



The
Wessex Cave Club

JOURNAL

Volume 31 - Number 319 - December 2009



David Lafferty
130 Days Underground

Ireland
Surico & Guinness

Wessex Girlies on Tour
Via Ferrata Switzerland

The J'Rat Digging Award
A Successful Year for the Wessex

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The Wessex Cave Club

JOURNAL**Volume 31 - Number 319**

- 3 Editorial
- 3 Journal Submissions
- 3 Annual Membership Renewals
- 4 **Club News**
- 5 **The J'Rat Digging Award**
- 6 **Ireland - David Murphy (Gnomie)**
"SUICRO & Guinness"
- 8 **David Lafferty - Phil Hendy**
World Record 130 Days Underground
- 12 **Wessex Girlies on Tour**
Via Ferrata Switzerland
- 14 **Templeton Update - Phil Hendy**
- 14 **Tuskas Tour Revived - Maurice Hewins**
- 15 **75th Anniversary Dinner**
- 15 **Diary**
- 15 **Recent Additions to the Library**



Cover Picture:
Jo Diamond, Jude Vanderplank, Sarah Payne and Vern Freeman having fun in the Swiss Alps.
Photo: Mak (Mark Kellaway)

EDITORIAL

Well, here it is, my first attempt at being an editor. I hope you like the new look of the Journal and the changes I have made in both style and content. What I am trying to achieve here is a journal that is read and re-read in the way that you would with any magazine. I think you will agree that I have been given, (and I think it is worth emphasising "given" as all the contributions are totally voluntary) some articles of the highest quality showing the diverseness of the clubs activities.

The Journal is many members link to the activities of the club, so I feel that it is important for this to be of high quality both in presentation and in content. The first bit of this I can deal with, but the rest is down to you, the members. With the modern world of forums, websites, blog and wikis (whatever they might be) the journal remains of upmost importance. It is a permanent /archivable record of where the club is and what the members are doing at this moment in time.

As you will see from this issue, even though we are a "Cave Club", our members participate in a huge range of adventurous activities, which are all relevant, and of interest to our diverse membership. This edition, we have via-ferratas, next we have mines and bunkers and who knows what in the future. Caving is of course the primary interest of the club, which will be reflected in the content of the journal.

As you will know, there are big changes happening locally in the caving world, more specifically in the caves themselves. In one system, Wessex members have been discovering hundreds of metres of new passage, whilst in other places we are being reminded that caves are an ever-changing environment and even our favorite cave can give us some fairly major surprises and show us that even the "safest" caves demand respect at all times.

At the time of going to press, there are many meetings and discussions ongoing regarding the collapses in the entrance series of Swildons. We will do our best to keep the membership informed and updated when we know the full situation.

I need to say a big thank you to everyone who has helped with this issue. As I keep saying, I am the Editor and therefore I "edit". So without my contributors your journal would be a lot thinner on the ground. If you feel you have anything worth contributing, just ask and I'll happily advise on what's needed. Historical and scientific articles are most welcome as are those on current activities.

As I said, I hope you enjoy reading this journal and I'm looking forward to your help on Journal 320

AndyC

editor@wessex-cave-club.org

Journal Submissions

Can you please email your text submissions as Microsoft Word files. If you can ensure these are spell checked and correct in grammar and punctuation, then my life is easier and the article is more likely to be published (Proofs will be sent out for checking prior to publication). Can you send any images in standard image file formats, ideally high quality Jpegs or Tiffs. I do have the facilities to work from any format including old prints and slides, even glass plates. If you have these, please ask for details on how to deal with them. All photos need to be supplied with both a caption and a credit to enable them to be used. If your article is of a historical or scientific nature, then can you ensure it is supplied with relevant references and information on abstracts. Information on how to present this can be provided if needed. As a guide, an article of 3300 words will fill 4 sides including images.

Annual Membership Renewals

It's that time of year when we all have to renew our club membership. Included with this journal is a summary renewal form which contains details of your membership status, together with the outstanding amount that the club is owed for the 2009/10 year. These details have been taken from the membership database. Renewal costs are given below.

Membership		Insurance		Other	
Single member	£30.00	Active caver	£16.00	Journal only	£14.00
Joint member	£22.50	Student	£8.00	Locker	£7.00
Senior citizen	£12.00	Armchair/overseas	£5.00	Food box	£3.00
Student/under 25	£15.00				

If for any reason you have an issue with anything on the renewal form, please get in touch. Otherwise I look forward to receiving your cheques (made payable to "Wessex Cave Club") in the post. Please send all correspondence to:

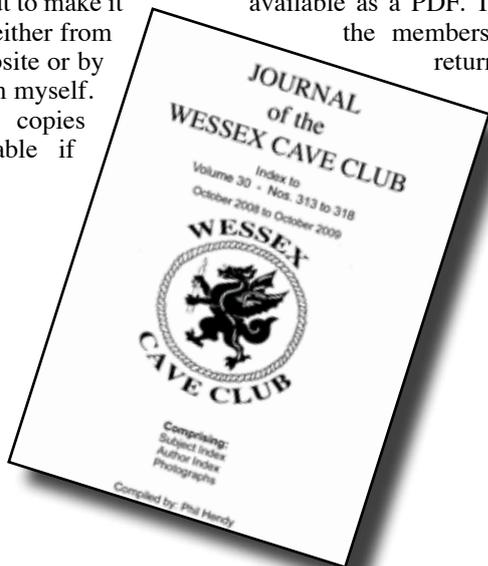
Tim Ball, WCC Membership Secretary, Hylands, Kingsway, Holcombe, Radstock, Somerset. BA3 5DU. You can also e-mail me via the club web page.

Many thanks, *Tim.*

Club News

Journal Index (Vol 30)

Due to a number of factors including the cost of printing / posting and the requirements of the membership, I have decided not to provide a printed copy of the index for volume 30 of the journal, but to make it available as a PDF. This is available either from the members area of the website or by email from myself. Printed copies are available if requested.



Wessex Rescue Practice

There will be an MCR rescue practice on Saturday 13th March in place of the usual 2nd Saturday trip. All members are welcome. Ali Moody or Tim Ball will be contacting all members to find out their availability and willingness to be on the MCR callout list. For more details, please contact Mak: sales@wessex-cave-club.org

N.A.M.H.O.

NAMHO 2010, 4th-6th June. The National Association of Mining History Organisations is holding its annual conference just to the north east of Bristol at Coalpit Heath. Titled "Fuelling the Industrial Revolution" it is an exciting series of lectures and over/underground tours recognising Bristol's part in starting the Industrial Revolution. For more information see www.namhoconference.org.uk

Drystone Wall Repairs

As anyone who uses the path between Upper Pitts and Swildons will know, the drystone wall on the corner is in a sorry state. There will be a working group to rebuild this on Saturday Jan 16th. Please wear old clothes suitable for whatever the weather throws at us and steel toecap boots if you have them. Work gloves are recommended. Bring food / Drinks as required. Tuition will be given. This is a great chance for us to "Give Something Back" 9.30am @ Upper Pitts. Please Contact Andy Chamberlain for details (editor@wessex-cave-club.org)

2010 Club Expedition

It was raised at the last committee meeting that we have not had a club trip abroad for a while; several suggestions were made, but as it is now December, it may be too late for some of the bigger trips that require pre-booking. One suggestion is a trip to the Bauges region of France (between Annecy and Chambéry). There is a family friendly campsite, plenty of caving, canyoning, walking and other activities in the area. The main local system is the Trou de Garde to Grotte de Caval which is one of the classic French through trips. I would welcome any feedback from the membership about this, or any further suggestions for a summer trip. Obviously volunteers to help organise would be most welcome! Email me (sales@wessex-cave-club.org) or badger your nearest committee member.

Northern Caves Permits

As always, there will be a selection of permits available for next year. If you would like to find out what is available, or if you have a specific cave or area you would like to visit, then please contact Les Williams (caving@wessex-cave-club.org) who can make the necessary arrangements.

Cave Leaders

Ric Halliwell has asked me to let you all know that both Pat and Ric are OFD 1 and Dan y Ogof leaders. "Naturally I would be happy to lead trips for fellow WCC members, but for the record I have to state that we formally hold all the leaderships (including my St Cuthbert's one) as Craven Pothole Club members rather than under our WCC membership".

Lockers at Upper Pitts

It has been brought to the attention of the committee that there are a number of lockers unaccounted for at Upper Pitts. If you use a locker, can you please check with Tim Ball that your name is on the list and that you have paid the correct fees. Any lockers still unregistered will be opened and the contents disposed of.

Mendip Covers Fair 2010

11th-13th June. A festival of caving in and around Priddy. Co-ordinated by the CSCC there will be talks, films, training, Wessex Challenge, stomp, BBQ and more. For further information see www.csc.org.uk

Devon Trip

There is a plan afoot for a trip to the DSS hut in Buckfastleigh over the weekend of the 12th and 13th of February. This is always a good fun affair with a mix of caving, walking, climbing, dodgy pub singers and the other fine options the area has. Contact Les Williams for more details (caving@wessex-cave-club.org)

Future Journals

I have many plans and ideas for the future look and distribution of the Wessex Journal and I would like your feedback on some of these. Firstly, hopefully you like the new look and content of the journal. Most people will not realise that to produce this journal and distribute it to the membership costs in the region of £4000 a year and uses in the region of 37kg of paper and ink based on a 16 page issue as this one. One of my plans is to consider the introduction of the distribution of the Journal as a PDF either by email or downloadable from the members area of the website. This would enable the size and content of the journal not to be limited by cost and enable the delivery to be quicker by eliminating the 2 week lead time from the printers. Also you will be able to read the articles in glorious full colour as they were designed to be seen. I believe this is a serious environmental issue, as I realise a lot of people just skim the journal, recycle, or even worse simply throw in the bin. There would still be options for a limited print run for those who require it. Please can you let me have your views and comments on this idea. (editor@wessex-cave-club.org)

Mak

JRat's Digging Award - The Beginning.

As most people who knew Tony Jarrett, knew digging was in his blood. He logged over 11,481 hours underground in his 44 years of caving – it was more than most “normal cavers” would have achieved in several lifetimes. Looking through Tony’s log books, I don’t think there is one caving area within the UK that Tony hadn’t visited, especially helped by his work travelling the UK as an Ordnance Survey surveyor. His main areas of digging and caving interests before his death were Mendip, Scotland and his annual trips to Meghalaya in India each February.

As the Ratfest committee sat in the Hunters’ discussing how to allocate the money raised at the Ratfest, Roger and Jackie Dors handed over £250 that they had collected from the sale of soup that Jackie had made especially in Tony’s memory. All the money they raised was to go to good causes which we all knew that Tony would have wanted to contribute to, which included the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Charity. We thought that half of this money raised by Roger and Jackie might be “recycled” into some form of digging shield to mark Tony’s life and hang in the Hunters’.

Tony had arranged before his death, how he wanted to disperse the proceeds of his books, pictures, and caving equipment, to benefit caving, remarking that he didn’t want anything named after him. However the committee agreed that to mark the recognition of Tony’s major contribution to caving, that we would name the award after him. Hence the JRat Digging Award was created.



For those who don't know, here are the rules:-

1. The JRat's Digging Award is to be given to the club(s) or group who discover and survey the longest length of passage in one cave. (This excludes claiming existing cave passage through digging a connection etc.).
2. The cave passage discovered and surveyed must be greater than 50 metres in length. In the unlikely event of a tie, the club(s) or group who can provide documented evidence of the greatest number of diggers to have worked in the cave to achieve their discovery will be considered the winner.
3. The cave passage discovered and surveyed must be either on Mendip or the surrounding area within Somerset or in Scotland (two of JRat's favourite digging areas).
4. The competition will run from 1st November until the 31st October each year.
5. Claims for the Award must be lodged officially with the Judges, with a closing date of the 31st October each year. Email Martin Grass (m.grass@btinternet.com) or Stuart (Mac) McManus (stuart@plummersfarm.co.uk).
6. The presentation will take place at the Hunters' Lodge Inn Priddy on the nearest Saturday to the 21st November (JRat's birthday) with the club(s) or group being awarded “JRat's Digging Award” for that year.
7. The winners will be entitled to have their club(s) or groups name and the length surveyed inscribed on the JRat's Digging Award Plaque, which will hang in the Hunters' Lodge Inn at Priddy.

Diggers Dinner 2010: It is hoped for November 20th 2010 we will have a diggers dinner at the Hunters' Lodge Inn. More details will be provided nearer the time.

Stuart (Mac) McManus



This years award presentation took place on Saturday 21st November in a packed Hunter's and was won by a joint WCC/ UBSS team for the 1500.77m of new passage surveyed in Charterhouse Cave. The team members were Ali & Pete Moody, Pete Hann, John Cooper, Andrew Atkinson and Simon (Si) Flower.

Ali Moody



Above & Right: The digging team at the presentation with Stuart McManus (Photos: Martin Grass) Top: JRat digging in Hunters Lodge Inn Sink (Photo: Andy Chamberlain)

Ireland

“SUICRO and Guinness”

After the organised, expedient and efficient Hidden Earth convention, it's always nice to unwind at Ireland's own version, which prefers to let things take their own pace and instead relies heavily on the medium that is Guinness for almost all of its functions. Sounds perfect to me.

Ireland is one of my all time favorite countries; I love the landscapes and the views, the food and the people and being a three year veteran I was starting to get used to the weather too. Some might say that a spot of rain never hurt anyone, but when caving in Ireland you can't help but take the it personally when the narrow passages you are traversing through start to rise and fill up before your very eyes.

It no longer becomes a trip based on how many Mars bars you can eat, or how many pretties you can photograph, rather it becomes a mental race against time, with every inlet adding to the concern and every foamy pool making it a little bit more nerve racking, add some random plastic bags and the odd bit of vegetation stuck in the roof of the cave (“Who put that there!”) and you can always be assured of an adrenalin filled “sporting” trip in the caves of Ireland.

Not to mention that statistically the Irish symposium falls on the weekend with the most annual Irish rainfall....

In a truly DVT defying attempt we managed to cram lots of people in one vehicle, they are as follows: Les Williams, Wendy Williams, Chris Williams (didn't cave all weekend), Bif (John Biffin), Cookie (Dave Cooke), Gnome (David Murphy)

We'd hired a nice chalet somewhere in County Clare, near The Burren, which was very nice and a stones throw away from the symposium venue. I'm going to get it out of the way now, because if I don't, then others will, whilst exploring the chalet it was noted that there seemed to be no way to lock the bathroom door, with no apparent key in sight. Thus, you can imagine my jubilation when I discovered one, well hidden behind a light. Finders keepers and all that I kept it on me all

weekend with the full intention of locking Cookie in, for a laugh...

Returning one night from the hotel I had to answer the call of the porcelain and so I locked the door of the bathroom behind me. It was around this time that the key snapped off in the lock.

How does this relate to caving? You may well ask.

Well, when I first started caving, I was claustrophobic, the thought of enclosed spaces really bothered me, and all of that roof ready to fall down on you was always a worrisome factor. Through time, and perseverance I got a lot better, mainly because I realised that anything I could generally get into, I could usually get out of... and even the biggest trips, generally had an exit.

So there I was, in a small windowless bathroom in Ireland, on The Burren, my only exit was a skylight nearly 3 metres above me, with no foot or handholds, and absolutely no way to get out, and I'm starting to get jittery. It's odd when you no longer have a choice, it's something most people take for granted, but being locked up and having to rely on others is pretty annoying.

Thus after yelling a lot, Les finally arrived and generally a lot of faffing and lock fettling ensued, until finally the lock sprang back and I was a free man. Free from the room, but now forced to endure the torment of a lifetime of pisstaking. Luckily that was the only rescue that weekend.

Day one: Pol na Gollum.

Attending: Les, Cookie, Gnome, Bif, Tony Seddon

This is my all time favorite cave in Ireland, very wet.. sometimes critical 5 (that's over your head) and generally big, sporting and fun.



L-R: Gnomie, Bif, Les, Tony Seddon, Cookie

Photos: Dave Cooke (Cookie)

As usual we seem to pick a rather wet time to do the round trip, and as usual there was a doomsayer at the entrance calling us mad (yes really) due to their Irish accents, I considered them to be informed locals and immediately started to worry. The last time we had done this trip it had been on a falling flood pulse and we could see a foam tide mark some two meters above our heads!

It wasn't quite so bad this time and apart from a truly awful crawl at the start, it was wonderful to wade (sometimes over my head) down the streamway and just relax and enjoy the cave.

There isn't so much to look at by way of formations on the round trip and instead most of the enjoyment is from the scrambles and the general sporting aspect of it, several people were too good for the water and traversed over it, I prefer to get my moneys worth from my wetsuits, (and the new oversuit I had purchased that weekend) so tried to get as wet as possible.

The highlight of this trip for me was Branch gallery which in normal conditions (I am told... and have never seen) is dry.... this sounds outrageous to me, because every time I have done it now it has been a roaring waterfall that literally thunders down into the depths.

Rather than an improvised sling, this time I had brought by SRT harness and so the abseil was pleasant and not fraught with the possibility of gravity induced morbidity.

It was however wet.... when you drop down the pitch the wall backs away and you end up taking the full force of the waterfall (at least I did) which is a very quick way to get into trouble if you aren't A:going down and B: going down very fast.

I hit the floor in no time, and as usual with a big grin, it's a very fun pitch to do, and was a little less violent than the previous time we'd done it, good stuff.

More trudging downstream and we finally reached the confluence which was the halfway mark and meant a lot of trudging upstream, the passageways here are fine and nicely scalloped, upstream is always hard work, but I had finally got warmed up at this point, it's always nice to note that cave fitness never really leaves you.

We were out fairly quickly, almost beating a group that had gone in before us and only done half the trip, we weren't hanging around!

This isn't entirely true though, because once we got to The Roadside Tavern as Lisdoonvarna, we actually did a lot of hanging around, so much so that Les's son got a bit windy and nearly got a rescue party out looking for us. Luckily the rescue party had a bit more sense and the first place they were due to look for us in was... The Roadside Tavern at Lisdoonvarna.

A great trip and in great company, one of the finest trips I've done.

Day two: St Catherines to Fisher Street Pot.

Attending: Les, Biff, Cookie, Gnome

As always with this group, there is a lot of pre cave faffing, this morning was no different, with great oratories about where the car should be parked in relation to the start and end of the trip, this went on for a long time and it was only later in the day that it began to make sense.

The walk to St Catherine's entrance from Fisher Street Pot is bloody miles!

We opted to do the walk at the start of the trip instead of after, and left the car near Fisher Street.

This cave is another classic, it's a three entrance cave

usually with a trip involving going in either Arran view or St Catherine's and then jumping out at Fisher Street to stumble over to the bar at McGann's for a swift Guinness and then head back down to finish the trip (although few ever return after hitting the bar).

I'd done Arran view to Fisher Street the previous year and so weather permitting I was glad to have a shot at St Catherine's too.

After a god awful long walk we finally got to the cave entrance, which in typical Irish cave fashion, started out small, crawly and generally unpleasant. I'd quizzed Les about squeezes, to which he told me he remembered none... as per usual this meant he had blocked it out of his mind and of course, soon we came upon a squeeze.

Les did a great deal of faffing before letting others have a go, whilst it wasn't quite a squeeze it was a bit of an awkward slot, I managed to get through fine, but strangely enough when Les finally got through, the ordeal had robbed him of his oversuit and kneepads! I know this is true because he certainly entered the cave wearing them and at some point they were unceremoniously handed to me whilst Les puffed and fuffed his way through. That's what you get for forgetting about squeezes.

After this the cave opened up and we found the streamway, I noticed that the roof was quite low, and it was always on my mind that unlike the previous days cave, this one wasn't quite so forgiving in high water conditions.... it filled to the roof.

There were points that a rise of a meter in the water level would have filled it up, and so I was genuinely a little on edge for this one. This isn't to say it wasn't enjoyable though and a lot of it was big stomping streamway, again with little in the way of formations but generally a lot of fun.

My only gripe was the stooping that falls somewhere between the roof being too low to stand but too high to crawl, oh how I hate that combination.

It was a lot of streamway, with lots of bags in the roof and fresh leaves stuck to places overhead, generally the kind of trip where you need to leave your imagination at the entrance and pick it up on the way out.

The few times we stopped I found myself staring intently at the stream level as if it might attack at any moment.

We soon made from the darkness into the sun beam drenched Fisher Street Pot and prussiked to freedom up the rope we had rigged earlier.

It was a top trip and we very quickly found ourselves in the roadside tavern, where things went wrong and Guinness was consumed, luckily this time we had already informed everyone that there was no need to worry about us, as any lateness would clearly be down to Guinness.

All in all a very good weekend, Wendy cooked some fantastic breakfasts and the symposium was brilliant as usual, a great crowd and a relaxed event, add to that some amazing caving and you have yourself a fine excursion and one of my all time favorites.

Thanks to all.

Gnomie

DAVID LAFFERTY

WORLD RECORD 130 DAYS UNDERGROUND

As cavers, we enjoy our time underground, but are generally happy with a trip lasting a few hours, after which we can go to the pub to talk about it. But there is a strange breed which wants to spend days, weeks, and even months underground, to seek their inner selves or just to try to beat previous records. In 1962 Michel Siffre, a Frenchman, and Bill Penman, an Australian, spent 62 and 64 days respectively underground and alone. The perceived wisdom was that any period greater than two months would be detrimental to physical or mental health.

Geoff Workman, a member of Craven pothole Club, disagreed, and in 1963 he spent 105 days alone in the farther reaches of Stump Cross Caverns, in Yorkshire. Amongst his kit he had a watch and telephone, with which he remained in communication with the surface. His stay was originally intended for 100 days, but he extended this to allow his mates to help get him and his gear out during a weekend!

In 1965 Antoine Senni, a Frenchman, had spent 126 days underground in a cave in the French Alps, beating the previous record held by Workman. Hearing of this, in 1966 Lord Weymouth (now the Marquess of Bath) and Cheddar Caves planned a publicity stunt, whereby someone would attempt to beat the world record for living in isolation underground.

Well-known Mendip cavers were consulted: Dr. Oliver Lloyd was a pathologist, cave diver, member of the Mendip Rescue Organization (now Mendip Cave Rescue) and had studied hypothermia in caves; Dr. Willie Stanton was a geologist who had done much work in the Cheddar caves, and had surveyed all the known systems there. Dr. Trevor Shaw, another caver, provided details of previous record attempts.

An early venue choice was White Spot Cave, because members of the public would be able to pay to visit, and view the person making the attempt. Willie argued against this, as there was little space at the bottom of the shaft beyond the railings, and the subject would be allowed very little privacy. He also thought that the attempt might look 'faked', as the cave was very short. He successfully argued for the attempt to be made in the Boulder Chamber of Gough's Cave, which was more remote and more realistic. The conditions were made more stringent than in other record attempts, so that the effect of prolonged solitary confinement without normal human contact might be studied. These conditions helped set the standard for subsequent record attempts. There was to be a telephone link to the surface, but the caver was not allowed a watch, or was to be allowed any means of gauging the passage of time.

Suggestions that a caver might be persuaded to make the attempt came to nothing, and eventually after advertising, a 27 year old ex-RAF flying officer, David Lafferty, was chosen. He lived in London, had a German wife, Uta and young daughter, Jacqueline. Uta, not surprisingly, was not overly enthusiastic about the plan, but gave her support.

Lord Weymouth offered to pay £5 per day for each day up to 100 days, and £5 per day thereafter, until the end of the attempt. The attempt was to be made for 127 days, beating the French record by 1 day, and Lafferty was taken to the Boulder Chamber on Sunday 27th March 1966. He entered by climbing an Electron ladder down the 3ft wide chimney (known today as Sudden Death) which leads off the Sand Cavern. He was helped by a support team comprising Cpl. D.G. Cowper and his assistants. (It is not known why Mendip cavers were not involved; maybe they did not want to be associated with a commercial venture, or perhaps MRO was dedicated to bringing cavers out of caves – their job was not to take them down and leave them!) Cpl. Cowper was from RAF Locking, and was the leader of the local Mountain Rescue Team. The ladder was then hauled up. At that time, there was no other route to the Boulder Chamber, at least not a free-climbable one. Lafferty was totally isolated, with no escape, in a chamber 40 ft high, 30ft long, and 25ft wide (12, 9 and 8 metres). The temperature was a constant 53 °F (11°C)

Lafferty took all his stores down with him, which included three quarters of a ton of canned food, curry, pineapple juice, Hungarian pork stew, creamed mashed potatoes, and 300 gallons of water plus a camera and film, many books, a dartboard and darts, Elsan chemical toilet, tent, air bed and mattress with sleeping bag.

He cooked on a spirit stove, but also had 1438 candles for illumination. He had a supply of paraffin for lighting, but during his recovery it was stated that paraffin lamps were to be kept out of sight, implying that only candle illumination was used. David did not use the paraffin lamp excessively, fearing a build-up of carbon dioxide. At first Lafferty kept a candle burning when he went to bed, but after a while he found it kept him awake, so he desisted. He also had a supply of 2,800 Senior Service cigarettes, which he estimated would last the period planned, at 20 per day. In fact, he smoked far fewer than usual.

Lafferty was fairly fit, having just left the RAF where he was a member of the fencing team. Indeed, his level of fitness was higher than expected when he emerged. There was a telephone link with the surface, and Mr. Robertson, the caves manager, took all calls bar three during the sojourn. (Robertson was then aged 54, twice Lafferty's age). He had a phone in his office and an extension link to his home. The arrangement was for Lafferty to phone out at what he thought were 24 hour intervals; Robertson would not phone him. Generally this worked well, though on a few occasions, when Lafferty had not contacted the surface for some considerable time, Robertson became so worried that he phoned him on a pretext, though on each occasion, Lafferty was merely asleep. Lafferty was to be given no indication of the date or time, the prevailing weather, and no news (which could give an indication of the time). It was noted by Robertson, who kept details of his conversations with Lafferty in two

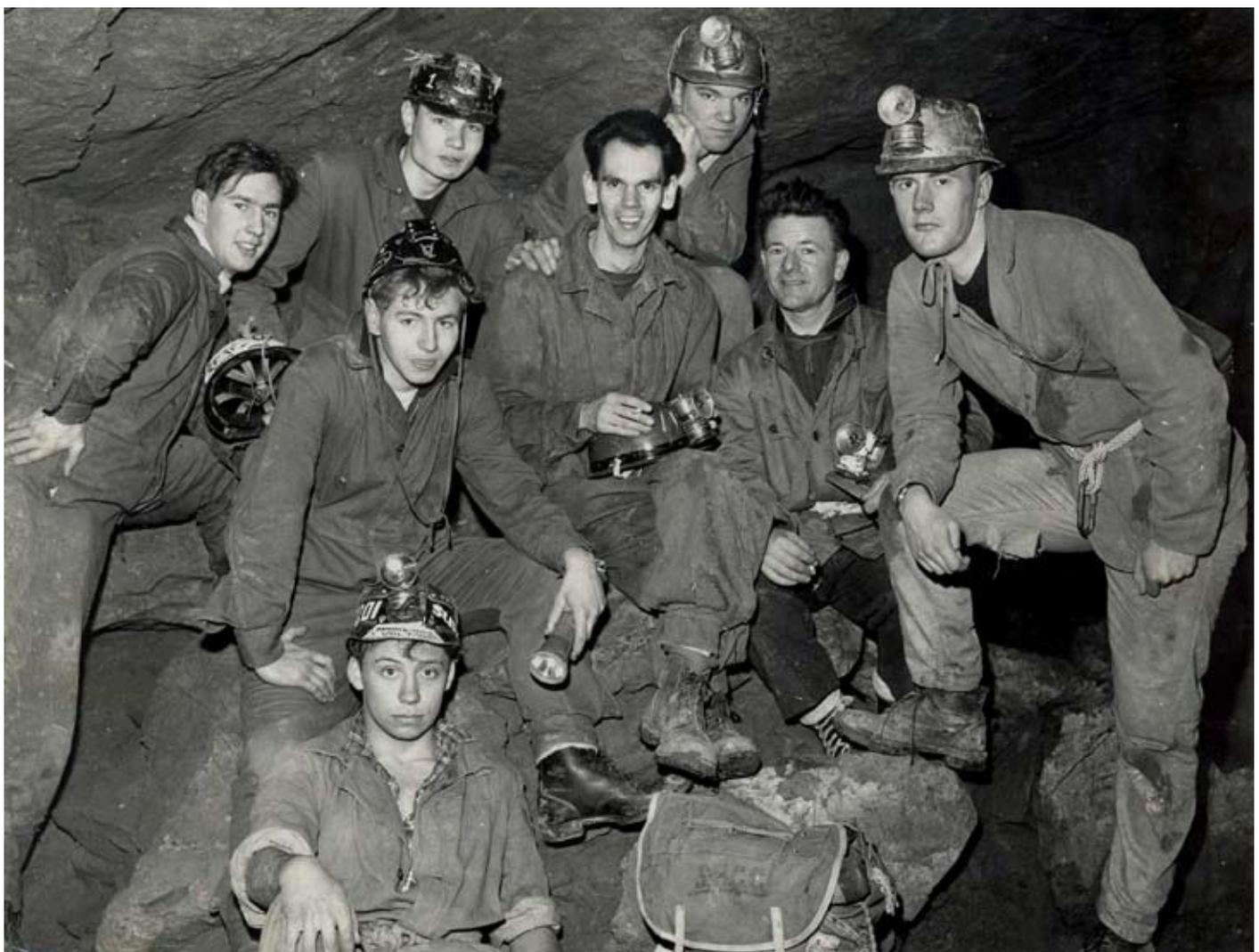
notebooks, that towards the end, he wondered who would crack first, himself or Lafferty! He spent many sleepless nights, but dared not resort to sleeping tablets, in case he failed to hear the phone ring. He lost a lot of weight. Lafferty himself commented that he never had any indication that he had woken Robertson, who always sounded fresh and awake when he answered the phone. Robertson (who died in the 1972 Axbridge air disaster) seems to have thoroughly enjoyed the deception. A daily bulletin was posted outside the cave, and was avidly read by visitors. Not surprisingly, tension mounted as the days went by – would Lafferty go the distance, or would he have to give up due to illness or psychological problems?

Lafferty also kept a journal, but Robertson recorded details of conversations with Lafferty. Much of this concerns menu choices and plans for the ‘day’, but also records details of occasional dreams remembered by David, and dates when urine samples were collected. The log also records the number of darts it took Lafferty to score a Bull, and the time it took for him to count to one minute. This latter information was not passed back to Lafferty.

Lafferty wrote letters and articles, and took photographs, spending much time experimenting with this. Completed films were sent out for processing, and his letters and articles were also sent out, by attaching them to a string which was hauled up Sudden Death. Processed photographs were returned the same way, but not mail, which could give

clues to the date. All such transfers were done when Lafferty was asleep, and not once did he hear people above him or see their lights.

Each day Lafferty made breakfast, usually cereals, and exercised with press-ups and breaking rocks with a 7lb sledge hammer. Once he banged his head on the low roof of the cave while exercising. He read many books, preferring adventure and ‘James Bond’ type stories, plus accounts of exploration and climbing. There were no ghost stories! He spent a lot of time studying, mainly German, but also French and Maths. He re-mounted his collection of photographic slides, took many photographs, being meticulous about setting them up, even making a mock-up camera so he could take a photo of himself taking a photo! Lafferty also played darts, propping the board against the cave wall and standing farther from the board than is customary. Whenever he played, he recorded the number of times it took him to hit the Bull – this varied from 2 to 71 (which he thought would cause derision amongst his old RAF mates) with an average of 19. He told Robertson, who recorded it in his log. Lafferty wrote articles, some of which were sent out of the cave, but it is not known if or where they were published. He wrote letters to his wife and others (one in Russian). He also had to deal with correspondence relating to freezing the insurance policy on his car. This car was displayed in the Cheddar Motor Museum during his stay underground. Lafferty also practiced knots and lashings.



David Lafferty (centre) with Cpl. Cowper (RAF Locking) and the support team.

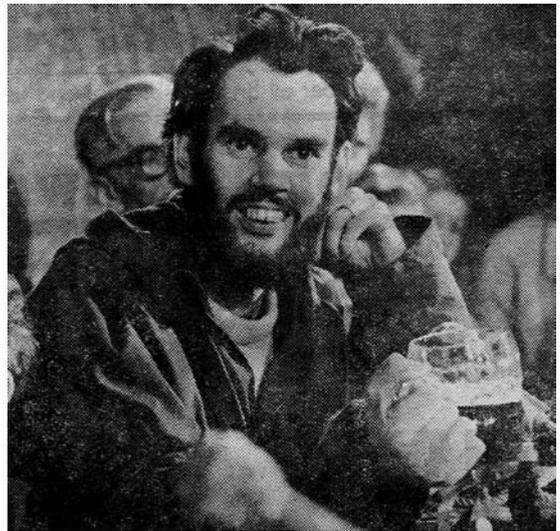
Photo courtesy of Cheddar Caves and Gorge.”

During his stay, Lafferty did some exploration (he had never been down the cave before), but concluded that solo exploration was too dangerous. Even so, he entered a bedding plane (the Muddy Crawl), finding a chamber 'the size of a bathroom' on 15th April, and examined an ascending passage above the overhang on 7th May, but decided it was too exposed to attempt the climb. He also found (17th May) a 'small cave of great beauty'. This was under the boulder on the far side of the chamber. It was narrow to enter, being 2ft wide. After 2ft he was able to stand, where there were some small milky stalactites. A vertical climb led to a horizontal section, 3ft wide and 15 – 20ft high. There was a little grotto with passage to left and right. "The formations are really great." This appears to be the climb up to the ladder at the start of the Wire Traverse, though Lafferty makes no mention of the window out onto the roof of the Boulder Chamber. This was, of course, before the April Fool squeeze connection to Far Rift (1988).

It appears that the floor of the Boulder Chamber was modified before his descent to create a more level area. Some boulders were moved, and settlement appears to have caused noises, which were disconcerting. He was scared on 2nd April, when a rock fell noisily from the roof. On 13th April, a piece of mud fell from the roof onto his tent, and rolled down sounding like an animal. He was alarmed by heavy rumbling on April 15th – this originated from a heavy blast in a nearby quarry. On 23rd April, settlement of boulders 'twice the size of a football' occurred.

David was not completely alone in the cave. He saw and heard bats, and also found and trapped some small insects, mainly flies, and springtails under stones. Some flies were caught by squirting methylated spirit at them. He noticed a lot of mould and mildew, mainly he thought where there were traces of food on the rocks, and encouraged by the light.

Psychologically, David did very well, though he suffered from boredom. At first, there was a continual desire to keep looking over his shoulder. He decorated the walls of the cave with magazine pictures, and alleviated the silence by singing and banging a drum made from an empty tin. His hearing became very acute, and at one time he thought he could hear mice, but the scratching sounds were merely his hair rubbing on the inside of the tent. Small sounds appeared very loud, though not once did he hear the cavers who came in to remove his papers or supply things. Cooking was a chore, and he generally only cooked one meal per day. He hated washing up, though he was aware of the potential for food poisoning if he allowed waste to accumulate. Many of his meals were cooked in one pot to avoid the need to wash up, though he accepted that some flavours were marred if the food was cooked in the same pot that he had previously cooked something very different in. The Elsan bucket when full was carefully hauled up Sudden Death and disposed of. The passage of time seemed to vary, though he had no method of checking this. He did not like it when someone other than Mr. Robertson (usually Mr. Saye, the company accountant) answered the phone – he felt awkward, and did not want to talk for long. Early on he suffered for two days from claustrophobia, but it went and did not recur. His moods varied between elated and depressed. Some days he could hardly be motivated to get out of bed. This and lack of exercise, caused backache. His health was generally



Lafferty enjoying his first pint after emerging

good. He suffered from a painful knee when he fell 3ft. This continued to cause problems, as he had an earlier Rugby injury. He had some stomach cramps and indigestion, and was physically sick on April 22nd. Lafferty did some intelligence tests found in magazines, but found his short term memory failing – he had to write things down before he forgot them. He had difficulty in studying, as it was too quiet – he was used to studying in cafes with juke boxes. Some clean clothes were sent down for him – he did some washing but clothes and his boots rapidly became mildewed. He washed, and once attempted a bath in the stream, but it was very cold. Condensation gathered under his air bed, and he noted that his perceived temperature bore no relation to the cave temperature (constant) or to his actual temperature.

Dr. Anstis of the Psychological Unit at the University of Bristol arranged for Lafferty to record his urine output, and samples to be sent to Prof. Mills at the Physiology Unit, University of Manchester. This was to be done weekly, but Lafferty was not told the time period. Details of the collections were recorded in Robertson's log.

Lafferty's worst problem was the damp, but there were events which would have been less serious had they not occurred in the circumstances of Lafferty's isolation. He ran out of baked beans on 11th June, and on 23rd July he caught his pillow alight when the head broke off a match. Later that day, while he was cooking his 'evening meal' of mashed potatoes, butter and spam, the top came off a pepper pot and the excess pepper spoiled the meal. He was so dispirited, he did not bother to cook anything else. On 27th July, he spilt half a pint of milk in his bed.

Early in April it snowed, and later the melt water caused the cave to flood. The showcave closed due to flooding on April 20th and 22nd. The water was up to 6 inches deep. By the 23rd the water had receded and the show cave opened again. On April 16th Lafferty recorded that his cave had two lakes, one about 3ft deep, and a river, 3ft wide and 2ft deep. He thought this was due to heavy rain. It was very noisy, and he nearly fell in when the bank collapsed. After a while the sound disturbed him, as it sounded like voices. The water had all gone by 4th May, and it seemed to Lafferty that it had receded quickly.

On several occasions television companies spent long period in Robertson's office waiting for Lafferty to call,

but they were often disappointed. One conversation was recorded by ITN for the national news.

Towards the end of Lafferty's stay plans were made for his eventual emergence into the daylight. It was decided to have him checked out by doctors underground for three days before he left the cave.

On July 30th 1966, Lafferty estimated that he had spent 102 days in isolation, with 24 to go. In fact he had done 126!

On Monday August 1st Robertson telephoned Lafferty to tell him he had beaten the record. His reaction was: 'Wow! Bless my little cotton socks.'

A PA system had been set up in the restaurant, and Uta and Jacqueline were there, having been brought over from London the day before. They had been booked into the Cliff Hotel (now the Cox's Mill Hotel). David had been concerned that the booking was made early, as accommodation might be scarce during the holiday period. The conversation with Lafferty and Robertson was initially conducted just between the two of them, with Lafferty unaware of the crowd of family and press on the surface. He was then to his surprise allowed to speak to his wife. He was told the main news of the preceding four months, especially the result of the football World Cup and the results of the General Election. David was told that two doctors would be on their way to the cave to examine him before he was brought out. They took a change of clean clothing.

The support team comprised Doctors (Prof.s Mills and Anstis) with Cpl. D.G. Cowper and his assistants. They went down the cave to examine Lafferty, finding that he was a little emaciated and with diarrhoea. His colour vision and balance were impaired, but otherwise he was in good shape. Their examinations took 3 days, while plans were being made to bring Lafferty out on August 4th. During this time, no press interviews were allowed with Lafferty; these were conducted by Robertson. On 3rd August television cameras were allowed into the Boulder Chamber.

On that day the cave was closed to the public mid-morning, and guides were placed to guard the route up to

Black Cat Chamber. At 10.30 the 'rescue team entered the wild cave. Lafferty was able to exit the cave unaided, and his first words were "Cor, strike a light. Ain't everything blue!"

There was a crowd estimated to be 2000 at the surface. Lafferty met his wife and daughter, and conducted press interviews in the bar. He drank his first pint and had fried scampi and chips. He also watched film of the World Cup final, which England won.

It is estimated that as well as the £650 paid to him by Cheddar Caves, Lafferty made £2000 in picture, story and commercial rights, but he took 3 months to find work afterwards. He became Assistant Road Safety Organiser with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

Cheddar Caves received several letters from people asking if they could enter the cave to beat the record, particularly when the record was soon beaten by a Frenchman. Jean Pierre Mairetet had entered a cave near Nice some little while before Lafferty entered Gough's. He planned to stay underground for around 131 days, in conjunction with the French Armed Forces Ministry to study the effects of timeless existence. One writer claimed to be qualified as he was a world champion walker and disgusted that the British record had been beaten by the French. One woman wanted to make the attempt as she felt that woman were just as capable! All offers were politely refused.

David Lafferty is still alive, though at 69 not in the best of health. He revisited the cave, at least as far as Mushroom Chamber, in 2006, forty years after he set the record, which still stands as a British record. A new generation of guides was able to meet him in person, for by then he had become a living legend at the caves.

Note that although western cavers have so far set a record of 366 days underground in isolation (Marizio Montalbini, an Italian in 1993), some eastern monks have been immolated as part of their religious faith for up to 3 years. Some have repeated the exercise!

Phil Hendy

CAVER'S UNDERGROUND SOLO ENDURANCE RECORDS

Year	Caver	Days	Cave	Notes
1962	Michel Siffre	62		France
1962	Bill Penman	64		Australia
1963	Geoff Workman	105	Stump Cross Caverns	To disprove supposed 2-month limit
1965	Antoine Senni	126		French Alps
1966	David Lafferty	127	Gough's Cave	
1966	Jean Michel Mairetet	131+		6m planned, with French Armed Forces Ministry to study effects of timeless existence
1972	Michel Siffre	205		
1987	Maurizio Montalbini	210	Frassassi Caves	Italy
1988	Montalbini + 14	48		Male and female
1992	Maurizio Montalbini	366		
1998	Maurizio Montalbini	166		Lost 2 stone. Earthquake
	Stafania Follini	130		Female
2006	Maurizio Montalbini	235	Grotta Fredda	Target 1000 days. Lost 21kg weight
2008	Giancarlo Sulas		Campanaccio (Sardinia)	Target 366+ days

Based on Descent 203 (Aug/Sep 2008) p. 5

Maurizio Montalbini died 19/9/09 aged 56 (b. 1953)

Wessex Girlies on tour

Via Ferrata Switzerland October 2009

Jude Vanderplank and Jo Williams came up with the original idea for a girly trip, also invited were Sarah Payne, Jo Diamond, 'Tom-asina' Chapman, 'Ver(o)n-ica' Freeman and 'Mak-haela' Kellaway!!

We set off on an early flight from Bristol to Geneva, where we picked up a van and set off into a cloudy and very damp Switzerland. After a couple of hours driving down the Rhone valley, and a quick stop for lunch, where we were taught how to eat a sausage, it was still raining. Obviously being British we weren't about to let the rain put us off, so we decided to go for it anyway, and fully kitted up in waterproofs we set off. Luckily though it stopped raining just as we arrived at the start of our first Via Ferrata de Tière in Champéry.

This route was rated KS4-0 which means hard-valley location, the route started with a walk downhill to the base of the crag by a water slide. It went upwards and sideways taking us above the water and to the waterfall of Tière, where two wire bridges crossed the waterfall. The route continued back along the face and then up over a small overhang to the pasture land above the crag.

This was a good introduction to Swiss via ferrata – especially the slippery damp conditions, and the local wildlife 'beware of sleeping bears. What we could see of the scenery under the cloud and through the breaks was spectacular, especially with the leaves turning on the trees mixed with the evergreens giving an artists palette feel to the countryside. This enthralling view was served up to us from an old Victorian era gallery carved high into the cliff face that formed part of the return route, this alone was worth the trip.

We drove down to Sion and somehow managed to find a campsite despite Jo's dodgy directions (this was a bit of a theme of the trip!). Luckily it turned out to be a different campsite than she was aiming for as this one had a restaurant on site. We pitched tents in the dark and pouring rain as best we could given the hard ground, before retiring to the restaurant for food and beer and a plan of attack for the next day.

Given the forecast for mixed wet/dry weather over the next few days and the proximity of several routes we decided to stay at the campsite another night, this also afforded us the luxury (or hardship depending on your point of view!) of two VF trips in one day as we no longer had to take down and set up tents.



Jo, Jude & Jo eating cake whilst others battle the mountains - Photo: Vern Freeman

The day started early with fighter jets taking off from the nearby airfield! After a fitful return to sleep, interrupted by other jets taking off, we woke to sunshine and relatively clear skies, a hasty breakfast of bread, honey, jam and cheese saw us on the road for our first adventure of the day, the via ferrata du Belvedere below Rochers de Nax which was a short drive from Sion. The clearer skies gave us a full view of the fantastic mountain scenery around and also great views all the way down



Sarah has head for heights above Sion

Photo: Tom Chapman

into the Rhone valley, at times those views seemed all too close on the hairy switch back up the mountain.

The route itself started from a bend in the road and a short walk past an old quarry, this was again rated KS4-0 but seemed to have a little more overhanging elements than the day before. Another fine route with plenty to entertain, including great views of the valley, the route finished on the top of a small spur of the mountain and gave a panoramic view of the main valley and the side valley we had driven up earlier. We saw the fighter jets from earlier circle around and dive down to land – obviously returning for lunch which prompted us to rush back down off the mountain and look for a suitable lunch stop en-route to our second VF of the day.

We stopped for lunch in the town of Raron below the start of the Via Ferrata du Bietschtal bridge. We had crossed into the Germanic part of Switzerland and lunched on open sandwiches and cakes before driving up narrower and even hairier switchbacks than the mornings jaunt. We arrived at the parking spot next to a bar before heading up hill on foot and then along a narrow precarious path to an old stone bridge across the gorge that the VF wound its way back down.

This VF is supposedly only open to guided groups – but we had our own rope to abseil in the start so ignored the signs and pressed on. The start of the VF was interesting, after the easy abseil you had to reverse downwards on a slight overhang on small slippery rungs that you could not always see and had to either feel for or be talked onto. This then led round underneath the bridge and rock arch to an interesting controlled pendulum across to a cave!! We all made it across successfully, even Sarah who managed to get her glove stuck in her abseil device. The VF continued with ropes in situ down to a tyrolean

cable out of the cave mouth and across the river, a short walk to another tyrolean and then more hard VF, Tom however decided it wasn't hard enough for him, and he dropped his camera case in the river just so he could prusik down and rescue it.

Then it was the final, and as it turned out, eventful tyrolean across the gorge into the mouth of an old railway tunnel.

I was sent across first - something about being big and strong (obviously nothing to do with me being the heaviest!!) and being able to stop anyone going too fast from hitting the wall in the tunnel. I stood on some old sleepers that you had to remember to lift your feet over and stopped the first few coming across. Then Jo W came across on her silver speed pulley, when she was just over half way (of the 72m cable!) I started to realise she was going a little fast - I sat my weight down onto my cows tails which were clipped into the cable, but as Jo hit she swept me off my feet and we both fell off the raised sleepers and landed on the floor behind, I managed to land on my feet, but Jo landed badly and gashed her leg and sprained her ankle so there was no more VF for our intrepid leader after this. It was a pleasant walk through the tunnel, well a hobble



Mak and Jo make for a quick exit from celebrity hell in the Jungle - Photo: Vern Freeman

description of an in situ pulley for the final cable tyrolean was out of date - luckily Tom and I had our pulleys with us so we pressed on to the end and past the torrent of water which was luckily under an overhang so let us off with just some heavy drips and spray. There was a small blue draw back cord, but this was so jumbled that it snagged and snapped when Tom went across - like a hero he hauled himself back across and we had another go at sending Sarah across - but again the line snagged and we lost most of it, so I was the only other one to enjoy the exhilarating ride across, the down side was getting wet feet crossing the swollen river to join the others and return to the van where we had some beers and found Jo had picked up three hitch hikers who were also heading to Leysin.

We would have driven straight to the campsite by following the hitchers directions, but Jo insisted that wasn't the campsite and had us drive all the way around the village only to enter the same campsite from the other side!

Still it was only a short walk into town and a fantastic cheese restaurant where they made cheese the traditional way whilst you ate your meal, and they had a fascinating little museum upstairs. The food was good as was the wine, beer and brandy, although as a result of the quantities consumed nobody wanted to look at the bill what with Swiss prices!

We woke the next morning to clear skies and awesome views of the valley below from our tent porches, the surrounding peaks were snow clad with a fresh dusting from the previous day. Only three of us were up for the VF today as it was billed as being quite overhanging, so Sarah, Tom and I dropped the others off in town to shop (on a Sunday in Switzerland off season!) whilst we spent the morning pumping our arms on the VF, but at least we had good weather and spectacular views.

That was it then as we drove back to Geneva airport and returned to a dark and dismal Mendip, all in all a great trip, despite the mixed weather we never got rained on whilst on a VF. I've done some VF in France before and can happily say that I thought the Swiss ones were more fun. I'm looking forward to a return in the spring/summer period so that we can do some of the high level routes which require longer daylight.



Ver(N)onica tries out for the new Tarzan movie - Photo: Mak

for Jo, and then back across the railway bridge, we even had an obliging train come thundering across. We consoled Jo with a beer back at the bar then headed back for more food and beer to numb the pain at the campsite.

Next day saw us heading up to the Leysin area, the morning VF was going to be the Via Ferrata de la Cascade by the Col du Pillon near Diablerets, this was high up and the name should have been a clue - we might be getting wet!. As we drove up in the incessant rain the guide book picture of blue skies and a trickle of water was in the backs of our minds, it may have eased raining but we had to be reassured Jo was not joking when she pointed at a huge cliff with a torrent of water pouring over it and saying that was our destination for the day!

We tried putting it off for as long as possible by getting a coffee in the restaurant, however eventually we decided we just had to go for it. By the time we had kitted up and started walking our luck held and it stopped raining, but the torrent kept pouring over the cliff.

This was another interesting VF, great views and the wet/muddy sections added to the excitement, the guide book

Mak
(Mark Kellaway)

Templeton Update

Much has changed since my last update (October 2009). In September we lost our spoil heap, which was visible from space and very dear to the diggers. As Hugh Tucker says, the point of Templeton isn't to find a cave – it is to make the world's largest spoil heap! At first we blamed didicoys – our fault, as we hadn't nailed it down, but it transpired that the farmer has taken it to level off one of his fields. The site is now very exposed. We now need to refence the smaller area that we now require, and then plant a blackthorn hedge around the dig.

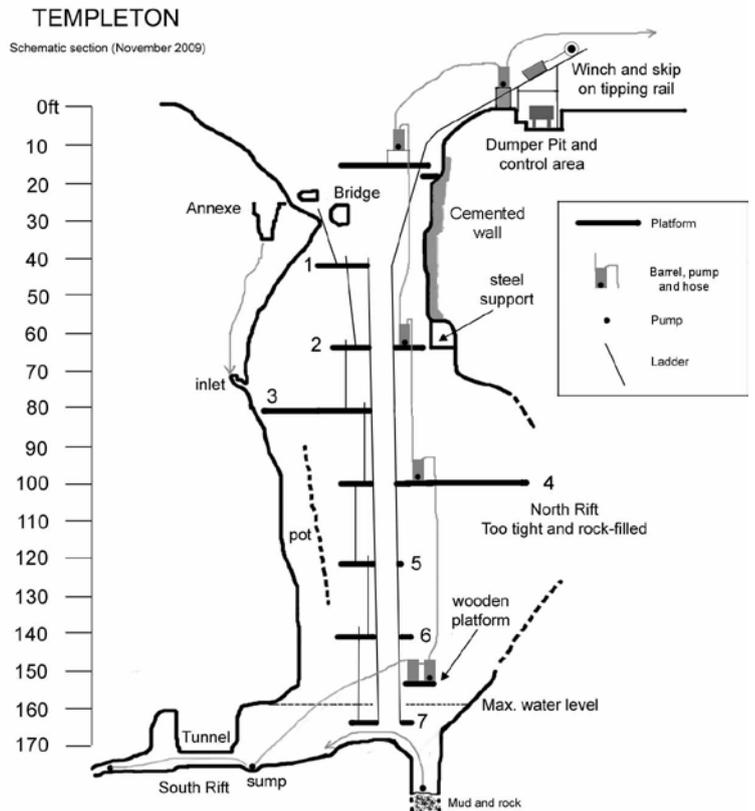
The generators have been moved, and Eric Dunford has relocated the generator control panel inside the shed, taking the opportunity to instal lighting and power sockets. Pumped water is now led into the next field, and spoil is being used to make a dam to prevent water running off the now bare earth where the spoil was and down the dig.

At the bottom, the shaft at the north end has been progressively deepened at the rate of about a foot a week (due to the relatively small size of the shaft). The fill is mainly soft mud, gloopy on top, though this can be fairly dry once the upper layer has been removed. There are some large stones which need to be broken before removal, though a bar can be pushed several feet down into the mud. At the time of writing, the shaft is about 5 metres deep, so it is below the level of the south rift. Interpreting the way the dig is going is difficult. The south rift looks like an outlet, judging by the scalloping, but we are not certain. Could it be the original outlet, and the north shaft has deepened causing it to be abandoned? Or did the south rift develop when the north shaft became choked? Time will surely tell.

The recent dry period has meant that pumping the north shaft does not take long, though heavy rain will cover the entire floor and even the bottom (166ft) platform. The

generator cannot cope with all pumps working, so we lower the level at the south end, then pump the north shaft water to the south. When this shaft is empty, water from the south end can be raised to the surface. The depth of the shaft makes bucket hauling difficult, so a hand winch will be bolted to the wall. Digging continues...

Phil Hendy



Tuska's Tours Revived

It had been several years since we had an excursion the day after the Dinner, so it was with some expectation that we awaited our luxury coach at the bottom of the lane on Sunday morning. Despite a few hangovers the fine weather ensured that there was a large party bound for Tuska's mysterious location.

What joys awaited us, we wondered, as the coach set off towards Cheddar. However, after a couple of rapid changes of direction, it became clear that the destination was Burrington. As we alighted at the café, we were met by Kevin and Charlotte, who had dreamed up an elaborate competition, designed to fully test our alcohol affected minds and bodies.

The cunning pair had devised a course among the various cave entrances to find letters to make up an anagram, and there were also stickers to collect from a series of check points. The final sting in the tail was a quiz sheet to be completed at the end before the time limit lapsed. A few of the teams made it out to find the most distant clues at Rowberrow Warren and the top of Blackdown. Most, however, settled for getting all the points to be bagged nearer to the coach park. At least we all ended up together at the ice-cream counter at the Café!

Back at Upper Pitts we enjoyed the traditional club lunch, served up by Wendy Williams, Lou Biffin, Marion Wilkinson and helpers. After the meal Dave, Kevin and Charlotte handed out the prizes. Our thanks are due to all the organisers,

Maurice Hewins

The declared winners were :-

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Cookie, Frank Tully and Graham and Chrissie Price. | 409 points. |
| 2. Jo, Mak, Emsey, Lou and Biff. | 406 points. |
| 3. The Festerers (Tommo, Judy and Maurice) | 330 points. |
| 4. Simon Richardson. | 295 points. |

75th Anniversary Dinner

The AGM was certain to be a tough act to follow. However, there was a 75th Anniversary Dinner, and it was rather good. Our thanks to Wendy for organising this. Arriving at the Bath and West Showground, worrying rumours of extortionate beer prices proved to be unfounded. I suspect this may have been a cunning rouse to outflank the perennial fusts. Following the usual format, a number of awards were dished out by Les. Paul graciously received Tiger of the Year for a somewhat insignificant incident in the "Igue de Goudou". Since when was getting hung up with a bomb on your back, and cutting off half your SRT kit worthy of such recognition? Knownie got the Frank Frost, vowing to lock himself in the loo and pen some more excellent journal articles this year. Alan Butcher spoke on behalf of the guests. Jim Hanwells talk on days gone by at the Wessex was particularly enjoyable. A passionate recount of caving and all that comes with this. The food was excellent, the gents looked dapper and with a few exceptions the ladies all looked lovely. I was quite taken with, oh I forget her name. As the evening wore on came the inevitable launching of paper aeroplanes from the cheap seats. Obviously one avoided getting involved, at least until a profiterole floated past my head. At the more salubrious end of the room I observed plenty of sophisticated banter, with the exception of the top table where they were too busy putting away several surplus meals. Aside to the normal proceedings, there was also loads of stuff on Charterhouse, and a rolling slide show of old photos. It is somewhat disturbing to see oneself fifteen years ago. I can only speculate on what this is like for some of the older members, clocking old pics of themselves from half a century ago.

All too soon we were back on the coach, leaving the venue intact; well done Bean. The usual suspects migrated to the rear of the coach, and Emsi and Lou crammed themselves into the overhead storage racks. It doesn't get any easier girls. Back at Upper Pitts we were greeted by missing footwear, with the exception of the slob amongst us that had unwittingly taken the precaution of wearing our trainers to the Dinner. Noel was keen to point out that his £10 Primark trainers offered excellent value for money, as they were typically good for six months. It was suggested to him that at this price he might stock pile two or three pairs as that would surely see him out. The missing shoe culprits, yooof staying at the Belfry, shortly revealed themselves, turning up to join us for a few scoops. For me, the evening ended with Malc and his laptop, "You've got to see this film from Greece. I can guarantee that it's never been shown in the UK before. You'll be amazed at the size and profusion of formations." Needless to say he fell immediately asleep. Very nice that it looked, one can get a little staled out at 4.30 in the morning. The following day brought the return of the mystery tour. Not quite what the doctor ordered when one is suffering from lassitude.?

Diary

January 9th - 2nd Saturday Trip - 10am @ Upper Pitts

January 16th - Repairing drystone wall between Upper Pitts and Swildons 9.30am @ Upper Pitts

February 6th 2010 - CSCC Meeting, 10.30am @ Hutters Lodge Inn

February 7th 2010 - WCC Committee Meeting - 10am @ Upper Pitts

February 12th - 13th - (Provisional) Devon trip - Staying at DSS hut in Buckfastleigh - Les Williams: caving@wessex-cave-club
for more details

February 13th - 2nd Saturday Trip - 10am @ Upper Pitts

March 13th - Wessex cave rescue practice - 10am @ Upper Pitts. All members welcome. instead of 2nd Sat trip.

June 6th - N.A.M.H.O. - See Page 4 for more details

June 12 - 13 - Mendip Cavers Fair - Talks / Stomp etc etc (see page 4 for details)

The Deadline for February's Journal (which will be current until early April) is the 31st of January. Please help with this if you would like to see the diary continue to be a useful resource.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

As at 22nd November 2009

Descent: Issue 209 (Aug/Sep 09) (Ian Jepson obituary, Charterhouse Cave, Fernhill Cave, Eastwater Cavern (Blackfriar's);
Issue 210 (Oct/Nov 09) (Fairy Cave Quarry, Charterhouse Cave, Fernhill Cave, Withybrook Slocker)

Grampian Speleological Group Bulletin 4th Series No. 2 (Oct 09) - Craven Pothole Club. Record 96 (Oct 09) - B.C.R.A. Bull.
'Speleology' 14 (Aug 09) - Cave Diving Group N/L 172, 173 (Jul, Oct 09) - Chelsea S.S. N/L 51, 8/9, 10, 11 (Aug/Sep, Oct, Nov 09)
MCG News 357, 358 (June, Aug 09) - M.N.R.C. N/L 124 (Summer 09) - Plymouth Caving Group. N/L & J. 152 (Mar 09) - Plymouth Mineral & Mining Club J. 39, 1 (Jun 09) - NSS (USA) 'News' 67, 7, 8, 9, 10 (7, 8, 10, 11/09) - Journal of Cave & Karst Studies 71, 2 (Aug 09)
Soc. Spel. De Wallonie (Belgium). Regards. 71 - Speleological Union of Ireland 'Underground' 76 (Summer 09) -

U.B.S.S. Proc. 24, 3 (Apr 09) (Speleogenesis and landscape development in the Burrington area. Farrant A.R., Mullan G.J., Moody A.A.D)

Bunnell D. Inside America's Lava Tubes - Ford D. and Williams P. Karst Hydrogeology and Geomorphology (2007) (J. Wiley & Sons, Chichester)** Muir D. and Ford D. Castleguard (1985) Photographic record of the Castleguard valley and cave in Banff national Park, Canada.** (**Kindly donated by Derek Ford)

Ian Jepson. Logbooks, slide and photograph collection - Norman Paddock collection of aerial photographs of the Brecon Beacons
David Lafferty - World record stay underground in Gough's Cave, 1966 (CD-ROM)

Pemberton C. The Story of Kent's Cavern* - Vallintine R. Divers and Diving* - Dubkin L. The White Lady* - Strinata P. Grottes et Paysages de L'Atlas au Taurus* - (* Donated by Ali Moody)

Phil Hendy

75th Anniversary Dinner

In Pictures



Top Left: Don Thomson (cutting the cake) flanked by two of the Vice Presidents: Jim Hanwell and Derek Ford
Photos - Ali Moody / Other photos - Simon Richardson