

Journal of the  
**Wessex Cave Club**

Vol. 28 No. 293  
February 2005

Le Reseau du Chaland

Templeton - The Epic Unfolds

Eastwater - Southbank Work on  
The Terminal Sump

Mendip Exploration

Age Concern Annual Outing 2004

## Officers

### **President**

Donald Thomson

### **Vice Presidents**

Paul Dolphin, Dave Irwin  
Sid Perou, Derek Ford

### **Chairman**

Dave Cooke  
3 Starrs Close,  
Axbridge  
BS26 2BZ.  
01934 733260

### **Secretary**

Les Williams  
51 Churchill Road East,  
Wells  
BA5 3HU.  
01749 679389

### **Membership Sec**

Simon Richards  
65 Bifield Road,  
Stockwood, Bristol, BS14 8TW  
01275 834839

### **Treasurer**

Mark Helmore

### **Caving Secretary**

Dave Meredith

### **Hutwarden**

Pauline Grosart

### **Librarian**

Phil Hendy

### **Tackle Officer**

John (Tommo) Thomas

### **Hut Administration**

Ian Timney  
Sales Officer

Christine Grosart

### **Journal Contact**

Jonathan Williams

### **MRO Co-ordinator**

Jonathan Williams

### **Webmaster**

Paul Wakeling

Opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily those of the Club or the Editor.

Copyright Wessex Cave Club

2005 All rights reserved

Headquarters

Upper Pitts

Eastwater Lane

Priddy, Somerset. BA5 3AX

ISSN 0083-811X

## From the Editor

Firstly thank you to all those who helped me through my first club journal. It was not as hard a journey as I had first thought. I might even be as bold to say that I quite enjoyed it!

This years diary already looks full. Well done to our new Caving Secretary Dave Meredith for putting the wheels in motion for what looks like a bumper year for caving.

The Pink & Fluffy caving team have already planned their summer holidays and offer an open invitation to all club members to join them in France this summer. Now is the time to check your diaries and book up those trips.

Thank you to all those who keep providing material for the Journal. If you've been involved in something exciting don't wait for someone else to write about it. Put pen to paper and see your name in print.

Jonathan

## Committee Corner



Christine Grosart has kindly stepped forward to take on the role of Sales Officer fulfilling an important role on the committee. She has already started work on stocking the sales cupboard and a short notice from her on page 24 gives her contact details should anyone wish to buy something. Why not treat yourself and help out the club at the same time!

## Cover Picture

Christine Grosart in Stoke Lane Slocker II Photo: Clive Westlake



## Mixed results in Hogwarts OFSTIM

This year's play off for the "Harry Potter Cup" was held under the auspices of the Wessex C. C. ( Central Coven) in the Burrington Caverns. The finalists were Wyverndor and Slytherout. The match took the form of a subterranean treasure hunt in which the teams searched for assorted paraphernalia such as snitches, owls and bats (not live ones, honest).

The Slitherout team, ably captained by the Lord Taviner, claimed to have scored 2070 house points to Wyverndor's 1110. However an appeal by Hermoany Groiner to Professor McGonigall was wisely referred to the OFSTIM (Office for Standards in Magic) inspectors.



After due consideration the result was allowed to stand. However the Quidditch syllabus was only judged to be satisfactory. The Hogwarts underground trainer, the Demented Sparrow, was put into special measures

The inspectors were impressed by both the underground and surface catering departments and all the staff were congratulated for being excellent. All the evidence was gathered on a moving picture machine in case of any late objections.

Both teams and the OFSTIM Inspectors repaired after the repast to the Novium

Out for a game of nine pins and a few jars of various potions which turned several witches into idiots. (No change there then.) £40 was put in the collecting caldron for designated charities.

Cornelius Fudge (M. of M.) Dolores Umbridge (H.I.)



Photos: "Tommo" Thomas

## Cuckoo Cleaves

This is an opportunity to own your very own cave. It has recently come on the market for £10,000 (plus £500 + VAT towards solicitor's fees). The new owner will have a right of pedestrian access across the fields, and will own the depression and all of the cave lying thereunder. A unique selling point is the exclusive underground swimming pool (available to anorexic midgets only)

Older members may be saddened to hear of the death of Roy Staynings in December 2004. Although not a member for many years, Roy was active in the 50s and 60s, and was also a MRO warden.

## New Year's Eve Dinner

24 people sat down to a New Year's Eve Charity dinner prepared by your editor. The dinner was held to help Reita Foyle in her efforts to raise money for SCOPE by walking the Inca Trail later this year. Diners were treated to a boxing match between courses and great fun was had by all. Thanks to all those who helped me in the preparation and serving and for the donation of raffle prizes.

## Club Sales

Chris Grosart is the new sales officer and has made an order of sweaters, t-shirts and wallets for the new year. The garments are available in large, extra large and xlarge (sizes are smaller than you would normally expect, though any dwarves may approach Chris for smaller sizes...)

On order are sweaters in Black, Navy and bottle green. T-shirts available in khaki, heather grey and blue. Other colours available on request. Rugby shirts, fleeces and hooded sweats are also available with Wessex logo, of course, but these will have to be ordered through Chris in person or on 07866 265 964.



New Year's Eve Dinner at Upper Pitts

Photo : J. Williams

# Club Meets & Holidays

## Club Meets

### Derbyshire Weekend.

TSG has been booked for March 11th & 12th. 15 bunks reserved please let me know if you intend coming. Trips should include Peak /Titan.

### Scotland/Skye Trip

There are 15 bunks reserved at the Grampian hut. There are a couple of bunks still available in the hostel in Skye. It will be about £6.00 per night per person for a bunk. I would like a £10.00 deposit per person to reserve a bunk. There is however room in the grounds for a FEW tents, this should not be abused as it is at the hostel managers discretion. Cost to camp will be about £3.00 per night. All costs depend on numbers as the hostel will cost a set amount for the period. Please let me know your plans.

There will be some Yorkshire meets later in the year I am waiting confirmation of permits.

### Dave Meredith, Caving Sec.

The Pink & Fluffy Caving Team (Swildon's book description team) would like to invite you to join us on a two week summer holiday in France between 10th - 26th June 2005. We are going to spend the first week in Haute-Savoie and the second week in the Chartreuse. The aim is to do as many through trips over the fortnight as we can find (inc. one Dent de Crolles trip as there are a few who haven't done it).

### Suggested trips so far for the Haute-Savoie:

Grotte de la Diau (8-12 hours through trip)

Gouffre de la Merveilleuse (4-5 hours through trip)

Grotte Jean-Claude (1 hour through trip)

Fauteuil de la Tournette (2 hours through trip)

Gouffre Jean-Bernard (find the entrances and possibly drop so far into one)

Plus we could add an ice cave or two.

### Suggestions so far for the Chartreuse:

Trou Pinambour (3 hours through trip)

Gouffre Tasurinchi to Grotte du Guiers Vif (5 hours)

Trou du Garde (8 hours through trip)

Grotte du Mort Ru (5 hours through trip)

Trou du Glaz to Grotte du Guiers Mort (6-8 hours through trip - will pull through)

Grotte de Gournier & Grotte de Bournillion (not through trips - just for a laugh in the Vercors)

As per normal we will be camping, the arrangement of which will depend upon numbers; we will however be returning to the same campsite in St Pierre de Chartreuse. The more that come the merrier, the more caving that gets done!

If you are interested in coming and would like to receive more information, please can you send me an email or catch me at the hut! If numbers are sufficient we may make a group booking at the campsites in which case we would like to arrange this sooner rather than later. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Nik Nak (Simon Richards) [niknak@bifieldroad.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:niknak@bifieldroad.freeserve.co.uk)

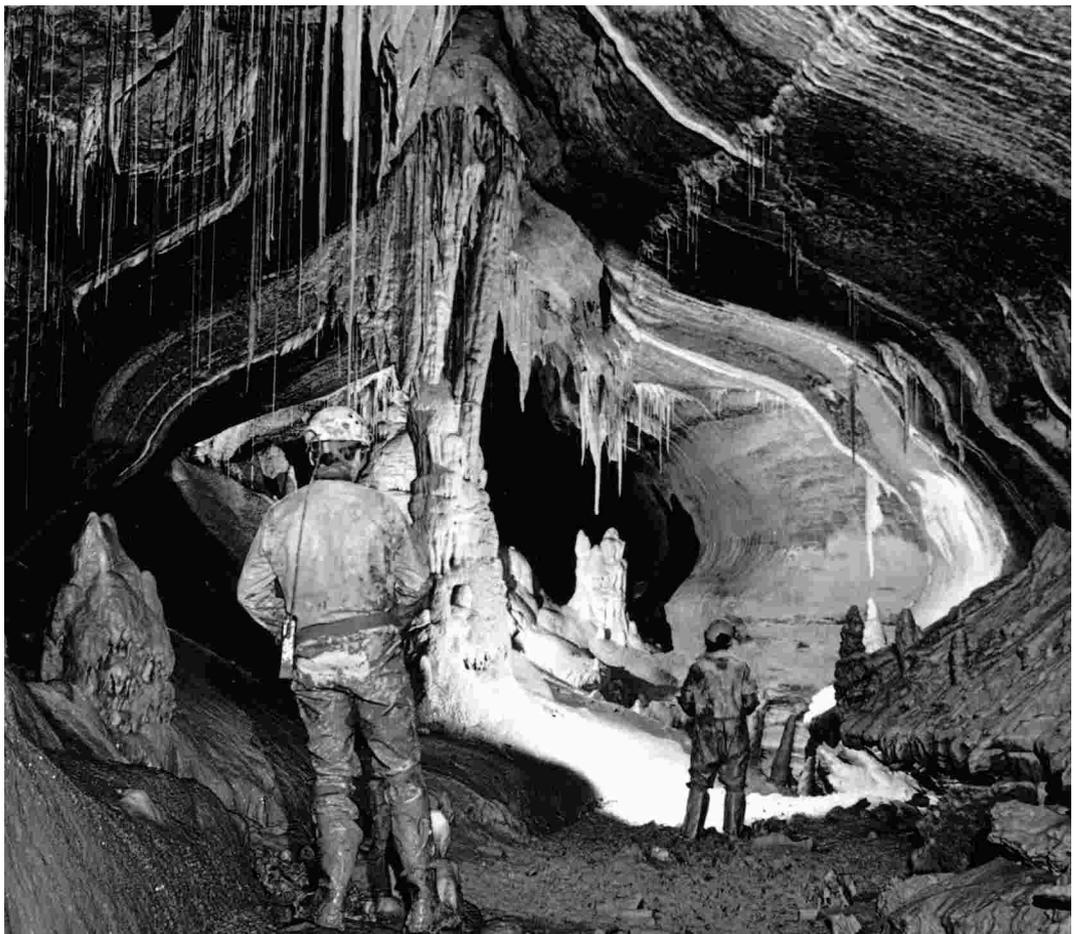
"D'you want a pot of tea?" is the sort of question you hope to hear when you stagger into Upper Pitts after a trip to the more barbaric parts of Eastwater Cavern, but not when you arrive in the kitchen of a French caver. Damien Grancolas has taken a major part in the exploration of the Reseau du Chaland and, having replied most helpfully to my emails, had asked us to call in so that he could show us the new entrance. As we'd driven half way across France, we definitely did want a pot of tea and Damien further amazed us with tales of Lancaster Hole and Top Sink. The dusk was falling so we went a couple of kilometres down the road and he took us a short way through woods and fields to the obscure entrance.

We were back a day or two later, we being Abigail Joynes, Jim Lister and me in my Northern Pennine Club guise. Our week in Franche Comte took in various caves, some of which I'd seen on previous visits to this scenic and accessible area, but the real objective was the recently explored Reseau du Chaland.

Haute - Saône is an unlikely place to find caves, and indeed not much had been found beneath the woodland and pasture of this scenically understated departement. Anyway cavers were much too busy in Doubs and Jura just to the south. True the Grotte d'Arbecy had a couple of kilometres of cave, but the choke beyond three short sumps was declared impassable by none other than SHAG, the explorers of the Verneau and many other fine systems. A

generation later along came Jean-Marc Lebel. At the impassable choke he lowered his head slightly and continued a few hundred meters downstream until he reached Le Collecteur - the master cave!

Over the next few months other divers joined him in exploring many kilometers of magnificent cave, which became known as Le Reseau du



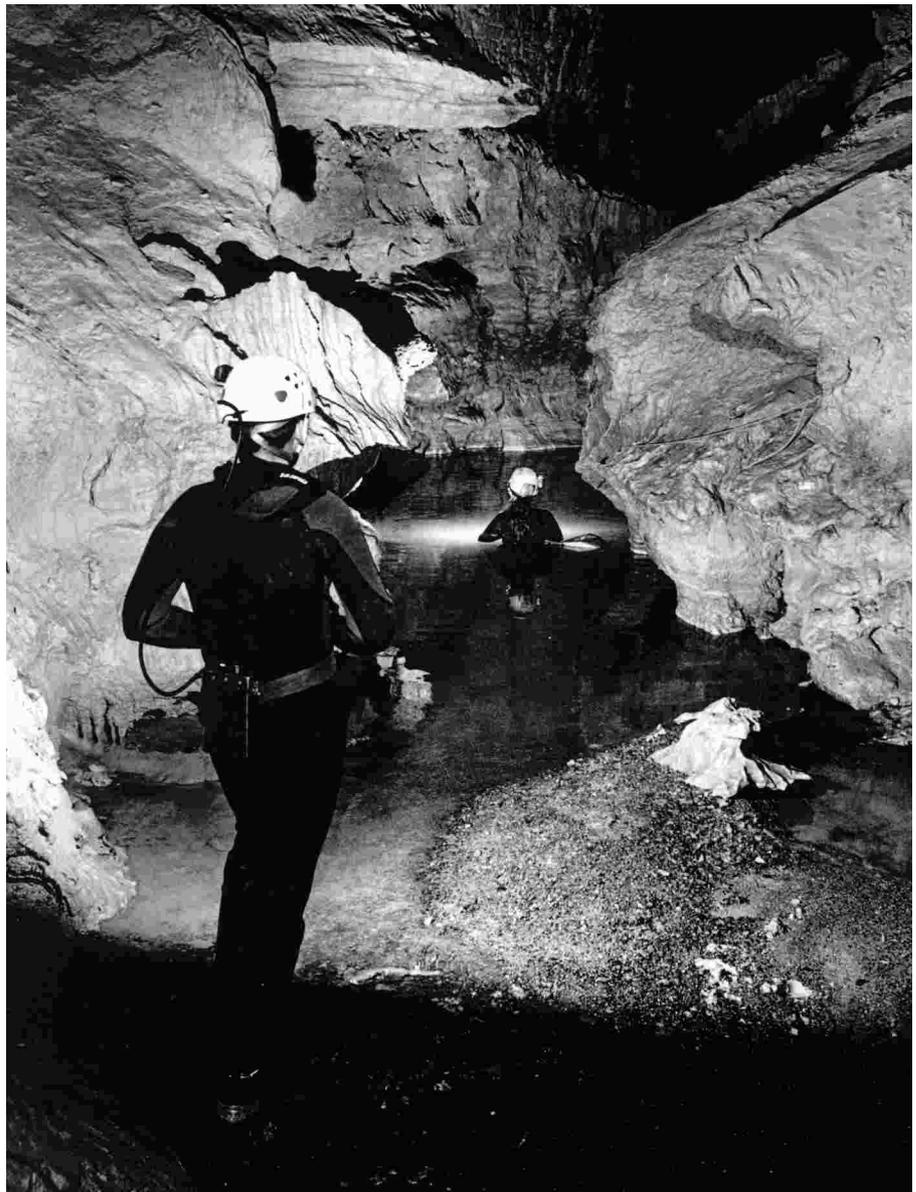
Gallerie des Mikados

Photo: CD Westlake

Chaland. Radio location showed that an aven not far beyond the choke was very close to the surface so a dry route was soon engineered. More digging and diving extended the cave to 9.8 km.

Abigail, Jim and I hadn't forgotten the way, so we were soon climbing down the fixed ladders which landed us in a modest stream passage. Simple walking with a few pools and the occasional minor gravel led us to a junction with a much bigger stream arriving from the left. We turned downstream into the Collecteur du Chaland, a massive and handsome passage with thigh-deep canals. After half a kilometre we found ourselves in smaller, immature passage but still vastly more attractive than the more barbaric parts of Eastwater Cavern! We visited the downstream sump then backtracked to the main high level route, which wasn't hard to find as it's about 10m wide. This trip was meant to be no more than a reconnaissance and anyway we were invited for another pot of tea at Damien's, so we made our way out, taking a few pictures on the way. Safely back in Damien's kitchen we found it wasn't just a pot of tea, but a huge feast created by Véronique, the world's best quiche lorraine cook. We also met Pete and Jen Boyes, who live just down the road when they're not at home in Northumberland! He said he'd come on our next trip to the Chaland and she invited everyone to come round to their place afterwards.

A day or two later the four of us met in the autumn sunshine and quickly caved to the turn into the start of the high level passages, the Semi -Fossile du Bar - Tabac. This is a large passage canals and what we thought were good formations. Soon we left behind the canals, but the floor remains muddy and slippery, which may not seem much to complain about in a passage which goes on 10mx10m or larger. About a kilometre from the Collecteur we found ourselves in the Galerie Féérique, a huge passage with what we thought were good formations down the walls. Next the cave closes in and we crawled into the Laminoir, which for thirty metres pretends to be like the more barbaric parts of Eastwater Cavern, then is spectacularly unmasked by the Galerie des



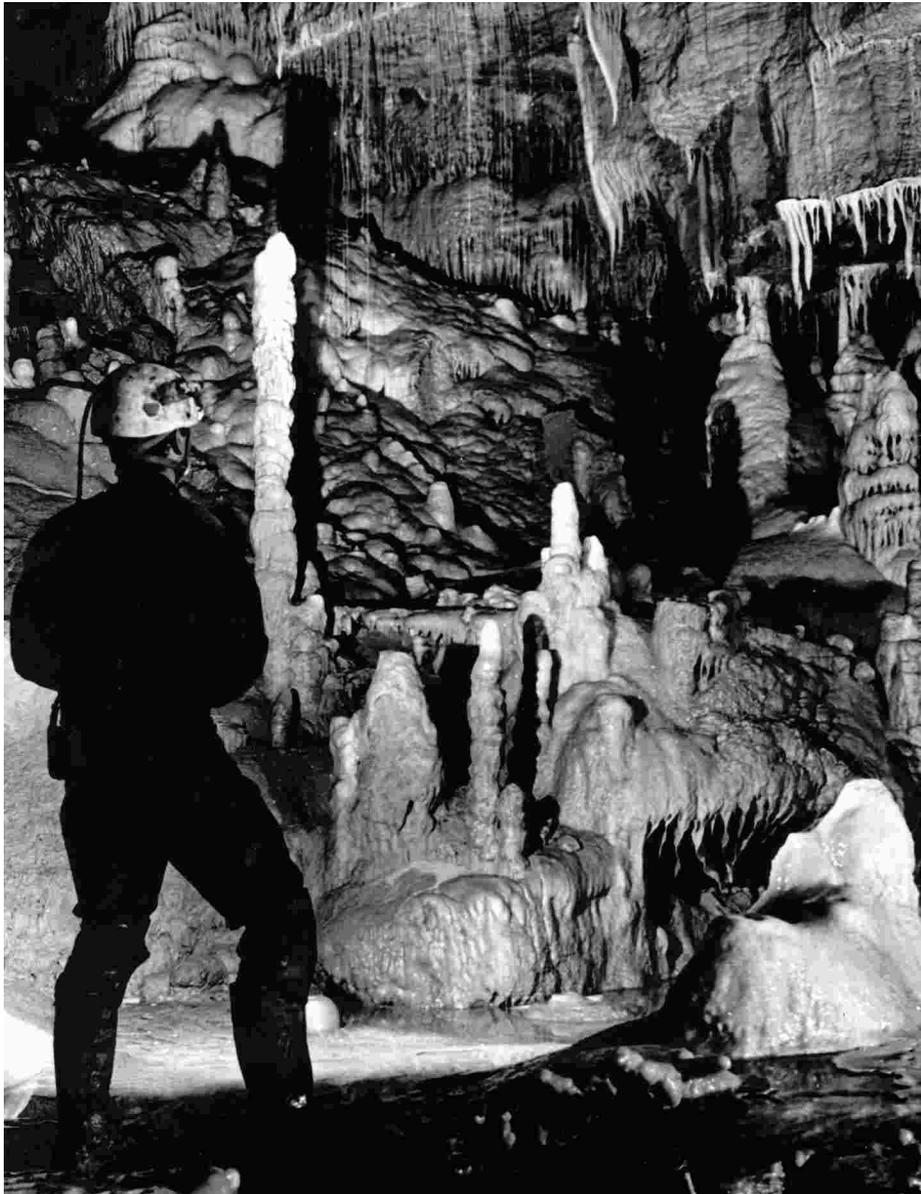
Le Collecteur

Photo: CD Westlake

Macaronis. This is an awesome, awesome place of elegantly phreatic tunnels resplendent with formations of every conceivable type. We staggered along, somewhat overwhelmed by this scenery until we suddenly remembered our dinner engagement! There was just enough time for me to take a few pictures - point camera in any random direction, fire a few flashes, success guaranteed. Despite the

tedious, slithery floor, we were soon back in the towering Collecteur and surfacing after eight and a quarter hours underground.

Over the high quality food and drink back at Pete and Jen's we were roundly abused for arriving on time instead of caving a few hundred metres further to the Salle Fofomarzal. Damien said this is even bigger, better decorated.....as I slipped into a speleo - gastro-



Salle Fofomarzal

Photo: CD Westlake

nautical coma, I wondered why I'd not been to Franche - Comté for so long and when I might go there again.

I did not have to wait long before the Wessex Cave Club was demanding information for the area, and assuming I was coming on the Summer 2004 trip. Some judicious ranting about the Chaland ensured that once the better known caves had been visited there were plenty of cavers interested.....Rob Tavinor, Emma Heron, Kevin Hilton, Julian and Carol Walford and Roger Galloway. I was a bit worried that the combined might of the Wessex and the Grampian, flushed with triumph after the Verneau and the Chauveroché, could be disappointed with the Chaland.

The sun blazed relentlessly upon the placid face of Franche - Comté, as it did throughout our stay. It was pleasant to feel the cold draught at the entrance and wade the canals in the Collecteur. As I could remember the way and the rest of the team are rather better cavers than I am, we made good progress to the Laminoir, paused for some food and drink, grovelled through to the Gallerie des Mikados and reached the furthest point of my last trip. We did not have to cave very far until we stepped into the Salle Fofomarzal, a massive chamber sumptuously decorated with superb formations. Julian and Tav are not in the habit of failing to reach the ends of caves so they continued a short way to the final choke 3,890m from the entrance. Meanwhile Carol, Emsy, Kev and Roger helped me with a few pictures of the Salle Fofomarzal. We wasted little time on the journey out and were back in the sunshine after a six and three - quarter hour trip.

Since the last Templeton update, in April 2004, much has happened. The dig has gone steadily down towards the centre of the Earth, and the Morrison / Young engineering team has improved safety with the addition of new working platforms and handrails. Elaine Johnson has recently published an update (to Christmas 2004) in the Axbridge journal, and it is highly recommended as a record of what has happened.

The stone wall which was being built to support and stabilise some hanging deaths and a stone-filled rift was finally shown to be approximately a metre in front of the solid rock wall at the north of the shaft. Dave and Jim inserted a massive structure of RSJs, pinned into the sides of the rift, to support this wall.

Without the need to build a wall, digging speeded up, although the fill remained as before: mud and small stones, and occasional large rocks which were beaten into submission with a sledge hammer. Some very unco-operative ones are blasted with snappers, although at £6 a go, this is only used as a last resort.

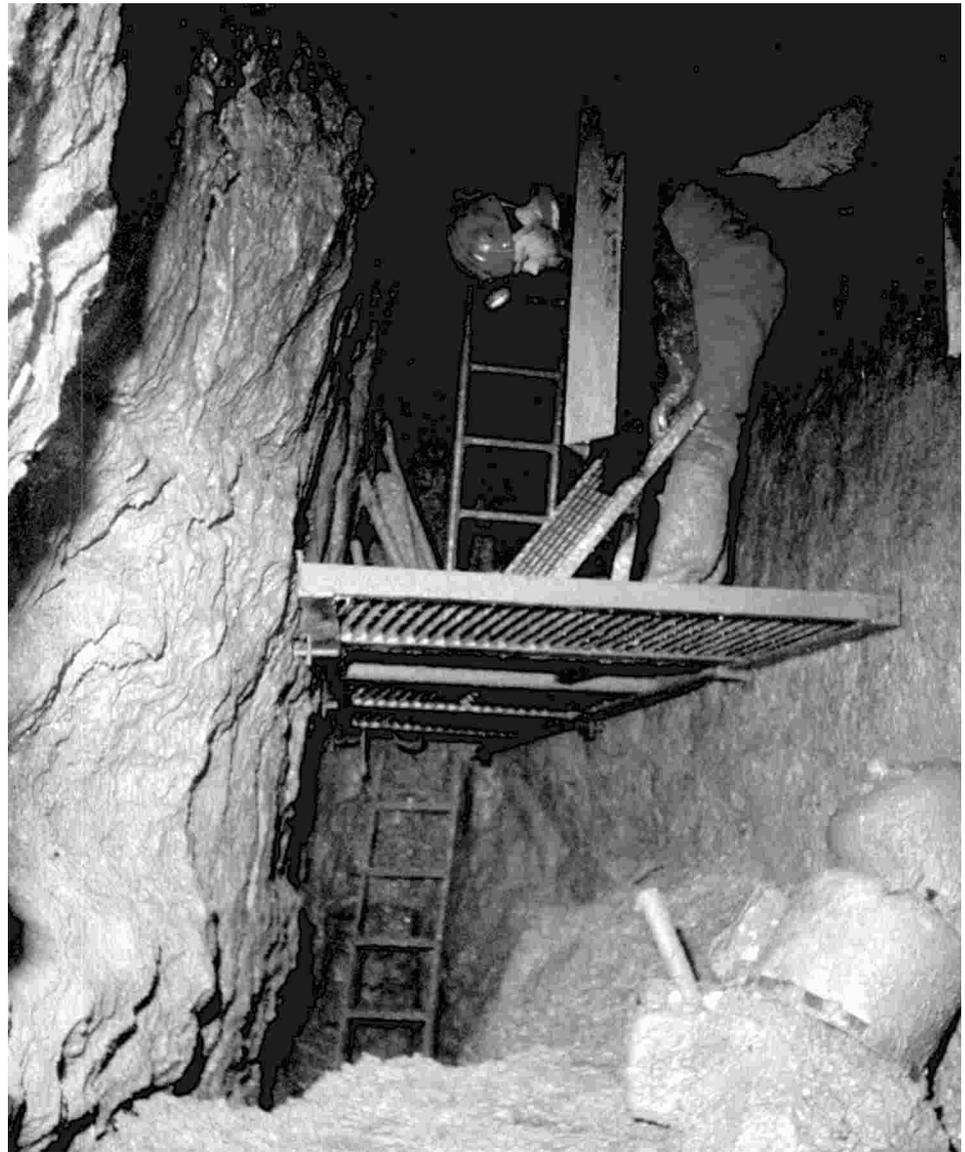
On September 1st, digging at the north end of the shaft revealed a narrow decorated rift, about 5 m long. This was entered the following week, and shown to have a floor of clean-washed stones, with the far wall composed of loose hanging deaths. Over the next few months, the floor of the dig was taken down to the bottom of the rift. In spite of its narrowness, some floor was removed, but also a lot of the hanging deaths were prodded down using a scaffold bar amid much spectacular crashing and rumbling. It has now been decided to wall up the far end of the rift, to make it safer to remove the floor.

Also in September, Dave and Jim installed a second, larger platform at 64 ft (20 m) below field level. This supported the rail line, and gave a safe landing for the third ladder. Power sockets and a lighting control box have been fixed to the wall at this level, to make it easier to get electricity to the bottom of the dig.

By changing winch cables, it has been possible to get the skip down to about the 82 ft (25 m) level. Often, the skip could not be brought to the very bottom, so the wooden platform has been much in use. It sways about, but has performed very well. However, in December the fourth ladder, which had been resting on a boulder which was gradually being dug around, began to look precarious, and so the engineers have built a third platform, in the narrow (south) part of the rift. This is at 82ft depth. The sections of decking are removable, to facilitate digging underneath the platform. Dave Morrison has now acquired a larger drum for the hydraulic winch, which means that we will be able to take a thicker and longer cable further on down the shaft. A hand-operated NHASA winch is being fixed to the second platform, to help on lifting boulders out of the dig bottom. As we have dug down, the plan of the dig has become elliptical rather than circular, with the rift at the north end, and the south end narrowing. A large ledge has appeared halfway along the west wall, which narrows the centre part of the shaft. In October, Prof. Derek Ford and Jim Hanwell kindly gave us their opinion. The dig appears to be located on a fault, at the upper end of the Triassic valley ascending from Ebbor Gorge. There is an outcrop of Dolomitic Conglomerate at the top of the dig, which extends the known northern limit of this infill. The strata on the east side of the shaft are quite contorted, whereas those on the west side have a gentle southwards dip. Amongst the fill we have found several pieces of stalagmite formed on Carboniferous Limestone or Burrington Oolite. This latter is a pale grey, and very crumbly. Early on in the dig massive lumps of low grade haematite and limonite were found, in a conglomerate / stal matrix. Some stones were coated in manganese oxide. As

we dug deeper, these petered out. Interestingly one or two water-worn pieces of sandstone or quartzite have been dug out. They are very rounded and must have been subjected to a long period of stream-rolling, but their source is unknown. We also found a large pebble of metamorphosed limestone, very like a piece of pink marble.

Since the New Year, efforts have mainly been concentrated on the south end of the rift. The very south end is quite narrow, and filled with solid clay and stones. Unfortunately, this end of the dig receives most percolation water, and quite a flow comes down the walls and splashes off projections during periods of rain. This rapidly turns the clay to liquid, making it hard to dig out and transport. Because it proved quicker to fill dig buckets than empty them afterwards, we have resorted to passing spoil from hand to hand. However, recently the mud fill has given way to a deep layer of large clean-washed stones, with gaps between them up to 2 m deep. It is likely that once the rest of the mud



Jonathan Riley on the 3rd Platform

Photo:P.Hendy

overburden is removed, downwards progress will be quite rapid, though as yet there is no tantalizing draught. The west wall here slopes down and outwards, narrowing the rift to about 0.75 m. The current depth is about 93ft (29 m)

There is a regular Monday crew of NHASA and Axbridge diggers, but Wednesday sees a larger turnout, including both Wessex and Shepton. Each night, we can remove between 2 and 9 skips (13 on one occasion) but we rely heavily on the co-operation of our ancient machinery. The dumper is quite temperamental, the large gennie works well but has a tendency to cut-out under extreme (welding) load, and the NHASA ex-US Army generator has a mind of its own - it has been stripped more often than a pole-dancer on bonus. However, in spite of all the buggeration factors, morale is high, and a breakthrough is confidently expected. Sometime.

Refs.

Hendy P.G. (2004) Templeton J. WCC 27 (289) p. 153

Johnson E. (2005) Templeton Update J. ACG p. 14

Axbridge Caving Group. Jnl. (Jan 05) (Templeton)  
British Caving Association Handbook. 2004-2005  
B.C.R.A. Cave and Karst Science 31, 2 (Nov 04)  
Cave Diving Group N/L 153, 154 (Oct 04, Jan 05)  
Chelsea Speleological Society N/L 46, 11, 12 (Nov, Dec 04), 47, 1 (Jan 05)  
Craven Pothole Club. Record. 77 (Jan 05)  
Descent 181 (Dec 04 / Jan 05)  
Grampian Speleological Group Bull. 4th Series Vol. 2 No. 2 (Oct 04)  
Grosvenor Caving Club. N/L 130, 131 (Nov, Dec 04)  
I.U.S. Speleological Extracts 41 (2002) Publ. 2004  
M.N.R.C. N/L 103 (Winter 2004/5)  
N.S.S. News 62, 9, 10, 11, 12 (Sep, Oct, Nov Dec 04)  
Journal of Cave and Karst Studies 66, 3 (Dec 04)  
Plymouth Caving Group. N/L & Jnl. 146 (Dec 04)  
Red Rose Cave & Pothole Club. N/L 41, 3 (Dec 04)  
Shepton Mallet Caving Club Jnl. Series 11 No. 4 (Aut 03, Publ. Nov 04)  
(Report of the SMCC Expedition to the Reykjanes Peninsula, Iceland, June 2003)  
Soc. Spel. De Wallonie (Belgium) Regards. 57 (Nov/Dec 04)  
Speleo-Club Perigueux. Speleo Dordogne.  
Activités 1,2,3rd quarter 1998, 1,2,3,4th quarter 1999,  
1,2,3,4th quarter 2002, 1,2,3rd quarter 2003  
UBSS Proc. 23, 2 (2004) (Ancient engravings in Aveline's Hole and Goatcruch Cavern)  
N/L Summer 2004, Autumn/Winter 2004  
Westminster Speleological Group N/L 2004/4 (Oct 04), 2005/1 (Jan 05)

Andalucia Subterranea (Fed. Andaluza de Espeleologia No. 11 (1993)  
Bristol and Gloucester District (British regional Geology) 2nd Edn. 1948.  
Donated R. Scammell  
Kingdown Quarry (Swan Mine) Survey (2004)  
Bick D. (2004) Waller's Description of the Mines in Cardiganshire.  
Black Dwarf Publications: Witney, Oxon.  
Eyre J. (2004) It's only a Game (Wild Places Publishing: Cardiff) (Autobiography)  
Pitten B. (1986) One Man and his Bog (Walking the Pennine Way)  
Donated: R. Halliwell

Stolen: 1:50 000 OS map Weston super-Mare. (now replaced at cost of £5.99)

# Eastwater - Southbank work on The Terminal Sump

Emma Heron

This sump was never dived during the original explorations but over the past year has been the focus of some interest.

On 31st May 2003, Ali Moody and Madphil Rowsell had a trip to check some old leads in Southbank (Wessex Journal: vol 27, no.286, p.94). They concluded that the sump at the end of Tooting Broadway would be worth diving and that whilst a diver was in the cave he should look at the Terminal Sump as well.

A few weeks later, Phil Short arrived with Ali, Nik Nak and Laura Trowbridge in support (Wessex Journal: vol 27, no.286, p.94). As well as looking at other leads, the Terminal Sump was dived. Phil managed to force himself feet first into a 45 degree slope which levelled off at 4 metres depth. After removing kit, he managed to wedge himself further in but got stuck in a gravel and mud slope, this was found to be blocked all the way round and with no obvious route on.

In the Spring of 2004, work began on surveying the Southbank series by Madphil with the help of Kev Hilton, Ollie Gates (BEC) and Tim Lamberton (BEC) as this had only been done in the form of sketch plans in the past. On collation of the data, it became apparent that the deepest part of the cave is in fact the Chamber of Horrors (155m depth) and that the Terminal Sump is perched, approximately 10m above. This led to some conclusions about the potential of the Terminal Sump:

'Water backs up here in high water to a head of approximately 1m, judged on flood debris. This may, as was previously concluded, be due to the rest of the cave sumping up (the Chamber of Horrors having flooded from the floor up on one known occasion) but could also be perched due to a flow restriction. This offers potential access to passage down-



Andy Smith, Emma & Mad Phil at the Terminal Sump Dam

Photo Kevin Hilton

stream of the terminal sump.'

(Madphil Rowsell, Belfry Bulletin, spring 2004, vol.53, no.5, number 519). If the latter was the case, then it was worth investigating to determine if the sump could be bailed and dug through.

Madphil and Kev returned to the site after a survey trip and pulled out 2 full orange bivvy sacks full of water. They found that the water level dropped by about 1ft. Plans were then hatched to build a dam in order to bail effectively and this was duly completed by the three of us a few weeks later. Following a very wet summer, we carried out a further trip to bail the sump. Equipped with only 1 Daren Drum it took approximately 3 hours before the sump was emptied to the point of being a very small puddle against the right hand wall that back-flowed to a depth of about 30cm. Digging is a possibility, and it is hoped that the water can be bailed out and work can begin on digging out the silt blockage. It is intended to leave the dam in place and return to the sump during a long spell of dry weather and try again (water levels had been relatively high during the first couple of trips).

Various trips in October and November were carried out with attention mainly focussed on the Pea Gravel Dig. This lies at the same height and only 4 metres distance from the Terminal Sump. It has long been thought of as a potential bypass (this had been dug by the BEC diggers during the original explorations but was eventually abandoned when the sump water was breached). On our last trip there, it was bailed and dug to a grovelly duck and a very small chamber has been reached with no way on. It is interesting to note that the water level of the Pea Gravel Dig is unaffected when the Terminal Sump is bailed and the two show no signs of connection yet. Work continues...

Thanks to everyone that has helped out on various trips during 2004 - Andy Smith, Tim Ball (Shepton), Chris Densham (OUCC) and Rob Eavis.

The Eastwater Appreciation Society!

## Mendip Exploration

### Rose Cottage Swallet

Tony Jarratt has started digging an old fish pond behind the Belfry, while Hunter's Lodge Inn Sink awaits drier weather. The pond was dug in the course of the leat from Fair Lady Well, when this was diverted to Priddy Green to supply the village with water. The pond was never too successful, and was used during Vern Freeman's rescue from St. Cuthbert's Swallet, when it was used to dispose of water pumped from the cave sink. It now drains water from the Fair Lady Well stream. A piped shaft (installed by ATLAS) leads to a rift and a small decorated chamber. Beyond that, a rift leads into a boulder-choked canyon, beyond which the diverted surface stream can be heard. The cave appears to be running between St. Cuthbert's and Eastwater, towards Fair Lady Well Cottage. Much work needs to be done, but the prospects (according to Tony) look good.

### Lamb Leer

The Shepton dig, opposite Lamb Leer, is progressing well, and is rumoured to be about 10m above the aven in Pool Passage in Lamb Leer. After many years with access denied, an alternative entrance to this unique cave will be very welcome.

At some point during the Wessex trip to Lost Johns in November, Noel Cleave informs me that I promised to record the trip in an article. Over the last few weeks, due to other commitments I did consider squirming out of it and working on a more persuasive argument such as 'I can't be bothered...' However, I have kept my word (a very short and sweet one) and although this is not of the same calibre as my last Heraldt article, I must at least have a go at upstaging Noel's literary prowess. Nothing to do with the formal NAG-MAIL that I received shortly after the trip, nothing at all...

The plan for the trip was to do the Hammer / Centipede and Cathedral / Dome exchange, which is pretty much what happened. I must however stress that, when the average age of your team exceeds ninety six, things are not meant to go smoothly, although Noel set out with the best of intentions to make sure they did.

I was delighted, though not surprised to find that our wing commander had not only sorted the ropes for the entire trip, but had bagged them in order and scrupulously labelled them as well in LARGE letters to avoid confusion of an elderly kind.

Our group was split into the two teams as follows : Noel, Bob Pyke, Clive Westlake, John Hurst and Ken Dawe making up the A team, to rig Dome / Cathedral and myself, Pat Warren (CPC), Alan Allsop, Andy Summerskill and Alastair Gordon (CPC) the B team rigging Hammer / Centipede.

Now, anybody who knows anything about the more senior members of the caving fraternity will be aware that, on the surface they are extremely good at appearing cool customers, with a wealth of knowledge and experience to share, along with an air of professionalism. Once you get beneath the surface however, things take a very different form. The beginning of the trip was slightly interrupted by a certain Mr. Westlake, who was spotted skipping gaily down the passage, kicking his heels together with overwhelming glee and a grin to match, having discovered that, besides yours truly, he was the youngest participant on the trip...

A moment further on into the cave and it was becoming clear that the troops appeared to be revolting. The question was put to Noel, if he was professing to be the leader of this rabble - to which Bob Pyke curtly replied, "This trip is UN-LEADABLE..."

Our B team made an uneventful journey to the main streamway and ventured some way down it, with Patrick and myself refusing to progress any further once the water reached welly depth. It was at this moment that the troops scattered in different directions and the mass stampede for the entrance began. The ropes slowed them down a tad, but never the less, it wasn't long before Patrick and I found ourselves with only each other and the occasional, hurriedly discarded zimmer frame for company. So we set about de-rigging and created some entertainment of our own when I made a successful attempt at de-rigging Battleaxe traverse.

We de-rigged the final two pitches, Dome and Cathedral and found the first sign of life to be seen for about two hours at the top of the Vestry. Ken Dawe was found fettling a lamp and de-fogging his spectacles, before valiantly assisting us with our rope bags back to the car.

All in all, it was a cracking trip and a truly superb cave. I must offer thanks on behalf of the teams to Noel for organizing the kit and washing all the ropes when he got home (no sympathy please - he likes it) and to Malc Foyle for ensuring we had a legal parking place. Lastly, I would like to point out that, despite poking fun at the geriatric caving fraternity, I would be amazed if I could complete a trip like that at their age and I take my hat off to them for doing so. As a point of note, the following day Clive Westlake and I made a trip to Old Ing - eventually, which is in the log extracts and Mr Cleave and company ventured down Notts II.



The Lost John's Team

Sunday 14 November 2004 Notts Pot 2.

Bob Pyke, Ken Dawe, Alan Allsop, Alistair Gordon(Craven), Noel Cleave.

Although we allowed young Alan to come along and demonstrate high speed caving techniques, this was essentially a geriatrics bumble.... the day after the party as it were. We had debated how to use our remaining weekend energy after our Lost Johns round trips on the Sunday (Described by Christine). Had the weather been as glorious as it was on the Saturday, we would have walked. Since it was grey, overcast and slightly drizzly, we opted for underground, but the really crucial factor was that Malc presented us with a Notts Pot permit, which was appreciated more than we can adequately say; all of us had long wanted to see NP2. Of the remainder of the Wessex mob at the Craven, Christine was doing diving practice with Clive, while Leg and John had family commitments, so just the 5 of us slithered our way down the awe inspiring Committee Pott shaft at 1100. This is a serious bit of civil engineering, an epic effort indeed. Also, what with ladders and concrete block steps, verily a gentleman's artificial pothole - entirely appropriate to the party descending it on this occasion, as indeed is the Notts 2 streamway downstairs. We started upstream and only desisted when the final series of canals became chest deep for Noel who, as the only one wearing a Neofleece, was immersion guinea pig. Then we headed back, past the committee pot tributary, to the downstream end, save for the final 30 metre crawl. No point in crawling in water when the whole of the rest of the streamway is so extravagantly user-friendly. This is one delightful piece of stream passage and merits all the praise lavished on it. If you haven't been, then lie, steal, cheat, bribe, get lucky..... but get a permit and go see for yourselves. 3 ½ hours of speleological luxury. Noel.

9.7.04 to 3.8.04 Norway Nigel Graham, T Faulkner, A Scott & A Marshall  
Caves new & old - region from Korgen south to our Svenningsdalen stamping ground & out to Brønnøysund on the coast. Several new caves, one 'ending' its streamway at an open sump with lots of potential. At Jordbruelo we visited Invasjoengrotta so TF could photograph unusual varves in this short but intriguing & very pleasant cave. This cave sits over the major sump explored by Paul Whybro in the 1980s; it carries the Jordbruelo (Rock Bridge River) from its diffuse valley floor sinks to a really lovely resurgence - crystal clear water pouring from a big sump in a broad arch. On to Navan, near Brønnøysund, for 2 large caves shown to TF by local cavers on his reconnaissance trips. They'd explored them - we surveyed them. (Well, I helped survey one but a very difficult take-off for its entrance pitch kept me out of the other.) Finished by doing the tourist bit - walking through the fossil sea-cave to Torghatten, near Brønnøysund - huge hole in very attractive orangey-pink gneiss. A very successful trip with ~2.5km surveyed.

2.8.04 Templeton NHASA & ACG etc  
Digging slowed on Monday when the winch stopped working - only 5 skips. Uppy made a welcome first visit. Removing a few large rocks enabled us to open a 5' deep cavity against the wall, surrounded by clean washed rock & draughting. A magnificent piece of flowstone was found loose in the floor last week. Formed on chunks of Burrington Oolite with pieces of manganese oxide, it was pierced by a mini grotto of honey coloured stal with small sharp crystals.

7.8.04 Swildon's Ali M, Jude VdP & Phil H  
Memory lane trip to the Mud Sump. Blasted Boss not as tight as I feared. Good to see this series again after at least 25 years. Mud Sump so low we could go through on our stomachs. On to the Greasy Chimney now with all the mud worn away! At this point I could hear lunch calling me, so we returned, meeting no one else in the cave.

14.8.04 Swildon's - Lower Fault Chamber Jude & Adrian VdP  
Down to LF Chamber to check state of the top Watergate duck. We lowered it by 50mm in 20 mins so with a bit more bailing a Watergate trip should now be no problem!

21.8.04 Swildon's - Maypole Aven & Terminus Chamber Ali M, Nik Nak  
Adrian VdP & Richard Carey  
Trip with the aim of proving the connection between the inlet by Maypole Dig - above Maypole Aven & the bottom of Terminus Rift near Terminus Chamber in Swyne-Puke Series. Ali & Adrian waited near Maypole Dig while RC & Nik Nak continued to Terminus Rift (RC didn't agree that the 42' rift was a Bimble trip)! An aural & light connection was achieved between the two passages & after much thrutching by Nik Nak at one end & Ali at the other, Nik Nak was able to see Ali's torch & the top of her fingers about 2m away. It would be necessary to widen (with bang) about 3m of passage in order to get a passable connection. This would be worth doing as it would provide a longer (but probably not easier) round trip in this area.

25.8.04 Crook's Hole Carmen, Bob S & Steve  
At last we've reached the hammer lost down the hole in the floor many months ago, but still have to find the spirit-level. A further 10-15' at least is open, though curving out of sight. It's a nice dig when it's not raining!

30.8.04 Goon's Hole Pete & Ali M

The horizontal tube now has about 4cm of water all the way along it. This is possible to bail with some difficulty but still leaves a fairly wet crawl, which is making the uphill slope at the end slippery. Spent some time opening out the tight bend before the end in order to make it possible to continue digging forward. Everything covered in wet mud by the time we finished. This must rate as one of our most unpleasant digging sites!

26-30.8.04 Gaping Gill Winch Meet Phil H, The Prews, Nigel Graham, Gordon Kaye, Ric & Pat Halliwell

Variety of tasks performed in Main Chamber, plus Phil helping at Marilyn, the CPC dig near Bar Pot. Sun, mist, high winds, torrential rain. A good time had by all - where were the Wessex lightweight fair-weather campers?

30.8.04 Ammunition Tunnel Weston Bros

Investigated the old wartime ammunition tunnel adjacent to the railway on the Bath/Wilts border between Bath & Box. This is blocked at the far end. Paced out its length to 1000yds. Worth a visit for the odd hour.

8.04 Grotto Madam Edith, Herault P Weston, Jonathan Williams & Rick Stanton  
Dived by Jon & Rick (twice). Jon went about as far as Monkey & Phil Short two years ago. Rick passed the first sump & the end of the French dive line into a muddy passage & laid 100m of additional line in Sump 2. On his second dive a few days later he laid a further 140m in Sump 2 down to a depth of 40m. The passage is descending as big, i.e. at least the size of the entrance passage to the cave.

Editor's Note: I can confirm that this cave is properly known as Grotte-Exsurgence de l'Avencas



Your Editor preparing to dive l'Avencas

Photo: Russ Brooks

17.10.04 Eastwater Round Trip Mad Phil, JRat, Kev & Em

The first trip through after the breakthrough on the 15th Oct. In via West End/Southbank - out via Morton's Pot!!! MAD PHIL HAS CREATED A MONSTER!

#### 10.04 Llygad Llŵchwr - S Wales M Barnes

Following on from the dives in July, a further 46 trips over the summer saw the way on through the slot opened up. Frequent flooding however reblocks the squeeze & it now needs redigging. The current is also a real problem as the entire river flows through a body-sized hole. According to M Farr, this is one of the biggest streams in any cave in the UK. A return is planned as soon as there is a big freeze or maybe next spring when the flow starts to diminish.

#### 23.10.04 Swildon's Phil Short, Greg Brock, Andy Judd & Tash Mitchell

All to Sump 1 then Tash headed out. The rest on to 12 in fairly high water. Foul smell at Cowsh & beyond, all the way through the cave. No visibility at all in the sumps. Andy & Greg re-lined Sump 9 whilst Phill went on to do another dive in 12, passing the previous point to a depth of 13m & laying 20m of line from Sump 12a pool to a gravel choke.

#### 1.11.04 Swildon's M Barnes

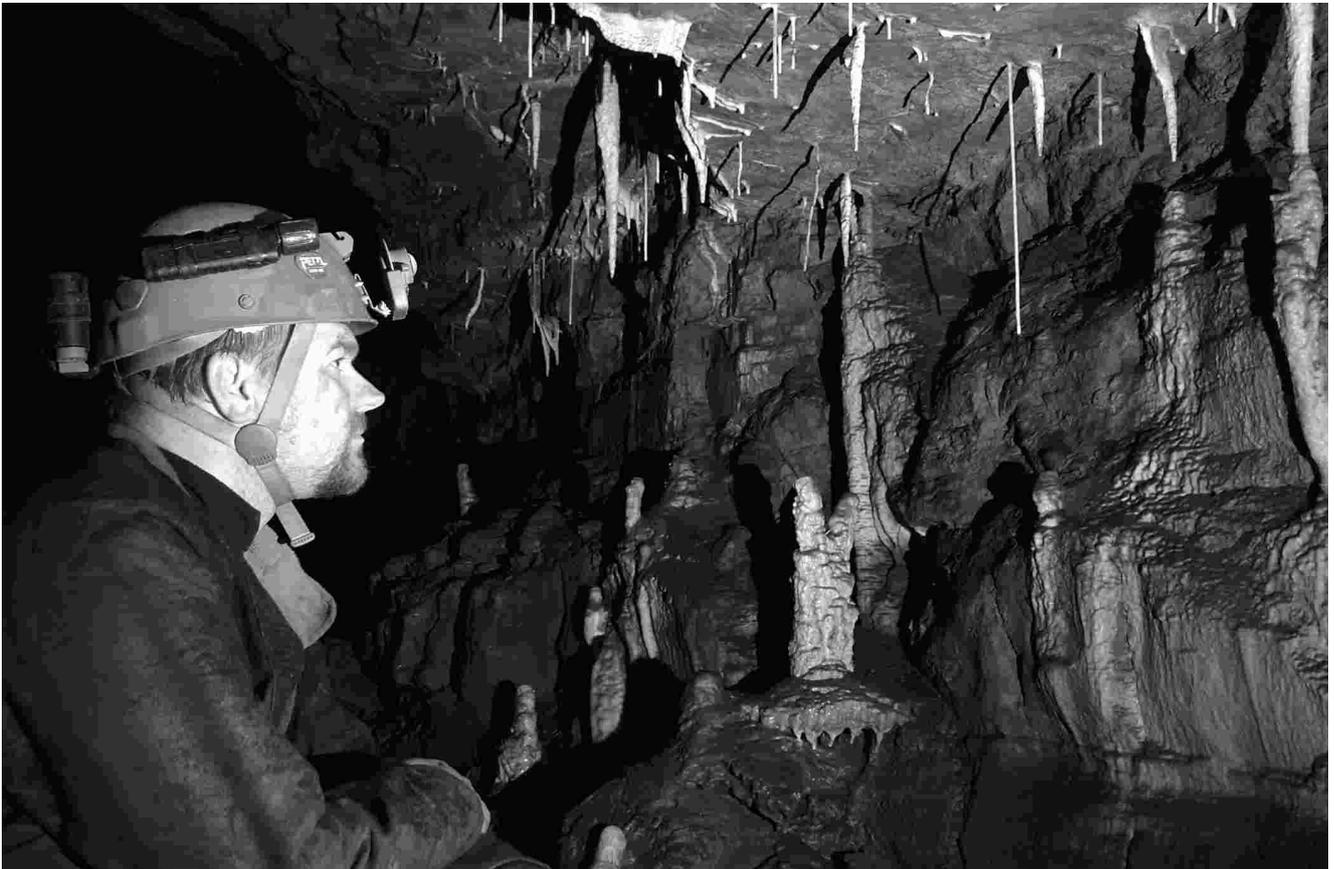
My first dive into the Landing Sump since pushing it to an indefinite conclusion some 12 - 13 years ago. The often overlooked sump lies below the mudslide in Swildon's 2, a rather insignificant looking pool directly behind the 2nd 'Wookey Hole 1½ miles' road sign. Some foolish person had pulled on the original line & this is now in a bad position some 4 - 5 m into the sump. This will be removed & re-laid on the next trip. I don't remember so much fine sediment in here either. Digging is needed to pass several squeezes & of course this totally destroys any vis.

#### 6.11.04

Return to the Landing Sump. A bottle was placed on a boulder & the hose was tied to this & then placed in the sump pool. This will hopefully protect it. The first squeeze was then dug open to be stopped a few metres further on by another. An attempt was then made to improve the barrier at the start of the sump & deepen the channel at the foot of the mudslide. This will hopefully stop the stream from flowing via the sump entrance & depositing any sediment.

#### 13.11.04 Swildon's 7 Nik Nak & Adrian VdP

Return trip to the boulder choked rift/aven in the 2nd boulder chamber. Moved some boul-



Jon Beal in Gilwern Passage, Ogof Draenen.

Photo: J.Williams

ders before drilling three shot-holes & firing. Towards the end of the dry passage (which ends in boulders) from the 1st boulder chamber we could smell the bang fumes, therefore we believe we are digging beyond this choke. Large rumbling noise heard in 1st boulder chamber five minutes after the bang, so something has definitely moved!

19-21.11.04 Another Wessex Yorkshire Weekend      Simon, Mad Phil, Mr Dave, Jo, Mak, Paul W, Kev, Em, Dave Hounslow, Martin Holroyd, Mimlet & Boycey & Rob Heron  
19th Corkey's: Dihedral exchange, good trip, Corkey's is like Eastwater except for the last impressive drop into Mud Hall. Much water on Dihedral.  
20th Boxhead to Lost John's: Exchange trip. Excellent place - the connecting tube is not nearly as bad as its reputation.  
21st Swinstow to Kingsdale: Sunday through trip

20.11.04 Priddy Green Sink      John Biffin, J Cooper (Chelsea), Chris G, Clive Westlake & G Taylor (NPC)  
A short walk through relentless sleet began this unique traumatic trip. Some hours later we arrived in Swildon's 4, having taken a few pictures for the Book. Back on the surface icy drizzle borne on the searing east wind chased us back to Upper Pitts.

5.12.04 Eastwater      Mad Phil, Kev, Em & Mr Dave  
Kev & Phil curing hangovers with a reverse round trip, having bailed Waterloo the previous day. Checked yesterday's bang in Chamber of Horrors. Em & Mr Dave met the others at the top of Lolly in order to drop ladders out.  
NB: All ladders now removed from 35ft pitch, Lolly Pot & Short Drop below Lolly.

11.12.04 Swildon's 9 & 12      Russ B, Clive W, Malc F, Jim Lister, Mike T & Jon W  
Photo trip with Mr Westlake for the Swildon's Book. Photos between 7 & 9, Mike & Jon down to 12 after getting lost between 9 & 10! All in. Job done. All out. Foyle broke!

12.12.04 Ogof Draenen      Mark H & Mr Dave  
Trip to 'suss' out a camping area for a future weekend caving trip. Quick look at the Wyvern Hall to show Dave around, then a quick furlgle at a promising dig site - guaranteed to go! Found a good campsite, then on to see the Snowball area - very interesting area, well worth a visit.

17.12.04 Llygad Llwchwr      M Barnes  
Return made to Sump 4. It had refilled (see entry 10.04) so an attempt was made to dig out spoil. This was a waste of time due to quantity to be removed. Later the hose was re-installed driven by a petrol compressor. After 4 dives the slot was passed. Originally passed in 1967 this passage is very intimidating. The slot consists of 2 squeezes with a very strong current in the second. Once through the passage becomes more friendly & is 4x1m, descending to -18m. The passage then ascends & becomes rather immature. The line was belayed at -12m after laying out 89m. Alas heavy rain has returned & further progress will have to wait.  
(This entry has been précised - for full details & survey see 2004 Logbook).

29.12.04 Swildon's NW Inlet      Kevin Gurr, Andy Judd & Phill Short  
Down to Sump 2 to drop off cylinders for a 12 trip tomorrow. Then up to the Landing & down to the infamous 'Wet Ear Squeeze' which had about 2" of air space above the pool of mud, cowsh & worms. After Andy dived in headfirst & got stuck I went in feet first & kicked the mud etc through ahead of me. We then pulled Kev through by his feet. On to the pitch & then to the up & down-stream sumps.

## Contents

Officers		22
From the Editor		22
Club News		23
Club Meets & Holidays		25
Le Reseau du Chaland	C.D.Westlake	26
Templeton - The Epic Unfolds	Phil Hendy	29
Library Additions	Phil Hendy	31
Eastwater - Southbank Work on the Termanal Sump	Emma Heron	32
Mendip Exploration		33
Age Concern Annual Outing	Christine Grosart	34
Uppper Pitts Log book Extracts	Brian Prewer	36

## Club Diary

March	
11-12th	TSG Weekend
	Please contact Dave Meredith for further Information
April	
2nd	Committee Meeting
23rd-8th May	Scotland - Grampian Hut and the Isle of Skye
	Please contact Dave Meredith for further Information
June	
4th	Committee Meeting
10th-26th	Pink & Fluffy France Holiday (see page 25 for details)
July	
1st-3rd	BCRC Cave Rescue Conference
23rd	Committee Meeting

How well do you know Swildon's Hole?

1. What was originally known as Showering Aven?
2. Where is Mike's Horror?
3. Where was the Maypole Series
4. Where is November 12th Chamber?
5. Why is the Forty Foot Pot so-called?
6. Where is Suicide Leap?
7. Where do you find the New Grottoes?
8. Who introduced the Swildon's numbering system now commonly used on Mendip and elsewhere?
9. Where is Pitch Chamber?

If you cannot answer all of these questions, you need to place an order for the forthcoming Swildon's Hole book.  
(Questions compiled by Dave Irwin)

Club Handbook

A new edition of the Club Handbook has been printed. It will be given to new members; others can purchase a copy from Phil Hendy, or it can be downloaded, in PDF format, from the club website. The handbook covers the history and makeup of the club, duties of officers, Club Rules, and much information on Upper Pitts, plus much more.

Distribution Board

Thanks are due to Barry Wilkinson, for replacing the electricity distribution board in the Hall, and tidying up the wiring. The board has been boxed-in. Plans are in hand to add an extra layer of plasterboard to the ceilings in the Hall, Library and Locker Room, to increase fire resistance. These ceilings, and the Hall walls, will then be plastered.