

Wessex cave club

Journal No. 337



June 2016

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EDITORIAL



Another day, another journal and I suspect that my editorial predecessors felt the same emotions as I do when the journal arrives from the printer; a mixture of relief and pleasure. For this journal the relief was spectacularly off the scale. The switch to DTP has (self-evidently) enabled me to use complexities of colour to enhance the appearance of the journal. Such colours make extreme technical demands of the printing process used. They also increase its cost. So this journal was printed in Germany, where digital laser printing is considerably cheaper. The process involved learning the complications of margins and bleeds, fonts, curves, colours, graphics and completely weird versions of PDF files - and there was no safety net. A proof copy was not available. It was 330 copies or nothing. I hoped that the result would be a better, cheaper, journal - but was prepared to say nothing, quietly foot the bill and consign the result to land-fill. I despatched the PDF and waited. A reasonable bid for the 2016 understatement prize would be to describe the atmosphere at home as "Tense". Finally opening the boxes allowed me to scrap an alternative Editorial..... The faults in my layout are "Non Lethal"! The journal you are reading is the visible and tangible reward for your contributions. It has cost less to print, and because it could be printed on thinner paper, less to post.

The better print quality also does justice to your photographs, so the journal can simply showcase more of them. When I requested photographs illustrating the squalor of the current digs, I did not anticipate such instant and graphic responses from the Tankards and Fester teams. Pages 84 and 93 make the point that these digs=squalor in trumps, and that success depends on a awful lot of it. And, happily, both digs have succeeded in opening new cave passage, which must be encouraging for the teams digging elsewhere. Our older generation will remember this wartime exhortation!

*Noel*

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Cover Photo: Wookey Hole, Chamber 24. The cave diver is Anton Van Rosmalen, from the Netherlands, who was visiting the UK under a temporary CDG membership.
Photo: **Christine Grosart.**

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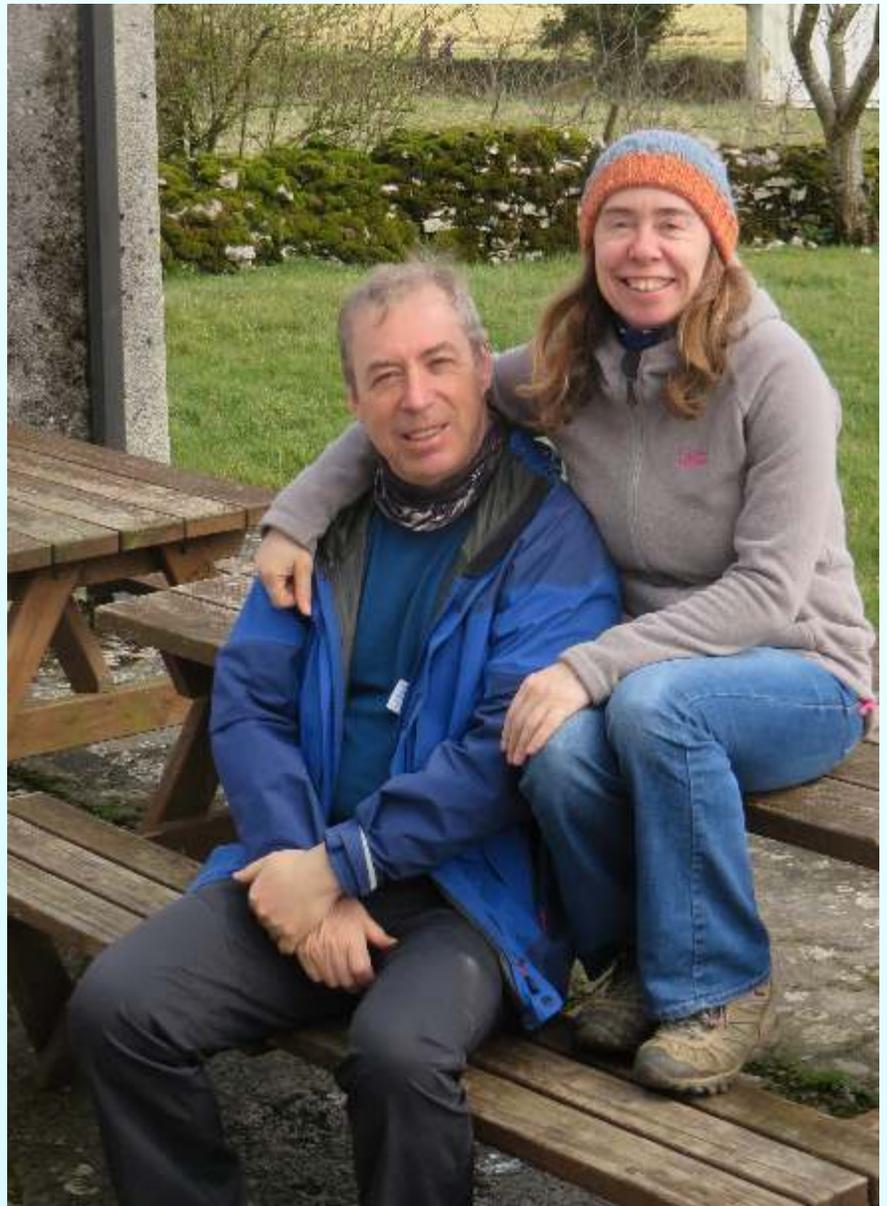
BITS AND PIECES



Behind the scenes, the debate about the impact of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), which came into force in 2005, and its interpretation relating to caving, rumbles on... and on.... It does affect us but there is not space to print out the current state of play in the Wessex Journal. As always, the invaluable "Descent" magazine is keeping tabs on the situation and apart from the article on page 5 of Descent 249, this is the best internet link if you wish to update yourself:

<http://www.wildplaces.co.uk/content/119-caving-and-crow>

Who said that Romance was Dead? Following a whirlwind courtship, Rich and Andrea have officially announced their engagement. Felicitations and our best wishes to you both from the Wessex!



The complete Devonshire Speleological Society key is now available in the tackle store



FESTER HOLE THE STORY SO FAR:

The Wessex has a long history with Tween Twins Hole, or Fester as it came to be known amongst club members. As Maurice Hewins detailed in his piece in Digging Scene (WCC Journal Vol.34:334) this small muddy entrance above the Combe road in Burrington has seen its fair share of interest through the 1980's and 1990's. I won't repeat again the accurate history given us by Maurice but will start my account in more recent times. My interest in Fester began in mid 2009 a few months after Maurice, Judy and Paul Weston had re-visited the dig as part of the J-Rat DigFest weekend in November 2008. It started as a bit of fun on Thursday nights for a small group of local cavers some of whom have now moved on from caving. Dave Upperton, Chris Halls, and the Kirk Brothers were all regulars back then. We were well supported by weekend visits by Tommo, John Thomas, Maurice and Judy and progress was rapid. Tommo would often rope in anyone hanging around the hut on a Saturday afternoon so the list of occasional diggers is lengthy. As things progressed Maurice thought it wise to seek permission again from the UBSS, who control digging rights in Burrington on behalf of the landowner. A visit from Graham Mullen ensued and permission was duly given on the spot; the only condition being that no further spoil could be brought to the surface. Fortunately, we had the redundant original shaft and passage that could be backfilled. There were also several useful alcoves to be filled. For a time, we were digging 100 skips a session before enthusiasm amongst the youngsters waned. More resolutely Tommo et al.

refused to give up and continued with the occasional Saturday or Sunday afternoon "fester" in Fester Hole. Wind on five years and Maurice rang me to say that he would like to have another look. Tommo, Maurice, Judy and my daughter Emily headed back up the Combe to take a look. Things hadn't changed all that much since 2009, save for Tommo having made a couple of feet of progress through solid mud heading upwards. A good fun time was had by all and with a small child interested in something other than a computer screen for a couple of hours it seemed like a good excuse for some father daughter bonding time. Over



Squalor in Fester..... Barry Wilkinson at the breakthrough point. Photo: Maurice Hewins

the next couple of months Tommo and I enjoyed a few more Saturday afternoon trips when he suggested that Barry Wilkinson join us. On 14th February 2015 we headed up the Combe once more and attacked the mud filled dig face. Maurice had left a long metal spike in the dig and I had taken to ramming this into the mud fill and prising out large chunks for Tommo and Barry to drag back. All at once the spike went into the mud and straight up into open space beyond. In a few minutes I had brought down the rest of the ceiling and could see up into that golden black space that all diggers dream off. We had found a pretty little rift with a partially filled phreatic passage heading off at its base. It was named Valentines after the day of discovery. Interest in Fester Hole had been well and truly rekindled. Over the next few weeks we set about following the phreatic tube heading south east from Valentines parallel to the road. I recruited new Priddy resident and aspirant digger Tim Clements into the regular team, and with help from Adrian Vanderplank we began to head off into the unknown. Spoil was hauled back into the entrance passage and we started to utilise sandbags to handle the copious amounts of spoil. By the 14th March my sketch survey showed we had made 16 metres of progress from Valentines. Work continued helped by the installation of conveyor banding and further sandbags. A small stream of guest diggers came up to look but the core team remained myself, Tommo, Barry and Tim with occasional weekend visits from the Hewins'. On the night of the 24th May with a returned Dave Upperton and newcomer

Josh Yates swelling numbers excitement began to rise. Our log book entry from that evening tells the story well.

“Jonathan W, Barry W, Tim C, Dave U, Josh Y - 2 hours. A very successful night. JC & JY at the front, BW hauling, JW & DU walling. A steady 30 or so buckets came out before time was called at 9.15pm. Excitement began to rise at the front and JW had to resort to holding back the buckets to prevent the men at the front filling them further. Closer inspection by JW and DU revealed the cause of the excitement. Through a too-small hole ahead a reasonable sized chamber could be seen. Decorated on the left but from what could be seen appeared to be trending right. No digging next week due to holidays but one or two more sessions should see us exploring caverns measureless....”

On 11th June with Maurice and Judy present, Tim Clements finally broke through into the small chamber we could see ahead of us on 24th May. After 14 minutes further digging the rest of the team joined him. Named Rands' Revenge in memory of Jim Rands one of the original Fester diggers, the moment of break though was recorded on Go-Pro and shown to a packed audience during the Mendip Round-up at Hidden Earth 2015.

From Rands' Revenge no obvious way on could be seen. However, a small hole in the floor looked interesting. On the night of discovery, a strong draught had emanated from it, and so with little other option we began clearing it. Over several

weeks it became obvious that at times of fast falling atmospheric pressure the hole blew strongly outwards. With the distance to the entrance from Rands' Revenge now nearly 40m we needed to reinforce the team so Pete Hann, Aubrey Newport and Adrian became regulars and then in August John Cooper & Murray Knapp swelled our numbers further. As we pushed further down the hole in the floor pebbles could be heard rolling away down a slope below. On 24th September I was finally able to squeeze down a body-size rift for 1.5m metres to emerge at the head of a steeply descending rift passage. At the bottom were the piles of rock we had thrown down over the preceding months giggling at the crashing noises they made as they went down! Named Stannah Stair Rift after Maurice's continued protestations that



Jonathan Williams in Waterlily Chamber. Photo: Pete Hann

we should dig everything big enough for geriatrics, the rift further complicated spoil removal. Everything now had to come up the 7m deep rift before being hauled 40m back to the entrance passage. Progress slowed a little over the Autumn and Winter months as only 1 in 3 sessions seemed to involve making progress at the front. Spoil removal remained a constant battle. As the rift got deeper a bolt and electron ladder were installed and by Christmas 2015 Stannah Stair Rift was over 10m deep. During January 2016 I began to ponder the upcoming one year anniversary of the discovery of Valentine's Rift. I made plans with all the team to have a Saturday afternoon trip to the dig followed by a Digger's Dinner later that same night. Maurice, Judy and John Thomas were to come down from Farnham and Tommo would make the journey from Birmingham. On Thursday 4th February with the one year anniversary fast approaching things began to heat up. Once again our log entry for that night tells the story.

“Pete H, Mike K, Jonathan W, Aubrey N, John C - 2 hours PH and MK at the front, JC hauling and JW and AN stacking in RR. At about 9.30pm JW called time to be informed by PH that he could see black space ahead and the echo was massive. JW went to have a look and a bit of dig fever ensued. By 9.50pm both JW and PH agreed there was something big ahead but it would be left for the 13th and the planned one year anniversary celebrations”.

The 10 day wait was nail biting but on 13th February with most of the team assembled it was time to crack on. Pete Hann and myself headed to the bottom of Stannah Stair Rift rift and after 20 minutes digging I felt confident of squeezing through into the void ahead. With Pete recording everything for posterity on the Go-Pro I squeezed ahead and found myself in a reasonable sized chamber from which I could see about 15 feet in either direction. Pleased with myself but not really realising what we had found at that point I set about with the lump hammer from the other side of the breakthrough to make it big enough for others to follow. In short order I was joined by Pete and then by Aubrey. We decided to strip off our fetid over suits to preserve anything which might lay ahead. This turned out to be a wise move. As I headed off into the darkness the passage grew bigger. A 2m climb ahead led up into a further large passage. I shouted to Pete that we had better wait for Maurice to explore with us. Oblivious to the crazy whooping noises of the cave explorers below him Maurice was busy taking happy snaps of the dig above. It took what seemed like an age for him to appear at the break-through point and head off with us into the passage ahead. Maurice took the lead as we emerged into a large chamber, now named "Golden Oldies Day Out". We all stood in awe of what we had found as Maurice sat down on a rock and declared he would lead no further.

"So it's now my turn at the front! Formations of every kind abound, and I feel I'm in a daze as I wander forward as carefully as I dare all, the while the Go-Pro clenched in the hand. I shout back to Pete but he urges me onwards. The passage starts to decrease in size and now the walls are covered in helectites. This must be the end I think; this is Burrington not Fairy Quarry. I push onwards all the while conscious that I will be judged harshly by my peers for damage done in the heat of the moment. I drop down into a small gour-pool floored passage. The pools are crystal clear and after a few meters I'm face to face with the Waterlilly. This can't be real. I wait for my friends to catch up. Pete approaches he looks at



The Waterlilly. Photo: Murray Knapp

the Waterlilly and then looks at me, his words will stay with me forever “What on earth are we going to do with this....in Burrington!” There is no place to pass each other so we stay in single file as we crawl further on past brilliant white formations. We are forced to lay down flat as a beautiful dagger-like stalactite blocks the way on. After another 10 metres or so of low passage the roof starts to raise and the cave goes big again. I stop and allow the others to pass me for their turn at the front. All too soon a large descending phreatic passage dips sharply down and ends in a mud floor. It looks easy digging but we are in our undersuits and socks and this is no time for getting muddy. It will wait for another day. As we make our way back out Pete takes some snaps to record the cave in its pristine state. By the time we make it back to the connection point a cast of thousands have arrived. Judy has climbed down her first ever ladder and has made it down, along with Tommo and John Thomas.

It was close to 4 o'clock before I headed back out of the cave buzzing with the excitement of the day. Later that evening fourteen of us gathered for dinner at my home and had good reason to enjoy a bottle of two of Champagne with our meal. After the chaos of the weekend Pete's words began to echo in my mind. What should we do next to make sure what we had found would still be there in a months' time let alone 10 years. Our first task was to contact the UBSS and inform them of what we had found. Linda Wilson acted swiftly in contacting the landowner, showing him Pete's photos of the cave. The landowner was resolute that conservation should be key to our plans going forward and would support measures to ensure that the cave and its formations will be protected. With the kind help and support of Linda we quickly

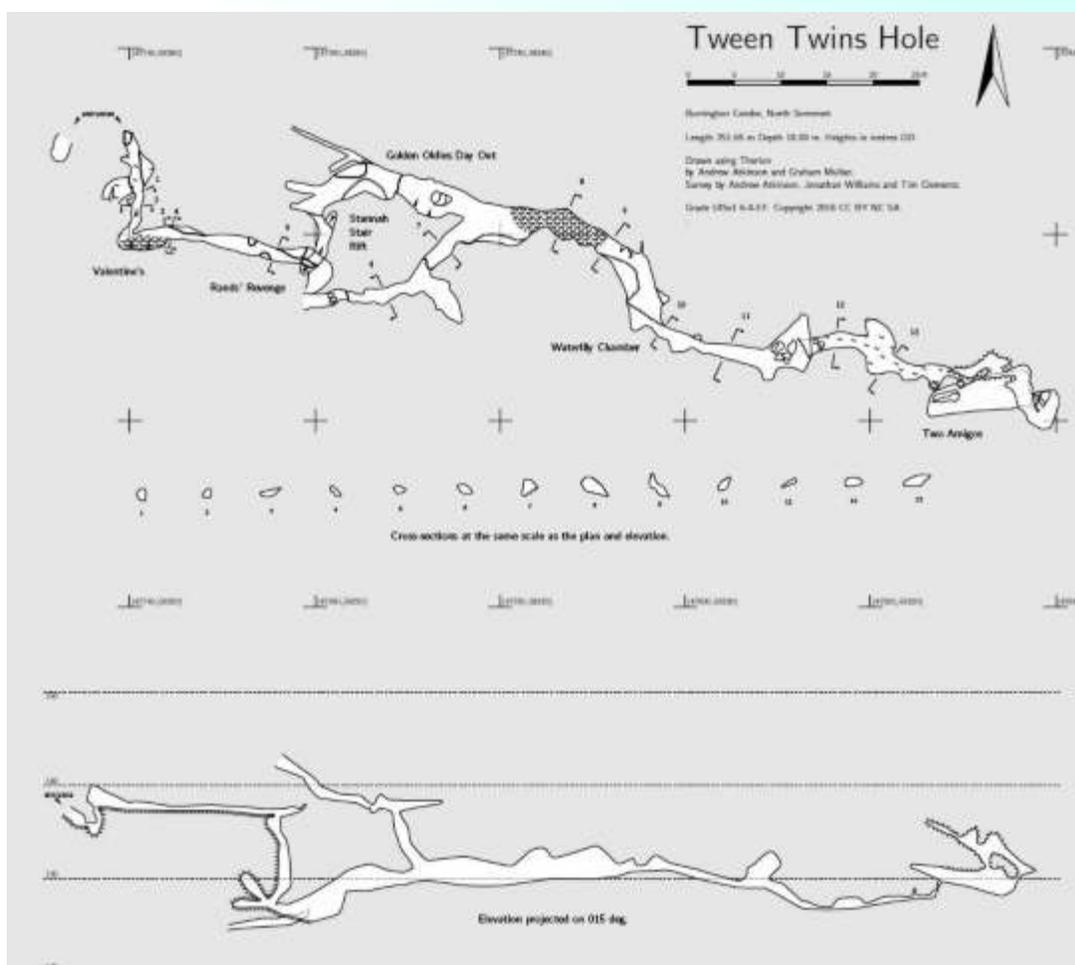
receive permission from English Nature and the landowner to place a gate on the entrance and introduce a leader system along the lines of the Fairy Cave Quarry system. This was to be a first for a Burrington cave.

“Take nothing but memories and photos.

Leave nothing but footprints”

Subsequently we went back to the end of the cave. A laborious but necessary process of stripping our dirty oversuits, boots and gloves and re-dressing at the end did nothing to speed exploration. On the night of 18th February, John Cooper, Josh Yates, Tim Clements and myself dug through the mud floor at the end but were only rewarded with a small mud floored chamber. The way on is over a rising calcite boss but its desperately tight and looked likely to be the end. On 5th March after the dust, or should that be mud, had settled Tim Clements and I returned to the end and both

managed to pass the terminal squeeze. After 2 hours of digging at the base of a boulder choke we were able to squeeze through into sizable boulder chamber. We named it “Two Amigos”. There is potential for further digging here so who knows what the future may hold for Fester Hole, that muddy little dig on the side of Burrington Combe that was “**never going to go**” .



Jonathan Williams



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Noel,

Here is a possible item of club news for the Journal, plus a couple of my photos:

The first ceilidh to be held by the Wessex took place on 12th March at Priddy village hall. It was a sellout, with over 90 members and friends present. The music was supplied by Priddy's own Backroom band. The event was arranged by Anne Brady-Vanderplank and helpers.

The bar was run by Les Williams and Aubrey Newport and needless to say both barrels were emptied. The choice of pie, mash and mushy peas proved a pleasant change from the usual ploughman's. It was surprising who gave the best exhibition of dancing, but Geoff Newton was up with the leaders.

Thank you Anne for all your hard work.
All in all an event worth repeating.

Best Wishes

Maurice



Editorial note. I have corresponded with Paul Hadfield, in Canada, on and off for some years. The "New look" journal, has triggered off an interesting correspondence from a Wessex viewpoint. I have edited extracts from this to introduce Paul's diary entries. Courtesy of Clive Westlake I have used two photographs of the **Gouffre de Pourpovelle** to illustrate the last diary account. I suspect that Phil Hendy would be the only Wessex member who could offer to accept Paul's archive, otherwise I think that only Chris Howes, at Wildplaces, has an appropriate library. Does anyone have any inspired ideas?

Hello Noel,

Congratulations on the new journal. A really nice job. Looks good on my coffee table and suitably mystifies and intrigues my guests.

Actually I am also inspired by the picture on the back cover. "L'Event Du Peyrejal". Turns out from checking my caving diaries that I soloed the bugger on 7th April 1978. The picture just triggered my brain into looking it up.

My personal caving diaries cover Dec '73 thro' June '80 . Those years when I was most active underground. Seems like I spent three weeks or so that Easter in '78 driving and caving around Belgium, Germany and France. I managed to get underground in 16 different caves over a 24 day period which included all the driving and a car breakdown that I fixed on the fly. The first few caves on that trip were actually done with Dave Walker and Dianne Beeching when I took them around a few of my old haunts in the Ardennes. My last trip in the UK was a 'tween tides trip into Otter Hole with Harper and Websell on 22nd April before the RAF kindly flew me to Canada on 1st May that year. The latter couple of years covering my first couple of years in N. America.

As the next "big" trip I will be going on is probably dying. I was wondering where these "invaluable" archives might be best deposited? The first few years cover largely UK caving (mostly Mendip) with a fair bit of Belgium, French and German stuff. Perhaps there is an archive somewhere that might be interested in the rubbish I got up to?

If you know of someplace/one that might be interested I'd appreciate knowing.

Keep up the good work on the journal !*Paul*
Hello Noel,

Thanks for the help with the diary. I have attached three jpg files that cover the couple of pages where L'Event Du Peyrejal crops up. This might give a taste of what the entries are like (mostly almost illegible - except to old farts like you and I who can still read cursive!). I have reduced the resolution so that I can afford to email them (I pay through the nose for every bit'n byte that leaves or arrives via the internet). However, if you need a higher resolution I can let you have it.

We have been without internet service for three weeks. The signal to my home here is a wireless connection that is repeated over the mountains from at least three sites before I pick it up. The final site went down to rodent attack and has just been fixed.

Verticals : I used both ladders and SRT. However, as I was solo, I used ladders for all the shorter pitches (up to 30m) and self lined as it was faster and more efficient. This means that essentially the entrance drops to the G de Foussoubie were all done on ladder.

I note from my diaries that there are some interesting entries to do with the PSM and exploration of the overlying karst including what was almost certainly the first British descent (one of the first ever descents) of AN3 (Pozzo Estrella) - a real f*****g horror!

Guess I've still got to find a home for these old personal journals before I finally expire and my caving light goes out for good.

I plan on joining an old BC cavers reunion in the Kootenay's this Fall. Apparently the local breweries have been warned that three old English cavers will be attending and production will be ramped up accordingly! Best Regards

Paul



Gouffre de Pourpeville. Puit Sud. Photo: Clive Westlake

~~~~~  
Tuesday 04 April 1978 Drove to the Ardèche - camping on official camp-site. Drove to Speleo's refuge and met two German families - arranged to cave tomorrow.

Wednesday 05 April 1978 **Aven de la Grotte Rochasse.** Hans Klose, Hans Weber.  
Entrance of left gorge of Ardèche. Follow track down from Gourmier corner. take a left & contour round a smaller track. Large entrance to a crawl then large gallery for 50m to head of pitch, tackled on R. Pitch 50m inclined, over rocks, need padding or splitting. Inclined landing leading down to another pitch, which we did not do. Traversed off and into a series of well decorated galleries.

Thursday 06 April 1978 Unknown cave - about 400m E of l'Event de Peyrejal. Solo.

Found the Event de Peyrejal only after much fruitless tramping through vegetated lapiaz. Did not fancy the entrance climb so I moved to the other cave I had noted on the approach. Basically a large railway tunnel sized resurgence with at one point a ??? traverse - hands on one wall, feet on the other, body horizontal - which lead to a large, clear sump pool after about 350 m.

Friday 07 April 1978 l'Event de Peyrejal

After much searching of the lapiaz I descended a large pothole by the side of the track S of the l'Event. Turning R and following a red arrow & Maltese Cross led to yesterdays entrance & I could look down to where I had tried to climb up. This was about 300 m of particularly large gallery. I tried a pot in one wall 25m deep & blind - interesting getting out!

I then returned to the entrance pothole and took the other exit - large gallery and formations for about 1 1/2 km to a muddy section which after a climb up a fixed h/line and down another led to a lake that appeared to be the sump. This did not tie up with the description in the book, but I am certain it was part of the Peyrejal system & I probably got into another section of the galleries. Found a large black felt hat partially buried in gravel on my way out. A great trip.

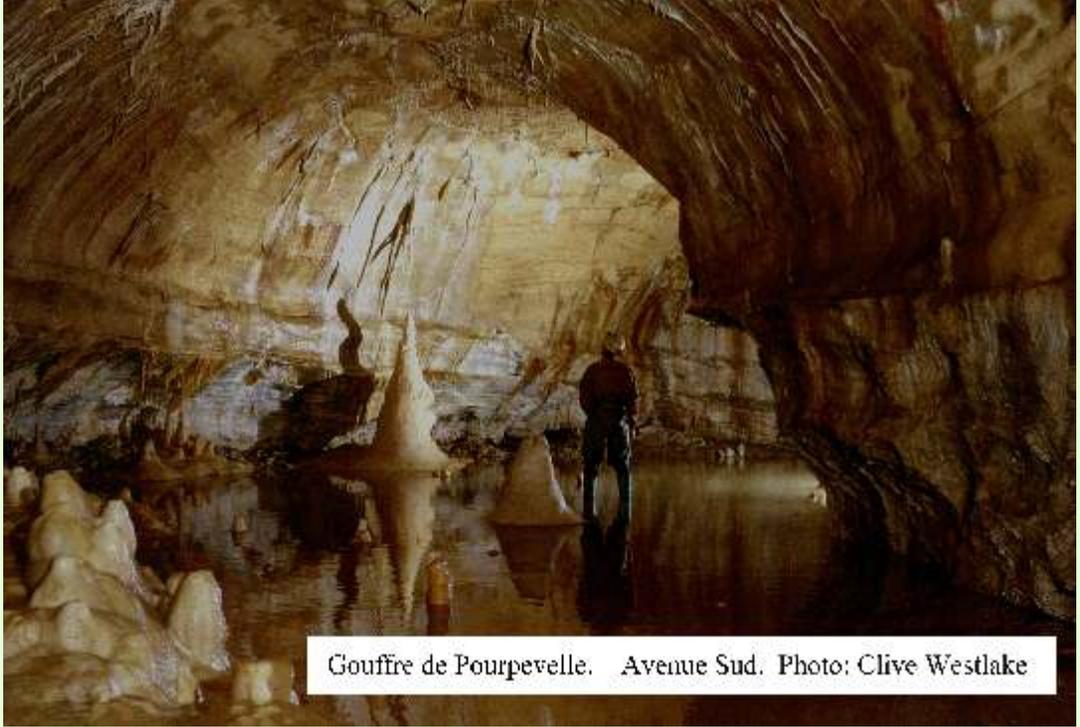
Saturday 08 April 1978 **Goule de Foussoubie** Solo

What a super cave this must be - hardly got anywhere before a lack of ladder - Oh for a Wessex team! Reminiscent of the best Yorkshire pots. Entrance 5m (but 10 m ladder required) then 15ft drop requires 20' ladder; - deep water. 7m pitch, 18m pitch - then could go no further because of lack of tackle! Most frustrating but will come back in the future with the Wessex or another team!

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March **Gouffre de Pourpovelle** Solo -

Dropped the puits sud - 25' to ledge - 15' to ledge - 120' bottom - a good final pitch into a large decorated chamber.-

The reseau ouest goes off at the foot of the boulder pile to the R. - it was closed by water when I got there. A climb on the other side of a large boulder led to a further climb up into a large decorated chamber with no way on. Below a house sized boulder on the L as you left the pitch was a small hole leading to a large passage, tunnel like with white walls - this led into an area of large gours "Galerie des Gours". On the left was a blind side lead full of caver's debris. Earlier on the R the reseau sud led off. This starts with a little crawling followed by G.G. sized passage over small gours until it enlarges a little with static pools on the floor. A little further on it suddenly bursts into beautiful decoration at a little grotto and beyond was water too deep for me to go on without a wetsuit. 4hr



Letters . . . . .

From Pauline Grosart.

**First Aid Kit, "Chop Chop!"**

For many years there have always been First Aid kits at the Wessex, yet not everyone knows of their whereabouts, or contents. The most prominent are the two situated at the top of the display cabinet in the hall, just above the telephone. These two kits are equipped with enough items to suffice for any minor, or slightly more major, injury. Recently one of our more noble senior members, whilst going about his culinary skills with a sharp knife, decided to add the tip of his finger to the casserole and allow copious amounts of blood to thicken the gravy. At this point, no one appeared to be able to locate a bandage, plaster or sterile dressing to cover the wound: there are plenty of such items in the hall kits. Furthermore, any key holder can get the two fully equipped First Aid kits from under the stairs. A brown Ammo Box and a red bag with a smaller green First Aid box. These are for trips abroad if anyone wishes to use them. These have been very useful on location in the Herault, Jura, Ardèche and more.... people will have accidents! Including myself when on a fishing trip I got well and truly hooked! I have just added a new large First Aid box, which is in the kitchen, situated on top of the Microwave, but ideally it should hang from a wall bracket. This new box contains "Kool Paks", burns packs, sterile water eye-pads (especially useful for anyone getting grit in their eyes digging).

I hope you find this useful. The kits are checked and restocked when necessary.

*Pauline*

An appreciation and obituary from Fred Davies.

**Ray Mansfield.**

On 16<sup>th</sup> March a large crowd, well over 100 strong, met at the Mendips Crematorium to say farewell to Ray Mansfield.

I had known Ray since he became a member of the SMCC in 1964, and there are two things which we did together which remain clear in my mind.

Ray was a avid reader of caving journals, whatever their origin, and this included some from North America. He approached me, probably in the late 60s, with information about a marvellous process, using Prusik knots, by which one could ascend a single rope. . We decided that this must be tried, so after a bit of practice at actually tying Prusik knots, we set out on morning for Lamb Leer armed with only Prusik loops and 100ft of rope. We both descended to the chamber floor though no one seemed to have thought of descenders; we just wrapped the rope around ourselves. I think I was given the job of being the first up, so, loops tied onto the rope, I started to ascend. Immediately the first mistake became clear. It had seemed to us that the foot loops should be at a lower point to the body loops on the rope. BUT..... Prusik knots do not slide easily up the rope; one needs a hand under the knot to prevent the whole rope just lifting. Try that with a foot rope knot in the region of your knees!! Still, I did get some 10 ft off the floor before another problem became apparent. We had hawser-laid rope. Our descent may not have been vertiginous, but our ascent most certainly was. It became necessary to wait for the spin to come to rest after a couple of upward moves, then wait for the opposite spin to cease, before making a couple more upward moves. We did both get up, eventually, having learnt some valuable lessons, but it must have been the slowest ascent ever recorded for a 60ft pitch!

We searched for sources of plaited rope, and for the next few years experimented with many different designs of ascenders and descenders which came on the market. All because that darn Ray must read foreign caving literature, but as I learned at his funeral, that was a very important part of his life.

The other times we spent together were when we were working up Cowsh Avens, 4 years of a weekly visit, starting early in the mornings. That way we were on our way out as the body ruckle was beginning to come down the cave - though on some occasions we encountered a problem situation before the MRO team from the surface got there.

Great times, good company: "Thank you" Ray.

*Fred*

## **Tankard Shaft** by Duncan Simey

Tankard Shaft is a promising looking dig next to the road into Priddy from the A39 near the Hunters' Lodge. Some of you may have noticed the caravan and tripod, if you see our cars there please give us a toot!

The location is intriguing as the shaft is close to Tankard Hole, a dig pushed in the 50's which achieved approx 200ft depth (surveyed to 160ft) before being abandoned due to a combination of access issues and instability. The final dig report mentioned a large passage heading off into the distance which was not entered. In the 70's the field was landscaped with a bulldozer and all traces of Tankard Hole were lost. When Tankard Hole was being dug the nearby shaft was unknown.

Like all good stories this one starts in a pub, in this case the Queen Victoria. Tim Payne overheard our group's chatter and introduced himself before inviting us to come and have a look at a mine shaft that had opened up on his land. Sarah Payne (no relation) and Duncan Simey agreed to go along for a look. MCRA has no entries near where he described other than Tankard Hole and they didn't expect to find much. It was most likely to be just a test shaft. **But luck is where you make it and there was a slim possibility of eventually getting permission to re-open Tankard Hole which was considered a worthwhile goal.**

On 6th October 2015 the team gathered to for their first look at the mine shaft. Tim heaved open the metal lid which revealed a far more substantial shaft than was expected. The shaft dropped 30ft to a debris cone with the bottom half in a boulder ruckle and the top half being highly unstable ginging, or would have been if about a third of it hadn't already **collapsed**. Before writing the project off, Sarah and Duncan decided to have a trial dig at the bottom using SRT to avoid touching the highly unstable

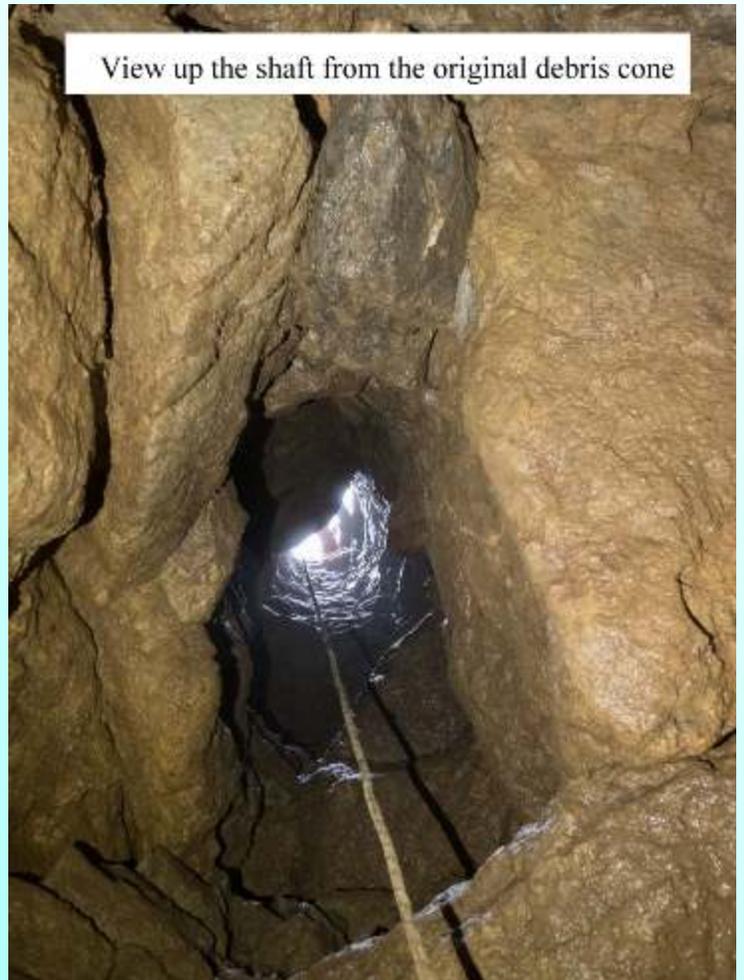


walls. They attacked the debris cone and eventually uncovered a small hole in one side with what looked like a piece of cave wall just visible. Stones thrown into the hole appeared to bounce down a decent drop. It looked promising enough that after taking engineering advice Sarah, Tim and Duncan started work stabilising the shaft so the lead could be pursued in safety.

Many shaft wall building sessions later the shaft was declared safe and digging started in earnest. The first goal was to make sure the bottom of the shaft wasn't going to open up under our feet and we were clipped to a safety rope just in case. As the floor of the shaft was dug out two more holes gradually appeared and on 18th February 2016 Sarah Payne and Duncan Simey explored beyond the shaft for the first time. The SE hole leads into a blind rift, natural at the top and excavated at the bottom, which although being rather pretty was a bit disappointing. However, the NW hole entered a boulder ruckle with a complex network of passages and chambers surveyed by Duncan Price at 150ft total length. The passages lie in a vertical plane heading NW from the shaft. The geology is complex as there are veins of Calcite crystals and evidence of metamorphic activity throughout the dig.

Although the passages are mostly natural there are a few small excavated rifts, stacked deads everywhere and a few stemples that have decayed to black dust. Miners have clearly been in here. We failed to find drill holes, pipes, candle wax or other artifacts that might help date the mine. One thing that got the team motivated was that the air in the lower parts of the boulder ruckle is consistently cold and fresh. Smoke testing was confusing and can best be summed up as a strong draft seemed to be coming from the whole East side of the mine.

View up the shaft from the original debris cone



THE DIGGING SCENE



Tim Payne about to go down on an inspection tour

A debt of thanks is owed to landowner Tim Payne who has become a key team member. Not only has he been actively involved stabilising the shaft and bucket hauling, but sourced or made most of our digging equipment including the tripod, caravan, stove, trailer and the tools we use underground. Tim also keeps us supplied with tea and biscuits, for which we are eternally grateful. A number of other cavers gradually started getting involved in the dig including regular assistance from Tony Massey and Mike Kushy. This improved the teams ability to haul buckets up the shaft and gave the project a boost.

Once the mine entrance was sufficiently opened up, attention turned to starting the next phase and finding the way on. Duncan opted for digging in the floor of the Lower Chamber which was only big enough for one person to work at a time, while Sarah and Mike attacked the floor of The Well. Duncan opened up a too-tight gap between large boulders with a tantalising view of crawlable passage heading off in two directions. Sarah and Mike kept digging down and





Digging squalor. Mike & Sarah at the break-through into the sub-level

crystals. A light connection was established through to two places in the previously surveyed passage with potential for light connections at other points. It is now clear the draft was strange because it was fed from the lower level emerging through the entire floor of the previously surveyed passages. There are still no drill marks or other evidence for dating the mine.

The good news is that the new passages include a rift that heads away from the NW-SE vertical plane that everything else lies on. It is a walkable rift with a solid flat roof and scalloped walls descending steeply to the NE, and is the source of the draft! Half way down the rift is a strongly drafting feature which looks like it could be a crawlable rift heading North. The entrance is a tangle of scalloped boulders that are preventing a clear view of what is behind. The bottom of the rift was a puzzle; a wall of deads built across the rift with a tight excavated crawl at ankle level heading North for about 5ft. Removing the top part of the wall revealed an enormous boulder with a strong draft coming round it and tantalising

views to rift walls beyond. The current hypothesis is that the miners couldn't get past this boulder and attempted to excavate a bypass. Our hope is virgin cave passage lies on the other side of the boulder waiting for exploration. It's very exciting, but two major stabilisation tasks need completing before the boulder can be shifted. One is to permanently stabilise the fill around the



Mike K, Sarah and Duncan at the shaft head.



THE DIGGING SCENE





breakthrough which seems all too keen to fill the hole back in, and the other is to sort out a 'dodgy' chamber which is sufficiently scary that no-one wants to hang around in it for long. The exit needs to be secured before we take the promising looking leads any further. As they say, watch this space!

Some realisations have been made which are worth sharing. Firstly, we believe the mine lies on the Stockhill Fault. This is becoming clearer now we have access to the

lower level which is mostly rifts instead of boulder ruckle. It looks like the shear line lies along the vein of Calcite crystals. Secondly, we aren't sure we have found the main mine workings. A lot of the stacked deads are a soft Yellow Ochre type rock and we haven't found anywhere we think these could have been extracted in sufficient quantities. There is also a puzzle over rope wear marks in the shaft as our ropes hardly touch them. It is likely there is plenty more mine still to be found.

Will Tankard Shaft connect through to the original Tankard Hole lying 60m to the NE? The survey shows we have made little meaningful progress in closing the gap as the mine has headed away to the NW, but this can be viewed as good news. Tankard Hole was located in one of the largest shake holes in Mendip and the rock underneath was notoriously unstable. However, between the shaft and Tankard Hole is an

area of the field that has not subsided; this is the direction our draft is coming from and our dig has reached reassuringly solid water formed rifts. Tankard Hole shows there is potential to go deep and the team hopes Tankard Shaft will find its own way down without hitting too much unstable rock.

At the landowner's request, visits to Tankard Shaft are by permission only. Please direct all inquiries and offers of assistance to Sarah Payne. You can follow the team's progress by reading their dig log published in the Mendip section of UK Caving.

**All Photos by Duncan Simey**

*Duncan Simey*





## EUROSPELEO2016 – MENDIPS GETS IN ON THE ACTION!

### “SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL”

*(I know the logo has dates 6th - 12th - that's because the 13th is a day when people are packing and leaving; local cavers can still visit the rigged caves that day (and possibly help with derigging them).)*

Most of you will know that this year the UK hosts the 5<sup>th</sup> European Caving Congress in the form of EuroSpeleo2016 with a week of events in the Dales. However, many of you may be unaware (until now, that is) that the week beforehand Mendip is hosting pre-conference events of its own, from Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August to Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>. Furthermore, if that wasn't good enough news in itself, it is based around the Wessex Cave Club with delegates being hosted here. Coordination Team is organising events and there are still spaces for volunteers if you'd like to be directly involved, rather than a bystander – visit the Facebook Page and message them direct at: EuroSpeleo2016:

Mendip Regional Event <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1621894061408632/>

There are significant differences between the Mendip Regional Event and the main Dales one – firstly **local cavers are being welcomed and encouraged to join in** with some of the prepared sessions **free of charge** and secondly the number of delegates is far smaller (30) so that the event can be more readily planned and manageable to observe the relevant conservation criteria for Mendip cave access; the Mendip event is also offering cave diving for delegates with the requisite technical skills, both in Swildon's Hole, visiting Sump 12, and also with privileged access being granted at Wookey Hole Cave.

**Get your diaries out at this point because you might want to mark them with the following dates:**

#### **EuroSpeleo2016: Mendip Regional Event**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August** – Welcoming the Delegates at the Wessex – the CHECC Marquee is being made available in case of poor weather – **there will be a friendly open barbecue and all cavers from any denomination are welcome to come along from late afternoon, with socialising continuing into the evening, there may even be a party somewhere....** During the day some caves will commence being rigged for the week and local cavers are welcome to assist with this as well as make use of the route(s) so they can benefit from being

able to engage in trips without the need to carry any tackle in and out. The rigging is expected to be completed that day with the main caving trips commencing from first thing on Sunday.

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>** sees the commencement of caving with the following caves presently expected to feature: Swildons Hole, St. Cuthbert's Swallet, Upper Flood Swallet, Charterhouse Cave, GB Cavern, Eastwater Cavern, Reservoir Hole, Shatter Cave – the conservation warden leadership caves will be set aside for delegates during the week (if you are a leader and can assist with this the Coordination Team have asked us to urge you to get in touch as ideally there needs to be a trip per day to cater for demand if every delegate wants to visit). There will be other caves available too, and a complete list will be on the Facebook page in the run-up to the event.

Local cavers are welcome to make use of the in-situ rigging in Swildon's Hole (Short Round Trip) and Eastwater Cavern (Twin Verticals Route), both of which will be rigged for SRT; there may well be additional caves/routes added, closer to the time – again check the Facebook page mentioned above for updates at the start of August.

**Local cavers are very welcome to show their faces and generally be around on the Sunday, as opportunities to network with our overseas compatriots could lead to future trips in other parts of the world – they can also take advantage of the rigged routes/trips if they wish.**

The Cheddar Showcaves are allowing delegates privileged access on the Sunday evening from 5:30pm onwards; Coordination Team members will be welcome to join this as part of the benefit of providing their time.

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup>** sees the continuation of caving. A Brewery Tour and surface tourism is also on the cards for delegates who don't want to spend all their time underground; visits to Wells Cathedral and the Digging Exhibition in the Museum, Glastonbury and the environs being diversions amongst others.

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>** – caving trips carry on all week but in the evening there is a visit to Wookey Hole Cave with privileged access to the off-piste parts. **There may be some additional space for local cavers to join in (free of charge) but first dibs will be given to volunteers who have helped with the event.**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>** – again, more trips, but the afternoon and evening will have a digging flavour with delegates having the opportunity to join in and assist/view a variety of Mendip digs and a follow-up in the evening at the Hunters Lodge Inn where the Long Room has been booked to host a DigFest-style evening. Alan Gray from MCRA may be providing a short talk about Redcliffe Caves as a visit there has been offered (possibly on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> - yet to be confirmed at time of writing). **This will be an open event with local cavers welcome and free to come along and be directly involved or turn up for the evening session.**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** – similar but with the Redcliffe Caves visit in Bristol during the day and perhaps a Curry Evening in Cheddar (or elsewhere) afterwards. **There may be some space available for the Redcliffe Caves Tour – enquire nearer the time.**

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup>** – a Final Evening barbecue again at the Wessex from late afternoon onwards, with presentation of prizes (during the week the Facebook page will be hosting delegates'/local cavers' photographs of what they are getting up to on a daily basis, with sponsors providing some top prizes for winning shots in various categories). There will probably be a party of some description too! **All welcome!**

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>** – pack down and head off to the Dales for the main event! **If any local cavers want to take advantage of the final day of the caves being rigged this is the last chance and it will be helpful to know as the caves need to be derigged by the evening too.**

## Recent Additions to the Library

As at 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016

*Phil Hendy*

Bristol Exploration Club 'Belfry Bulletin' 60, 5 (556 (Dec 2015)  
BCA N/L 22 (Sep 2015)  
BCRA News (Oct 2015)  
    Cave and Karst Science 42, 3 (Dec 2015)  
Chelsea S.S. N/L 57, 5/6 7/8/9 (May/Jun, Jul – Sep 2015) (*Wookey 20*),  
    10,11,12 2015 (Oct – Dec 2015)  
CNCC Newsletter 3 (Jan 2016)  
Craven Pothole Club. 'Record' 121, 122 (Jan, April 2016)  
Index to Records 1 – 15 (1932 – 1998). 51 – 80 (1999 – 2005)  
Derbyshire Caver 138, 139, 140 (Autumn 2015, Winter 2015/6, Spring 2016)  
    Annual Report for 2015  
Descent 246 (Oct/Nov 2015) (*Wookey 20, Templeton, Charterhouse Cave*)  
    247 (Dec 15/Jan16) (*Hidden Earth*), 248 (Feb/Mar 2016) (*Tankard Shaft, Upper Canada Cave*)  
    248 (Apr/May 2016) (*Wookey Hole, Tankard Shaft, Bradshaw's Cave*)  
Gloucester Speleological Society N/L 'The Journal' 1 (Mar 2015), 1 (Sept 2015),  
    2 (Dec 2015)  
Grampian S.G. Bulletin 5<sup>th</sup> Series 1, 4 (Oct 2015), 5 (March 2016)  
Luola (Finland) 1, (2013), 2, (2014)  
MCG N/L 378 (Sep 2015), 379 (Mar 2016) (*Bone Hole and Sandford Levvy surveys*)  
MNRC N/L 143 (Summer 1015), 144 (Winter 2015/6)  
NSS (USA) 'News' 73, 9, 10, 11, 12 (Sep., Oct., Nov., Dec. 2015)  
    74, 1, 2,3,4 (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr. 2016)  
    Journal of Cave and Karst Studies 77, 2,3 (Aug, Dec 2015)  
    (Future issues in electronic format only)  
Plymouth Mineral and Mining Club Journal 44, 3 (Feb 2015), 45, 1 (Jun 2015)  
South Wales Caving Club N/L 131 (Dec 2015)  
White Rose P.C. N/L 34, 3, 4 (Oct 2015, Jan 2016), 35, 1 (Mar 2016)  
  
Mines and Minerals of the Mendip Hills (Burr P.S.) 2015 Vols. 1 & 2  
Gaping Gill (Dixon K.) Donated B. Prewer  
Northern Caving (Resin Bonded Anchor Rigging Guide) C.N.C.C. Technical Group 2016 (For reference at  
Upper Pitts only, not to be removed)  
Graham Balcombe Magic Lantern Slides (CD-ROM, courtesy of C. Westlake and SWCC)  
The National Geographic Magazine. Known items of cave content, from Jan 1924 to Mar 2016 (Compiled by  
M.T. Mills)

### WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

Miss Jessie Wilman,  
Mr Chris Chilcott  
Mr Damon John Fentham  
Mr Liam James fentham  
Mr Jeremy John White  
Ian Parkin

Attila (Atti) Jager  
Silvia Auth  
Krisztian (chris) Balogh  
Charlotte Meakin  
Lee Venning  
Ben Smith

**Photo showcase. Greece, Aggitis Cave. Photo: Clive Westlake**





# EXTRACTS FROM THE UPPER PITTS LOG-BOOK

“Log Extracts” are invariably contentious; what to include or exclude. With no formal policy, I try to include a balanced number of digging reports from all the current digs, if only to remind everyone just how much digging work is in progress. First-time, and new-member trips go in and guest trips (where the handwritten names may well be wrongly transcribed (my apologies for this!), also family, and out-of-area trips. Journal space dictates a certain brutality. 22 pages of transcriptions appear here as just 4.

Saturday January 16 2016 **Goatchurch** ASCT

(Association of Scout Caving Teams)

Paul Willman, Andrea & James Roberts, Georgia (8) and Phillip (5)

My first trip into Goatchurch in years. Here in Mendip for the ASCT AGM weekend with a load of other scout cavers and my two children. Did the usual route for scouts..... I did Midget Stairs as oppose to Bloody Tight, as even with some weight lost over the last two years I just don't fit through tiny holes! Loved seeing all the bats, enjoyed the slides, found anything involving climbing very hard - and as I always say, I need to get fit! As my caving club “Chair” (Surrey Scouts) I should go caving a bit more - and now my children are enjoying it, maybe I shall have the chance. Lovely welcoming time at the Wessex. Thank You. **Andrea**

**Ed:** The Roberts Family. (The children had done Runscar and Upper Long Churn)

Sunday January 17 2016

**Sludge Pit** Geoff Newton

More hammering enabled me to pass the first part of the squeeze. Didn't push the second part, being on my own, but could see enough to tell that the passage beyond is not much bigger than the squeeze and goes uphill a bit. I am less optimistic about the lead than I was on 15/01/16. **Geoff.**



Wednesday January 20 2016 **Eastwater**

Connor Roe, Rachel Withycombe  
Rachel's first trip into Eastwater, so a nice little potter round the Upper Round Trip. A little drippy in the entrance just to cheer you up as you entered! **Connor**

Saturday January 23 2016 **Fester Hole**  
Maurice and Judy Hewins, Jonathan Williams

Annual inspection by CO, Wessex Engineers. Communication trench solidly sandbagged but muddy. Main switchline trench wet, one section partially flooded. New headquarters deep dugout solid and in frequent use, but some officers complain about the cold draught. Brief visit from Captain Binding from West Cheddar Yeomanary. **Sapper Maurice**

Sunday January 24 2016 **Hillgrove**

**Swallet** Mike K, Alex Nicholl

Found it easily enough. Lovely little swallet. Impressive engineering. **Mike K**

Wednesday January 27 2016 **Singing River Mine**

Tony Massey, Mike K  
Muddy, wet, cold and a right old rabbit-warren! Great Fun! West and East series, Six Ways and the lake. Great Hall - some dodgy timber ‘Supports’ in here! **Tony**

Friday January 29 2016 **Sludge Pit**  
Geoff Newto, Mike K

Back to the new dig site working at both the high and low level leads. The upper one is looking hopeless and the lower one very longl-term, so it's back to the old dig next tiem. We did,

however, take out the tight spot at the breakthrough point into the new passage, so it will make life easier when we return to carry on work. **Geoff**

Saturday January 30 2016 LVS Pete Buckley, Mike K, Geoff Newton  
Clearing spoil and drilling holes. About 14 buckets. Rock very hard, so fewer holes drilled than usual.  
**Geoff**

Saturday January 30 2016 Mitchel's Dig Barry Wilkinson, Nigel Graham, Pete Hann  
21 spoil out, 3 cement in. If it were not for the draught blowing out my light I would dig somewhere else.  
**Pete**

Monday February 1 2016 Spider Hole Alan Butcher, James Collings, John Cooper, NikNak, Tony Seddon, Ade & Jude VdP.  
Hauled 30 loads up Four Ton Shaft. Pulleys seized and need replacing. 2 hrs. **John**

Thursday February 4 2016 Fester Hole John Cooper, Pete Hann, Mike K, Aubrey Newport, Jonathan Williams.  
Hauling spoil up the final shaft for 1 3/4 hours. Lots of spoil needs removing from the cave. **John**

Saturday February 6 2016 LVS Ali Moody, Pete Buckley, Mike K.  
Really wet day. Water 1/2 ft below top of main sink at start. Ali and Pete set up charges in previous drilling. By the end of the session the sink had overflowed. The water estimated to travel at 3 ft a minute (without raining) and the water was a few feet from the entrance shaft when Ali and Pete came out.  
**Mike**

Saturday February 6 2016 Shatter Cave Jonathan Williams, Malc Foyle, John & Richard Kendal, Mark Vaughan  
Tourist trip to the end of the cave to escape the dreadful weather on the surface. **Jonathan**

Sunday February 7 2016 Swildons Bean, Mark, Simon  
Swildons in flood, and I had planned to dive through the sumps. Sump 2 had no viz so thought, let's wait until another day. Why go diving if you can't see! Thanks to Mark and Simon, sherpas.  
**Bean**

Wednesday February 3 2016 Swildons Bean  
Dived through sumps 2,3,4,5 and 6 which is a little awkward. After climbing up and over bypass, though, I'd had enough and proceeded out without sherpa help this time; where's your mates when you need them. **Bean**

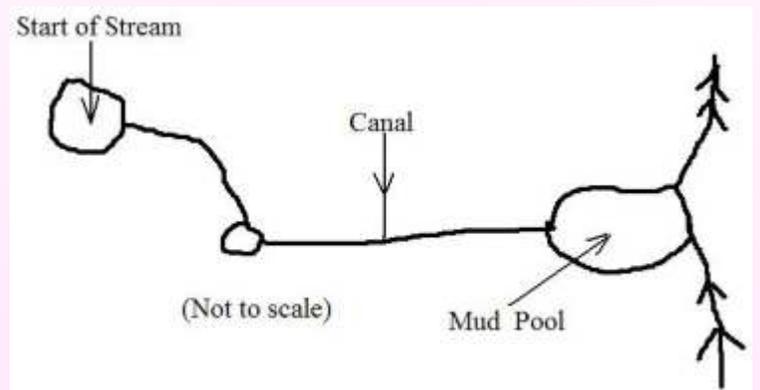
Friday February 12 2016 North Hill Swallet Derek Sanderson, Terry Waller  
A merry trip, one year on! Air below Rumble Plonk sweet and pure. Not so our language!  
1 1/4 hours. **Derek**

Saturday February 13 2016 LVS John Cooper, Pete Buckley, John Gisborne, Geoff Newton, Mike K, Auser Mecal  
16 buckets removed following last week's session. The stream had clearly flowed down the Triassic Tunnel at least once across the week with much leaf debris to the side of the conveyer belt and foam - deposited greenery on the roof. The passage continues forwards, dipping at about 30° and it's possible to see continuation for about 12 feet, with a promising echo and an inwards draught. **John G.**

Saturday February 13 2016 Sludge Pit Tony Massey, Wayne, Rich Carey, Andrea, Duncan Simey, Gerrick Roden

I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow the cave down! Main rift to terminal sump, Aragonite rift, Strike Chamber. Look around Back Passage, Shale series to Maze, Skeleton series, traverse over 4 Pots getting bloody stuck! Cave suit bum patch survived! Top Job! **Tony**

Sunday February 14 2016 Sludge Pit Mike K, Geoff Newton, Sylvia, Chris, Otti, T-Boy (HCCL)



Extra help in Sludge (Old dig) today. Mud cleared from pool at sharp end back to muddy chamber. Dropped water level to a foot of airspace. Managed to turn and go through head-first. Crouching space, with water going out on left and water coming in on right (Back passage?).  
3 hrs. **Mike K**

Saturday February 13 2016 Fester Hole Wessex Engineers, B Company: Maurice, Judy, John Thomas, Tommo.  
In trenches for last time, followed by demobilisation dinner, courtesy of Major Williams. Maurice and Judy transferred to Labour Corps. **Maurice**

Sunday February 14 2016 Craig y Ffynnon Tony Massey, Wayne, James Collings, Maxine  
A Valentine's day visit to the pretties in Helictite passage via much bloody muddy crawling, climbing and choking

on Welsh mud! Hall of the Mountain King was awesome. What exactly is a "Walking cave", Wayne? **Tony Insert Smiley**

Saturday February 20 2016 Swildons Noel

1<sup>st</sup>. trip for a couple of months and good to be back. Cave nicely wet and noisy. Fairly busy with just the 8 sets of tackle left at the 20. I encountered various scout ruckles but these were easily passed, so not too slow a trip. The 20 was badly rigged with 2 feet of space below the bottom rung, thus ensuring that it would be all too easy to swing into the waterfall (the ladder itself was long enough, but rigged with the top links directly into crabs on the upper P hanger). Lots of roped draped down around the pitch including a tyrolean. There was one rope vanishing up to the ceiling downstream of the pitch. **Noel**

(I later discovered that the Tyrolean was to help with a disabled youngster. I encountered him happily munching a chocky bar just above the Double Pots but had no idea that he was so challenged)

Saturday February 20 2016 Swildons Badger, Paul Dodd - scout trip.

Took a cerebral palsy young scout on his third trip to see how far we could get, helped by 3 scout leaders. We got to the Double Pots. At the 20 we set up a tyrolean which worked very well. One very tired young scout. 4 hrs. **Paul**

Saturday February 20 2016 LVS Ali Moody, Pete Buckley, John Gisborne, John Cooper, Geoff Newton, Mike K

An excellent session. 16 loads of debris removed to the surface and about 2m of progress in the last 3 weeks. A passage ahead is slightly bigger which will, hopefully, help reasonable progress. Mr. B succeeded in making some reasonable footage on his "GoPro"! Triassic Tunnel was measured at 30m in length from the start near Main Rift to where the rift starts dropping out where we are now working. **Ali**

Saturday February 20 2016 Rods - Bath Bean, Jacob, Louis, Jo.

Family trip through Bath Swallet. The kids enjoyed the abseil down and the ladder up Bath Swallet, although it was slightly short. **Bean**

Wednesday February 24 2016 Bath - Rods Duncan Simey, Max Howell

Bath - Rods through trip. Return to Rod's Pot after 30 or so years - good to see it has been extended. Sidcot - return to the Lobster Pot after 30 years. Surprised myself (and Duncan!) by getting up it unaided, having needed combined tactics previously. **Max**

Monday February 22 2016 Spider Hole James Collings, John Cooper, NikNak, Ade Vdp,

Jude VdP. Whilst NikNak acted as a human umbrella keeping Adrian dry (not least his drill) the others moved

rocks up to the pit in 4 Ton shaft. By the time we were reduced to moving pebbles it was time to move out, enveloped in fumes. 2 hrs. **John**

**PS** If anyone's in there, please retrieve Adrian's long drill bit. **PPS** Still no fixed ladders on Hazel Nut shaft.

Friday February 26 2016 Sludge Pit Geoff N, Mike K.

Survey some of the new finds. This was Mike's first survey, but our Sludge extension is not the place to learn. Getting through the passage is difficult enough without surveying it as well. However, a survey of sorts was carried out and will do for the time being. **Geoff**

Saturday February 27 2016 Mitchell's Dig Ade VdP, Pete Hann, Nigel Graham

Usual team, bailing out 18 buckets of mainly mud, with 4 buckets of cement down. A rugby-ball sized hole on the North side was emitting a strong draught; about 1 - 2 metres deep. Quite a lot of walling needs to be built before we can investigate the hole (and the draught). **Ade**

Saturday February 27 2016 LVS Ali, Krisztian Balogh, Pete Buckley, John Cooper, Mike K, Geoff Newton.

20 loads of debris removed from the end of Triassic Tunnel, plus 9 loads of flood debris from Main Rift. Usual, clear, drill, bang. However, due to the constricted nature of the final section of TT approaching the work face, we have started enlarging the passage about 3 metres back and will then work forwards again. **Ali**

Friday March 4 2016 Sludge Pit Geoff Newton, Mike K

Now that the stacking chamber is full, we have had to make preparations for taking the spoil all the way back to Strike Chamber. Moved lots of rocks out of the way and took out a couple of trial bucket-loads. Just need to put in conveyor belt and more rope now. Then started a new dig in Strike Chamber itself. Interesting.... the floor in this part of the cave does not seem to have been properly looked at before. **Geoff**

Saturday March 5 2016 LVS Cast of thousands: Mike K, Ali, Pete Buckley, Geoff Newton, Jake Parrish, John Gisborne, John Cooper.

Clearing the debris from last week's widening. 22 loads of spoil - lots more work-space. So much so, in fact, that John Cooper was able to drill some proper holes... to allow even more widening. Good progress being made. Secret breakthrough made, but there was no Gd to record it. Maybe next time..... **Pete**

**PS** my drill holes were not quite as long as needed;



# UPPER PITTS LOG-BOOK EXTRACTS



Friday March 4 2016 Tankards Tony Massey, Sarah Payne, Duncan Simey  
Dig, dig, dig, dig! Cobbles, crystals and cool chambers. More to come! **Tony**

Friday March 4 2016 Eastwater Tony Massey, Duncan Simey.  
Tony's first time round the 13 pots. Aces, ankles and arrggh, but great fun! **Tony**

Wednesday March 9 2016 Rhino Rift Sarah Payne, Duncan Simey, Tony Massey  
My first trip to Rhino, Duncan's too. Very ably rigged by Sarah. Down the 60 and 40, wet and chilly! Note the loose fixing on the second pitch head (ask Sarah). Re-rigged by Duncan. Seemed to enjoy his training for Titan. Smiley.  
**Tony**

Saturday March 12 2016 LVS Pete Buckley, Geoff Newton, John Cooper,  
Filled buckets of spoil, then drilled 4 holes. Water had been up and well over the gate - totally clogged with twigs and leaves - and 3/4 way up the back wall. 2 1/2 hrs. **John**

Saturday March 12 2016 Mitchell's Dig Nigel Graham, Ade VdP, Pete Hann  
19 spoil out and 2 cement in. Small open hole going down for about 6 ft with rocks looking bigger at the bottom - lots of work to get into it. **Nigel**

Tuesday March 15 2016 Tankards Duncan Simey, Sarah Payne, Tony Massey, Chris Howells.  
Digging out the base of the shaft, and widened and deepened the passageway to Crystal Rift. **Tony**

Wednesday March 16 2016 Burrington Combe Rich Carey, John Cooper, Richard Marlow, Jude VdP.  
Placing signs in preparation for rescue practice this coming weekend. First RC and JV went to Goatchurch, while JC and RM went to Sidcot. Then all went to Pierre's and Lionel's. Met another group in Lionel's not getting very far, even though they had a description with them! About 1 1/2 hrs. **John**

Since March the Ogof Draenen entrance has been worked on by a team from Brynmawr CC and Morgannwg CC. This is to rectify the effects of time and water, and to improve the entrance. Extra care should be taken in the entrance until the work is complete. The manpower and costs are significant ..... and offers of assistance would be appreciated. (From Descent Magazine).

### Diary Dates.

Fri and Sat, 17 & 18 Jun Hut Booking Croydon Caving Club. Carl Gibbs  
Sat June 18 Birks Fell Cave Yorkshire Permit  
Fri and Sat 08 & 09 Jul Hut Booking Chesterfield Caving Club (8) Frank Beasley  
Sat July 9 "2nd Saturday Meet" Singing River Mine  
Sun July 10 2016 Committee Meeting 10 AM Upper Pitts Library  
Mon 11 Jul to Mon 01 Aug Hut Booking Archaeology staff & students (27) Jodie Lewis  
Sat July 16 Lost Johns'/Deaths Head Yorkshire Permit  
Sun July 17 Notts 2 Yorkshire Permit  
06 to 12 Aug Hut Booking Eurospeleo Conference hut booking \*\*\*\*\* See page **XX**  
Sat August 13 2016 "2nd Saturday Meet" Llangattock trip  
Sat 20 to Fri 26 Aug Hut Booking Speleo Athens (6) Malc Foyle  
Fri September 2 Hut Booking CDG Claire Cohen  
Tues September 6 6:30 PM Library Booking CDG Meeting  
Sat September 10 "2nd Saturday Meet" Longwood Swallet  
Sat September 10 Penyghent Pot Yorkshire Permit  
Sun September 11 Committee Meeting Upper Pitts Library

\*\*\*\* All the "2nd Saturday Meet" trips meet at Upper Pitts at 1000, except for the trip to Llangattock which leaves from Upper Pitts at 0800.

