



Journal 324 

Volume 32  
**Journal** 324  
of the  
**Wessex Cave Club**

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# January 2012

## Diary:

**Jan 28th - Berger Training**

*Traditionally the Wessex Devon weekend, get in shape for the Berger with "walking and a spot of caving". Well it is Devon! Meet at the DSS Hut, Buckfastleigh.*

**Feb 11th - 2nd Saturday Trip**

*Eastwater Cavern - "13 Pots". Meet Upper Pitts 10:00*

**Feb 11th - Jim Rands Memorial Barrel**

*See "Club News" - Upper Pitts.*

**Feb 25th - Berger Training**

*Industrial Rope Access Centre Sheffield and Peak District*

**Mar 10th - 2nd Saturday Trip**

*Honeymead Hole & Little Crapnell Swallet. Meet Upper Pitts 10:00*

**Mar 18th - Committee Meeting**

**Apr 6th - 9th - Berger Training Easter Meet**

*YORKSHIRE - Gaping Gill permit confirmed, also 3 Peaks Walking. Meet YSS Helwith Bridge.*

**Apr 21st - Try caving weekend**

*Details to follow - contact the committee or Maxine Bateman for details.*

**May 7th - Berger Training**

*Yorkshire.*

**May 12th - CSCC AGM**

*Hunters Lodge Inn - see CSCC website for details.*

**May 13th - Committee Meeting**

**June 2nd - 3rd - Berger Training**

*2 day coastal path - Swanage to Weymouth.*

**June 30th - July 1st - Berger Training**

*Derbyshire.*

**July 8th - Committee Meeting**

**July 28th - 29th - Berger Training**

*Mendipshire.*

*Please do let me know if you have any events, parties, sofa burnings etc. (even caving trips!) which you would like to publish in the diary. - Ed.*

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Ian Timney must have made it back from Tenerife, because here with his hut administrator's hat on he reports on planned renovations to Upper Pitts, and most importantly, the roof.

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## 23 - Additions to the Membership

*It seems the lot of journal editors to begin with an apology for being late - perhaps the white rabbit was an editor for a journal dealing with the subterranean realm... Anyway, in a break from tradition, I won't - I have always maintained that the first journal in my term would probably take a while, so despite the delay I hope you like it.*

*There is some great material in this issue, and hopefully the increase in colour will do the photographs more justice. Don't worry, I will be monitoring the cost closely!*

*One criticism regularly directed at the committee is that we don't communicate well with the membership. We're trying to improve this, so please do read Cookie's message regarding the email list, and this is also why there are two pages about sewage treatment, two pages about insurance and a page about the roof in this issue. Oh the joy! Be careful what you wish for...*

*I shall try to avoid any obvious begging for articles - we are lucky to have been promised some fantastic sounding content, (There has been some fantastic caving to write about!) but what I will say, is don't be put off thinking that I only want you to write epics. Half a page is also great. A fistful of photographs or a few paragraphs about a fun day out or lesson learnt can be just as entertaining as a long expedition description.*

*Happy Caving... (and writing!)*



### Cover:

Taking an unusual turn in front of the camera, Clive Westlake seen here in Agen Allwedd wearing his "trusty Dritex overall" in case you're wondering about the colour!

Photo by Christine Grosart



**Left:**

Adrian (front) at the twenty with Colin Pim on a trip to Swildons in 1969. (John Vanderplank)

**What do you get up to when you're not underground?**

A bit of open water diving, working on our nursery and being a crew manager at my fire station which has quite a few new recruits so being involved in the training and support is very rewarding.

**When did you first go caving?**

I first went caving in 1969 aged 11, and it was probably Goatchurch Cavern, and it would have been definitely on carbide, I don't remember anything about the trip, but obviously I wanted to go again!

**Favourite trip on Mendip?**

Swildons, down the stream-way, probably to IX.

**Dream caving trip?**

A through trip, which had a cake shop halfway through and not too many squeezes (certainly not after the cake shop)...

**Funniest Caving Trip?**

As Les says it's all about the stories. There are lots of them, whenever you get the right combination of people and especially when minor things start going wrong they just turn out hilarious. Probably the trip in the Pucelle in France, just splashing down the stream way, falling into pools - the sheer banter and barracking that everybody got. A caver climbing up the wrong side of a pitch and then having to have a ladder swung across to get him up! (Sounds like he should have got a Tiger - perhaps he did, but not for that episode)

**Scariest Caving Trip?**

Mmm... I'm not sure. It's a toss-up between some very snug bits of passage that I've been to with Alison, Four letter link, Clitoris crawl, or a trip I did in the early 80's to Wookey nineteen, grossly over weighted and virtually having to bottom walk up the slope to 9.2 on the way out.

# Meet the Chairman

*The Wessex Cave Club has a new Chairman, Adrian Vanderplank. A familiar face to many, he kindly agreed to answer a few harmless questions by way of an introduction to anyone who hasn't yet met him.*

**You were unopposed in your nomination for Chairman – how would your election statement have read?**

One of the reasons I stood for this post is, that although the club is large and very successful, this brings its own foibles - the more experienced members arrange their own caving trip/holidays which leaves newer members reliant on being invited on these trips rather than just signing up for them. I would like to see some more club based holidays and activities which

newer members can participate in. The club is about its members and what they want from the club.

**What do you love about the Wessex?**

I love the broad spectrum of members, their enthusiasm for whatever project they're involved in (e.g. the Templeton diggers!!) and the caving community is the least ageist group of people I know. The Hut is fantastic and has changed significantly since I started caving.

**What do you hate about the Wessex?**

Probably the septic tank, because I know we're going to have to do something about it, and sh...t and cavers well there's probably a song there somewhere.

**What are your aspirations for the club in the coming year?**

Club Holiday - Berger or Felix Trombe, Septic tank, Roof, Happy members and lots of prospective members.



# Club News

## What's the closest you've come to winning the Tiger of the Year?

Christmas Eve 2008, Bath Swallet. At the time we were digging up an aven. I had gone up through a constriction just to have look, and the roof started to self dig - my waist was still in the squeeze, and very rapidly so were the contents of the roof. At one point it was coming down faster than I could push it down past me, but it did stop, and Jude and NikNak managed to dig me out!

## Last piece of caving kit you bought?

Probably knee pads, 'cause I've worn the others out.

## Are you a caver, or a digger?

Probably a digger on Mendip, caver elsewhere. I love the ethos of digging - it can be amazingly frustrating at times - the technical difficulties, the endless speculation of where your dig might go... and when you think you're about to break into new cave it's just incredible. B.T.S!

## What is the difference between Caving, and Potholing?

Oooh is this a trick question? I can almost feel Les rubbing his hands in glee when (not if) I get this wrong. I thought that if the cave has a vertical entrance it's a Pothole. Perhaps I'm safer to say if it's in Yorkshire. (have I failed?) [answers on a postcard please! Ed]

## Stop or Simple?

It's in the question! Stop, because I like to.

## Oversuit - inside or outside your Wellies?

Inside, just because I'm used to it ,and it looks tidier.

## What colour should we paint the hut?

Well thank goodness they haven't invented it yet, but invisible paint would be quite fun, some cavers have difficulty finding the hut late on Saturday nights anyway. I think it would just add to the hilarity!

## Jim Rands Memorial Barrel

Those who attended the club dinner in October will recall that Mhairi Rands presented a cheque to the club bequeathed by Jim to purchase a barrel. Aforementioned barrel will be tapped on the 11th February 2012. Conveniently this is the second Saturday of the month (see below) which was chosen for being closest to Jim's birthday. Members are advised to bring their own Jura & Patra! [It is hoped to include an Obituary in the next Journal - Ed]

## Second Saturday Trips

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday trips for the last year have been well attended, and Jude would like to say a big "Thank You" to everybody who has been involved, and particularly to those who have led trips Dave Cooke, Alison Moody, Richard Carey, Rosie Freeman, Mark Helmore, Aubrey Newport, Pete Hann and Wayne Starsmore.

The planned trips for the first 3 months of 2012 are:

### 14<sup>th</sup> January

*Bath Swallet and Rod's Pot.*

### 11<sup>th</sup> February

*Eastwater Cavern - 13 pots.*

### 10<sup>th</sup> March

*Honeyhead Hole and Little Crapnell Swallet.*

Meeting for all of these is at Upper Pitts, at 10am on Saturday morning, there's usually time for a cup of tea before we get going. If anyone has any special requests for trips please let me know and I'll do my best to get it organised!

[see diary page - Ed]

## Mystery Red Box

As advertised, the Hut Warden has removed all items from beneath bunks after the AGM weekend. There is one large Red Box that has gone unclaimed. Are you the owner? Do you know the owner? Please see Lou. If unclaimed by the next AGM, the committee will open it and dispose of the contents accordingly.

## Upper Flood Guest Leaders:

The Mendip Caving Group are currently improving access to Upper Flood Swallet by training "Guest Wardens" to guide trips. They are asking for a number of cavers to apply to be wardens. The criteria for becoming a warden is available on the MCG website.

See: <http://tinyurl.com/cs7y7n2>

For any enquiries please contact the MCG Caving Sec. Kevin Speight..

## Obligatory Nag

Lou the Hut Warden has asked that members continue to "do their bit" towards keeping the hut clean and tidy, even when it is very busy and lots of guests are staying. Clearly the guests need to do their bit too, but please don't leave it *all* to them!

## IMPORTANT email news

Please see below for an important message from Cookie (club secretary) regarding the emailing list:

The club's mailing list is a simple service where an email sent to [wcc-list@wessex-cave-club.org](mailto:wcc-list@wessex-cave-club.org) is automatically forwarded to all the other members on the list. It can be a very effective method of getting information out quickly. For example, "There's a barrel on at the Hut this weekend to celebrate so and so's Birthday" or "The 2nd Saturday trip will now be Gough's Cave" or "This year's subscriptions are ...".

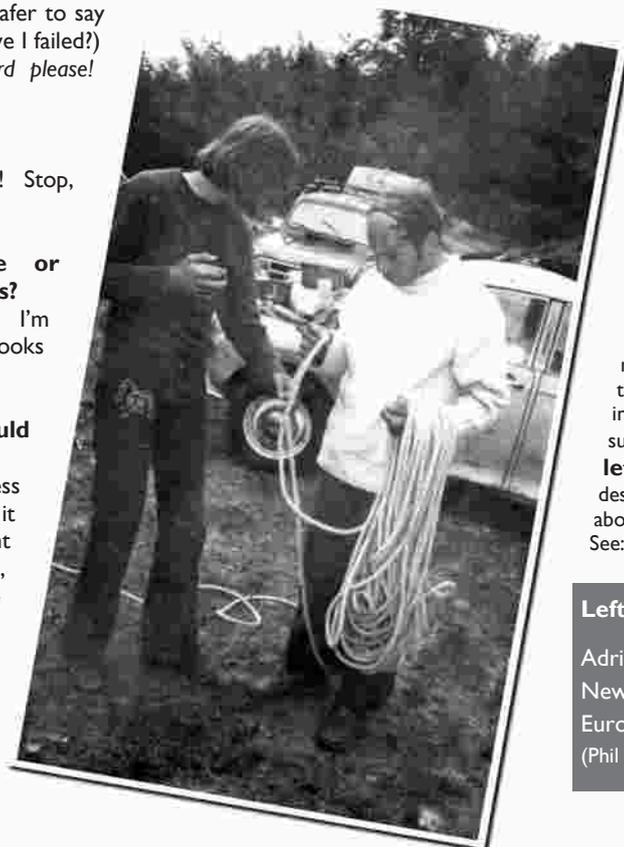
The mailing list is for members only and is intended for announcements - it is not intended for in-tray clogging conversations which best belong on the club's forum.

Unfortunately it is not as effective as it could be, since many members are not registered to use it. The Committee would like to improve the use of the list with all members registered and intends to register those members who are not currently subscribed. **If you do not wish to be subscribed please let the Secretary know ASAP.** There is a web page which describes the mailing list which as well as telling you a little bit about it allows you to subscribe or unsubscribe yourself at any time. See: <http://tinyurl.com/bmg32qw>

## Left:

Adrian Vanderplank and Aubrey Newport at the Picos de Europa in 1974.  
(Phil Henty)

**Caption  
Competition?**



# Tiger of the year 2011

## or - “Cave Bites Man”

*Pete Buckley describes what started out as just “another” trip, that ultimately lead to his being awarded the dubious honour of Tiger at last year’s annual dinner...*

Another Saturday, another trip down Charterhouse! This was a working trip to Stone Roses, both exploration and survey.

I've previously described the trip down to the 2010 extensions. [on the Forum - Ed] Although I'm now more familiar with the best routes to take, it hasn't got any easier! For some reason I took the heavier bag down to The Narrows - taking care not to get it wet or damage the contents - and gallantly leaving this bag for John to take through, I found this obstacle less daunting. Perhaps I'm getting used to it...

Dumping some food and drink at Frozen Cascade and then along Timeline to Portal Pool. Again I was able to lead through to (H)our Chamber and beyond. Diesel Duck was open, but was a grotty muddy mess. Last week's trip had, apparently, seen this section with considerably more water in it and with a stream running to fill it, not a pleasant exit. Clipped in and over the Flyover above the (W)hole of Time and then through the rather interesting vertical squeeze into High Time and then to Zebra Junction. Charterhouse is an impressive and varied cave.

Leaving excess baggage (food, drink) at Zebra Junction we squirreled away through Sand Worm (another 'pleasant' wet sandy/muddy crawl) and then up into Stone Roses. These geological features are lovely calcite inclusions in dark rock. At the final choke we split into two groups and, armed with a ball of string, went looking for routes through the boulders. I followed Ali through an obvious(ish) route. In places it was a tad snug and was often awkward. Ali had managed to get in about 30 or 40 metres and had come to a little squeezey bit. Through this and up to her right the way on looked promising but was blocked by a rock which she couldn't shift.

Maybe, at this stage, I should have remembered the adage about never volunteering.... but, once Ali had backed out I made my way into this squeeze. It was a little more snug for me... I was flat out but had managed to ease my way through and was just getting to the point of turning off right. I was thus on my front in a sort of reverse dive pose when my right foot kicked a small stone out of the squeeze. I then heard the rattle and clatter of rocks and felt the whole lot move. Bugger! That little stone must have been the chock stone for that boulder set.

I was pinned in place in-between two slabs of rock – one of which had slid onto me when I kicked the chock stone out. This slab was on my leg just behind the left knee. The weight of the rock held me tightly down and not too comfortably on my chest. Ali went off the call the others for help and I looked around. I could clearly see the rock I was working towards to move. My upper body was free and I cleared loose little stones to try and get more comfortable.

After a short wait Andrew arrived and began to clear rocks. He was not able to lift the slab on my leg without it pivoting on my leg – not something I was encouraging him to do. With a bit of grunting and shoving and a little lift from me at the front he managed to push the slab forward about an inch so as to rest on another stone. Now the pivot was be rock and not my leg. I joked about using this example of pivot points and levers in my next lesson (and did so today!). Andrew tried lifting but with limited space and no leverage he was not successful. He did manage to get some stone under to hold it up and reduce the pressure on my legs.

Pete H arrived (having had a tight time getting through some of the squeezes on the way) and had a



go at lifting the slab. Like Andrew he had no room to get any purchase and, with my legs in the way, there was no space to put any stones underneath or use any leverage. Pete used a lump hammer to gently persuade a few little pieces of rock out of the way – which made it a little more comfortable for me and gave them a fraction more space. Helpfully, I tried to kick Pete in the face as I tried to get some feeling back into my legs.

Options were running out now – my left leg was cramping up and my chest was becoming very tender. I started to think about the ‘nuclear’ option – who to call out and what to get them to bring.

Pete on the other hand, not being easily scared off by my attempts to kick him, had cleared a little space and was able to use a small crow bar and lump hammer for leverage. With Andrew holding it all in place and providing extra support they went for a final attempt. As the slab lifted I was able to make a frantic wriggle and pulled like hell to get my legs out of the way. Once I was clear, they let the slab go – Andrew got a minor nip as things settled.

They’d freed me! Yippee. As I realigned myself to get out, Pete and Andrew also backed out. Through one of the more snug squeezes Pete used a little forceful persuasion to remove the nip point and let himself through.

Back out in the chamber, John was returning with some tackle which might have been used to lift things. All told, I’d be stuck for an hour. My legs, particularly the left one, and my chest were very sore. My left leg was either in cramp or I had a nasty dead leg. Not wanting to be a real party pooper, I offered to wait in the chamber whilst the others carried on exploring.

Ali and Andrew returned to the scene to find the squeeze no longer a squeeze. They managed to get a bit further and found a round trip through the choke (perhaps not one that will become that popular?).

Back at Zebra Junction for food, water and to repack tackle bags. I bravely let the others take the bags back – probably a good decision. Getting back was fine, except for the squeeze bits (of which Charterhouse has plenty). My leg and chest were causing a lot of pain. The really hard bit for me was bending my left leg against the muscle cramping – this made the slog up the entrance boulder choke, er, ‘fun’. I made it out and I was OK – very thankful to the whole team for their hard work and support. I certainly would not have made it out without their help. Thanks again!

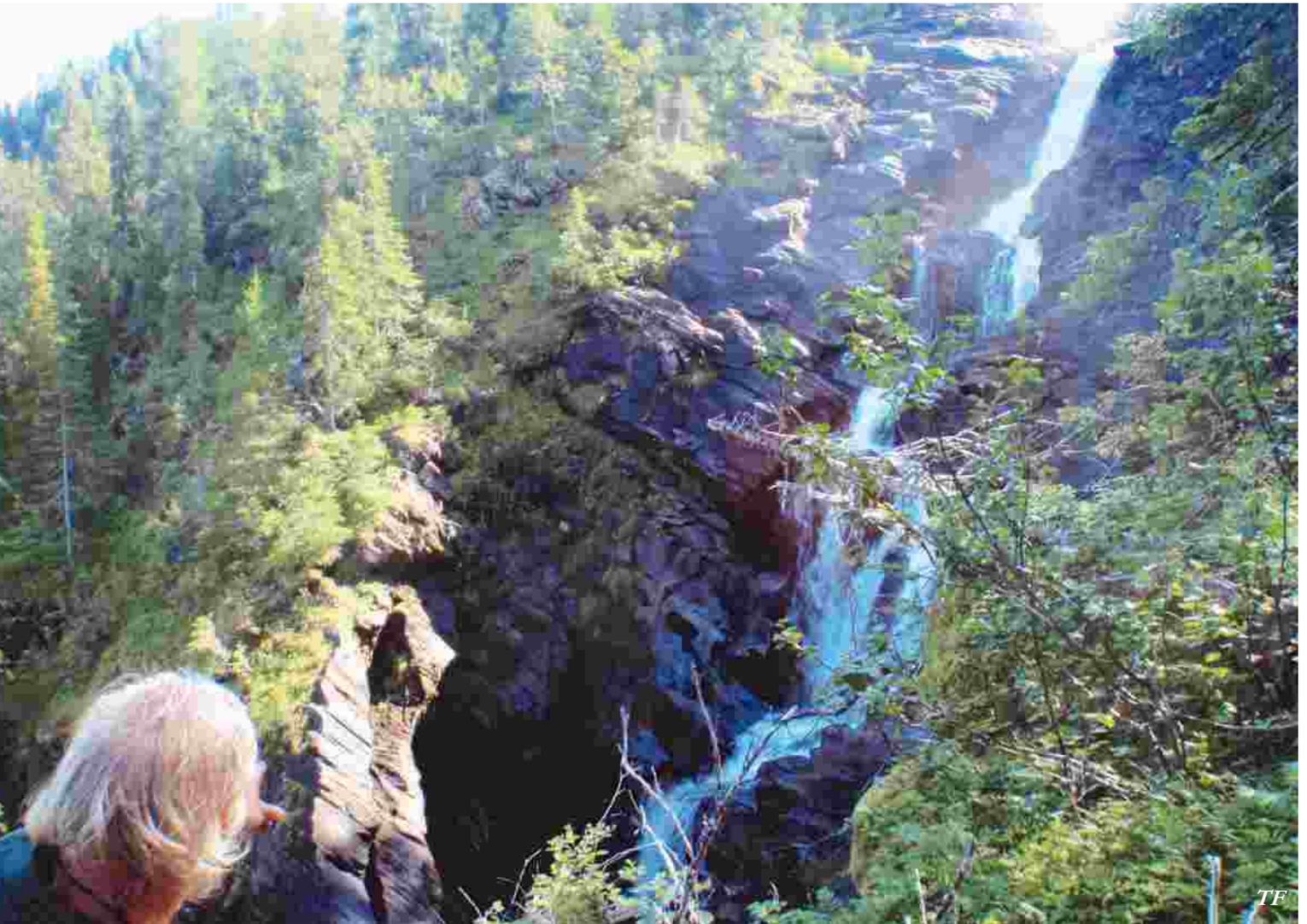
#### Observations

Getting stuck is always, erm, a tad embarrassing. I’m more annoyed that it was my foot kicking a small stone out rather than me muscling through the squeeze and bringing it down. I must levitate higher next time.

I thought long and hard before writing this up and posting it .... No doubt I’ll live to regret it (I’ve no idea why Tight Fit’s only hit is relevant and no, I don’t fill up with Esso....)

It could have been worse ...

*Article first published WCC forum July 12, 2011  
Photo: Adrian Vanderplank*



# Foreigners on the lawn

*Norway 2010*

Part II

## **To the woods – and hope restored!**

The town of Mosjøen is overlooked by a wooded hillside criss-crossed with popular walking, cycling and riding tracks used in winter for skiing, with street-lamps that look very incongruous above the rough tracks in the summer.

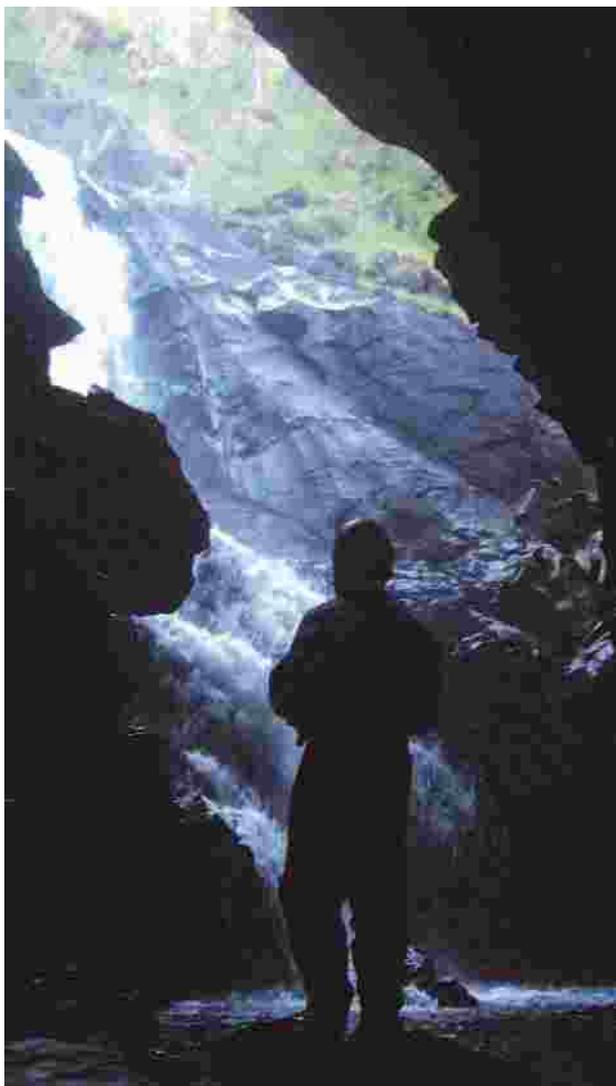
Historians in the local museum's wonderful little oasis of academe told us of caves in these woods, and one on the slope above the main road just outside the town. My reaction on seeing the latter was, "I didn't travel over a thousand miles for a tatty little slip rift when I've bigger and better ones back home on Portland!"

A tiny resurgence, a former private water-supply, proved impassably tight but a couple of things warranted a lamp on your head. One offered an intriguing choice of entrances - awkward eyehole, muddy little crawl or short, loose pitch – all to a deep rift below loose boulders. Trevor Faulkner (TF) and I descended in turn. The take-off was narrow and awkward, but a fine 40ft climb just off the wall followed. It choked, but a short traverse near the bottom entered an attractive, dripping aven.

A decent stream-sink entered an easy bedding cave with a moist crawl under, or dry route over, a central "island" but little else was notable apart from a shaft entrance. A low, wide, wet crawl nearby was a soggy grovel too far: the resurgence was visibly barely 10m away. Other suggested sites seemed to have been only folk memories - one "hola" complete with name-board was just a doline.

Just North of the town, a drainage tunnel under the railway line ended not in the alleged natural cave beyond, but a slippery exit climb up onto steep, forested hillside.

We played "Where the cave wasn't" a lot on this trip.



### Grand Verticality

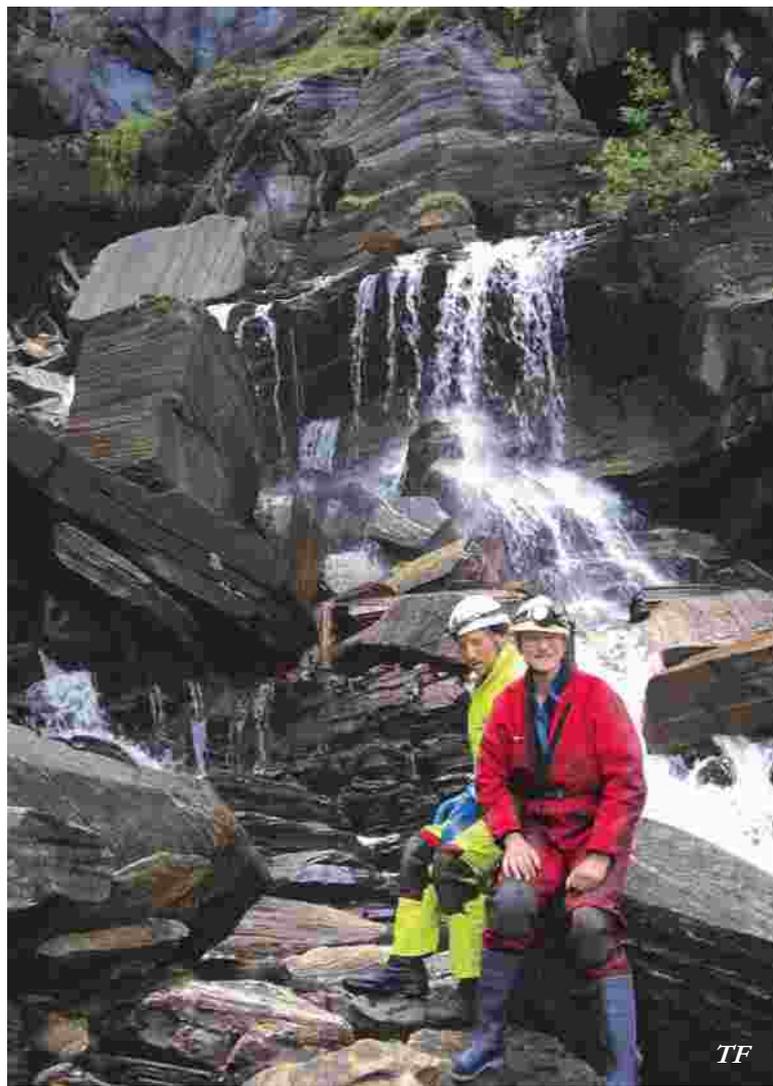
The farmer Jarla Seljelia was not just friendly - he led us up the long track to Kinnforsen in his 4WD until we reached the limit for Trevor's Vauxhall Vectra, then gave TF and David St-Pierre (DS-P) a lift the rest of the way! Alan Marshall (AM) and I rode with Ragnar in his Suzuki 4WD.

A steep but comparatively easy clamber up the wooded valley side reached a sizeable river across gorgeous "wood-grain" marble to a waterfall into a huge open double shaft oddly placed on the valley flank. Forgetting the fear of heights that had ended my apprenticeship, let alone stopped me at Langjorda and in Neverdalen, I was first to scramble down the shake-hole to find the cave entrance.

It is a magnificent feature. The elongated shaft is divided for much of its height by a central ridge with the water cascading 50m down its upper face's strangely-contorted and eroded marble. Carefully descending the steep slope into the parallel, dry part of the shaft, I reached a terrace protected by the ridge which acted as a parapet. The wall fades, eclipsing the floor. The dry part of the shaft funnels to greasy boulders around a hole, with the river visible 10m below. Failing to find a bypass, I returned to kit up.

Trevor appointed Dave and himself as surveyors; Alan, Ragnar and I as explorers. AM soon found an entrance onto a short, dry ladder pitch down boulders. From below he called out, "Another pitch!" It looked deep and made big wet noises.

"There's a passage here! I'll see what it does!" I replied. To our delight this narrow side rift soon entered the main stream-



passage, which upstream passed below the greasy boulder hole and met a lofty entrance in the shake-hole ridge, with a superb view up the waterfall. Downstream, the passage opened rapidly into a grand hall, with the river slithering into boulders and tree-trunks. Not yet quite twigging the cave's layout, beyond the boulder pile Ragnar found an exit to a ledge on the valley side, whence a decayed wooden ladder led down to an easier slope. Who's been exploring our cave?

From the boulder heap, we could see the surveyors, level with us at the foot of the entrance pitch. We rigged a pitch between the boulders opposite the previous, but AM soon returned having met the water but no way on. He reported that the stream flowing into a narrow canyon was too strong for safety, so we rigged the first second pitch. RS declined, but I had a look....

"Take in!.... That's me!"

"Climb when ready!"

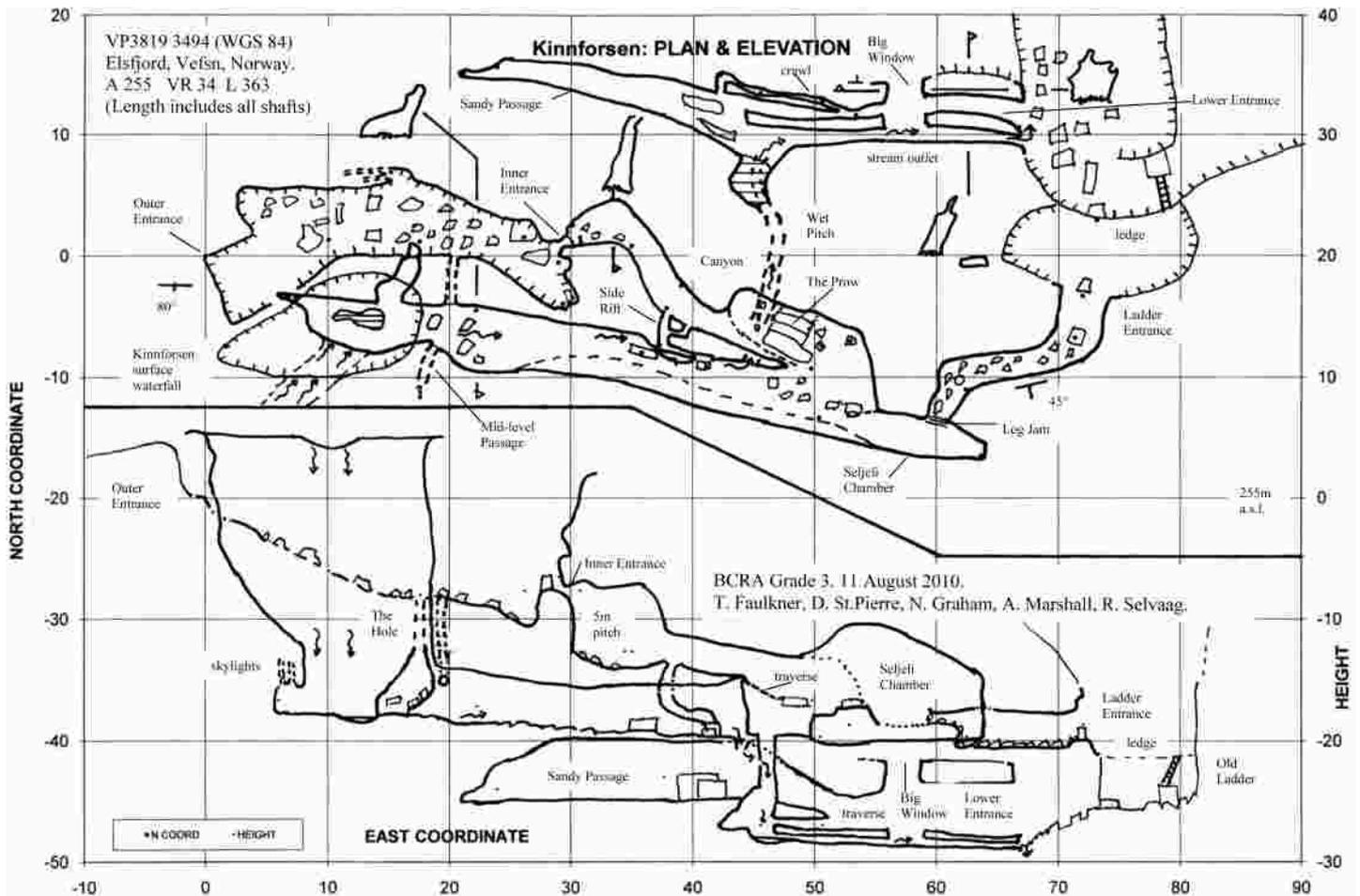
"Climbing!"

"OK!"

A comforting litany - Alan drew the line smoothly through the Italian Hitch, and ascending was easier than descending the off-vertical, rugose wall. I climbed steadily and confidently, really enjoying the feel of this cave. Its dark, gaunt, expansive, vertical walls, the sheer volume of the chamber (unusual in this area) and the roaring water combined to give an air of great verticality. Yet the cave is short and quite easy, a sort of big Calf Holes - Browgill, and the wide pitch is only 40feet to a narrow ledge above the torrent!

Three happy explorers sat above the shake-hole, nibbling chocolate and waiting. Eventually, concerned, we met the surveyors just emerging. Also confused by the main chamber's topography, they had

TF



traversed high up back into the short entrance passage, mistaken it for a new one into which we'd inexplicably moved the ladder, and surveyed it again before *déjà vu* set in! Clear so far? There will be a test later.

Typing this now, cave in mind's eye, its layout is simple. The river passes under the dry entrance, runs round the main chamber and falls down a shaft whose full development is obscured by the boulders and an optical illusion.

The resurgence, in the valley side below and to one side of the shake-hole, was beautiful too. A scramble up marble, schist and amphibolite blocks led to an easy traverse on a watery ledge and a multi-windowed pair of parallel passages. One was the stooping-height, wide water-way. The other was a hading rift in which someone had run a new-looking traverse rope, only I'd left my lamp down in my pack so didn't see much of it! The passages I learnt, met in a chamber with a waterfall where Alan was sure he was very close to the bottom of the stream-way pitch. Honour was satisfied, we decided.

The ladder to the higher exit Ragnar had found was too rotten to use. We learnt that the farmer's son had been through the cave in very dry conditions, but we weren't sure how he managed the pitches. Trevor promised the farmer a copy of the survey. So, new only to us, but some right good potholing we all agreed, in a short but beautiful cave with a magnificent entrance and a certain grandeur.

Back at the car, Ragnar bade us farewell. He had to return home for his young daughter's birthday party, and would be unable to rejoin us.

**"It Goes! Oh, Schist!"**

"Didn't we have a lovely time the day we went to Hestmyra" (Horse Mere, or Marsh), to abuse the song. It was damp, windy, chilly and for those brought up on the classics, the first site was "rather boggy and sad", with soggy vegetation dangerously covering small-scale limestone pavement. The promised sink and rising were illusions. We picnicked at the car, and considered our next move.

Dave stayed in the car. AM, TF and I were delighted to find a real footpath heading the right way! It lead over a ridge with small cairns, bogs, bare rock and an electricity transmission-line for landmarks, into shallow strike valleys in marble-stripe karst.

Aha! That valley's not dry... A real, live, cave! "Make sure it's only 10 metres long", TF instructed me, ex-officio team ferret. Partly kitted, I negotiated greasy boulders to a choke but potential way on, and returned. "I think it goes!"

All kitted fully. TF led in, along the stream. "It chokes!"

"I'm not having that". I thought, ferreting further, finding a crawl. "It goes!" I stood waiting for AM and TF in the start of a proper

marble stream-way curving away as seductively as the best natural curves, then waved them through, a politesse from the Charterhouse Cave team. On single-filing into new passage, place-changing at intervals gives everyone that unique first-foot.

A short crawl on a schist "mezzanine" ended at a short, awkward drop. Next was a long ramp down a treacherously slippery schist floor. This insoluble, dark-brown, light-absorbing rock often forms thin, very sharp, friable flakes jutting out of the marble, giving few safe holds. Beyond, elegant oxbows enhanced the high marble canyon. We were enjoying this cave.

Suddenly the fun stopped at a 10-foot drop into a pool, it appeared beyond which a shadow might just be the way on. Only... why oh why hadn't we brought a ladder and tethers? The cascade was on slippery schist, or an amphibolite dyke, too dangerous to free-climb – you don't take chances here. Even Trevor, who had soloed Vallerdalgrota to its first sump beyond a waterfall that stopped the rest of the team, decided it too risky.

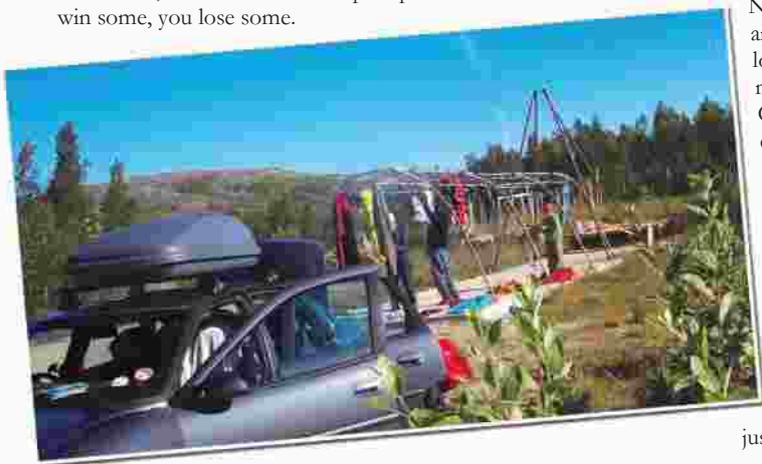
TF and I surveyed out. AM pursued a draughting roof-tube to a squeeze too committing for the occasion. Down-hill we located the deep, dark, rather ominous, presumed resurgence but found no other caves here, nor, thankfully, bears. We returned to David, leaving in peace a fine little cave that may or may not continue, and regretting having left the ladder behind.

### Yes, It Sinks, But...

It was an idyllic spot, reached by an easy three-quarter hour walk along an anglers' footpath to the lake. Yes, the outflow sank as the historian had said, but sadly, in a small marsh. Frustrated, we descended the dry valley to the presumed resurgence, just small fissures whose sparkling clear water chuckled at us.

Trevor recorded everything, and his acid test showed the rock to be probably dolomite (magnesium carbonate) which he explained, dissolves in water but far more slowly than calcium carbonate. Furthermore, it normally fractures profusely, creating diffuse rather than conduit flow - so very, very few caves in dolomite.

We lunched in the hot sun, and took snaps of each other, the lake and ursine paw-prints. You win some, you lose some.



just booze!

### Not For Santa

Our last field-trip was on departure day. The Sami had covered our target shaft with wire-netting held down by massive boulders to stop their reindeer falling into it. It is close to the concrete base and steel frame of an autumnal slaughter-house that bare and clean in the bright hot sunshine, hinted not of that to the unknowing. This is part of the Sami's livelihood, we all enjoyed elk stew on previous expeditions, and we hoped only that the reindeer are killed as humanely as possible. We had wondered about a pick-head we once found on Elgfjell...

A second shake-hole with a dry, choked sink offered a quickly-impassable crawl, and a steeply-descending, narrow tube on loose earth and rubbish. The ex-reindeer debris, and the installations nearby, cooled determination despite a cool, fresh draught.

We were glad the Sami had piped in clean water, for here of all places we wanted to wash our hands before lunch at the car, while our damp caving-kit aired over the butchery frame. Picnic over, we re-packed the car and headed South.

### Clean-washed Money?

We had one call on the drive home - the Geological Survey of Norway (NGU) HQ in Trondheim's leafy suburbs, so TF could buy photocopies of papers and a big glossy book on

Norway's geology. I bought the same book, plus another summarising N.W.European / N.Atlantic geology - its cover photograph of Durdle Door, the famous rock arch on the Dorset coast not far from my home, caught my eye! Both are in English. Curiously, the NGU sells publications but can't take payment so gives you an invoice.

Faced with UK banks' bureaucracy and fees just to pass forty quid overseas, I suggested paying in a bank before leaving Norway. TF, perhaps mindful of the long drive ahead, was coolly dismissive, so with an uncharacteristic lack of shyness I asked the manager, who spoke English. He didn't know, nor did a colleague, but they suggested trying anyway.

Once on the journey Trevor had decided that, "I think we might be able to pay in a Norwegian bank". Alan and I exchanged wry looks. So UK banks like making people queue? Of two cashiers, each dealt only with certain transactions, with no flexibility. The book prices were remarkably low for their size and quality, and I suspect UK equivalents would be far costlier despite Scandinavia's high prices for many everyday things, not just booze!

### The International Dimension and Efforts Appreciated

The 2010 expedition was the first apart from TF and DSP's reconnaissance to meet so many Scandinavian cavers. It's also very rewarding to find others have appreciated our efforts.

We always try to meet Odd Johannsen, our Svenningdal contact, now just socially. This time he could converse with Erik and Lina, though his English is good, as we sipped delicious, smoke-tanged coffee brewed over a wood fire in his front garden.

Odd told us that a Polish team returning from being Scandinavian cavers' guests further North, had visited Blåfjellgrotta, our find on that fell near his home. At some 900m long, it is one of the area's longest caves and gave us three days of delight as its varied crawls, chambers and attractive stream-way played with us, revealing ways on just when we thought we'd reached the end.

In 2010 Mark Dougherty and a Swedish colleague passed the Vallerdalgrotta sump, another of our finds, to 50m of fine stream-way and a boulder ruckle, still a long way from the resurgence. He intends returning with more experienced support.

There are few Scandinavian cave-divers in our sense, but some open-water divers visit resurgences as purely sporting challenges. Ståle Tveitane, who died in the Plura River rising in August 2006, was one such; Mark organised the

recovery after fire-service divers had understandably failed. The Swedish cavers and resurgence-divers converse, hoping for proper collaboration, but their Norwegian counterparts tend to stay apart, and this diving has become an "extreme sport" with commercial web-sites I found when verifying the Plura facts for here.

I told Mark of our 2006 observations at remote Jengelvatn, of open, large, deep, lakeside sump pools, with a known cave in a tributary valley. Transport for major diving may necessitate help from the fishing-club whose hut we had used. A "lightweight" reconnaissance would still entail a hard day's walk each way and one or two days field-days.

It was while walking back from that hut that we met the fell-runner who told us of the Plura tragedy, three days previously. Christine, my English pen-friend in Norway, learnt more from the news for our dinner-date at the end of that expedition.

Back to 2010... Two overnight stays made the long journey home, now right round via gently-hilly Sweden and monotonously flat Denmark, very enjoyable. At the Oslo home of Torstein and Magni Finnesand, Torstein explained his intriguing mathematical model predicting a given region's total of cave passages. Tomaz Gustafsson, former Chairman of the Swedish Caving Society, and his wife Tatjana and family were our Gothenburg hosts. So this is my appreciation of their hospitality, which the expedition rewarded more formally with Tincture of Unimalt.

### Foreigners On The Lawn

The Mosjøen antiquarians had suggested a cave at Jordfoss, a local farm apparently owned by two bachelors. The team's resident, heterosexual bachelor treated the corny "nudge nudge wink wink" speculation with suitable contempt.

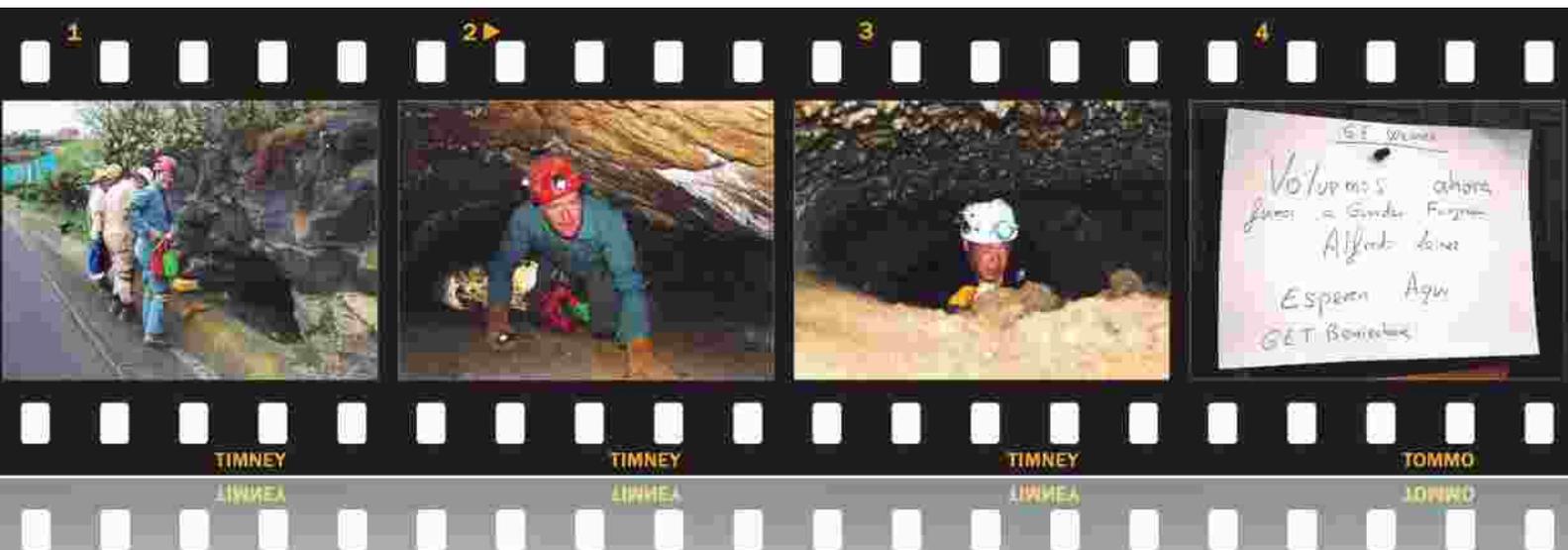
We found the house. An elderly man dozed in the sun, alone, on a garden seat. Now, if a foreign car full of strangers arrived unannounced at your isolated home at the end of four miles of dirt road, wouldn't you be at least curious?

Not he. He glanced round, and resumed his contemplating. TF and DSP approached him with a greeting in Norwegian. AM and I saw him once languidly wave towards the scenery. Soon they returned, downcast.

"Yes, he says there is a cave up there, but it's small and hard to find." His gesture had subtended umpteen square miles of densely forested hillside surely holding the system to make Emma Porter give us Hidden Earth top spot. The man dozed on, as indifferent as ever. His cat had made more fuss of us.

Clearly some things cannot disturb a Scandinavian siesta, not even an unexpected alien invasion - a bunch of cave-hunting foreigners on the lawn.

*Nigel Graham*



# Tenerife 2010

## Part 2

### Friday 18th

Today we visited Cueva Hoya De San Felipe at Barriada San Felipe, below the town of Icod. Icod is quite a large town, a little east of Garachico. The cave was found when a new road was built to the north of the town. The excavators cut through the lava tube which is in the same lava flow as San Marcos & Punta Blanco but quite a way up-flow. The entrance now lies by the roadside, and a very busy road at that. [Photo 1, Above]

Andy, Cookie, Ed and Hayley were surveying, Les, Mark and Frank were caving, and I was trying to advance my photographic skills.

After a short crawl [Photo 2, Above] the cave opens up into mostly stomping passages.

When the cave was discovered, the road builders would not allow cavers to enter the cave until construction work was finished but provided them with a survey of the full extent of the cave made by their own surveyors. It consisted, according to them, of some 810 meters. When Alfredo and his mates were

eventually given access to the cave they surveyed it themselves and found that it consisted of about 3.5 kilometres.

With loads of rich mineral deposits, this a very interesting and colourful cave. Not far from the entrance is a nasty, sharp, jagged, body size crawl known as the junction, through which the surveyors disappeared. One doesn't slither through a lava squeeze like you would a squeeze on Mendip. The method employed by most people is a series of press-ups as you first release the front of your boiler suit from the sharp jagged stuff beneath you then lower your stomach to release your backside from the sharp jagged stuff above you. Andy Morse has it down to a fine art, but he does look like he is practicing for something else. Apparently it's well worth doing because there is a half kilometre of cave beyond, which I intend to explore next year when I have lost about 2 stone.

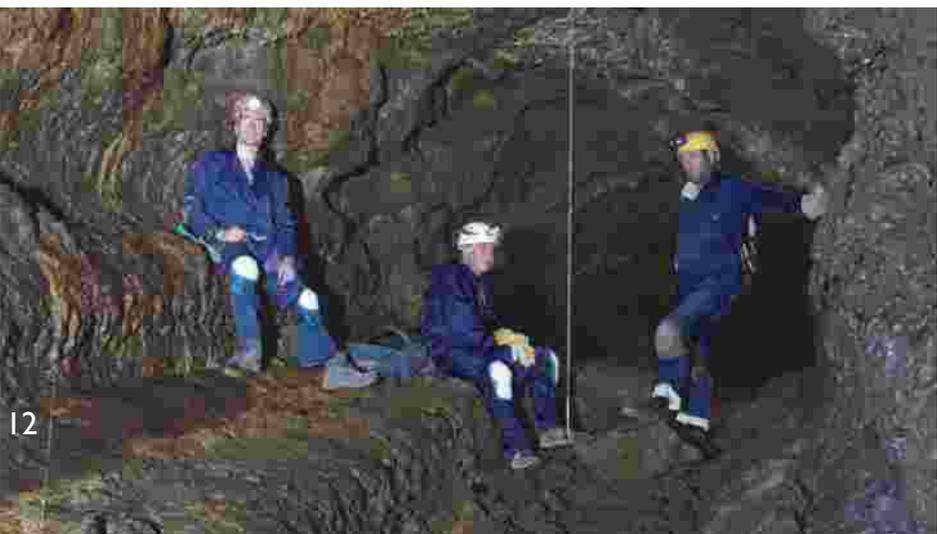
Mark, Frank and Les were, for a while, willing photographic models, [below] but the tight jagged crawl was so inviting they buggered off,

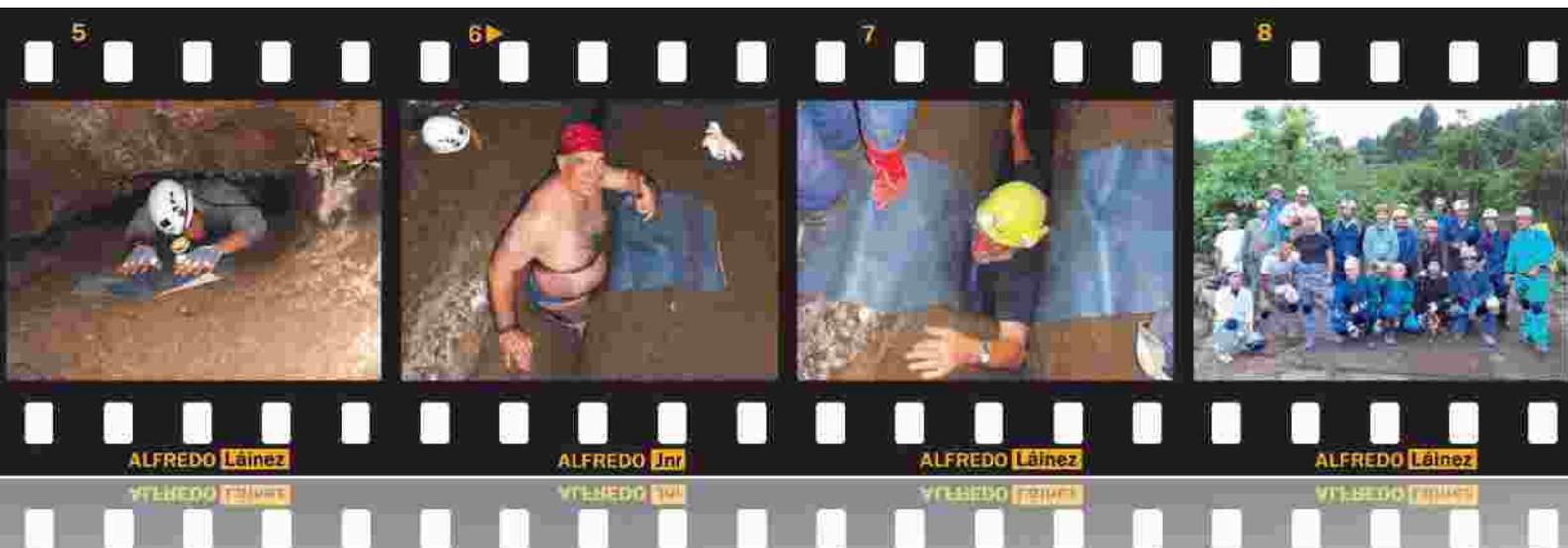
leaving me in the dark all alone. I busied myself messing about with flash guns and slaves, which had a tendency to work miraculously well, but only when they wanted to. I managed to get one or two useful photos and loads of crap, all a part of the learning curve I suppose.

After about an hour Mark, Frank and Les returned (the expression on Marks face at the prospect of having to do the squeeze again tells it all) [Photo 3, Above] leaving the others to carry on with their survey, so I packed away my kit and we headed off for the bar. Today's early evening bar just happened to be once again on the volcanic beach in the quiet little cove at San Marcos. With the sound of the waves lapping at the shore we whiled away a couple of hours, enjoying several plates of chips and nice cold beers, whilst sheltered from the hot sun under large umbrellas. Unfortunately our peace and tranquillity was occasionally disturbed by nasty transmissions from a large speaker on a pole, by someone with an awful voice, singing terrible pop songs in a foreign language. However, we were unable to escape the terrible din on account of the totty frolicking at the waters edge.

We were eventually joined by the others and so were forced to have another beer just to be sociable. A little while later we decided we had to leave as our driver was in danger of getting drunk. We then drove off to Punta de Teno (Teno Point to you) at the western-most edge of Tenerife to watch the sun go down.

We made contact with the others by mobile phone and arranged to meet up at the lovely beach side restaurant at Buenavista Del Norte. Unfortunately it had just stopped serving, so we then travelled far and wide in search of





food, but our efforts were all in vain because all the restaurants had stopped serving, it was after all a Sunday evening. We had to make do with a ploughman's lunch back at our villas, and an early night. The old wives tale about eating cheese late at night giving you nightmares and keeping you awake is indeed just an old wives tale, because we all slept like logs!

#### Saturday 19th

After our customary fry up we rendezvoused with the others. Today was to be a day of exploration, followed by an evening trip lead by Alfredo, into Cueva Del Viento (the cave of the wind). After some discussion and a lot of faffing, we packed our walkie-talkies, GPS's, sun hats, sun cream and cameras then piled into three cars and set off for the coronal forest. We drove for about an hour to Kilometre 14 TF32 on the forest road, to search the area between Chio and Boca de Tauca, South West of Mt Teide. We did a bit of off-roading in the hire cars (as you do) and then parked up in a convenient spot from which to start our search. The search party consisted of Frank, Cookie, Mark, Tommo, Les, Chris, Andy, Ed, Hayley and I. We fanned out across the lava flow and started a systematic search for new lava tubes. We scrambled all over the place up over huge ridges and down into deep troughs keeping contact with each other when ever we could on our walkie-talkies. Ed climbed to the top of a massive cinder cone to scan the whole area, but sadly the buenavista was his only reward.

*[Right - Mt Teide from our search area. Note the tottering piles of shite in the foreground]*

Our consolation came in the form of our surroundings; the pine needled forest floor was bathed in strong dappled sun light, which warmed our very souls with its life giving benevolence, whilst our bodies were calmed by a cool gentle breeze sweeping soundlessly up the slopes from the island's halo of cloud, far beneath us. Huge banks of lava in all directions stood out in stark contrast to the softness and tranquility of our surroundings. The tops of

extinct volcanoes could be glimpsed through the mysterious fog that swept the surface of the vast boiling ocean of cloud. On the far horizon to the north west, stood the twin peaks of the island of La Palma, a little to the south could be seen the island of La Gomera, and an occasional glimpse a little further south, of the Island of El Hierro. They looked like islands in the sky. Our state of euphoria was completed by the silence that was all about us, broken only by the enchanting sound of bird song.

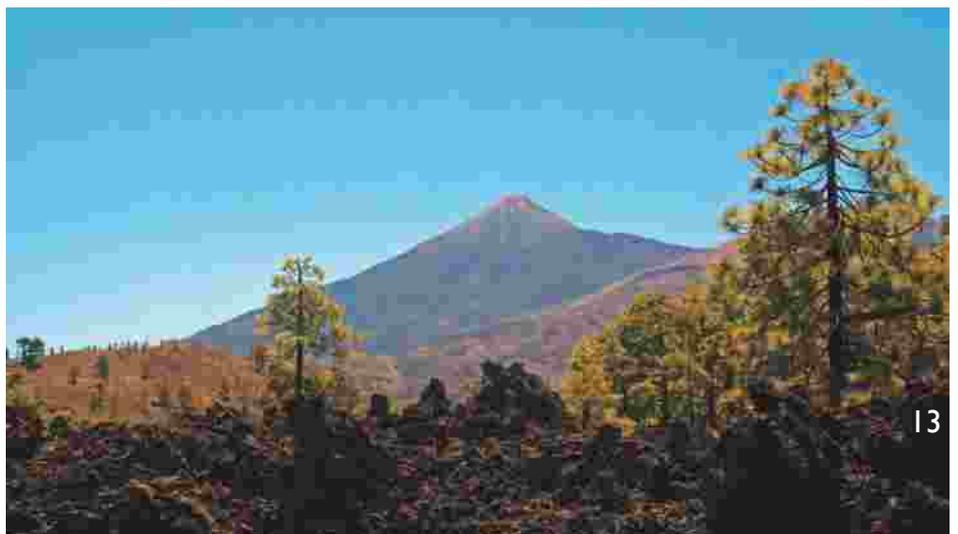
Well its thirsty work trudging to and fro over ankle wrenching lava, or as Mark aptly named them "tottering piles of shite" so we repaired to a favourite bar of ours, known to us as the Dinosaur bar, named on account of the fact that it used to have a large Pterodactyl out front, which blew down in a storm and has sadly not been replaced. It took several cold beers to restore our bodily fluids, the more hungry amongst us had a late lunch, and the rest had plates of chips to keep us going, not wishing to spoil our appetites for the sumptuous evening meal that we were planning to have at Alfredo's brother-in-laws restaurant called 'EL Refugio' after our early evening caving trip.

As we relaxed and chatted under the shade of umbrellas on the large sun drenched veranda, we where treated to a very amusing display performed by four local gardeners. They had for some time been drinking copious amounts of red wine from glasses that held a half bottle

at a time. The first sign that all was not well was when the driver knocked over some glasses and a bottle which shattered noisily on the ground. The shock brought them all to their feet for just one moment before, in complete unison, their legs buckled beneath them sending them and the table flying across the flag stones. What a spectacular performance! From our vantage point we watched them dance a merry dance across the veranda, then stagger a wiggly line across the car park where, much to our alarm, they managed to shovel each other into their green gang van. The driver alone amongst them had managed to find his legs, they then set off at a snails pace down the steep winding mountain road in the direction of the coast. As time was getting on, and we were full of concern for their safety, we thought we had better follow them, expecting all the time to find them upside down in a ditch or even worse. But no! Despite the fact that they were only a few minuets ahead of us we never saw them again.

It was time to head back as we had an appointment with Alfredo at the show cave centre of Cueva Del Viento at 6pm for our evening through trip from the entrance of Cueva Sobrado to Las Breveritas. Alfredo was not there, a note on the door in Spanish informing us that they were keeping Spanish time. *[Photo 4, Above]*

We gleaned enough information from the note to know that Alfredo would be late, so we repaired to the little bar across the road. When



## Wessex Cave Club

Alfredo turned up 2 hours later he had with him seven local cavers. 'Our party' consisted of Andy, Les, Chris, Frank, Mark, Cookie, Tommo, Ed, Hayley, Chris Binding, Carmen and I. With the Spanish cavers we now numbered 22. This could be a long trip I thought. What about our sumptuous evening meal?

We could not avoid the inevitable Tenerife style faffing which is in a different league to British faffing. They really know how to put mañana to the test, and we finally got under ground at 10.32 pm. Our trip tonight was to be about 4 kilometres and despite the size of our party we traversed through the cave at a reasonable pace, about a kilometre an hour. We were slowed up on route by 3 tight squeezes in which Alfredo placed a slippery mat made from some conveyor belt material to ease our passage through the jagged crawls. [Photo 5, Previous] One of the crawls had to be cleared of a pile of rocks which had been placed some years before to prevent unauthorised entry before the Las Breveritas gate was installed.

Our progress was once again slowed when we reached a vertical squeeze called the Leve through which every one went led by Alfredo in his under pants. [Photo 6, Previous]

Every one except me that is! Despite 4 attempts in my under pants and T shirt I could not get through - at this point I was proper stuck. [Photo 7, Previous]

Having broken ribs on two occasions in UK squeezes, and not wishing to make it a hat trick, there was no option but to back track the 3.5 km to the Sobrado entrance. Dave Cooke elected to accompany me but Alfredo being our official leader stripped off again, squeezed back through the Leve, and led Cookie and I back the way we had come; making ours a round trip of 7 kilometres. The others only had about a half kilometre to finish the cave, but a gruelling kilometre long up-hill struggle to the cars. They arrived at the start only twenty minutes before us - it was now 2 am. Alfredo and Co. were spending the night at their refuge near the cave so we all gave each other a big hug in celebration of our comradeship then sped off back to our villas for a cup of tea and bed at 3.30 am. Note the lack of a sumptuous dinner.

Cueva Del Viento is the longest system in Europe with a total of 17 kilometres of passages, consisting of Galeria De La Cueva Del Viento, Galerías Superior & Inferior Sobrado, Galeria De Los Ingleses, and Cueva De Felipe Reventón, on 18 different levels. Alfredo hopes in the future and with our help, to connect this system with Cuevas San Marcos and Punta Blanco, Hoya St Felipe, Cueva Estafilón, Cueva De La Candelaria and some unnamed tubes in Icod, which would make this the longest volcanic system in the world. It is now thought that all the known caves are in the same lava flow from an eruption which occurred 27,000 years ago.

### Sunday 20th

After yesterday's epic almost all of us decided to have a day off and go sightseeing, whereas Andy, Ed and Hayley decided to explore more of Cueva Sobrado. Les, Wendy, Chris and I started off with a breakfast at our favourite pavement café in Garachico then headed off for Anaga, one of the oldest parts of Tenerife, at the far eastern limb of the Island. We enjoyed spectacular scenery all day and we discovered a huge rock en-route which has been shaped by nature in the form of a Lions head. [Bottom]

You really get to see how Tenerife country folk live, scratching a living from their terraced farms which cling to the windswept slopes.



[Above - How to keep your roof on in the wind]

This house is a fine example of an original Tenerife house, built by the earliest inhabitants of the Canary Islands known as the Guanches.



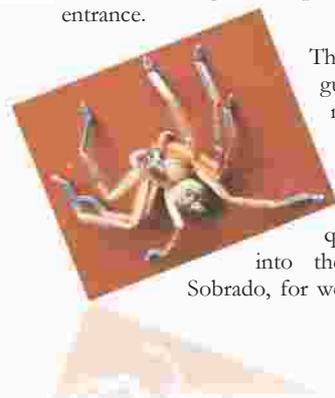
We eventually met up with Frank, Mark, Cookie and Tommo at a beach side bar at the delightful cove of Playa de Benijo where we were entertained by local folk singers and musicians whilst enjoying our cold beers. A very pleasant day was had by all, but the afternoon was waning and evening coming on, so we headed back to Los Silos to meet up with Andy, Wendy, Ed and Hayley for an evening meal. Unfortunately all the restaurants were shut. A touch of déjà vu was had by all and another bloody ploughman's lunch back at our villas was looking disappointingly likely. Thankfully we snatched victory from the jaws of defeat when we found a pizzeria/bar with a wide screen TV, still open for the football. Spain was playing tonight. The pizzeria owner immediately foresaw his night's takings taking a turn for the better, so quickly laid a table for 12 and opened the kitchen. Pizzas, puddings and beer followed, and a liqueur on the house. Feeling full and content we headed back home for a couple of large brandies before bed.

### Monday 21st

After our 'evening to early morning' trip in Cueva Del Viento, Alfredo provided us with a key to the entrance of Cueva Sobrado. Some of us wanted to have a good look around and take some pictures. The others wanted to search for the Galerie de los Inglesias which had been found some years earlier by the Shepton Club. It's all rather tight and jagged apparently, but can be by-passed in twenty minutes through easy passages.



From the picture [Above] it is clear that Hayley has trodden in something nasty and Cookie watched her do it and has seen what it was she has trodden in. Ed with the blue tackle bag is clearly laughing his socks off, while Mark and Morse exchange a knowing look. The Spanish caver behind Mark is trying hard not to notice, and Tommo is having a good old chuckle to himself, whilst pretending to inspect the cave entrance.



The entrance was guarded by this nasty big spider. [Left]

We Managed to give it the slip quietly disappearing into the long dark of Sobrado, for we knew that much

fouler creatures existed in the dark places of the ancient world. With bated breath we passed quietly through mysterious passageways in the hope our presence would go unnoticed.

Those who went in search of Galerie de los Inglesias must have had a nasty experience, because it was all a very tight, sharp, jagged, sweaty, hideous and thrutching place. Les eventually abandoned those in the tight stuff and joined the photographic team. We had a very pleasant time exploring and photographing lots of wonderful stomping passages and features. Les, Mark and Tommo were very patient whilst I fuffed around trying to unravel the mysteries of lighting the underground. We also tried some light painting with a Scurion and Biff's Little Monkey. I still have a lot to learn about underground photography, but we managed to get one or two nice pictures like the one overleaf of Mark and a formation known as the battleship. [Overleaf]

We were all very thirsty by now so we packed the gear and headed out. Hayley caught us up as we reached the entrance, having also abandoned the tight stuff. Hayley elected to guard the entrance as the nasty big spider had bugged off or been eaten by an even bigger nastier big spider, so we repaired to the bar at San Marcos, where we were eventually joined by the others. The end result of our two pronged Sobrado trip was that they had the most nasty, sweaty trip, and we had the most beer.

### Tuesday 22nd

Sadly today we had to say goodbye to Cookie, Mark, Frank, Wendy, Chris W, Carmen, and Chris B; we waved them off at 9am.

The rest of us were going to visit Cueva De Felipe Reventón, to explore and take some photos, but first Les had to fix his lens as the aperture would not open. Realising that being already broken, there's no harm in trying to fix it, he very carefully took it apart with the aid of my Swiss army knife, after which one thing was for sure, it would never open again. So, we packed what photographic gear we had and set off for Garachico for a consoling breakfast. Poor Les had in one morning said goodbye to his loved ones, and his lens.

For Tommo, Ed & Hayley it would be their first visit to Cueva De Felipe Reventón. Les

and I had visited it back in 2006 with Morse, Alfredo, his lady friend called Candy and two of his friends. To get to the entrance you first have to crawl under some prickly bushes.



Just inside the entrance is one of Alfredo's gates that only the most tenacious caver will be able to open. It's in a small downward sloping tube, about 3ft high x 2ft 6ins wide and half way up, at about 6in in from the left, is an arm sized hole with a 6in long horizontal pipe the other side. So you're lying head first in the downward slope, you put your left arm right through the hole with your face squashed against the iron door. You then bend your arm and feel for the lock. The lock is behind a metal shield which is big enough to get your hand in but when you clench your hand to turn the key it becomes a vice, stripping skin from your knuckles. Tommo tried first but his forearm was too long, so when he bent his arm his hand was the other side of the lock. Les and Ed both had several goes at it without success. Hayley then had a go, her arm is exactly the right size, and after a hell of a struggle, she managed to get the lock undone, which turned out to be the easy bit. To lift the hasp and slide back the bolt was the hard bit. Many attempts were made resulting in several bare knuckles but to no avail. Ed had a brain wave. If we passed the 6mm rope attached to the top of the DEBS (Dynamic Extendable Belay System) ladder through the bars above the door, we might be able to hook it under the hasp and lift it. This worked to a degree but not enough to slide the bolt. So Hayley then drove to the visitor centre to seek help from Alfredo whilst we continued to try to open the bloody door. Alfredo had a large group of tourists to deal with so could not help. On her return Hayley made another concerted attempt and by leaning against the door whilst pulling it towards herself, she somehow managed to draw the bloody bolt. It had taken an hour and a half to gain access but well worth the effort. Ed, Hayley and Tommo explored about two kilometres all the way to the end. Les and I did a photo trip, but Ed got the best picture of all of a Meta Menardi spider.

Another fine trip was had by all, so we stopped off at the beach bar at San Marcos for a couple of wets, home for a shower, then around to Ed and Hayley's for dinner. We had enjoyed the food at Marks party so much that Ed and Haley treated us again to Fajitas and Chilli Tortilla's. Delicious!



Mark and the formation known as "The battleship" in Cueva Del Viento.

### Wednesday 23rd

Today was to be Ed and Hayley's last day, which was for me particularly sad, because Ed and I had done quite a lot of caving together about twenty years ago when he was still a Wessex member. I had always enjoyed Ed's company back then, and so to spend ten days caving with him again after so many years was a great pleasure, and with the added bonus of Hayley's company. They were a most welcome addition to our party this year. Ed also has an extensive knowledge of volcanology which added another dimension to our exploration.

We decided to go prospecting again up in the coronal forest and to visit a cave called Cuevas Los Pajaros which is not very extensive but of huge proportions. It is split into two parts by a large section which has long since collapsed. Both halves have been gated by the local government and the forest road runs through the gap. You can either walk two kilometres down the very rugged forest road to the cave, or do as we did and go off roading in our hire cars; anyway we always pay a little extra on the

insurance which covers us for all eventualities. It has to be said that we were pushing the limits a bit with our little Citroen C3s - plenty of axle breaking, sump smashing gullies and boulders everywhere. [Bottom - Photo Andy Morse]

The gates are locked to both halves of the cave but at the bottom left hand corner of the gate there is a pile of boulders which Les removed a couple of years ago to reveal a little body size hole, so in we went. The passageway remains large for about 300 metres then closes down to a crawl eventually popping out into daylight in a chaotic jumble of lava known as a tottering pile of shite. This downhill end of the tube is virtual impossible to find without a GPS coordinate. We had not on previous trips entered the uphill part of the tube, so Les went to have a look, and as he was furling with the gate the lock mysteriously broke, so in we went. We continued uphill for about 150 metres where it closed down to a crawl, then to a choke. The roof of the crawl was covered with droplets of condensation and a bacterial growth which was highly reflective giving of an iridescent silver glow in our lights.

Heading back I noticed a ramp rising to about 5 metres at the top of which the lava flow descended at about 90° to the left for about 30 metres before it closed down and choked also. I have never found a cave that swallows light like this one, so very few useful pictures were got.

We carried out a good search of the surrounding area and Tommo found a tube by the road side which had eluded us on previous trips. The entrance had been walled up with lumps of lava. He could see daylight through the blocks and could peer through into a section of the tube with no roof, so he scrambled around the back to find a large tube which descended under the road for about 50 metres until it choked. We had an interesting time driving back up the forest road without gravity on our side. We stopped of at the Dinosaur bar for a couple of wets, then finished the day with a slap up 3 course dinner in a lovely restaurant, at a place called La Palma on the torturously windy road to Masca.

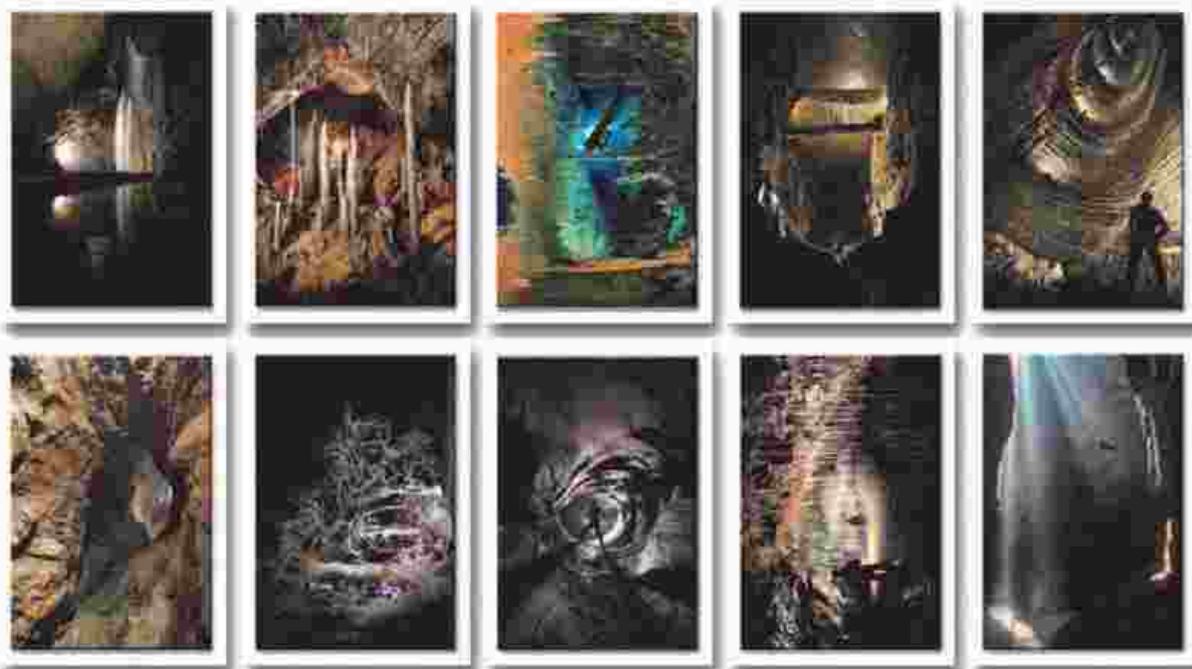
*To be concluded...*  
Ian Timney



# Ghar Parau Foundation

10 high quality, blank A5 folded cards with envelopes

Helping  
to support British  
Caving Expeditions and Exploration



Featuring Photographs by Clive Westlake, Robbie Shotte, Dave Ryall, Gavin Newton, Brendan Morris & Mark "Geezo" Lumley

The Ghar Parau Foundation is a Charity that manages an investment fund to provide grant aid to assist caving expeditions from Britain to all parts of the world. The fund focuses on those expeditions which include an element of innovative exploration or scientific study. We are also particularly keen to encourage young cavers into expedition caving (as well as sport caving) to maintain an active caving community in years to come.

The charity itself works by investing the capital within the fund and distributing the interest in the form of grants to caving expeditions who apply and fit the foundations criteria. As a result the fund only grows by direct donations, bequests or fund raising activities. Over last twenty years, the fund has not increased in capital value to any appreciable extent, which in real terms less money is available to distribute to caving expeditions.

As part of a new drive to increase the fund, a set of 10 high quality blank A5 colour gift cards with envelopes (shown above) have been produced to sell to raise money for the foundation. We are selling them for £8 per pack (0.80p per card) which we think is good value. The profits from the sale of these cards, goes solely to the Ghar Parau Foundation.

Please BUY them and support the Ghar Parau Foundation, and help support our British Caving Expeditions and our younger generation of cavers.

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Lizard: Les Williams

## *Addendum: (Tenerife 2010 Part 1)*

*Ian Timney writes:* There was a mistake on my part in the first instalment of the article published in journal 323. I wrote that during historic times Tenerife has experienced an eruption roughly every hundred years; the last eruption was from the Nostrils of Teide on the side of a volcano called Chinyero in 1909. The Nostrils of Teide are actually on the side of a volcano called Pico Viejo. The article should therefore have only read the last eruption was from a volcano called Chinyero in 1909.

# From the logbook

Transcribed by Noel Cleave

The logbook seems to get used on and off these days, which is a shame, since it is the club's record of its caving activities. If you ask around, there is a consensus that we all should write our trips up, and yet most of us (myself included) are terrible at actually doing it. Noel has done a sterling job transcribing all of our scribbles - the following are just a selection. Please don't be upset if your trip isn't here, it is meant to be just a taste of what is in the book, and so not every round trip or bucket of sand has made the cut... Whether or not the logbook entries even make it into the journal is subject to some heated debate! [Ed.]

## Sunday April 10 2011

Peak Cavern - Ink Sump and Dooms Retreat. Richard Walker, Christine Grosart, Tony Seddon. Sherpas: Mark and Wendy Noble, Clive Westlake and Ann Soulsby.

The guys did a great job of getting the large camera set-up, and fragile 18w HIDS through to Ink Sump intact whilst the divers looked around in Buxton Water Sump and went in the easy way. Visibility in Ink Sump was poor, but the main objective was to film Doom's Retreat - complete with 60' ladder, Jim's porn stash and beyond-sump penthouse. The divers spent 2 hours beyond the sump, filming the dig, while the sherpas waited for their zero-vis return - only for the tape to have recorded absolutely nothing ! Back again then..... **Chris.**

## Thursday May 12 2011

Bridge Cave - Little Neath River Cave - Sand Chamber. Christine Grosart, Rich Walker

In 6 years of cave diving, Chris had never bothered to dive this sump. Now we know why..... it was Crap! But all good for filming and suitably impressed by Sand Chamber. Definitely a return to LNRC by the river entrance (Flood Entrance) as I do remember it as being good. Both divers ended up with colds and went home for TLC. **Chris.**

## Saturday May 14 2011

Pierre's Pot. Claire Cohen, Kevin Hilton. Productive trip! Plan was to take photos of the boulder choke above the downstream end of (downstream) sump 2. Things weren't looking great and the thought of hunting for wild strawberries instead of caving instead of caving through grot had crossed our minds. The boulder choke wasn't too bad (lots of stal-covered boulders) and a route through was found. A large standing passage.... a moth fluttered past as we spied a big black void above, between boulders! We found a large rift

chamber with rift passage leading left and right. Much giggling and "Oh my gosh" as we found yet more passage with curtains, helectites and gour pools. Took pics of an amateur kind. More trips to follow to radio-locate. **Kevin.**

## Saturday July 23 2011

Swildons. Nigel Graham. To make sure, prior to Norway trip: Cave was where I left it. It was. Entrance was as I remembered it. It wasn't. My lamp was working properly. It didn't. My leg worked (arthritis problems) It did. My caving fitness is still there. It is. **Nigel.**



**Saturday July 23 2011** Swildons. Noel, Nicholas and Cameron Cleave, Sebastian Ashton, Keith Glossop. Emphatically not a Wessex Geriatrics trip. This was a 3 generations introduction to caving for Sebastian and Cameron, who are the eldest two of Noel's Grandsons at 9 and almost 9. Nicholas spent a week at Upper Pitts with me in about 1982. He enjoyed trying my hobby, and we did Goatchurch, Rods, Swildons, Eastwater and Stoke Lane, but he didn't get the bug. On today's showing his son may well do so. Keith Glossop kindly came along to ride shotgun and we took the

boys down the Long Dry and to the 20, meeting various parties en-route, including Wayne and Nigel. Wayne had been to the sump and said that there was still airspace through it. For us the cave was just right in terms of water, damp enough to be nicely exciting. We came up the Short Dry to Jacob's Ladder and then via Kenny's Dig to finish up via the top of the Wet Way. 2 hrs. 20 of enormous fun and noisy enthusiasm. Questions back at Upper Pitts: "Can children join the Wessex?" "Can we come caving again this holidays?" Thanks to Keith for his company and photography. **Noel.**

Sebastian adds: I liked the crawly bit in the stalagmites, and the slidy-on-the-bottom bits. The waterfall was cold and difficult and getting up Jacobs Ladder was quite hard. Uncle Nick and Keith missed the entrance to Kennys Dig and went on until Cameron shouted to them to come back. Cameron and I found our own way out to daylight. That grid was a cheat and fooled us for a while. **Sebastian.**

## Friday August 12 2011

Rhino Rift. Keith Glossop, Noel Cleave. This trip started on the Thursday, with a morning's SRT refresher and practice for Keith on my garden Willow Tree rig. This is higher, harder and better than the tower, so we went to Rhino feeling confident. Alas, our abilities and our organisation were maladjusted. I rigged across the traverse and down Pitch 1 easily and quickly. Similarly I made light of the airy "Y" hang on the nose of Pitch 2, and even hung an Etrier there to help the shorter/less agile/heavier followers. Starting down Pitch 2 Keith alerted me to the fact that the rope emerging from my suspended tackle sack had ended. In a knot. !\*\*\*\*!! There was meant to be some 77 metres of rope in there. I left the Etrier hanging and derigged back towards Keith and the foot of Pitch 1,

where all became clear with the Pitch 1 bag bulging with surplus rope. Common sense dictated a retrenchment so we went back to the beginning and repacked a tackle bag with the 77 metre rope, then beat a retreat towards the surface and Upper Pitts, where we sort of fudged an explanation for an un-rigged Rhino which fooled nobody. I quietly packed a 60 for Pitch 1, stole all the Maillons from my Croll bag, and planned the Saturday rigging trip! **Noel.**



## Sunday August 7 2011 to Saturday August 27 2011

Voronya Krubera Tony (Starless River) Seddon & Mike Bottomley (Craven).

Challenging and mainly enjoyable trip distinguished by good rigging, good company, bad rope (and very thin) and very unfortunate food. NB. All rigging on maillons or snap-links - not for the faint-hearted! Except for one screw-gate which was sighted on a deviation. Terminal sump at minus 2100 is an impressive spot. The "Way to the Dream" crawl at minus 1700 is still a bit of a sick joke. **Tony Seddon.**

Photos this page: Noel Cleave

**05 September 2011**

Event de Rognès (Cavaillac, Gard)  
Clive Westlake, Osama Gobara, Joe Hesketh, Noel Cleave.

We parked near the local waste tip and walked to the entrance, which was not at all bad because it's still where my memory left it, some years ago. Anyway there was a breeze and some shade today. We changed into wet-suits because there's some deep water in the Rognès. Joe was videoing the trip and began by interviewing me about the cave. I spouted some balderdash, trying to remember previous trips, but he seemed quite impressed by my performance. Just inside the entrance we met a narrow ruckly descent which must have been swept from Mendip during one of the interglacials. Downslope in a large passage we reached the first of the lakes, with wires high above. Few French cavers use wet-suits. While the others did acrobatics on the wires, I found the 14 degree, neck-deep water quite bearable.

I ranted on about an obscure left turn, while walking straight past it, but Noel noticed the draught. Videoed by Joe we climbed easily down a 6m rift to the Gallerie Vézinet where there's some more deep water. Next comes the Grande Colonne, which, at 10m high would be quite grand, but it hides in a side alcove, so is mildly underwhelming. The Grande Diaclase is a tall, hading rift, which at first involves some climbing and traversing, followed by more wading in neck-deep water.

The notes in my worksheet about where to climb up 10m were correct, but not needed because a rope now hangs down the climb up. It's no use because it hangs vertically down a difficult part of the rift, and not needed because an ascending traverse in an easy part of the rift is a better way up.

We were now in the Gallerie des Boeux, where a few climbs and traverses soon brought us into a large, handsome phreatic passage with fine formations and sediments. We continued for several hundred metres until a display of gours and glittering flowstone inspired Joe to more videoing. Again I found myself performing an unscripted harangue about this cave,

which I was enjoying more than I'd intended and was clearly delighting the others.

On the way back we were becoming quite warm until Joe took some more video in the canals, lying in the water to do so. I thought that the point of being a cave photographer was that you made everyone else do this. With only a little casting around we found ourselves back at the entrance after 4 ½ hours underground. It was a superb evening with the sun low in a cloudless sky and before long we were back at the camp-site enjoying a BBQ organised by Noel. **Clive.**

**Monday September 26 2011**

Ogof Fynnon Ddu Emma Herron,  
Clive Westlake, Claire Cohen.

We went down to Dan yr Ogof which was a mistake because it was awash with the wrong sort of water. Instead we went to the Top Entrance of OFD and made our way down the Nave to the Second Oxbow. Caving upstream to the Top Waterfall was quite exciting and wet. Back to Penwyllt to sit in the sunshine drinking tea. 3 ½ hours. **Clive.**

**Tuesday September 27 2011**

OFD. Claire Cohen, Emma Herron,  
Clive Westlake.

The "Through Trip" from OFD 1 to Top Entrance, a great trip, as always. Following the new route to the entrance of OFD1 (recently purchased by the SWCC) was definitely the most difficult part of the trip. Back to Penwyllt to sit in the sunshine drinking tea. 4 hours. **Clive.**

**Wednesday September 28 2011**

Dan yr Ogof. Claire Cohen, Emma Herron, Mike Thomas, Clive Westlake.

We went round the DyO "Round Trip" with a diversion to the rising. Back to Penwyllt to sit in the sunshine drinking tea. 4 hours. **Clive.**

**Thursday September 29 2011**

Pant Mawr. Claire Cohen, Mike Thomas, Clive Westlake.

Lots of sun on the way to, and back from, Pant Mawr, but no tea until back at Penwyllt. 3 ½ hours. **Clive.**

**Friday October 21 2011**

Darren Cilau. Hatstand, Becky Varns,  
George & Ursula (NPC).

Entered by the long crawl, 1st trip into Darren for Hatstand and Becky. Becky was surprised by how unsmall the entrance series was, with quite a lot of turning spaces and I also have to admit that the crawl should really be called more of a thrutch in places, rather than a crawl. Once through the crawl/thrutch we went on to Epocalypse Way and saw some of the best decorated passage that Becky had ever seen. [The White Company] On from here we went to Antler Passage and Becky found this somewhat disappointing in comparison to the "Urchins" observed on the way back through Urchin Oxbow. An excellent trip and will definitely return. **Becky.**

**Saturday October 22 2011**

Spider Hole. Pete Hann, Jude & Ade VdP, Pete Buckley, Nigel Graham,  
John Cooper, Aubrey Newport, Mak Kellaway, Barry Wilkinson.

With Barry having ferried sand-bags up to the entrance, 28 half-bags of sand and one complete bag of cement taken to the bottom. Two mixes of cement done, and more wall building achieved. Is there a draught.....? Of course.....! Do we know where it's coming from.....? Maybe.....! **Anon**

**Tuesday October 25 2011**

Rods Pot - Bath Swallet through trip.  
Ali Moody, John Cooper & Pete Buckley.

Into Bath to ladder pitch for return. Into Rods, where we collected 4 KUCC students. Lots of furtling around and route finding plus a quick trip into Choke Rift (Just to make an interesting diversion, and some off-route exploring done: "I don't remember it being this tight on the way down!") Through to Purple Pot and a quick slide down the rope. Spent time admiring the flood debris in the horizontal passage after Purple Pot. Re-joining the ladder at the pitch (two ladders aren't quite long enough) some decided to free-climb the bottom section. Out, with no problems in coiling the ladders in about 2 ½ hours. KUCC members thoroughly

enjoyed it. We also located Drunkards Hole and Boss Swallet before having a quick look into Reads. Had a little furtle for a way into Lad's Luck and Borne Stewart Series. Great trip. **Pete.**

**Saturday November 12 2011**

Palmer's Cave. Ali Moody, Andrew Atkinson.

With the landowner's blessing we uncovered the gate that had become completely buried. Surveyed the cave - over 30 metres in length. Also surveyed the much smaller cave in the quarry face to the right of this - a respectable 4 metres! **Andy.**

**Saturday November 12 2011**

Tyning's Barn Swallet. John Cooper,  
Pete Buckley, Dave Walker.

[Second Saturday Trip]

We followed Wayne's group down so they rigged the ladders and we derigged on the way out. Straight down main cave to the terminal sump (A Day). Had a quick look up at Bertie's Paradise and the small tunnels there. Pyramid Pot wasn't that wet. We removed the hand line (by mistake) on the way out.... it's in the tackle store. We had a look up White Dog Passage, Paton Place, Sheep's Jaws and the awkward climb into Dragon Chamber (but not into it). The route up into Drunken Horse is great - we only went as far as the start of the Boulder Chamber. All in all a good trip. 3 hours. **Pete.**

**Saturday November 19 2011**

Hunters Hole. Claire Cohen, Mike Thomas.

More rigging practice.... chased out by many a student on ladders. **Mike**

**Sunday November 20 2011**

Spider Hole. Mike Thomas, Claire Cohen, Jon W.

Nice easy walk to entrance followed by slightly scary free-climb drop (Actually it just looks exposed, from the top). A bit of a crawl, a small drop followed by a huge rift. Never seen anything like that before. Fun SRT pitches then back out to another mild November afternoon. **Mike.**

# WCC Rescue Practice

Fairy Quarry and Hillier's Cave

Saturday 9th April, 2011

Rosie Freeman, Photographs by Mark Kellaway

## MCR Wardens

Mark Helmore  
Mark Kellaway  
Dany Bradshaw  
Stu Gardiner  
Jude Vanderplank  
Adrian Vanderplank

## Above ground

Matt Jones  
N Lokuciewski  
John Thomas (Tommo)  
Richard Carey

## Cavers

Andy Ladell  
Chris George  
Naomi Sharp  
Rob Delacour  
John Biffin (casualty)  
Claire Cohen

Mike Thomas  
Andy Judd  
Nigel Graham  
Rosie Freeman (WCC  
MCR Co-ordinator)

## Overview

The WCC rescue event commenced at 10:30hrs at Fairy Quarry with the obligatory cuppa to get the day started. We were fortunate with the weather as it proved to be the hottest day of the year so far with temperatures in the low 20s and the use of hats/sun-cream was recommended. Mark H gave a safety briefing about the dangers of the quarry setting, noting the loose boulders on the quarry cliffs and the importance of solid footwear (we'd already had one injury due to a slippage on the quarry floor while wearing flip flops!).

## Training

The morning session was planned as a purely above ground training exercise mainly due to the amount of digging currently being undertaken on Mendip and the potential for the requirement for moving boulders. To reinforce the message, Andy Judd gave a summary of his recent experience in Craig y Fynnon when a 'stable' boulder that many of us have probably stepped on, decided to move from its usual position. Unluckily Andy was the one who must've annoyed it but luckily it jammed in a rift causing him to be trapped, rather than crushing him and causing permanent damage. I think his description made quite an impact on people and probably hit home more than any reading of books.

## Tirfor Winch

The training session started with the group finding a 'casualty' on the lower part of a boulder slope pinned by a large boulder on his right lower leg. Casualty care was provided by Claire although made quite difficult by the one-sided conversation – talking to an over-suit stuffed with balloons takes considerable effort! Members of the group started by moving the manageable boulders around from around the casualty.



We then set about ensuring that a fairly reasonably-sized boulder above the casualty was 'made secure' by the use of rope slings tied to a tree and Adrian gave some useful advice about twisting the rope to gain tension. However, before the large boulder could be moved off the casualty, the one above it had to be moved. A car-size boulder was identified about 15m off to the side and slightly upslope of the casualty – this provided a solid belay and again a rope sling was used to provide an attachment for a pulley. A rope was then attached from the boulder, through the pulley and to the Tirfor Winch that was being set up on a boulder on level ground about 10m from the casualty. Dany showed the group how to operate this and winching commenced.



It seemed to take a long time before anything started moving, then an almost imperceptible

movement of the boulder while the rope was taking tension then ... in an instant the boulder moved off and the rope twanged.

The winch was then used to move the 'crushing' boulder from the casualty but this time the casualty was moved from under the boulder as soon as they were released with approx. 10cm of clearance – I think we'd all appreciated by this time how unpredictable the movement of the boulder was once the rope was fully tensioned and then released. To demonstrate this, winching continued but even though we were expecting it, the stored energy in the rope was pretty impressive – it was agreed that this would probably be the reason why wire ropes were used. Overall this technique proved very successful with no further crushing of the casualty – one balloon did burst but this was probably due to the heat as no-one was even nearby when it happened!

## First Aid and Packaging of Casualty

The treatment of crush injuries was discussed and the casualty then changed to a 'real person' (Jude). The use of tourniquets in crush injuries was lightly touched upon as the only people able to use the Combat Action Tourniquets (affectionately known as CATs) are Cas Care MCR wardens. However the reasons for requiring tourniquets was discussed – to try to prevent the build up of toxins entering the bloodstream – as well as what actually happens when the tourniquet is released. Basically if muscle is damaged due to crushing for >1 hour, potassium will enter the blood stream when the tourniquet is released leading to cardiac arrest. Other toxins released will then lead to kidney failure. Treatment for crush injuries is very much based on pain relief, giving fluid intravenously and gaining medical support as soon as possible.

After neoprene splints were applied to the lower leg, Jude was then packaged into the Short Slix stretcher, ensuring that people had the opportunity to gain familiarity with the strapping system.



Mike T was then packaged into the stretcher but this time with the addition of the spinal splint and obviously being considerably taller than Jude gave a different perspective.

### Black Hawk

No casualties were used for this demonstration but Mark and Mak demonstrated how this was connected together and the attachments and how they might be used underground. The 'jaws of life' were used to move a boulder down the boulder slope and then the attachment was changed to act as an extended stemple and a boulder moved to enlarge a 'rift'.



### Boulder Splitting

After these 2 training stations, a lunch break ensued with everyone making the most of the sunshine and Dany continuing his refreshment duties. Stu then demonstrated a technique for splitting boulders:

### Plug and Feathers

Two 14mm holes were drilled into a boulder and Stu explained the reasoning for the location of the holes drilled. He then used

his home-made plug and feathers and after alternate firm hits with the hammer explained the different tones generated as they did their work. Suddenly cracks started appearing, the tone deadened and the boulder disintegrated. People watching were suitably impressed by the relative ease of this technique and could certainly see the value of this in a rescue situation when a casualty was nearby.



Some people then got the chance to practice with the results being quite impressive.



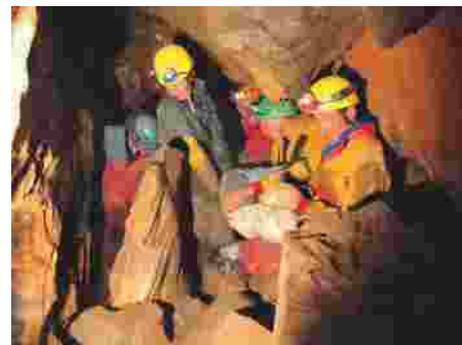
Due to time constraints, the use of the hot air kit and heyphones was not demonstrated but of course if anyone wishes to have some training on these, please let me know. Kit was carried back to the car park, a number of us got changed into caving kit and the practice rescue started. This was purely to tackle the elements of casualty packaging, moving them through the cave, then rigging and hauling them to the surface, with no elements of actual boulder moving or first aid included.

### Practice Rescue

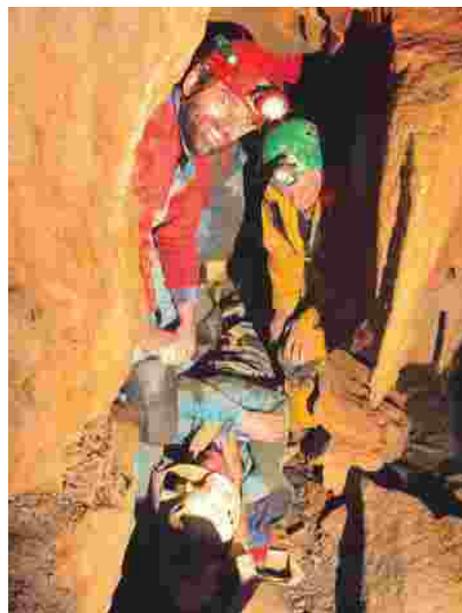
11 cavers went underground plus John Biffin (Biff) who had 'volunteered' to be the casualty. On the way through the cave people were asked to consider how best to get the casualty out, considering the cave environment. Only the drag sheet was taken through to the casualty as it was felt that in the low connection at the bottom of the entrance rift the stretcher frame would prove more of a hindrance, getting caught on the rocks or in the gravel.

The scenario was that on a through-trip from Fairy Cave to Hillier's a caver had slipped just

on the Hillier's side of Tar Chamber and a boulder had landed on their lower legs trapping them on the floor – the distance underground being less than 5-minutes from the Hillier's entrance. Once the casualty was in position, Mike T offered to take on the role of underground controller and proceeded to task people to move the boulder and others in the nearby location to create more space, plus get the drag sheet ready to be placed under the casualty once they were lifted. The actual lifting went well but getting the casualty correctly placed in the drag sheet was a lot harder underground on an uneven floor with limited space. Once securely packaged, Mike co-ordinated getting people lifting/moving whilst getting other cavers ahead between boulders to enable the casualty to be placed level on them.



This gave other people chance to move ahead to try to keep a constant forward motion of both the casualty and rescuers .



Andy and Chris went ahead to start rigging the entrance rift with assistance from Mark and Dany on the surface. The low connection was smoothed as much as possible with stones and boulders being moved to the side but some rocks were embedded in the floor and so ramps were built up to them to try to smooth the process of the drag sheet over them and so make it more comfortable for the casualty.

## Wessex Cave Club

A rope was attached to the head end and 4 cavers were located in the low connection. The rest assisted in getting the casualty round the 90° constricted bend which took considerably longer than at normal caving speed!

The drag through the low connection went well with the main problem being the lack of flat surface on which to put the casualty once they were out of the low bit. By this time the entrance had been rigged and the stretcher frame assembled. The casualty was placed in the frame and, with some assistance, the hauling and lifeline ropes attached to both the casualty, stretcher and drag sheet. Moving up the boulders to the bottom of the entrance rift went well and rescuers were placed at various points in the

rift to help guide the stretcher into the widest bits, whilst being hauled from the surface. The rescuers then exited the cave, even with one being whizzed up by one of the ropes being used as a lifeline – probably the quickest ever exit recorded!



### Debrief

A debrief was held at the Wessex afterwards and feedback was very positive. Having both training and rescue practice combined seemed to work well and the techniques learnt in the morning were new to a lot of people. Although a short trip underground, it did take almost 1.5 hours to get the casualty to the surface – for those people who'd never been involved in a rescue before I think it was quite a sobering thought. Additional MCR training would be welcomed by those present, particularly around the logistics of getting the right kit to the right place at the right time in a longer cave rescue, so this is something that can be arranged at a later date.

### Main learning points

- Always ensure that the casualty is given a pair of goggles – although they might get muddy leaving the casualty unable to see, better this than having gravel in your eyes. Unfortunately the training kit didn't have these but it is intended to rectify this for future training sessions.
- Use a longer haul rope through the connection
- Ensure that both the hauling and lifeline ropes are attached to both the stretcher and casualty to minimise the event of slippage if a rope fails
- A frame does fit up the entrance rift but care is needed as there are a couple of tighter bits. A stemple was considered to ensure the stretcher was moved through the wider bits but no safe/secure point could be found.
- The part of Hillier's Cave between the entrance and the connection with Fairy Cave is still relatively new, with loose gravel and rocks .

Thanks are due to the MCR wardens for their assistance in this event, particularly Mark H for the logistics, Dany for arranging all the kit and making an excellent brew (of tea, of course), Stu for his training skills and Mak in his photographic capacity.

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## Recent additions to the library

B.C.R.A Cave and Karst Science 38, 2 (Aug 2010)  
Cave Diving Group N/L 180, 181 (July, Sept 2011)  
Chelsea S.S. N/L 53 9/10 (Sep/Oct 2011)  
Craven Pothole Club 'Record' 103, 104 (July, October 2011)  
Descent 221 (Aug/Sept 2011) (Spider Hole, Lost Cave of Axbridge)  
222 (Oct / Nov 2011) (Pierre's Pot)  
223 (Dec 2011 / Jan 2012)  
Grampian Speleological group Bulletin 4th Series 5, 1 (Oct 2011)  
Shepton Mallet Caving Club 'Journal' Series 12, No. 7 (Spring 2010) (Thailand, Staffa)  
No. 8 (Autumn 2010) (Cave Diving)  
Soc. Spel. de Wallonie (Belgium) 'Regards (Speleo-info)' 75, 76 (Jul, Oct 2011)  
University of Bristol Speleological Society 'Proceedings' 25, 2 (May 2011 for 2011) (Excavations at Priddy Circles, Aveline's Hole, Read's Cavern)  
NSS (USA) 'News' 69, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 (July to Nov 2011)

CCPC Peak District Rigging Guide (10th Edn.) 2009  
Decades in the Dark. Grampian Speleological Group Jubilee 1961 - 2011

#### Donated by John Osborne:

Hill A. (2000) The History and Development of Colliery Ventilation.  
Barnatt J. & Penny R. (2004) The Lead Legacy (The Prospects for the Peak District's Lead Mining Heritage)

#### Donated by Mike Thomas

Sport Diving (BSAC Diving Manual. Revised Edn. 1987)  
Advanced Sport Diving (BSAC Diving Manual 1990)

#### Librarian's Notes:

I have been asked to acquire current rigging guides for Northern and Derbyshire caves.

The Peak District Rigging Guide has been added to the Library, while the CNCC rigging guide is out of date and out of print. However, I have been able to download current guides for Jingling Hole, Rowten Pot and Sunset Hole. These are also the Library, in a folder. Feel free to copy as required, or download your own from the CNCC website.

Now that most photography is digital, the supply of prints showing club events, trips and expeditions has dried up. These photos, of which we have a large archive, form an important part of the club's history. Perhaps members with suitable photographs could put them on CD for the Library (prints would be even better) Phil Henty. [Any photographs are also welcomed in the journal - of course if they get published they automatically get archived in print! - Ed]

# Upper Pitts Improvements

If you have visited Upper Pitts regularly or even occasionally over the last few years, you will know doubt have noticed that some fairly major improvements have been made to our facilities. There's the new main upstairs dormitory, new stainless steel kitchen, concrete drive, the ceilings have mostly been increased to meet fire regulations, the gents toilets has been refurbished, most of the windows and external doors have been replaced with double glazed units, we have a new front porch, and most recently the down stairs dormitory has been refurbished.

The committee has therefore spent a good deal of the club's money on these improvements over this period of time. We are about to spend a good deal more and so I write now to inform you of the next phase of improvements that we are about to embark on.

The committee has already placed the order for a new fire alarm, and emergency lighting system, which we are obliged by law to provide, the cost of which is about £ 6,000. We have to bring our sewage system up to meet the requirements of the environment agency, at a cost of approximately £ 12,000. Les Williams has researched their requirements for us, and explains all in a separate report for this journal.

We also need to re-roof Upper Pitts. It is my intention to replace the existing cold roof,

for a much more efficient warm roof system. This entails stripping the entire roof, carrying out any repairs to the roof structure where necessary, then covering the whole roof with plywood, on top of which there will be a 70mm thick layer of dense insulation board. The advantage of placing a continuous layer of super-efficient insulation on the outside of the rafters is that you remove all the cold spots, which will help to alleviate condensation problems inside the dormitory. With a cold roof system, every rafter is a cold spot as they conduct the cold from out side to the internal ceiling causing condensation.

For those who do not know me personally I have been a builder all my life, and have been monitoring the condition of all aspects of our hut for the past 20 odd years. The last two hard winters have resulted in a significant deterioration of an already tired roof. The roof is the original dating back to the early 1960's and is therefore about 50 years old. The old roofing felt, tile battens, iron batten nails and tiles themselves are all well past their best.

I have carried out a thorough survey of the roof and have identified that all of the ridge and valley tiles are just about worn through and loose, all of the verges are slipping due to the deterioration of the battens, nails and the cement mortar, the remaining original lead flashings are in a poor condition, and the tiles have mostly lost their weather surface

and have become porous, and so are open to frost damage.

I am at the moment trying to get an accurate cost for this work; I have received two estimates from roofing contractors. One company has misinterpreted my specification, placing the insulation between the rafters, leaving the cold spots intact, at a cost of £18,352.00 plus VAT.

The other company has estimated for a full warm roof system, at a cost of £29,745.22 plus VAT.

My investigations continue.

When all of these works have been completed, we have stopped reeling from the expense and funds have recovered, my next projects are to replace the remaining single glazed units with double glazing, install cavity insulation, and to repair and re-render all the external walls.

It is the committee's intention not only to maintain our club house, but to leave it in the best possible condition for the next generation of Wessex Cavers.

I hope this meets with your approval.  
All the best,

**Ian Timney**

Hut Administration Officer

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## Recent(ish) additions to the membership

There were no new members listed in the last Journal (323) but that's not to say that there haven't been any... and with the additional delays to the production of this issue, even *more* have joined! So, a warm, if belated welcome to the Wessex Cave Club to:

Tim Rose  
Sarah Watson  
Sam Jones  
Jonathon Cording

Keri Lewis  
John Newton  
James Collings  
Beverly Ford

Sarah McFee  
"Tony" Molski  
Marcin Muszynski  
Mhairi Rands

# Caving & Insurance

Les Williams

In 2001 the insurance industry got a bit of a wakeup call after a few, very shocking, terrorist incidents, including the World Trade Centre and Pentagon aircraft crashes. For the first time, insurance companies realised that those impossible events that they believed would never happen, actually could. They used to offset their risk on the stock market, but the volatile nature of the market and the .com crash between 2000 and 2002 meant that they lost significant amounts and couldn't rely on it to insulate them from insurance losses. The companies re-assessed their exposure in all areas of insurance risk, and caving was one area where they felt somewhat over exposed so they dropped the cover like a hot potato. Caving was not the only sport to suffer; they dropped lots of adventure sports cover at the same time.

Until this time the caving community had benefited from the BCRA (British Cave Research Association) insurance scheme, which was relatively cheap and provided all the cover that was required. BCRA effectively bought the block policy and then sold cover to individuals and clubs for a small fee. The changes to the insurance market were further complicated by legislative changes, which were already in the process of being implemented and were going to effectively stop BCRA from selling insurance anyway, due to regulation from the FSA (Financial Services Authority).

The loss of this insurance cover crippled organised caving, and a lot of work was carried out behind the scenes, including by several Wessex members, to try and resolve the situation. Eventually it was and suitable insurance obtained, but at great expense. The new National Body, the British Caving Association (BCA) was able to negotiate cover, but at a much increased premium and with a very large excess. Thankfully the insurance market has improved quite a bit since then and BCA has recently been in the position of having more than one company bidding for the business. It has to be said though that a substantial claim could still spell the end of the policy.

## Why do we need it?

Anybody who remembers the period when there was no cover, will remember the problems for organised caving that this lack of insurance caused. In the Wessex we had to remove all the tackle from the tackle store and stop club caving meets as the club (and its officers) were exposed to the risk of potential litigation in the event of a claim. We still had insurance on our building, so we were able to use Upper Pitts, but we were only able to get underground as individuals and had no use of club equipment or official support from the club. We were in grave danger of becoming a "tea drinking club"... Insurance is a necessary evil, as it is the means to protect the members of the club, including the officers and trustees from any claims resulting from the actions of its members. Some access agreements require that participants have insurance and the lack of insurance prevented anybody accessing these particular systems.

In short we need insurance to ensure continued access to caves and to allow clubs and the institutions of caving to continue to operate.

## What does it cover?

The current policy is very comprehensive. It was effectively written by cavers for cavers and includes all the risks you can imagine that relate to caving (and probably some you wouldn't). The policy has been specifically worded to cover all normal activities of cavers, caving clubs and mining history organisations and all their members, including cave diving and the use of explosives. It also includes such things as the use of mechanical excavators and man riding winches, etc.

There are three main parts to the policy, which are there for substantially different reasons.

Firstly there is the Landowner cover. The policy indemnifies any landowner that allows BCA members onto their land against the risks to them of allowing them on the land.

This includes for any caving activity such as digging or repairing or installing gates, etc.

Secondly the policy insures the institutions of caving such as BCA and the regional councils, access controlling bodies and other specialist organisations, such as BCRA (Cave Science, publications). This part of the policy also includes cover for club officers and trustees.

Thirdly the policy gives "person to person" cover. This means that if you are caving and as a result of your actions somebody else is injured, then the policy will cover any subsequent litigation against you (within the terms of the policy).

## So what isn't covered?

There are lots of different types of insurance and each is for a specific kind of risk.

The BCA insurance policy is a liability policy and a very specific one at that. It covers public liability and product liability. There are lots of other risks which are not covered.

It isn't a travel policy, so rescue, medical treatment or repatriation is not covered.

It doesn't cover the usual risks from being a property owner, such as damage from flooding or storms. It does not insure property against fire or subsidence or the risks of buildings injuring people or other property (perhaps a tile might fall on somebody). Buildings insurance is the specific cover required for this (Wessex already has a separate insurance policy for these risks).

The policy is not a professional indemnity policy so it doesn't cover risks arising from taking people caving for financial gain. A professional indemnity policy is what would be required in this instance.

As regards the BCA policy, there are specific conditions and exclusions within the policy itself.

Conditions: The policy covers liability from the use of explosives, but a condition of this cover is that you must be a member of the Explosive Users Group. It also covers liability

caused by cave diving but a condition of this cover is that you must be a member of the Cave Diving Group.

Principle exclusions: Deliberate, conscious or intentional disregard for safety and/or the need to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury or damage; War, Civil War, Revolution, etc., and kindred risks; Ionising radiations, Nuclear Fuel or Waste or Explosive Nuclear Assemblies, etc.; Employers Liability; Professional Indemnity but including gratuitous advice; Libel and Slander; Terrorism; Asbestos. These exclusions are pretty much standard exclusions that are applied to most insurance policies. There is an exclusion of Libel and Slander, which used to be covered under the old BCRA policy.

There is also quite a large excess on the policy. In the case of a normal claim then the excess is £5,000, for a claim resulting from the use of explosives the excess is £10,000. In both cases BCA has funds to reduce this excess to £2,500 but cannot guarantee to do this for multiple claims as funds are limited.

### Why must we have cover?

The Wessex is an unincorporated club. Unincorporated clubs have no legal status as an organisation. This is why clubs need trustees to act as the holders of assets. In an unincorporated club all the members are "jointly and severally liable". What this actually means in practice is that all the members are liable if the club was to be sued. This has been recently tested in court and a precedent has been set, so this is not an idle risk.

The Committee runs the club on behalf of the members, and in doing so, makes decisions, which place the officers first in line in any litigation; however the rest of the membership can also be sued. If an individual member of the club (such as an officer) was to be sued then they would have no option but to attempt to recover their losses from the rest of the membership. Lawyers always

head for the money and people with money and/or assets are more likely to be sued.

Insurance does not protect anyone from legal action, but provides a financial safety net if legal action is taken against them. Even if a case is defeated, the legal bill can be very high. In the case of the club, insurance will protect our assets (Upper Pitts) and protect the member's assets (houses, money, etc.) if the worse were to happen. The maximum protection is the level set in the policy, up until now that was £2,000,000 for any one claim, but at renewal (Jan 1st 2012), it is being increased to £5,000,000 cover in line with industry standards and due to the increasing needs of access bodies when dealing with landowners, especially large corporate owners such as the Forestry Commission, District Councils and the National Trust, who are insisting on this level of cover.

Without this cover the club would be unable to function as a club - no decisions could be made, no club equipment made available and the training tower would be out of bounds. Anything that potentially opened a route to litigation against members could not happen unless the members and officers of the club agreed to accept all the risks, unanimously!

The regional caving councils would not be able to carry out any works on behalf of cavers, including conservation and access works such as maintaining entrances and providing fixed aids.

The national body could not publish advice, run any training schemes or run any conferences or other meetings. Publishing anything could leave the organisation open to litigation if the information within was perceived as negligent, libellous or just incorrect.

Access to quite a few caves would be lost as well, as it is a requirement of quite a few access agreements that BCA membership is needed to enter these caves. This includes caves such as Peak Cavern, Dan yr Ogof and also the caves of Fairy Quarry (Shatter Cave, Balch Cave, Withyhill Cave, Fairy Cave, etc.).

### Why must everybody within the club be covered?

It is a requirement of the policy that in order for the club officer cover to be in place, all the members of said club must be insured. From a legal perspective, if some people are uninsured, then their assets are more at risk.

Morally of course it is only fair that the cost of the premium is shared around the caving community, as we all benefit from it, even if it is not immediately obvious how.

### Why must we be members of BCA?

BCA cannot sell insurance. Rules imposed by the FSA mean that BCA would have to register with the FSA and have qualified staff in order to do so and this would be prohibitively expensive. The only way that BCA can provide insurance is by making it a membership benefit. BCA pays for the premium and a contribution is collected from the membership subscription. This way, insurance is a benefit of membership and the FSA rules are satisfied. As a result if we want the club insurance cover then it follows that all of the members of the club must also be members of BCA.

#### Further Reading:

The BCA Web Site has a comprehensive insurance section including a copy of the policy, all the policy documents and a schedule of insurance: ([www.british-caving.org.uk](http://www.british-caving.org.uk))

BCA Liability Insurance Scheme - Frequently Asked Questions - <http://tinyurl.com/7vj85b3>

"Club Insurance, Why bother?" - <http://tinyurl.com/7l46chh>

An example of case law established on Jointly and Severally liable: <http://tinyurl.com/cmwsmrh>

# Down the Pan...

with Les Williams



The Wessex has a major problem with its drains. This has been on-going for some time and there cannot be many members that regularly visit Upper Pitts who are unaware of this.

Our current drainage system is basically a two stage process composed of a "settling pit" (septic tank) and a "herringbone drain soakaway" (drainage field). The way this is supposed to work is that the raw effluent is deposited into the septic tank via the drains, where the solids settle out and the fluids flow through the outflow and run into the drainage field. Here the fluid is allowed to slowly drain into the soil where pollutants are consumed by aerobic bacteria. The soil effectively acts as a filter and a medium to house the aerobic bacteria that consume the pollutants. The resulting liquid that soaks away in the ground is considered clean enough to discharge to the environment and not generally a problem for health if it gets into water courses.

For a septic tank system to work effectively several things are required. Quick draining soil and an air supply for the bacteria are the key requirements. Loosely compacted soil is essential for the exchange of air (oxygen) to keep the bacteria aerated, as without them the system will fail.

Our main problem is that the drainage field has failed. The reason is that the soil is not ideal for drainage, as it is clay. I believe we have already had to construct several drainage fields and that the current one is under the car park, which is very compacted ground as well as being clay. The bacteria cannot live there and the liquid cannot drain away as the small pores in the clay quickly block. The untreated liquid cannot drain away naturally so finds a way to the surface where it can cause smell and also pollute neighbouring property and water courses.

## So what should we do?

Doing nothing is not an option, as there are very serious implications if we don't act.

Firstly, if the Environment Agency is made aware of the problem then at the very least we will be served with an enforcement notice and a timescale to rectify the problem. If the Environment Agency were to decide that our discharges are completely unacceptable, they can close us down until it is resolved. If we are taken to court then the fines in a Magistrates Court can be up to £50,000, and if a case is elevated to the Crown Court then the fines can be unlimited. The Government and Environment Agency take this kind of thing very seriously.

Secondly there has been recent new legislation following an EU directive on clean water (The 2010 Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations). The Government proposes that the directive is dealt with by requiring every property in England that is not on a mains sewer, to register their private treatment plant. Currently they are re-assessing this requirement and have asked the Environment Agency to see if there is a more practical way to implement the directive. Pending this assessment, the need to register has been suspended until next year, for low levels of discharge (less than 2 cubic metres to the soil or less than 5 cubic meters of treated discharge to a water course, daily), unless the discharge is in a Ground Source Protection Zone One, where registration is still required. It is however, expected that the requirement for compulsory registration will be implemented towards the end of 2012 for all private treatment plants. This requirement to register will be followed by a period of enforcement on those that don't register, and also site visits to check the functionality of the private treatment plants. The Environment Agency will expect to see that the law on discharges is being complied with, that the plant is functioning correctly and that any discharges are above acceptable limits.

To prove the legislation is being complied with they will require the paperwork to demonstrate that there is a service/maintenance contract in place where required, that any treatment plant is pumped

out in line with guidelines and they will inspect the outflow (where one exists) to ensure it discharging within permitted limits. All paperwork will need to be kept for a period of at least 5 years and available for inspection by the Environment Agency. All pump-outs of sludge must be carried out by a licensed waste disposal contractor; it is an offence to use an unlicensed one.

Currently it appears that we fall within the low discharge bracket, but it is not entirely certain that we do; only the Environment Agency will determine that. If they accept that we are within the small discharge bracket then we will get a discharge exemption, and registration should be free. If we don't fall in the bracket then there will be a fee for registration and we will need a license to discharge. We are not (currently) in a Ground Source Protection Zone One, however if the zones are changed later, then we will almost certainly get legacy rights to continue our discharge providing we are below the license threshold. At the moment, prior to any of the legislative changes that are proposed, discharges above the license threshold are already required to register and are being denied licenses unless discharges are clean enough. These controls will only get stricter not easier.

## What are our options?

### Option 1 – Install a new Drainage Field.

This is not an easy or cheap task as we will need to excavate a large array of trenches about 1m deep and 800mm wide which will need to be filled with a porous material (clean stone chippings) and perforated pipes. This would be our cheapest option except for the following points:

a) There is nowhere on our land to construct such a drainage field so we would need to get permission from one of our neighbours to dig up their fields and install the drainage field on their land.

b) The ground is clay, so any drainage field would have a very short lifespan (perhaps only 3 – 5 years) before we would need to install a new one.

c) The Environment Agency is unlikely to accept a drainage field as a means for disposal of effluent on non-draining soils.

**Option 2** - *Install a package sewerage treatment plant.*

A package sewerage treatment plant is a complete solution to our problem, but is no trivial task and some quick research will show it is also not cheap. All approved plants require that they are sized to accommodate the maximum usage of the building (this is true of any sewerage treatment solution); this means that we would need a plant that can cope with Upper Pitts on the busiest weekends. It would seem that we would need to install a very large facility which would be underused for most of the year. The Environment Agency will not allow us to use a smaller plant as it will fail at peak times and will discharge untreated effluent into the environment.

A package treatment plant for 50 persons is approximately £12,000 to purchase. It must be buried underground (typically these plants are around 7.5m long and just under 3m in diameter). The hole must have a concrete base and the plant must be concreted in place to prevent it "floating up" in high ground water conditions. There is quite a bit of associated drainage works and we would need to run an outflow pipe somewhere. An annual service/maintenance contract is required and the first stage of these plants must be pumped out regularly (normally at least every 4 months) by a licensed contractor.

Package treatment plants cannot cope with sanitary products such as tampons, sanitary towels or wet wipes and also there would be a need to use non bleach cleaners.

Package treatment plants also need a means to aerate the aerobic bacteria; without oxygen the bacteria will die and the plant rendered useless. This is normally by way of a blower that runs 24/7. For the 50 person plant the blower is 1.1kW which equates to something over £1,000 per year depending on the electricity tariff. I estimate the install costs to be somewhere around £18,000 to £20,000 with annual running costs of around £2,000. As I said, not cheap!

**Option 3** - *Adapt our existing plant so that it complies with discharge requirements.*

It is possible to install an "add-on" filter bed (called a "Biorock Filter") that will treat the fluid effluent from our existing septic tank. These filters are a direct replacement for a drainage field and produce discharges that are in excess of 20 times cleaner than the Environment Agency's permitted discharge levels. We would continue to use our existing Septic Tank and just route the outflow through these filters. To cope with the maximum usage of Upper Pitts we would require two of these filters in tandem. These filters are approximately 2m x 1m x 2.5m high and can be stood above ground or buried. The discharge outflow from these filters is positioned 1.7m below the inflow, so in our case, in order to be able to discharge to a watercourse (a requirement of the Environment Agency), the filters would need to be only partially buried, or stood completely above ground. This is controlled by local ground levels and would also cause similar problems for a package treatment plant outflow. To overcome this problem we would need a small submersible pump that would intermittently pump the liquid effluent to the top of the filters, where gravity would do the rest. Alternatively we could completely bury the filters and pump the outflow - this will require some research to determine the best option, based on the practicalities and on cost. The Biorock system is still an aerobic system and to ensure enough oxygen for the bacteria there is need of continuous airflow through the filters. This is achieved using the chimney effect and uses no electricity at all, but does need a "chimney" 5m higher than the air inflow. This plant (the Septic tank) normally only needs pumping out (de-sludging) once every 1 to 3 years, depending on usage and also the filters need to be hosed clean of particulates once a year. Approximate cost will be somewhere in the region of £12,000 to buy and install the plant (The Biorock filters are around £3,500 each (we need 2) plus associated alterations to the pipework and the septic tank, also some excavation and construction works will be required).

This system will work fine with sanitary products and bleach based cleaners, so would require less vigilance concerning what ends up "down the pan", a good thing where there is little or no possibility of controlling what gets flushed.

We would need to install the filters "downstream" of the existing tank. A "pump well" would also need constructing and a new outflow pipe laid, to discharge to surface water. The filters could be sited in the corner of the car park and would fit nicely in the area behind the Hidden Earth Store, where they would be out of sight, shielded by the trees. The trees would also aid in concealing the "chimney" which would be a 4" plastic pipe, although it would need some sort of support.

There should be very little maintenance overhead, with just an annual service, and an infrequent pump out of the septic tank (perhaps as infrequent as every 3 years, but this cannot be determined until the plant is running). There would be a small electricity cost and maintenance costs for the submersible pump. Electricity usage is likely to be somewhere in the region of £20 - £30 per annum. Pump maintenance should be infrequent.

Whichever option is selected we will need to install a grease trap on the kitchen drain and ensure all rainwater is discharged to a soakaway and not to the treatment plant (diluting the effluent will reduce the effectiveness of the bacteria in the plant).

## Conclusion

Looking at all of the options I believe only one is really practical, and that is option 3. Modifying the septic tank and pipework and using the add on filter beds to replace the failed drainage field will more than comply with current legislation and give many years of service, with minimal running costs. It will be the easiest to install, will not require too much excavation or construction, and will be acceptable to the Environment Agency. It will also be unobtrusive and not take up much more space on our land.

There is lots of information on the Environment Agency's web site and an internet search of "Package Sewerage Treatment Plants" will show what is available.

# Wessex Expedition To The Gouffre Berger 2012!

For anyone who has not yet heard there are plans afoot to have a club trip to the Berger in 2012!

## A Bit Of Background

Discovered in 1953 by Joseph Berger and Marc Jouffray the Berger was the first cave in the world to descend below 1000m and for over 10 years (with a total depth of -1323m) it held the record for the world's deepest cave. To this date it is ranked as the 23rd deepest cave in the world. A trip into the Berger is an opportunity to see French caves at their very best with soaring galleries, fantastic formations and active streamway. However the cave is not to be underestimated. It floods very quickly with some of the pitches rapidly becoming impassable. People have lost their lives in the Berger – planning, preparation and fitness are essential.

## Who Can Go?

All members of the Wessex are welcome. This is not just a trip for experienced cavers who are intent on bottoming the cave - it is open to everyone no matter whether you just wish to visit the entrance, the hall of 13 or the bottom.

## When Is The Trip?

Access to the Berger is controlled under a permit system. Applications can not be made before the 1st November for the following year with confirmation typically taking a couple of months. The Wessex has applied for the following dates in descending order of priority:

First	Tue 21st - Fri 31st August
Second	Sat 11th - Mon 20th August
Third	Wed 1st - Fri 10th August

As yet we have not received confirmation but as soon as the dates are confirmed they will be widely circulated.

In preparation for the trip there will be a variety of training weekends coming up. These will be designed to help you get fit, improve SRT (a necessity to get in and out of the Berger) and to meet other people who are going out on the trip. There will be something for everyone regardless of whether you are new to SRT and big trips abroad or a seasoned continental caver.

## Why Get Fit?

Being fit for the trip in question will make the difference between enjoying the cave, appreciating your surroundings, being able to do other caving trips in the area and doing just one trip, struggling, coming out completely broken and not doing anything else for the rest of your holiday. This applies even if you only want to go in a short way, not just for people who want to get to the bottom. The trips below won't be enough on their own - you will need to add your own training. In short - get fit for the Berger.

## I Don't Want To Go To The Berger – Can I still Come On The Training Weekends?

Yes. These are club trips and are open to everyone.

## Updates About The Berger Direct To Your Email Address:

As well as posting on the forum, updates will be put out onto the Wessex mailing list. To subscribe to the mailing list simply visit this web page and enter your details: <http://tinyurl.com/bmg32qw> [See Club News for further information on the club's emailing list - Ed]

## I Want To Know More!

There are many members within the club who have been to the Berger before who will only be too happy to chat about their experiences. Alternatively drop me a line – [kevinhilton792@btinternet.com](mailto:kevinhilton792@btinternet.com).



**17 Step Out For The First Berger Training Session!** Saturday 26th November and Noel, Jo, Mark, Rosie, Simon, Pete, Kev, Adrian, Jude, Andrea, Colin, Biff, Richard and Andy step out for a 13 mile walk around Mendip. [3 missing from pic - Ed] Leaving the Wessex we headed over to the mast at Pen Hill and then down into Wells. A good climb back up towards Higher Pitts Farm and down again into Wookey before another climb back up past Deer Leap and into Priddy. There was an obligatory stop at the Queen Vic before heading back to tea and cake in front of the fire at the Wessex. Thanks to Mr Helmore for a great route!