found ourselves at the cave entrance and crawling through the entrance passages. There were quite a few bats about and care was needed not to disturb them.

Andy soon had the traverse rigged and was descending the rope. A moment of swinging around soon had the deviation rigged and he was on his way again. I soon had the call to let me know the rope was free.

My turn. And actually I found it OK. I am now far more confident with the kit than I was the last time I came and was soon out across the traverse and threading the descender at the "Y" hang. And not a sign of disco knee! As long as I take my time and check every thing I do I can keep the vertigo at bay! I soon found myself at the deviation which needed some adjustment and then on my way again. The bottom section of the rope was quite wet and was a lot quicker through the stop so need some careful control on the way down.

A quick stop at the bottom for a breather and we decided it was time to make our way out if we wanted a pint and food at the Hunters. Andy made his way out first and then I followed de-rigging as I went.

We stuffed the rope in the bag and beat a hasty retreat for the car. The rain was coming down even harder and we changed quickly. A quick stop at Upper Pits to wash the rope and put it and the key back and we soon found ourselves sat in front the fire at the Hunters.

A nice trip for a Friday night, I think I'll make Rhino my new SRT training ground in preparation for Derbyshire next Spring..... **Dave Mason.**

13 December 2008 **Kingdown Mine** A cast of thousands , scores, dozens.....

After lunch in the "Swan Inn" we went into the mine to celebrate Christmas with sherry, mince pies and sausage rolls, organised by Ali Moody. A full exploration of the mine was undertaken first, including a visit to the intact crane, which was well photographed. The end chamber of one of the mine's branches was lit with Tea lights, miniature Christmas Trees and Santas. Most of the visitors were suitably attired as Elves, Reindeer and enough Santas to confuse any child. We departed, litter picking as we went, and later enjoyed an indoor BBQ at Upper Pitts



Wessex Christmas Party. Photo: Mak

(properly cooked, however, outside, courtesy of perfectly clement weather). **Phil**

Thanks, Ali, for yet another delightfully enjoyable event. **Noel**

Saturday December 20 2008 **Swildons 5, Tumbledown** Adrian VdP, NikNak

First time back in a while. A little time digging at the face. The passage appears to be climbing up on the left. In a session or two we should find out if this is the way on, or a small inlet. Hilti-ed the floor to increase passage size for digging convenience. **Adrian**

Wednesday December 24 2008 **Rolling Thunder** Murray Knapp. Aubrey Newport

Wednesday night = digging night, where was everyone? (bah! humbug!)

We went to Rolling Thunder with a crow bar. Murray managed to ease a flake from the left hand wall and blocked the passage with a 3 foot long lump of rock. Sad.

We will return with magic rock breaking chemical. Aubrey Newport

Thursday January 1 2009 **New Year at Upper Pitts.** New Year 2009 was the coldest on Mendip for some years. The temperature remained below freezing for many days, and the trees and hedgerows were covered in fantastic



New Year's Eve at Upper Pitts. Photo: Maurice Hewins

ice crystals. However, with the old Hillgrove pot-bellied stove roaring away, Upper Pitts had a most welcoming feel about it. The evening before New Years Eve, thirty members sat down to a four course meal, arranged by Phil Hendy. He was assisted by Brenda Prewer, Jacky Ankerman and Pauline Grosart. After a few glasses a session of target practice ensued, rather reminiscent of Wessex Dinners of old (minus the pepper-bombs and butter-dipped paper darts, of course).

On New Years Eve there was a partial change of personnel, before we braved the cold and walked up to the Hunters. There the usual crowds saw the passing of 2008 with Auld Lang Syne at the crossroads. Here's hoping this year's caving will be as good as last in the Wessex. **Maurice.**

Tuesday January 6 2009 **Rods Pot - Bath Swallet** Phil Hendy, Rich Hobbs, Kaye Chambers, Chris Castle & Nicky Dennis (both Cheddar CC).

A Freezing night. Phil entered Bath Swallet finding an icy inwards draft and ice well into the cave. He laddered the pitches and waited at the bottom, finding four bats. The others explored Rods and roped down Purple Pot to make the connection. The ascent was straightforward and it was a pleasure to return to Upper Pitts to shower and change in the warm. **Phil**

Thursday January 8 2009 **Gough's Cave.** Phil Hendy, Rich Hobbs, Kaye Chambers, Chris Castle & Nicky Dennis (both Cheddar CC).

A trip to Lloyd Hall. Quite straightforward. Although we had not had rain recently, the Hall was very drippy though water levels were low. All went down the rift and traverse apart from Chris who used SRT to get in and out. We intended to replace the frayed rope on the water-level traverse around the projecting rock leading to the diver's platform. We all made it to the platform and then Rich returned to the base of the ladder to start replacing the rope. It all looked very iffy. The rope was frayed almost through and the maillons were extremely rusty; even so we were surprised by a loud splash as Rich went into the water. We found that one of the rock anchor plates had snapped. Luckily Rich's reactions are good and he only went in to his knees (the water here is about 10 metres deep!). Rich tied the rope off to a rock and we fixed the other end to a maillon at the back of the platform. Further work is needed to make access to the platform safe. **Phil**

Tuesday January 20 2009 **Whithyhill Cave** Phil Hendy, Rich Hobbs, Kaye Chambers, Nicky Dennis (Cheddar CC), Darren Whiley (Cheddar Caves).

Supposed to be **WL Cave**, but due to a Senior Moment the wrong key was picked up. The cave has flooded recently, enough to soften or obliterate most of the footprints, and leave everything covered with greasy mud. The water in the pools was higher than usual which made some of them more difficult than usual to cross. We went to the end of GP series and to Green Lake Chamber. **Phil**

Friday January 23 2009 **Hunters Hole** Dave Mason, Mark Adams.

Pantin, Pints & Pleiades! Yet another Friday evening found us meeting in the Hunters car park for some SRT practice. We originally planned to do Rhino but in the end both of us just couldn't be bothered to trek all the way there so an easy trip in Hunters was agreed. I was particularly keen to try out my new Pantin.

We soon had the pitch rigged down to the ledge and then a second rope down the main pitch. Having done a fair bit of SRT now I am now feeling really quite confident with the rigging side of things and was pleased with the way things went. Mark went to the bottom first and we messed around looking at different deviation points further down the pitch making use of naturals. There was loads of water dripping and it was really quite wet in places due to the recent rain so neither of us were keen to hang around too much at the bottom. Mark went up first and then I followed using the new Pantin.

I have to say I was really impressed with this bit of kit. It makes self starting easy and eliminates the problem of the rope not feeding through the Croll. I didn't try any particular style but having that extra ability to take a step up also made getting the Croll off the rope easier at the top of the pitch.

We soon had the pitches de-rigged and headed back out to get changed in the frosty car park.

The Hunters was really quiet and we found a table easily in the bar and settled down with a pint and a chilli.

We then left the pub to make our way home and found ourselves looking in awe at the fantastic night sky. Even with the light from the pub the sky was a mass of stars. Something us townies just don't see with all the light pollution. The milky way could be clearly seen along with the Orion nebula and the Seven sisters. We even saw two shooting stars in the 10 minutes or so of star gazing....wow I could have spent hours watching that sky!

A great trip! **Dave Mason**

Tuesday January 27 2009 **Swildons** Phil Hendy, Rich Hobbs, Kaye Chambers, Nicky Dennis (Cheddar CC)

Low water, straightforward trip to Mud Sump only to find 3" of airspace. Rich bailed a bit, then floated through. The rest declined. The stream in the Water Chamber now sinks to the right, to emerge at the end of the Dry Ways, so no water now sinks at the back of the large block above the start of the Water Rift. **Phil**

Saturday February 14 2009 Lionel's Hole Richard, Tim, Faye, Graham,. Pete Buckley.

My thanks to Richard for leading a very enjoyable round trip down Lionel's Hole.

Despite the horror stories and warnings of mud, squeezes and difficulty route finding this was a fantastic trip. Very reminiscent of Eastwater in many respects (navigating a boulder ruckle, crossing a traverse and so on). Unlike Eastwater though, the traverse was actually fun! Lots more grip. The first duck was Ok, even for an avoider like me, I got a wet ear. Sensibly the second duck was bypassed. Tim added some enjoyment by tackling Horroface 1; he enjoyed it so much he, almost, persuaded me to try it

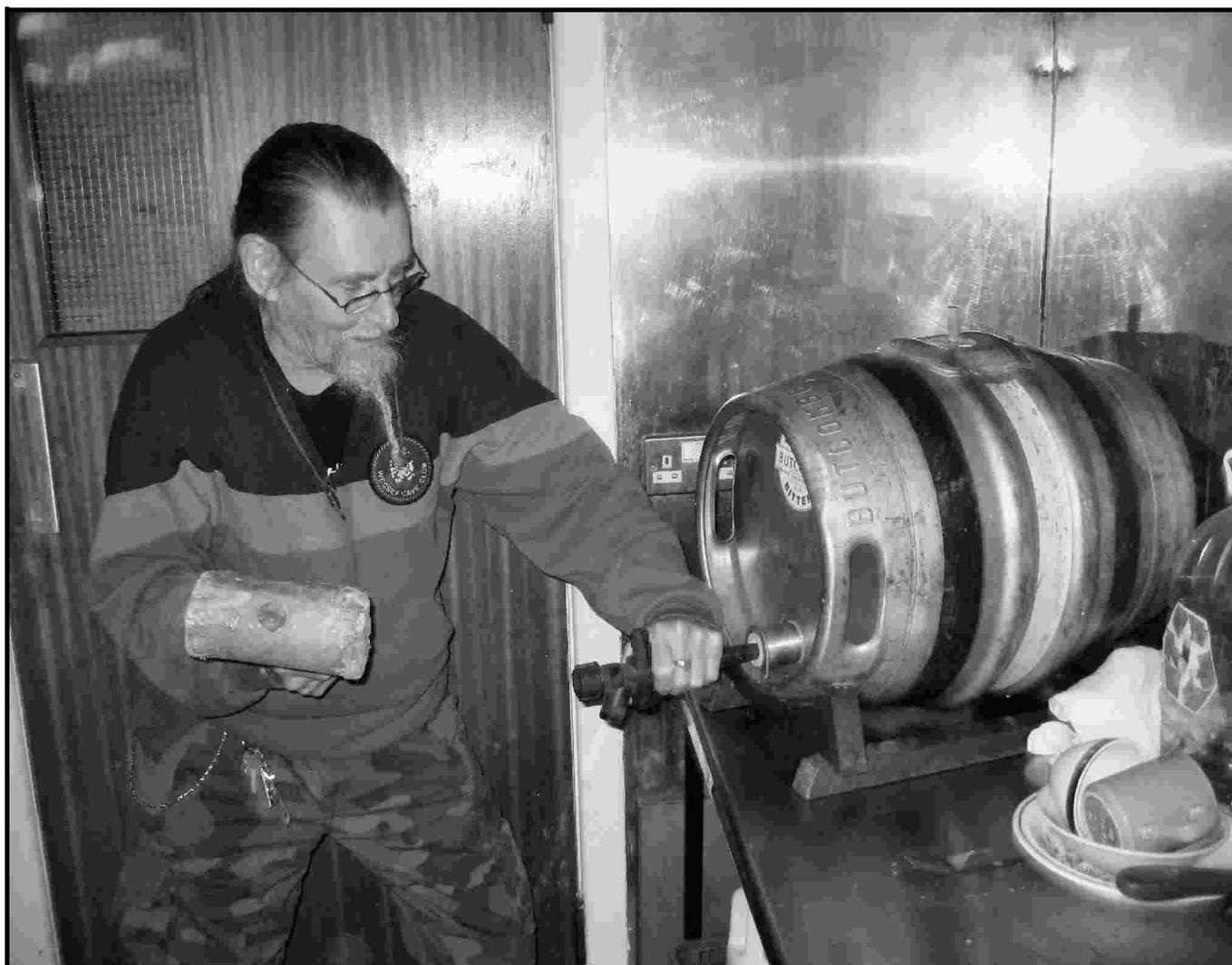
Coming back didn't throw many route diversions ... ably led out by Tim (ok, by Faye and Richard).

Some brilliant rock and fossils to look at and Sandwich Rock (?) also providing excellent incentive not to touch it. A great trip....one I'd happily do again. . **Pete**

Saturday February 14 2009 Eastwater Rich Carey..... cast of thousands!

This was a very well attended meet with 15 people all wanting to do 13 Pots in Eastwater. Rather than a Grand Procession we decided to split into 3 teams. Alan, Avelina and Anne Vanderplank were travelling independently and agreed to rig the Dolphin Route. New prospect Pete Buckley, Jo Candy, Jude Vanderplank, Tim Ball and myself would rig Twin Verticals on Ladder with Chris Binding, Carmen, Tom and Sarah, Wayne Starsmore, Slippery Matt and Matt from the Internet doing the Dolphin Route and derigging Twin Verticals.

The Dolphin Rigging Team went first followed by the Twin Verts team and the derigging team. The timings seem to work out well and there were no Swildonesque hold ups at the pitches. Everyone went across the Traverse and the TV team turned right down Primrose for passage through Hallelujah Hole. Then onto to The Lower Traverse to the the 1st Rift Chamber. The 1st Vertical was duly rigged and descended. 2nd vertical was rigged where we ran into the Dolphin Rigging team who had already completed their trip. Some exchange



Saturday, 21st February, Jim Rands 70th. Photo: Maurice Hewins

lifelining saw all up and all down safely. The Dolphin Team had split up and we encountered Chris and Wayne on the ledge

below the Bold Step. The others had gone to look at the beginning of the West End Series. We descended the Muddy Oxbows and visited Sand Chamber which Jo had not seen since the 60's. Time to go home and we climbed the 13 Pots, crossed the Bold Step and up Dolphin Pitch and Pot, up the Canyon to the Boulder Chamber and out. Just in time for Tea and Showers at the hut. Hurrah! Top trip everyone. **Rich Carey**

Eastwater Trip: Tim's account.

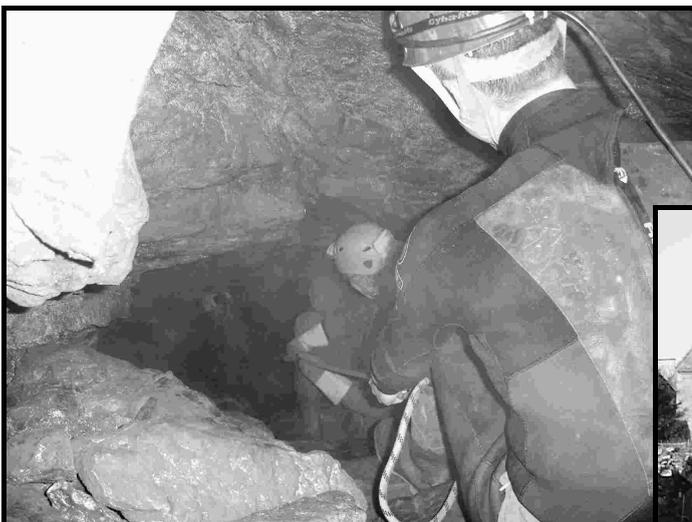
A really good trip down one of my favourite Mendip caves! Very Happy When I arrived at the the hut there were about 5 people going, but the numbers steadily grew and eventually there were enough people for the Dolphin Pitch/Twin Verticals exchange. I seem to learn a little bit more about this cave every time I visit, and on this occasion have Richard Carey to thank for pointing out the locations of Dark Cars and Sunglasses, plus also where to find Unlucky Strike from the second rift chamber. The best thing was when we all met at the bad step, with people climbing up the second vertical, and down to the thirteen pots. The shaft looks really spectacular when lit from all angles. And I also met Jo Candy who put the "Crossroads" sign in place some 50 years ago.

Team "Twin Verticals" was the last out, with a time underground of three and a half hours. Quite respectable considering how many people were underground. Thanks to Richard for organising it and competantly rigging the verticals, thus showing me the position of the spits. **Tim B**

Saturday March 14 2009 Manor Farm Swallet Bob Pyke, Ken Dawe, Stu Genders, Alan Allsop, Noel Cleave, Keith Glossop, Kerrin Malone, Doug MacFarlane, Mark Pyke, Tim Reynolds.

A quick glance at the names will reveal that this was yet another in the ongoing Wessex Geriatric Group sagas.

Absent, save in spirit, was Paul Allen, whose (feeble) excuse was that he tore his ACL in OFD last year and that his knee has still not healed. So he socialised with us, safely: *on the surface*. Pyke Junior (Mark) was along in case anyone needed an anaesthetic (his



A delicate help up September Rift. Photo: Kerrin Malone

trade) and to hold his Daddy's hand on the steep bits. Mark is one of the few living survivors of 2008 Karrimor Mountain Marathon - if you believed the press reports of the appalling risks, disorganisation and horrendous death toll. Whatever, Manor Farm was plainly going to be a doddle for him. If not exactly a doddle, it was the perfect cave choice for the rest of us and we had a thoroughly enjoyable trip to the smelly end and then up and down through the NHASA gallery to the alternative (equally smelly) end. We are all much indebted to Messrs Pyke and Dawe, who instigated and organised this foray to the stygian depths. We geriatrics look after each other, and



Precision lifelining up the entrance shaft. Photo: Kerrin Malone

the photographs show that lifelining is undertaken with only the gentlest touch of assistance Despite recent slanderous accusations that the only things shorter than Noel's memory are his ladders, the rigging was exemplary. And just when did anyone last see an etrier rigged to ease the climb up the waterfall pitch? This was more than exemplary, it was *historic*. In all modesty.... **Noel**.

Cave Rescue Conference - Derbyshire 8-10 May 2009

The 24th Cave Rescue Conference will be held in Derbyshire in May, hosted on behalf of the British Cave Rescue Council by DCRO.

It will be held at the Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow and in various nearby underground locations. The centre offers B&B accommodation and some camping. More details on derbyshirecro.org.uk. **Aubrey**

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH TRIPS

If you are a new member and are looking to meet people and have the opportunity to go underground on Mendip, or a longer standing member who would like to do some sociable caving, don't forget trips do happen regularly on the second Saturday of the month. Information is put on the forum, notice board at the hut and in the journal.

April 12th

Destination:Box Freestone Quarries

Leader: Chris Davies

July 12th

Destination:GB Cavern

Leader: David Cooke

May 10th

Destination:Hunters Lodge Inn Sink

Leader: David Cooke

Aug 9th

Destination:Ogof Capel

Leaders: Carmen, Chris

June 14th

Destination:Hillier's - Fairy Cave Through Trip

Leader: David Cooke

Sept 13th

Destination:Rhino Rift

Leader: Chris Binding (PM Chrispy)

The Molephone.....an ear to the Underground

The recent snow caused the usual outbreaks of hooliganism amongst the older members. In view of the manner in which he was mistreated during the previous snowfall, your Editor wisely stayed away, but an anonymous source opined that the Prewer menage suffered similar outrages: "Paul Weston threw a snowball at Brenda's car window in the Hunters - unfortunately her window was wound down and she copped a face-full. Had a bit of a sense of humour failure apparently. Even worse was Brian Prewer, who spent hours clearing snow from his drive. He'd just finished when the snow plough came down the road and dumped the whole load back in his drive". Meanwhile Ooop North our Clive had a senior moment at the bottom of Alum and only remembered his camera box when he was half-way up the rope. He then completely forgot to tell his group just why his ascent had taken quite so long. Memory loss is a terrible thing.

Cheramodytes

Like Ko Ko in the Mikado, I have a little list.... of ailments from caving, that never would be missed, they'd none of them be missed. I was, after all, a pathologist, and had, occasionally, to look at bits of persons deceased because they ventured underground. A lively desire that my colleagues in the Wessex should not expire likewise, explains my reappearance on these pages. One of the quickest methods of premature departure is to

stop breathing... breath is a bit like sex in that you only really notice either when you aren't getting any. The air that we breathe, above ground, provides us with the oxygen we need to burn our own carbohydrate fuels. Actually it provides a useful surplus of oxygen, because air contains roughly (by volume) 78.08% nitrogen, 20.95% oxygen, 0.038% carbon dioxide, traces of other gases, and a variable amount of water vapour (on average around 1%). Typically we exhale about 4% to 5% carbon dioxide and 4% to 5% less oxygen than we inhale. So why should this process pose enough problems underground for me to talk about it? The answer is not too little oxygen, but too much carbon dioxide. Sometimes we're responsible, sometimes the cave itself, but excessive carbon dioxide can kill you just fine, no matter how much oxygen is available. How much is too much? At about eight per cent concentration it causes loss of consciousness after exposure for between five and ten minutes. In between the natural 0.38% and that 8%, at about three per cent by volume in air, it is mildly narcotic and causes increased blood pressure and pulse rate, and reduced hearing. By about five per cent by volume it causes stimulation of the respiratory centre, dizziness, confusion and difficulty in breathing accompanied by headache and shortness of breath..... and most of you have experienced some of these symptoms in Cuckoo Cleaves, or on the far side of Tratman's Temple - and the pleasure of breathing properly again when back in Swildons streamway. It's not rocket science to realise that a pre-requisite for poor air is poor air flow, or that the most lethal encounter with CO₂ will be at the bottom of a blind shaft. We are lucky on Mendip that this is rarely a problem, but in the Ardèche some of the Avens entered from above are literally, lethal. Go figure, as they say, SRT quickly down into the CO₂ and then try and climb back out. Elsewhere, divers have encountered CO₂ pockets in air-bells or even large over-water chambers. So too much CO₂ is bad news..... but so is too little: essentially, when your lungs detect CO₂, this is what makes you breathe. If you hyperventilate you will wash all the CO₂ out of your system. You may feel giddy, see stars and have tingling fingers. This doesn't matter if you are blowing up an air mattress or plastic boat, or puffing madly at the Upper Pitts Barbecue. It does if you are about to free-dive a significant sump, because you could black-out underwater. Unlike the old miners, we don't carry Canaries as bad air detectors (the ALF would blow up Upper Pitts and the CDG have never mastered the Canary problem), so if you can't breathe normally, then suspect the air that you breathe.... and leave.

Extracts from the recent Cambrian Council Newsletter.

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu :

All covers collecting keys from SWCC must use the Destination Board at the SWCC Headquarters. The OFD Management Committee has requested that when the trip ticket is completed **the name of your club is given in full.**

These tickets are used for a number of purposes, not least for rescue callout. The more information on the tickets the better so please fill them in properly. For a guide to the proper completion of tickets visit the SWCC website and click on the ticket shown.

Mynydd Llangatwg Committee :

At the meeting in October the Officers were appointed for the next two years. They are:

Secretary and Warden for Daren Cilau: Adrian Fawcett

Warden for Daren Cilau: Andy Rumming

Warden for Craig a Ffynnon: Alan Brady

Warden for Agen Allwedd: John Stevens

Diving Warden: Gary Jones

Science officer (and unofficial warden for Ogof Capel): Stuart France

Media officer: Martyn Farr

Flintshire Lead Mining Website

A new website from Cris Ebbs appeared earlier this month. For a site which describes itself as a "few pages put together simply to make available some of the information that's been lying around the house for too long" it contains plenty of interest and seems to be growing almost daily as he searches more of the household nooks and crannies.

<http://sites.google.com/site/flintshireleadmining/Home>

Obscure Cambrian Caves – Big Sink

Located in the Forest of Dean within easy reach of Symonds Yat and the multitude of short caves in the Symonds Yat cliffs, **Big Sink** was excavated by GSS about 10 years ago. A typical Forest dig with scaffolding everywhere

ultimately leads past a slightly damp patch to a superb 14m pitch and anyone who perseveres through the notorious 200m rift is well rewarded by the splendour of Formations Passage at the very end of the cave. A visit takes about 4 hours.

The cave is gated and access is controlled by FoDCCAG e-mail permits@fodccag.co.uk

Diary:

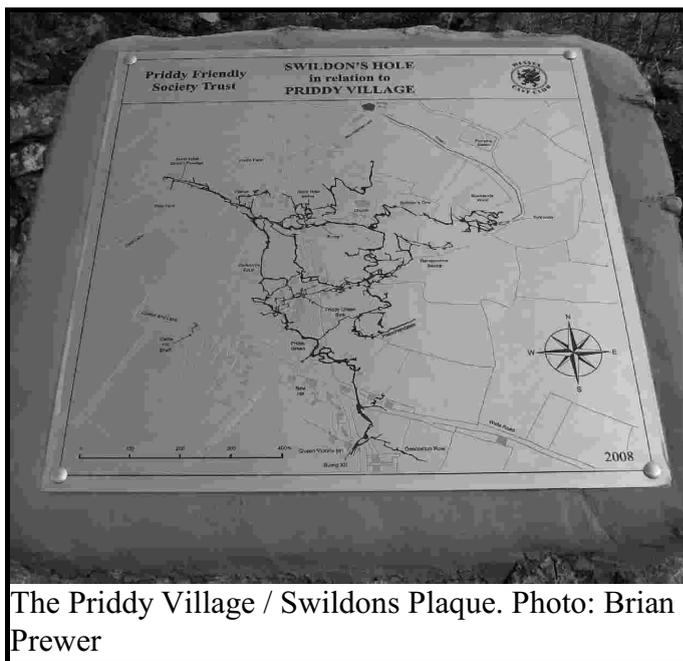
April 12 th	OFD Columns Open Day
May 3 rd	OFD Columns Open Day
May 24 th	OFD Columns Open Day

SWILDON'S HOLE PLAQUE UNVEILED

Since its launch in December 2007, the definitive history and description of one of the world's most famous caves, '*Swildon's Hole – 100 Years of Exploration*' has sold well to British cavers and others around the globe. One copy was purchased by Roy Turner, a Priddy resident, and in reading the book he was intrigued by the map of Priddy village superimposed on the cave survey. He thought more should be done to let villagers and visitors know about this important cave system beneath their feet, and came up with the idea of producing an engraved version of the illustration, to be displayed on the wall of Main's Barn.

As Chairman of the Priddy Friendly Society Trust, which administers a fund started by the late Bob Pitt to enhance the village, he was able to persuade the other trustees of the worthiness of the project. The Club was asked to produce a suitable plaque, and Phil Hendy, helped and advised (to be polite) by Ali Moody, came up with the artwork, which was so up-to-date it included the BEC dig at Cain Hill Shaft. It was decided to engrave the plaque on high-grade stainless steel, in three colours – the cave in black, surface topography in orange, and water features in blue. Brunel Engraving at Clevedon was commissioned to produce the finished article. Discussions with various village committees led to the site for the plaque being changed from Main's Barn to a spot behind the Fountain, close to Fountain Cottage and opposite the cave's second entrance, Priddy Green Sink. Mike Brown, a villager with extensive experience of dry-stone walling, was asked to build a plinth, which was constructed of local stone and made to appear to be built in dry stone. Most of the finance came from the Friendly Society Trust, with a contribution from the Priddy Folk Fayre.

The plaque was finished in December last year, and was inspected by the Club and by various villagers. Construction of the plinth was delayed due to the unseasonal ice and snow (!), but everything was ready for the official unveiling on Sunday March 8th. It was a typical March day at Priddy – cold and drizzly, with a stiff breeze. However, around 50 cavers and locals congregated on the Green at 12 noon. First to speak was Roy Turner, who described how he came by the idea, and how he thought that Swildon's Hole should be made known to a wider public. Indra Cotton, Chairman of the Parish Council, then talked about the long history of caving in the village, and its effect on local life. It then fell to Jim Hanwell, one of our Vice Presidents and past Chairman of Mendip Rescue Organization, to describe his long association with the cave, as sport caver, digger (Jim's efforts in the original Priddy Green Sink dig have been immortalized in song), and of course as rescuer on many a long cold wet night, when various cavers' came unstuck down the cave. He assured us that, rescues apart, Swildon's Hole is a very safe cave, and has been popular with cavers of all ages and levels of ability, from all around the world, for more than a hundred years. Jim then revealed the plaque for all to see, and the official photographers began to record the event.



The Priddy Village / Swildons Plaque. Photo: Brian Prewer

At this point, the weather took a decided turn for the worse. The drizzle turned to driven sleet, so plans for a champagne toast were hastily shelved, as everyone

abandoned the scene and made for a convenient hostelry. Within minutes the sleet changed to big fluffy snowflakes, and soon, with typical Mendip contrariness, the sun came out. It is hoped that the plaque will be a lasting reminder of the major cave that lies below the village of Priddy, and give yet another reason why this village, the highest on the Mendip plateau, is so unique. It also marks the long involvement of the Wessex Cave Club with this magnificent system.

Editor's Note

The Journal's current centre-folded layout dictates a page multiple of 4, which imposes considerable layout restraints. I have held-over the details of our recent library additions, and also our formal welcome to our new members. Both omissions will be rectified in Journal 316. Pages 271 and 272 have "Rogue" PDF prints at their bases. After several hours I admitted defeat on these. Finally I know that people prefer to have the "Contents" block on the back page, but with a colour layout, photographs take a higher priority. **Noel**



Photographs of Ali's Christmas party at the Kingdown Mine. Both Photographs: **Mak**



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Diary Dates	
Box Freestone Mines	12 April
S Wales, Penderyn Meet	01-04 May
Hunters Lodge Sink	10 May
Journal 316 closing date	25 May
Committee Meeting	10 May
AGM & Dinner	17 Oct



Sunday March 8 2009

Unveiling the new plaque on Priddy Green showing the relationship between underground Swildons and the village above it.

Photo: Brian Prewer



Thursday February 5 2009

Christine Grosart at Rowten Pot.
Photo: Clive Westlake



Saturday March 14 2009

The Wessex Geriatrics demonstrating precision lifelining at Manor Farm Swallet.