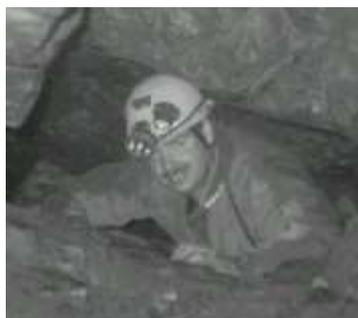




Wessex Cave Club Journal
Volume 27
Number 287
December 2003

Officers of the Wessex Cave Club

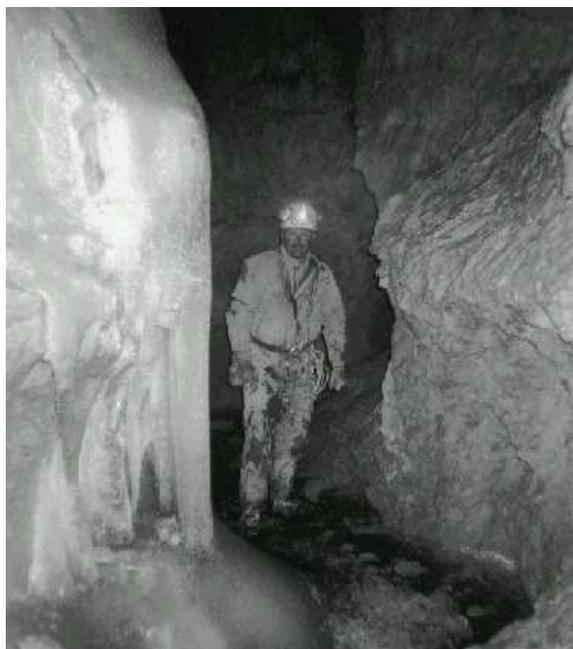
President Donald Thomson. **Vice-Presidents** Paul Dolphin, Dave Irwin and Sid Perou



Stuart Waldren, Committee Member.
 Stewart, photographed here in the Chartreuse by Christine Grosart was elected at the AGM. Tomo Thomas has taken over as tackle Warden from Laurie Orr. We thank Laurie for the excellent work he has done over the last few years.

Dave Irwin was elected as a Vice-President at the AGM for his services to Mendip Caving over very many years.

Chairman	Dave Cooke	3 Starrs Close, Axbridge Somerset, , BS26 2BZ	
		01934 733260	chairman@wessex-cave-club.org
Secretary	Roz Fielder	Redacted in on-line copy	
Treasurer	Mark Helmore		
MRO Co-ordinator	Jonathan Williams.	Membership Secretary	Simon Richards
Caving Secretary	Les Williams	01749 679839	caving@wessex-cave-club.org
Journal Contact			01252 329302
Librarian	Phil Hendy	Sales Officer	Paul Wakeling
Hut Warden	Pauline Grosart	Hut Administration	Ian Timney
Northern Caving Secretary	Keith Sanderson		01524 251662
Hut Bookings Officer	Brian Prewer		01749 870678
Web Master	Jonathan Williams	Tackle Warden	John (Tomo)Thomas



Subscriptions

If you didn't pay your subs by the time of the AGM you are no longer a member and should not be reading this Journal. However, Nik Nak will probably accept late payment if you do it NOW. His address is 65 Bifield Road, Stockwood, Bristol, BS14 8TW.

This Issue's Cover Picture

Christine Grosart and Andy Judd in Gouffre du Grand Glacier, Ice cave, Dent de Crolles.

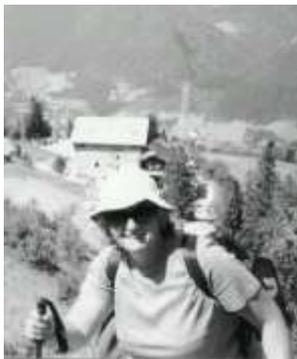
Left, Malc Foyle, taken on the same trip. Photo's Mike Thomas.

W.C.C. Headquarters, Upper Pitts, Eastwater Lane, Priddy, Somerset BA5 3AX Tel. 01749 672310
 Copyright Wessex Cave Club 2003 All rights reserved ISSN 0083-811X
 Opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily those of the Club or the Editor.

The Club Trip to the Chartreuse

This year's French trip was ably organised by Simon Richards, thus giving Malc Foyle a well deserved rest. The camp site at Martinière was good, if a little cramped at times, while the editorial staff were comfortably ensconced in the adjoining aûberge. As on the last couple of trips, the Wessex with some help from the Craven and a few welsh members, managed to increase the bar takings considerably.

As well as the classic through trips in the Dent de Crolles system the region afforded some other excellent caving and plenty of superb walking. Most of us from the babies to geriatrics got underground at least once. It was good to find 9 of the old Hillgrovers present. Bob Pyke flew in for 3 days and achieved 2 epic trips and climbed the Chamechaud. Most people managed several major through trips and hopefully they have been written up in the expedition log. If you haven't put yours in there is still time.



**Left, Pauline climbs her mountain.
Right, Fred and Hannah.**

Below, Left, Some old Hillgrovers, Judy Hewins, Paul Weston, Davelene and John Alder and Maurice Hewins.

Below, centre, Alan Allsop, Dom and Debs.

Below, Right, Dave Crane, Dillon, Rob and Ruth Delacour



P40 a Personal Memory by Noel Cleave

After "SRT for the Aged" (the Editor's title, not mine) and "SRT for Improvers", the Chartreuse always looked likely to provide an SRT Finishing School. If slightly West of true Heidi country it still provided the visual bit, the fresh mountain air, lots of healthy exercise, cow and sheep bells, the locals spoke French, oh yes, and shafts to die for; for SRT Finals.

Despite passing the Rhino Rift practical, I checked out the rebelay self-tangle and self-rescue on my first trip down the third Lantern shaft, but thereafter managed to disguise my inexperience well enough to be allowed to join the P40 de rig in the company of two undoubted tigers – Mark Easterling and Pat Warrren (who was guesting from the Craven). OK, OK, so we all do stupid things from time to time, but this was turning error into an art form. Why me and why the P40 of all trips??? Basically there were three reasons: (1) that I had done Trou to Guiers streamway, Annette to Guiers fossil, and Trou to Chevalier, so that (2) that doing the highest entry would complete my experience of Chevalier classics. And (3) that my IQ is only measurable in fathoms –on a good day.

It didn't start out as a good day. We left the Col de Coq at 07-15 ish and, ignoring some silly red tapes across the path, started up hill. Whatever the deficiencies in my SRT, my legs had ample recent practice; very recent actually, as the day before they'd carried me from la Diat to the Grand Som the steepest way, rather fast. It rapidly became apparent that today if I once stopped I might never start again, so I plodded upwards. Below me the tigers apparently enjoyed the climb and occasionally stopped for the views. Viewing nothing but my boots (through a red mist), and trying not to breath like a whooping cough victim, I gradually drew away from them and eventually arrived on the summit of the Dent de Crolles. Twenty minutes later a certain loneliness set in and it dimly seeped into my cranium (see (3) above) that this was wrong. Could it be that they had taken the

Trou path and ascended by the wire route to the lapiaz? – That I was not sitting within yards of the P40? – That it wasn't actually right on the summit?

Few options presented themselves, so I took the only one off down to the lapiaz, where in due course I found Mark and Pat hunting for the P40. I did not join them directly. Between us and the limestone pavement was littered with bottomless rifts and shafts. One of them was rigged and had a plaque saying P40. Mark thought this was a clue. Mark had, in police parlance, previous form in the P40. Six hours worth of meander bashing in fact, but Mad Phil (Rowsell) had convinced us that the secret was to stay at floor level and all would be better, if not actually well. Even so, Mark confessed to being nervous....which was so infectious that I had to hide away for the world famous adrenaline/bowel interaction. Then, somewhat later and lighter I committed myself to the P40 experience.

It started well. The entrance pitch was a honey. It was also a sucker hole, with a Mendip sized, tight exit squeeze, which was merely the hors d'oeuvres for the meanders which follow on... and on...and on. These meanders were seriously tight and hyper-sinuuous. Our feet, hips, shoulders and tackle bags jammed. Periodically we would all stop and recover enough breath to exercise the full descriptive richness of our vocabularies Sandwiched between Mark and Pat, I seemed to be managing the pace, which was reassuring, but the professionals brushed aside my offers to carry some more of the pulled through ropes. This was wise of them and (secretly) a relief to me.

Memories of the roomy entrance shaft were obliterated by a succession of tight drops within the same basic rift. Puits des Pompiers was better, but not the 50 metres of meander from its base. And then, abruptly, it all changed, with the superlative Puits du Balcon and les Douches. Vast polished and fluted, as good as any in the Dent de Crolles, and properly wet as a bonus. No more meanders and we ambled past the Puits de la Lanterne and into daylight.

It had taken 3 hours exactly. Now P40 to Guiers Mort....that would be a trip....Did I say that ? See (3) above!



The Dent de Crolles.



Mike Thomas, Andy Judd, Christine Grosart and Noel Cleave at the Trou du Glaz. Photo, Roz Fielder.



On the Lantern Pitches. Photo's by Kevin Hilton. Left, Emma Heron and Mark Kellaway, Centre, Dave Meredith Right, Emma again.

Below, Centre, Dave Cooke, Emma and Alan Allsop at the P40 entrance. Within 5 minutes of going underground, one of these people got stuck!



Emma and Cookie
Chamrousse Via Ferrata



Path to Annette and Chevalier
Photo's Kevin Hilton

FAIRMAN'S FOLLY By Phil Hendy

Accompanying the Twin Titties Swallet article (J. WCC No. 278 p.131) was a photograph showing a tramway and a wedge-shaped spoil skip. Such a spoil disposal system was never used at Twin T's, and so I began to ask around in order to discover which dig was in fact illustrated.



Eventually, Richard West identified the site as Fairman's Folly, which the Club dug between 1966 and 1967. His photographs clearly show the tramway under construction, with the spoil skip. The site had previously been dug by the BEC between 1956 and 1957; the shaft was dug to 25ft in clay and boulders, but the wooden shoring was not up to the pressure on it, and it collapsed. Richard's diary reveals that he prospected the site with Geoff (Gnome) Moore on 20th February 1966. Over the rest of the year, it was the Club Dig, and many members helped dig there – Mike Thompson, Carl Pickstone, Chris Hawkes, Denis Warburton, Will Edwards, John Church, Alan Surrall and Tony Dingle, to name but a few. Even our revered Editor was photographed at the scene, and Bob Lawder shot some movie film.

The shaft was re-excavated and at last the old BEC shoring was found and removed, and new shoring was installed. Some of the digging used Dr. Nobel's Remote Shovel, and on at least one occasion, the amount of water in the dig was removed in this way, as a mini geyser.



Always a problem, the small surface stream was diverted down a polythene pipe to try to reduce washout, but by May 1967 the shaft had again collapsed, and the dig was abandoned. The Club's interest switched to Nine Barrows Swallet, and Fairman's Folly was left in peace, being finally filled and levelled in 1971. It is still a promising site; there are a lot of deep depressions in the nearby fields, and who knows what a Hymac dig might reveal in the future.

Photos:

1. The tramway under construction. Note the spoil skip to the left. May 1966
2. The dig depression, looking towards North Hill and Asham Hill. L-R: Maurice Hewins, Denis Warburton, Bob Lawder, Chris Hawkes & Junior, Tim Reynolds, Carl Pickstone, Ann Lawder, John Church, (Geoff Moore, Phil Davies, Will Edwards—in gate), Dave Westlake, Jean Chalker. 1966
3. De-watering the dig, the chemical way. 7th May 1966(?)

Thanks to Rich West for the loan of photographs, and extracts from his caving diary.
(Copies are now in the Library)

Extracts from the Upper Pitts Logbook

Edited by Brian Prewer

17.5.03 Notts II

Leg, R Watkins, Patrick Warren & Karen Lane (both CP)

Climb down very impressive scaffold lined shaft to Notts streamway. Upstream, covering several inlets & all the way to the Notts sump (several sections of swimming involved!).

24.5.03 Slaughter Stream Cave

Leg, Patrick Warren & Sean Howe (both CPC)

I managed to go through three sets of lights on a 3-hour trip! Anyway tried upstream to get to Dead Dog Passage but couldn't remember the way on. We then went downstream to the sump. Back out via Crossover (?) Passage & into the higher level passage that leads to the Dead Dog. Out via the way we couldn't find on the way in. First time into this cave for Leg since it was found 10 years ago. First trip for the others since the day before!

10.6.03 Eastwhere

Paul Wakeling & Mak

Dry? How are you supposed to find the way out without water?

11.6.03 Crook's Hole

Carmen, Bob S, Steve, Paula & Phil HENDY

NHASA subcontracted to wall up some hanging headaches in the rift. An interesting afternoon wedged in a slot festooned with buckets of 'pug' & stones. The dig will be a lot nicer when the width increases & the ladders are closer together! Work overseen by Bob who also hauled buckets.

PS. I must add, Phil did very well & did exactly as instructed. I think he'll make digging status yet, but still needs a little guidance.

14.6.03 Swildon's – Watergate

Phill Short, Ali M, Mad Phil & Geoff B

After 10 years of trying to get the Watergate connection trip done finally got a grown-up to show me the way. Fantastic trip – well worth the wait. We didn't need to bail any of the ducks, so all got some ceiling sucking practice! P.S.

15.6.03 Swildon's – Passchendaele

Phill S, Andy Stewart, Andy Chell & Laura

In No 286 Page 98

16&20.6.03 Eastwater – Primrose Pot

Ali M & Mad Phil

16.6.03 Trip to top of second pitch to check that Mad Phil fitted the Primrose squeeze in both directions.

20.6.03 SRT trip to bottom. We had hoped to survey the south passage extension but the U-tube was blocked. Surveyed everything that was open & back up the pitches & through the squeeze. Found a good digging site at the bottom of Primrose, which would possibly give a connection to the 13 Pots & Sand Chamber, supposedly only 20' away. We like the idea of a Primrose – 13 Pots – Dolphin Round-trip. Hopefully we'll have a go at this in September. The dig is easiest from the Primrose Pot end but the trip definitely isn't. Hard trip with only two people. 6½ hours. We were an hour overdue – sorry Brian.

17.6.03 Goatchurch

Ali M, Nik Nak, Dick Crane, Kermet, Roz F, Adrian, Jude & Rob Vanderplank & Lyn?

ROZ FIELDER'S FIRST TRIP TO GOATCHURCH!! We discovered that Roz had never been down Goatchurch so a trip to the final chamber with the above named to look after her! Nik Nak managed to pass Hellish Tight uphill so is declared 'officially thin'.

21.6.03 Crook's Hole

Aubrey N, Bob & Golly S

The lid – previously described as 'bomb-proof' – proved not to be! I found a simple way of opening it by remote control. Aubrey managed to open the very heavy galvanised 3' square lid in a split second. What has occurred 30' below is yet to be found out? There was quite a noise, & a pillar of brown mud, dust & rocks suddenly appeared from the ground – it impressed us.

21.6.03 Charterhouse Cave

Ali M & Tony Boycott

Trip for Tony to bang a couple of boulders in the end dig. Also went down Tynning's Great Swallet & Dibble's Mine.

25.6.03 Draycott Sleights

Phil H, B&B Prews

Looked at Draycott Cave & found Front Sleights Cave. Very overgrown – probably another Draycott Cave.

18.6.03 Swildon's

Pauline G, Mark H, Jim & Bob

Lovely evening walk to Swildon's. My (PG) first trip in 31 years!! Could only remember the entrance. Got to the 20' & watched Mark go down the 'Spiderman' way. Out via Jacob's Ladder – with help & a bit of pushing from Mark I got to the top again. Many thanks.

22.6.03 Browgill/Calf Holes

**Keith, Roz, Janine & Liam F, Pauline G,
Pete Hann, Gordon Kaye & Malc Foyle**

Trip to Yorkshire to an 'easy' cave, they said, just for me. Well, I did not expect the ladder entrance, never been down one before, well I have now! Anchor man Gordon; I insisted Malc held the rope also, just in case. Glad to reach the bottom, complete with waterfall – I stood in the pool & promptly fell in deep water up to my neck. Wet trip from the start. Turned right down a long narrow passage – wet, lots of crawling & struggling. Keith had 'Housemaid's Knee' & had to turn back. We seemed to come to a narrow dead-end. We'd gone the wrong way!

Found another passage where the problems started: - narrow drop down hole x2 – Malc & Gordon could only get half way through so they turned back. Malc rejoined us later realizing he could not return through the double squeeze bit. Came to an almighty big drop – complete with waterfall – only way down for Janine, Liam & myself was by a quick make-shift harness & rope. After a quick instruction on how to abseil down a cliff from Malc, I went over the top & edged downwards. Now beginning to enjoy it. 'James Bond' fashion when I reached the bottom. That bit was great. We followed the stream to more, "which way do we go now?" Followed a ravine to a knotted hankie. Do we go up there? Pete climbed the rope – no – wrong way. Climbed over huge rocks & crossed wide deep drops & then we saw a light in the far distance. It was the rescue party, Gordon. He led us to the exit, I was never so glad to see green fields & sheep in all my life. A super trip for me, but at the time I was a little nervous. Thanks Malc for all your patience. PG.

25.6.03 Templeton

**Phil H, Prew, Jon Riley,
Adrian VDP, Milch, Eric & Tuska**

Humungous block of limestone beaten into submission. Bid expected any day from Amey Roadstone. Four skips up, dumper full (failed to start it). Trying to clear route for next 6' of railway. Tuska has found another bucket at the bottom.

28.6.03 Cuckoo Cleeves

Phil H, Christine & Pauline G

Entry 1 Luckily I spent the morning practicing on a ladder on the SRT tower under instruction from Mark H. This helped me to get down the entrance, once inside; I was not really enjoying it. Got to the bottom, then slow return to the entrance. Got attacked by those flies at the opening – made a quick return to the car. I will not do this cave again. Fast family trip – all 3 of us together. I have bruises to prove it.

Entry 2 Bimble down fairly unimpressive rift. PG didn't really enjoy it & has bruises to show! CG got molested by horseflies & ran away on exit.

29.6.03 Longwood/August

Gavin N, Christine G, & Stu Waldren

Stu decided he didn't fit the entrance rift, so returned to ferret in the stream. Gavin & Chris continued to the end (excluding the grovelly further reaches) & returned, having a look at the upstream passage before the exit. Smashing trip.

5.7.03 Swildon's Damp Link

**Ali & Pete Moody, Nik Nak, Phill Short,
Andy Stewart & Tash Mitchell**

In No 286 Page 98

6.7.03 Ridge Mine

**Phil H, Brian & Sheila Pitman, Cookie & Jo,
Roz, Liam & Janine Fielder, Gordon K & Don**

A good wander round seeing about half of it. Impressive roof falls, kids fascinated by Porno Corner. Debrief in Quarryman's Arms.

6.7.03 Swildon's – Watergate

Dave, Mark, Mak, Bean, Kev & Emm

Breeze down to the top of Watergate, having overtaken a party. Bean dropped a ladder down Lower Fault Chamber – the sump was dry. Rapid progress to 4 with a performance getting up the first climb into the start of Watergate. Then the fun began – lots of gloop accompanied by hysterical laughter & much 'Hoo-Hoos'! No eyeball licking though. Climb out of Lower Fault Chamber felt like hard work even with the ladder! Completed Round Trip & had a few view stops out from Sump 1. The most fun you can have with your cloths on!!

10.7.03 Swildon's – Damp Link

Suntan, Mr Dave (alias Butch) & Nik Nak

In No 286 Page98

12.7.03 Swildon's Radiolocation – Desolation Row

**Underground - 4 Divers
Surface – 3 Locators & 2 Film Crew in previous issue**

12.7.03 Swildon's Radiolocation 12

**Phill Short, Greg Brock,
Gavin Newman & Andy Stewart**

In No 286 Page 99

12.7.03 Swildon's

**Kathy, Christine, The Jo Ws, Laura,
Phil H, Nik Nak & Cookie**

Glamour photography below the Showerbath. Photographer – P Henty; 1st Lighting Technician - Nik Nak; 2nd Lighting Technician – Cookie. How we suffered for our art! Some accompanied Mike Thomas, Andy Chell &

Stuart down to assist the 12 party out with kit. The rest out to the Hunter's to collect essential supplies for the diver's return.

13.7.03 Star Mine

Paul Wakeling, Cookie, Jo Williams & Christine G

Trip to further reaches of Star, through slot/choke. Unstable, but passable into 50' of passage with 2 more wheelbarrows.

13.7.03 Rhino Rift

Noel Cleave, Stu W & Nik Nak

A 'skills' sort of refresher/training/consolidation trip mainly for the benefit of Noel & Stu. Noel rigged the RH bolt route but couldn't find the pendulum deviation into the crack above the second pitch, so we continued on down pitch 2, leaving Nik Nak to exit up pitch 1 – he had to feed his cats!! Stu then excelled himself by derigging the first pitch – this on his first ever bolting rig. All in all an excellent dangle.

6.7.03 Charterhouse Cave

Ali M, Steve & Simon (2 prospective members)

Tourist trip for Steve & Simon. Ali went to end dig to look at the results of Tony Boycott's bang. All still looks fairly stable & nothing has moved! Good tidy up & cementing session is now required.

8.7.03 St Dunstan's Well Cave

Nik Nak, Ali M, Adrian Vanderplank

Duck in entrance series was high & blowing a gale. All got through with varying degrees of difficulty. We were intrigued by the large diving bottle that had been abandoned by the duck. No sign of the draught in the end chamber – it would be very interesting to try to trace where this comes from. After exiting the cave we followed the stream through the old tunnels. Very impressed with Tunnel No 1, the straws in this are now 2' long!

12.7.03 Swildon's - NW Stream Passage

Geoff Ballard & Ali M

Pete declined the invitation – can't understand why! Wet Ears Squeeze was full of liquid mud – nice. On to look at the Dip Tubes. (We have left a hand line on the first of these.) Then to Heaven & Hell Passage (lots of liquid mud) to look at the final dig. Doesn't look as though NW Stream is seeing many trips these days. Mr Short you would love it, when do you want a trip? Ali M.

Note by GB: - Watch out Phil – this isn't the quality trip that Watergate is!

12/19.7.03 Grove Cave Portland

Kev & Em

Went to look for the entrances – found them but the sea was inviting – went snorkelling. Back on the 19th with lids & lights this time. Did all the caves – not bad for Portland.

19.7.03 Templeton Dig

ACG, NHASA etc

The dig face below the railway has collapsed so the bucket emptier will have to levitate. Tuska & Jim Young welded a new roller onto railway & a safety chain on skip, Re-fixed an expanding stemple to act as psychological aid propping up the hanging death. Measured up for an RSJ as part of a stone trap for protection against falling rocks, also discussed the new winch cable – the old one is at its limit on length & is fraying.

19.7.03 Ibbeth Peril, Yorkshire

Pauline, Ros, Janine & Liam Fielder, Sam,

Pete, Malc, Nik Nak, 'Bob-the-Builder', Abby & Kate Lavender

Entrance crawl through spider's nest – Yuk! Into Big Chamber – mooch about. Managed to climb up onto Big Rock with verbal assistance from Nik Nak, but could not step up & across to Waterfall – too far a leg stretch – Ros & kids went down a tight little hole & explored further – I bottled out & waited for them to return. Nice little trip, except for spiders that had rebuilt their webs by the time we made our exit. River bed dry as a bone.

19.7.03 Pwll Dwfn

Terry Waller, Keith & Derek Sanderson

Good cave. All five pitches are 'P' bolted so rigging is fairly obvious. If you haven't done this cave then you're missing out on a treat.

22.7.03 Kelston Church Tunnels

**Geoff Ballard, Pete & Ali M,
Jon Edwards +1**

Geoff had found a reference to a tunnel that runs under the churchyard at Kelston (*Nr Bath*) & had gained permission for a visit. You park in the yard of the abandoned Manor Farm & walk along the churchyard wall & through the first gate. The tunnel is in the wall & has a red iron gate across it (it isn't locked). This drops into a rather fine man-made tunnel that runs for about 100' under the graveyard. It starts out as walking sized, first clean-washed & then knee deep in mud & gradually lowers to hands & knees & then flat out. Looks like a drainage tunnel for the graveyard. We found the odd bone or two! 'Downstream' ends in a drainage grill. Also spotted another 'entrance' to a second tunnel next to where we had parked the cars. Only Ali was able to squeeze into this one – a hands & knees tunnel which ran for 110'. Again must be for drainage. Excellent pub in Kelston.

See Photo's by Geoff Ballard next page (109)

29.7.03 Burrington Mystery Trip

Geoff B & Ali M

For various excuses, e.g. too wet (it was raining hard), too fat*, we bypassed Bos & Pierre's & ended up for a grot around in Sidcot to allow Geoff to explore the delights of Purgatory.

Fat! That's a little harsh – I prefer 'healthy'.

31.7.03 Pen Park Hole

**Pete & Ali Moody, Geoff Ballard, Gavin Newman
Tony Boycott & Graham Mullen**

Impressive hole, especially considering its location. Water levels were very low (Tony had not seen them this low for 10 years) & we were able to get all the way down to East Low Level. Gavin brought one of his filming lights which made the Main Chamber well worth seeing. A good collector's cave with some excellent geothermic crystals. Unfortunately I think it will take me about a fortnight to get the ladders clean again.



**Kelston
Church
Tunnel
Alison on
the right.**

See Page
108



25.7.03 Manor Farm

Sporting trip after July downpours. Laying in flowing water in Albert's Eye – needed wetsuit!

26.7.03 Shute Shelve

All on very interesting trip. Several history lessons from Alan Gray, which were informative. Alison M, Roz, Abigail & others visited Elm Hole dig. Alison couldn't resist; & large boulders were being removed in no time. 8 visited Carcass Cave close by. Very pretty little cave. Currently being dug by Bracknell CC using jackhammer & compressor, as they are not allowed to bang.

Abigail & Ros

18 photographers, artists, cavers, diggers SAGA

Photo, Phil Hendy.



1.8.03 St Cuthbert's

A short little trip around the upper reaches, including Coral Chamber & Log Chamber Extension. Climbed back down into Curtain Chamber & then to the base of Maypole Series for a check on water levels at Vern's favourite pitch!

Roz, Vern & Nik Nak

2.8.03 Star Common

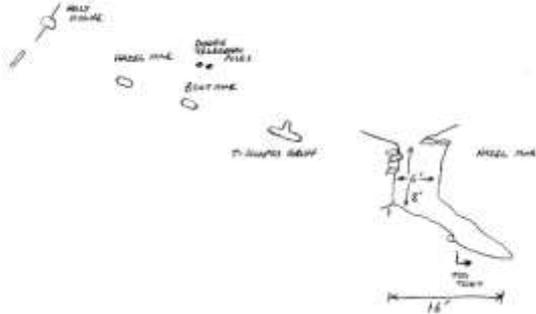
First descent of Hazel Mine (formally New Shaft 1). 8' drop in 30" rift with top & side walled. Slope down over leaf litter to stone step & too tight continuation – length about 16'. Belay ladder to Hazel bush. Then to Boot Mine (formally New Shaft 2). A similar entrance & about 20' SE of Hazel Mine. 6' drop to a further 4' steep slope of leaf litter followed by stones. Two odd leather boots with leather laces & a strange cross strap, part of a shoe, bottles (intact), broken Spode vase, oil lamp & part of a stone bottle were found. Low wriggle to top of choked shaft filled with boulders. Far wall (3' high) of spar fragments leading to 4' long shelf with a narrow (too tight) rift leading off. An old can & part of a stone jar on this ledge. Above the shelf was a capping of large precarious stones, obviously near the surface. This mine was about 30" wide with the left wall of spar & the right of limestone with at least 6 half shot-holes drilled from above. Holly Fissure – choked 7' down with large rocks. A short continuation could be seen to the north.

Phil H & the Prews

5.8.03 Grebe Swallet

Phil H, Ali M & Martin Grass

Phil on leader training trip. A slow wander around the sights – the rift squeeze at the bottom is not getting any bigger. (The squeeze had to be pointed out to Alison!). Heavy drips in places plus a dead rat lurking in one of the crawls. Great joy & profound happiness struggling with the lock about 4' from a very dead rabbit!



6.8.03 Brown's Folly Mine

Paula, Bob S & Steve

Break from Crook's Hole until all the green hippies have gone from the area. The gates were locked & I left them alone as kids are on holiday. Used the other entrance. Although I live right by the mine I haven't been inside for a while – I was amazed. What w*nk*rs there are with aerosol spray cans. Just a small amount in somewhere like Goatchurch & the CSCC would be right there, yet although they keep the keys nothing more is done to preserve Brown's Folly.

10.8.03 Hunter's Lodge Inn Sink

Phil H, J Rat, & Tangent

Went to collect some bones for Dr Jodie to look at. Probably cow rather than bos, also pig (?) & roe (?) antler. The big bits of the cave are large & impressive with interesting variety of stal. The small bits (i.e. the unavoidable entrance passage) are 'ORRIBLE'. Lots of flat out crawls – I felt very claustrophobic on the way out -& weighted down with mud. I do not think I will go there again. (The bos/cow has now been checked by Bristol Museum – it's bison and reindeer, 28,000 years old.)

13.8.03 Crook's Hole

*Paula, Bob S & Steve
Aubrey & Colin later*

One 1 metre deep shot-hole stuffed with 1 metre lengths of cord & a fine explosion + smoke & fumes & a barbeque, nice evening, pleasant company – digging doesn't have to be all hard work.

20.8.03 Templeton Dig

NHASA, AGC & Many Others

Large turnout, mainly sightseers. Good progress made with half of the floor lowered 18". 9 skips removed, lots of rock, some stal covered. Gaps are appearing in the floor.

22 to 24.8.03 Gaping Gill (CPC Winch Meet)

Phil & Dan Hendy, The Prews

Weather generally OK, plenty of beer in Trenchfoot Arms. Main Shaft quite dry. Various tasks on surface & underground, also visits to Sand Cavern & Mud Hall. Dan is now an experienced Main Chamber guide & 'Whistler's Ass', however he doesn't rate 'Rat Packs' very highly!

23.8.03 Swildon's

Phill Short & Tash Mitchell

Carried cylinders to Sump 2 for 12 trip tomorrow. Tash then dived Sumps 2 & 3 while Phill free-dived to go up Blue Pencil & back round to Sidcot U-tube. Dived this, which is very short but well silted up with mud & grit. Then on to North Doodle Aven before heading out.

24.8.03 Swildon's

Phill Short, Greg Brock & Tash Mitchell

Down to Sump 2 to pick up cylinders from yesterday. Dive to 12 then dive to check out the results of bomb. Large rock removed from gravel pit beyond enlarged squeeze. This resulted in a collapse of the pile of bang debris. Phil & Greg dug 5 barrels of debris from the elbow which has just about filled the big 1 tonne bag. Large open space felt beyond. Will keep digging.

25.8.03 Longwood

Andy Morse, Rob Clarke & Nigel Jackson

A small delay on the first pitch as we had only brought one ladder with us. Managed to continue by using the ladder 'cordelette technique'. Shower Bath dry, but rest of streamway had water. Down to the lower streamway & the end of the cave as far as I'm concerned!

Fourth Time Lucky? Digging at Thrupe Swallet

Richard Witcombe continues with the saga.

Luckily for the diggers working at the bottom of Persistence Pot, the summer and early autumn of 2003 were among the driest on record, but even so Clive North had a difficult and uncomfortable task lying in a trickle of water in an eighteen inch bedding plane, drilling patterns of shotholes in the walls and ceilings ahead of him. It was slow progress and dumping space for bang debris at the foot of the pot was in short supply.

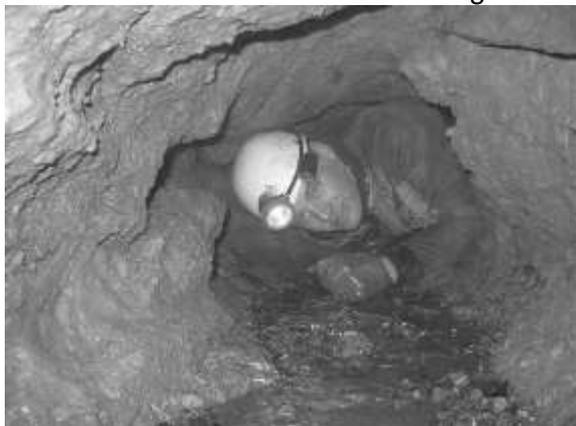


Left, Formations in Quality Street.

Opposite, Left, Tony Littler, MNRC in the former duck in Upside Down.

Opposite, right, Great care needed in Quality Street. Tony again.

Prospects took a turn for the better in early July when the view ahead revealed the passage developing into a sinuous rift, which was gradually gaining height. While Tony Littler, Dave King, Dave Everett, Dave Speed, Simon Meade-King and the writer assisted Clive with spoil removal, Rob Taviner and Simon Richards were able to squeeze ahead of the bang man, and started work hammering away at a stal constriction. Beyond, the passage looked to be just about man-sized and the water could be heard flowing down a small cascade.



By the beginning of August Clive had reached the stal coated ledge which had been receiving the attentions of Tav and Nik Nak, and subjected it to several Cordtex charges. When the bang debris was cleared on Wed 20 August, Dave King managed to force the squeeze and slithered sideways for 6 feet around an inclined slot to drop into a tiny chamber about five feet square. On his left was a large stal flow while ahead the passage continued as a low, muddy, almost horizontal tube for a further 20 feet. Dave crawled to the halfway point, where he could see the passage narrowing and the roof lowering to

a pile of stream debris with heavy drip falling onto it – could this be the anticipated cross rift? The next couple of sessions saw Dave, Nik Nak and Tav working in very squalid conditions clearing mud and small rocks which the writer stacked away in various nooks and crannies around the walls. On 10 September Nik Nak squeezed forward into the virtual duck that had been created by the digging and finally managed to reach the rock pile. He could only peer awkwardly upwards but could see into a roomy inlet or aven off to the left. Very cold from immersion, he retreated leaving Tav to take over the task of pulling rocks and debris back.

A quarter of an hour later, Tav forced his way into the cross rift. Off to the right the stream trickled away down a tiny, debris strewn tunnel which was disappointingly not man-sized. More significantly, a squeeze upwards on the left led into a small aven chamber, about fifteen feet high with a floor area of fifteen by two to three feet on a north/south axis, which was almost completely coated with orange brown flowstone. The heavy drip was pouring from a narrow, impenetrable slot in the north end wall. Just when prospects were looking rather bleak, Tav spotted a hole in the stal floor midway along the west side of the chamber. Through it he could see down past a constriction to a phreatic tunnel seven or eight feet below, which looked man-sized and was carrying our small stream along a clean washed floor.

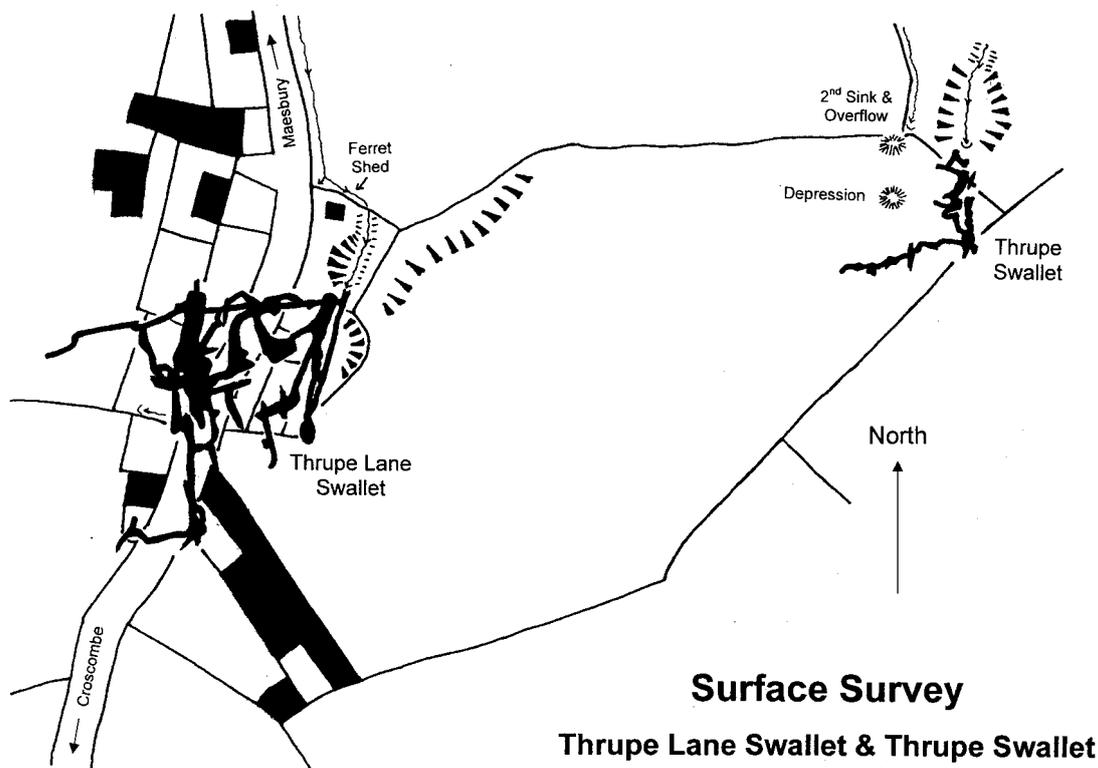


After some further enlargement of the approach streamway, the hole in the floor of the new chamber –Tango Rift- was banged on 14 September. The following Wednesday, Tav and Nik Nak went ahead to clear the bang debris, and were joined later by Simon Meade-King and the writer. After a short session of hammering, Tav and Nik Nak were able to drop down through the floor slot to reach the lower streamway. Upstream the route was impassable due to slabs and rock shelves but it clearly connects to the approach streamway. Ahead a vadose modified phreatic tube some three feet high by two to three feet wide meandered off at a shallow gradient. Only fifteen feet further on the stream slipped under the left hand wall, leaving an open dry route, floored with small white gours surrounding a similarly white boss on the right.

Sadly and regrettably, there was no alternative to crawling over the stal as banging or engineering a route to follow the stream would have totally destroyed it. Dave King was given the doubtful honour and he advanced carefully on his stomach for a further fifteen feet to reach a low chamber with a screen of stal ahead preventing access to a small high level phreatic continuation. Below, a too tight slot dropped down for six feet or so to a wider continuation and a window into a passage beyond. The stream could be heard below but not seen. Attacks with a lump hammer and chisel

proved unsuccessful and it was clear that some careful banging would be needed to advance further in this stal encrusted zone.

On Wednesday 1 October, working in very cramped conditions, Tav and Nik Nak managed to drill a single shot hole into the wall of the terminal slot. After a Sunday bang, a party comprising Nik Nak, Mark Lumley, Dave King and the writer went underground on the following Wednesday expecting to have to insert more shotholes. Instead, after a short clearing session, Dave was able to crawl down into the "pot", now largely filled with rubble, and squeeze around a corner into a rift with a very well decorated aven overhead. A very careful manoeuvre past some pure white stalactites and flowstone led into a roomy grotto with the small stream rejoining from the right. Sadly the steeply descending passage closed down after only twenty feet at a tight left hand bend, partly obstructed by a large flake of rock.



The rest of the team followed Dave and admired the fine, but very vulnerable grotto. Dave made a careful assessment of the fifteen feet high aven, finding no significant leads above, while Nik Nak clambered into the roof of the grotto. At the downstream end he cleared some mud from a continuing phreatic tube but it proved to be not quite man-sized.

Over the next few weeks the terminal corner was assaulted, first by sledgehammer which broke up the obstructing flake and then by Cortex. The restricted view ahead shows the passage continuing as a narrow slot obstructed by old stal flows but emitting a slight draught. With the winter rains now just round the corner, further significant progress this year is unlikely, but the latest line survey shows we have now passed the 200 feet depth mark and have clocked up 650 feet of passage. Encouragingly, the streamway is now heading west south west, straight towards the resurgence at St Andrews Well.

To be continued.

Swildons Twelve update, from the log

7.9.03

Andy Chell, Rich Dolbey, Greg Brock, Tash Mitchell and Phill Short.

Straightforward trip to 9, then Phill went off to 12 with a head start to get some visibility in 12. The others followed on 5 minutes behind. Very low water levels led to unusually good viz in Sump 9 (Almost like a cave dive.) At 12 Phill went straight in and got to the end squeeze with a hand mounted light and no helmet. Passed straight through the squeeze to find two large 4ft by 1ft by 6 inch slabs of rock holding back a large pile of rock debris on the left.

Swimming up, Phill could see over and behind this into the continuing passage found at the end of last year. This could be seen to continue to the limit of visibility (2 m) going up slope. Phill removed to the safety of the squeeze and reached through to heave the lower slab out, which resulted in 30

seconds of rumbling as the two slabs and the debris collapsed into the squeeze. Phill then pulled the first slab from the gravel, grabbed it in a bear hug and walked out of the sump to dump it in front of the others, before going in to get the other. Hauling these out used the gas supply up so Tash and Greg both dived and were able to get through the squeeze but in zero viz to find the way to the left fairly open. (Back again next week). Also see Log on page 110.

Club News

Club Trip To The Jura Summer 2004

Next summer seems a long way away but it is time to start thinking about places to go. A number of people have mentioned the Jura and the general consensus seems to be that the last week in July and the first week in August will be the best time to go. The Herault trip will probably be going out around the 8th August, so this means the two trips won't clash.

The Jura is on the French/Swiss border and the scenery is fantastic. We are hoping to tackle some of the classic caves in the region, including the **Reseau de la Verneau Traverse** (9 km long, 345m deep) and the **Grotte de Chauveroch** (6 km to sump with lots of swimming!) There are also plenty of smaller caves and **Via Ferrata**.

If you would like to go (or want to know more) please can you get in touch as soon as possible.

Dates: Saturday 24 July to Sunday 8 August. Accommodation: do you want to camp or stay in a Gîte? As these two weeks coincide with the French holidays we will be competing with the rest of France for campsites and Gîtes – please let me know as soon as possible.

Kevin Hilton.

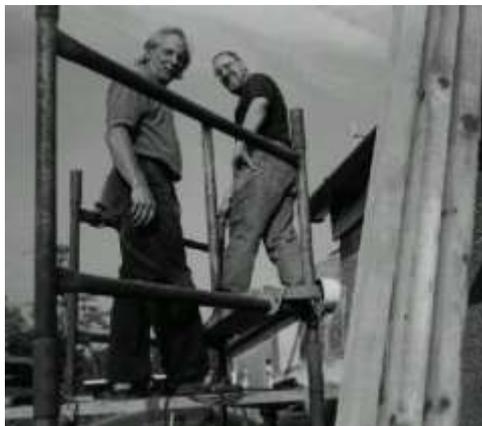
01305 259274 kevandem@onetel.com

The working weekend, 20/21 September.

Once again the weather was kind to us and a large number of members turned up to help. Ray Deasey came all the way from Australia to help dismantle pallets and fill the new wood shed. This replaces the old steel tank, which was cut up for scrap. Please try and keep the shed and its surrounds tidy. At present, the car park and grounds are as tidy as they have ever been.

Ian Timney led the team working on the boiler house and the roof is now finished. A large part of the concreting behind the hut has been relaid. Mark Helmore fitted new guttering and down pipes. Some useful work was done in the grounds. The editorial team filled in the redundant cattle grid, while Kevin Hilton climbed the ash tree in the drive to eliminate a branch of hanging death. Brian Pitman was somehow allowed to drive Keith Fielder's mower but there were no casualties.

On the Saturday evening the workers sat down to an excellent three-course meal prepared by Jonathan Williams and Brenda Prewer, who provided the sweets. An ample supply of bread and cheese for lunch severely reduced Roger's takings at the Hunters.



Left, Nigel Graham and Mike O'Connor at work on the boiler house. Centre, Kevin working out how to climb down after cutting the branch and Right, the new wood shed.

The Annual General Meeting

There was an average attendance at a fairly long and important meeting. Matters discussed included the insurance issue and the general state of the club. The provisional accounts showed that the Club had a good year and there was a surplus on the year of £1104. The hut account showed some improvement from last year and heating bills were well down. Copies of the accounts will be circulated when they have been audited.



The Annual Dinner

There were 109 members and guests at this year's dinner, which was held at the Crossways Hotel, North Wotton. The food was good and plentiful even if the space was a little cramped



Master of ceremonies, Phil Hendy ensured that the event ran smoothly and with his usual good humour managed to embarrass some of us with ease. The toast to "Absent Friends" was proposed by John Alder.

Our Guest of Honour was Sid Perou, who spoke about the many difficult, and sometimes dangerous, experiences he has had filming underground. Sid was made a Vice President two years ago in recognition of his outstanding caving films, produced over a period of 30 years. He made the mistake of asking how many present had carried batteries

and equipment for him. Several had, including Brian Prewer. Unfortunately when Prew had carried, Sid forgot to put film in the camera!

Before the formal dinner ended there was an auction for club funds. Items included some collectable caving books, some framed pictures and an expedition carbide lamp. In all they made about £300.

For the last 5 years Club Dinners have been arranged by Wendy Williams. As a mark of gratitude Wendy was presented with a bottle of her favourite tippie. (See Right) She has firmly said that she is standing down as Dinner Officer so you will need to find a replacement for her next year (as well as for Editor!). The Club "Wessex Girls 2004" Calendar went on sale during the evening.



Frank Frost Journal Prize. Because time was running out Don Thomson was unable to announce the winner. It is

awarded for the best article published each year. This is what Don would have said. "This Year has been a difficult choice. In the end it came down between three of the 2003 offerings. Journal No 284, April 2003 contained a good article by **Phil Short** entitled "Russia 2002" This featured the expedition to the Caucasus and the diving that went with it. It was a commendable article contributing not only to the knowledge of an infrequently visited area, but the trip itself must have done much for international relations.

Another write-up in the publication for February issue (No 283) described all the excitement of a first time visit to the Herault district in Southern France. The enthusiasm came over clearly. It was well written by **Christine Grosart** and merits special mention.

After a great deal of heart searching I felt the award should go to **Richard Witcombe** for his magnus opus on digging at Thrupe. I can't say it made me want to rush into offering to join the team, but it did bring back memories and the picture on the front could have been North Hill. It was so well written and detailed that I felt it to be the winner." (Richard will receive £10.)

Library Acquisitions, as at 16 August 2018

- B.E.C. Belfry Bulletin 53, 2 (516) (Aug 2003) (*Hunter's Lodge Inn Sink – recent discoveries*)
3 (517) (Autumn 2003) (*Hunter's Lodge Inn Sink, St. Cuthbert's Swallet, Ore's Close*)
B.C.R.A. Cave & Karst Science 29, 3 (2002)
B.C.R.A. Bull. 'Speleology' No.3 (Sep 2003) (incl. CO₂, Matienzo 2002, Mendip Caving 2003)
Chelsea S.S. N/L 48, 8-9 (Aug/Sep 2003), 10 (Oct/Nov 2003)
Craven Pothole Club. Record. No. 72 (Oct 2003) (*Hot air balloons in the Verna, and laser survey of Gaping Gill main chamber*)
Croydon Caving Club 'Pelobates' (N/L) No. 82 (Aug 2003)
Descent No. 174 (Oct/Nov 2003)
Grosvenor Caving Club N/L 125 (Aug 2003), No. 126 (Oct 2003)
Gruppo Speleologico San Giusto (Italy) 'Ipogea' Vol. 3 (2000, Publ. 2001)
(Mainly English language)
Kentucky Caver (Magazine) (Apr-Aug 2003)
M.N.R.C. N/L No. 97 (Aug-Sep 2003)
N.S.S. News 61, 7 (July 2003) 8 (Aug 2003)
Pholeos (J. Wittenburg Univ. S.S., USA) 21, 1,2 (Jun 2003)
Regards (Bull. Soc. Spél de Wallonie, Belgium) 49 (Jul/Aug 2003), 50 (Sep/Oct 2003)
SMCC Jnl. Series 11 No. 3 Spring 2003. (*Expeditions to Umphang & Mae Sot, Tak Province, Thailand*)
South Wales Caving Club N/L No. 123 (2003)
Speleological Union of Ireland / Irish CRO N/L 57 (Autumn 2003)
Westminster Speleological Group N/L 2003/3 (July 2003)
White Rose P.C. N/L 22, 3 (Aug 2003)
- Explorer 1:25 000 OS Map Chippenham and Bradford-on-Avon (Stone mines area)
(For reference at Upper Pitts only)

The Club is grateful for the donation of several items for the Library (too numerous to mention) plus old diving gear, Read's Cavern MRO notice etc.

Notice, Lost survey kit

One of the Club sets of survey equipment is missing (Suunto compass and clino). Its return would be appreciated – can anyone help?

Points from the President's Remarks at the AGM by Don Thomson

I would like to welcome the Club to the AGM. This is the opportunity for Members to state their views, and offer their opinions on Club matters, on Club policy and how well they think the club has

been run during the preceding year. It is a chance to discuss whether the club has been run in accordance to the wishes of members. It is also a chance to put faces to names.

Club membership seems a little down on last year. Perhaps this just means that the club is about at the appropriate size and will continue to vary about a mean. It may mean there are more specialist organisations available or that there is some independent caving. Quite a number of divers have joined: perhaps the exploration of the further reaches of Swildons is something to do with this.

The Club has been very active overseas, with expeditions to Ireland and to the Herault district of France and to the Dent de Crolles, but also to Matienzo in Spain. These trips have been written up and shared with us in the Journal.

There have been digs at Thrupe, Eastwater, and Swildons, at Shute and at Templeton, the latter being a splendid place for spectator digging.

Tackle is mostly under control. There seems to be a few items missing, presumably accompanied by missing signatures. The Club has always suffered from this and it may indicate that a lot of caving is being done. But could we have our tackle back please?

The Journal keeps us up to date with progress at the Club H Q and with the social events such as the Wessex Challenge, accounts of the caving activities and a little bit of history in the log notes.

There are still some outstanding matters to resolve. The question of insurance is a big one, with its relationship with the possible BCRA and NCA merger, and this will be coming up for discussion.

We welcome the following new members, elected 18/10/03

John Whitely, Lower Cottage, Harcombe Farm, Chudleigh, Devon, TQ13 0DG 01626 859005

Jonathon Edwards, 12 Alma Road Avenue, Bristol, BS8 2 DH, 07884 498169 jaa-edwards@Jack21.com

Changes of Address

Dave Cooke, 3 Starrs Close, Axbridge, Somerset BS26 2BZ 01934 733260 **Not as in Membership list.**
chairman@wessex-cave-club.org

Ian Timney

iantimney.builder@vergin.net

Transcript (warts and all) of the Dent de Crolles Log Book. Part 1.

Humping kit to Trou (06. 45)

*Pete Hann, Andy Judd, Mike Thomas, Christine Grosart,
Roz Fielder, Gordon?, Noel Cleave, and Malc Foyle.*

Down Trou du Glaz (1200!!) out Guiers.

*Nik Nak, Tav, Kate, Jo, Mad Phil, Alison,
Dave Crane, Kevin, Emma.*

Route finding? to p40.

Lou and Vern.

Up Guiers Mort;- Trou du Glaz

*Mark Helmore, Bean, Paul Wakeling, John Biffin,
Jim Phillips*

Rigging trip to bottom of the Cascades (High Level). Met other group at Cascades. Stopped for dinner. Stomped on to look at Fernand? and other shafts before turning around to go out Trou de Glaz. Slow walk with kit back down to car park.

Trip with Nik Nak, rigging Trou to Guiers. Excellent caving for all, with much fun on the Banana Pitch.

12/8/13 Trou to Guiers, via Metro.

Nik Nak, Tav, Kate, Jo, Ali, Simon, Noel, Roz.

All very impressed with the Metro. Some of us went upstream in Guiers to find the base of the Puit Chevalier. (Nik Nak's return time of 40 minutes was more like 2 hours!

11/8/03 Trou du Glaz to Grotte Annette.

*Malc Foyle, Dillon, Mike Thomas, Christine Grosart,
Suntan, Andy Judd and Pete Hann.*

Rigging Trip and lots of fun navigating. C G acquired a new nickname (Peach Bum) and Malc frightened Andy into a tirade of no, no, no, no, etc. excellent trip.

11/8/03 Guiers Mort round trip

Cookie and Alan.

Warming up trip. A spot of exploration in the entrance series. (Cookie)13/8/03.

13/8/03 Trou du Glaz to Chevalier.

Stuart, Alan, Cookie

"Rigging trip" Took 3 bags of rope through the system took for the laugh – those sneaky French had left the route rigged. Tip Top Trip. Meet Suntan and Dave at Maurice Pitch coming the other way. The climb up out of Chevalier goes on a bit, but the stunning views at the end make it all worthwhile. (Cookie)

15/8/03 Trou du Glaz to Annette

Kev, Em, Mak,, Mr Dave, and Cookie.

Magnificent trip. Away early, nice pace, excellent company. Back early afternoon in time for crepes.

12/8/03 Annette to Guiers (via 'orrible streamway.)

Beaner, Mark, Phil, Paul, Bif.

Annette straight forward. – didn't get lost in P36 locality – this time. (Bif)

14/8/03 P40 to Guiers.

Beaner, Phil, Paul W, Carmen, Bif.

Didn't use streamway route this time!!

P40 partly rigged and relatively straightforward. (Bif)

Carmen caused havoc all day with carbide bombs? Tackle sack bombs and being a suicidal human bomb. (Bif)

16/8/03 Maurice, Judy and John Thomas

Guiers.

Up to Guiers Mort. Tried video on "night shot" in main chamber with 3 torches.

16/8/03 Trou to Chevalier.

Bob Pike, Biggles (Noel), Carmen, Taz, Patrick Warren and Bif.

Effective navigation by Patrick. In contrast Biggles got lost at top of lantern pitches. Sorry old chap. (Bif).

16/8/03 Guiers Vif.

Long hot steep walk –up-40 minuets, my ass! " 2 hours 15 minuets for me and Gordon carried my gear! Once at cave a dramatic temperature change., very odd- explored cave.- dry walk, rocks, boulders to sump- crystal clear water with line in situ. On to a perched sump and a bit of a climb over a gully/water hole- the word "traverse" came into vocabulary. Wonderful views at entrance/exit – walked up to the cascade – Photo's of Roz and Gordon at top of waterfall. Fielder family, resembled the Von Trapp family.

With Tav, Alison, Pauline, Gordon Kaye 1 hour 15 minutes to get down to Flat. Threw myself into the stream and begged Tav for time for ice cream. Quick dash back- his tea was waiting for him.

Excellent day out- even though I am aching.

Pauline Grosart.

19/8/03 Alison's trip out to Grotte Perret

With:- Tav, Dillon + Issy and Hannah, Taz, Bean + Jacob, Emma, Kevin, Biff and Lou + George and Andrew Gordon, Carmen, Maurice, Judy, Pauline and Fred.

Alison said it was 20 minute walk up through trees and mostly flat. NOT!! Fifty minutes up + ups+ downs + slippery bits. Suntan's food box handle broke in half on way up and made it difficult to carry.

Got to a viewing point, stopped to photo the scenery. Suntan and Pauline got left behind and we got lost! Thought we'd missed the route but eventually got rescued and called to right direction. Cave entrance big and dry, with smaller cave entrance to left of main entrance.

Inside – dry rocks and moving boulders, ups and downs! Climbed up a wall with iron bars sticking out for a ladder – widely spaced out for the 7ft man. Got the children and babies up with help and then I went up. – with guidance from Carmen and Suntan. Once at the top, more passages with water and sculptured walls and lots of deep and clear pools of water – "scalloping", continued on to a gully with deepish water in. Taz turned round with Hannah. I decided it was easier to swim through than go along the wall, iron bars and possibly fall off.

Suntan and I continued on to a big sump with wire attached – met Fred Felstead coming up out of sump and said he was not going any further. Suntan went in and through the sump and said it was good but cold. "Actually, I'd like to have a go"- "Oh shit" he said "Now I've got to go back in!" And it was freezing but a deep pool of water – could not touch the bottom and off I went. Held onto the line and whizzed through to the end. Got up onto a rock ledge. Suntan got out and lost his head torch – fell into the water and he could not find it. I shone my torch and saw it floating away. He reached out and got it back.

We went on down the prettiest streamway I've ever seen, lots of clear pools of water and rocky ledges went on until we decided we were cold enough – should return now. Got back to the iron bar drop and met up with Maurice and Judy, complete with film crew.- carried on to the exit – met brilliant sunshine and ate our picnic.

To the bottom of valley – slid down steep muddy track on my bottom – safer than falling – very steep – to the river at the bottom. Deep deep clear water, fairly fast flowing – got in wearing leggings and bikini top – forgot all our swimming gear so "undies" were the order of the day. Emms, Pauline, Kev, Taz had got in for an icy swim. Invigorating to say the least... Suntan still in his furry – jumped in a deep pool. It was a fantastic day out. Best caving trip for me so far. Thanks Ali. **Pauline Grosart.**

To be continued.

Liber Exoniensis by Friar Westerne

The following was extracted from the Exeter edition of the Domesday Book

“Rex ht. 1. Manifore que Sumus Fossa. q tenuit spelunca Wessexus. Non cavere. Oxdo ibat in expedition patatio. Spelunca vergus ebriosus il vectigal vitare. Rex descendere caverna intercludere. Tenuit Natus gerere modustus.”

This is a very puzzling entry, some of which may not be accurate or even true. However it does contain some undeniable facts and illustrates the power the land owner (the King) had over those he or others had given title to. There are those that would question the reference to Natus as being the ravings of a “nut case” Here then is a rough translation.

The King has a manor called Upper Pitts which is held by the Wessex cavers. They go on an expedition and get “rat arsed”. Cavers are a drunken rabble. The King will send them (the Wessex) down a wet cave, (probably a reference to Swildons) and fill in the entrance. Having got rid of this drunken rabble he will give Upper Pitts to the BEC because they are so well behaved and pay their taxes.

That this threat was not carried out is thought to be entirely due to the efforts of one Nitidus Paulinus and a promise to keep the kitchen tidy. This may seem a small thing but it is where the booze was kept.

Old Roman saying “**Ille moderatio cullina moderatio fermentum**”

More Club News

Hidden Earth.The Wessex were prominent at this year’s conference at Upton on Severn in October, both as organisers and as delegates. Most of the technical team each year are members of the club. Our boiler fund T-shirt, which was designed by Robin Gray and based on an idea by Pauline won £30 in the T-shirt competition and has naturally gone into the boiler fund.

Kitchen hot water. Those who have recently visited Upper Pitts will have noticed that the sink is supplied with hot water electrically. The old ladies room shower heater has been cunningly used for this purpose and the shower now runs off the new boiler, the same as the changing room showers.

Caving Secretary’s Report 2002/3 extracts, by Les Williams. (Presented at the AGM.) Unfortunately, due to work commitments I was unable to make the deadline to get my report into the AGM handbook. I apologise for this and offer my report here.

The club has been very busy over the past year, with many trips around the country and much further afield. The club trip to the Dent de Crolles was very successful and was enjoyed by a large number of club members and their family and friends. Thanks are due to Simon Richards (Nik Nak) for organising this.

I would like to thank Keith Sanderson, Northern Caving Secretary, for again supplying a full list of Yorkshire meets. His sterling service to the club makes my job much easier. The club meets to Devon, Wales and Derbyshire were well attended and enjoyed by all who took part. Thanks are due to Phil Hendy for organising the well-attended “grotty holes of Mendip” meet.

Club members have been seen all around the world again this year, on trips to Ireland, Spain, France, Tenerife and even as far away as Australia. (Some members have also been seen caving on Mendip. This is how it should be!)

We don’t seem to write up all our trips for the Journal. (I’m as guilty as most on this.), so it might not be apparent to some people what we do as a club. A recent convert from

another club expressed great surprise at how much we are doing. We are a very active club and that is to our credit.

The club again supplied a large amount of volunteers for "Hidden Earth," the National Caving Conference and several members helped to organise "Mendip Caving 2003", a very successful regional caving event. Thank you all very much; caving is all the richer for your efforts.

There is another matter I feel which I feel I need to draw your attention to, caving politics. Plans are very advanced to form a new governing body for our sport., under the banner of a "One Stop Shop for Caving". It is envisaged that all the services of BCRA, NCA and the Regional Caving Councils will be available by membership through a new single organisation, the British Caving Association. The club is very active in this process and will be representing you at a special meeting of NCA on Nov 1st. We would welcome your comments and opinions on this process.

The mines and caves of Ores Close

Dave Irwin recently sent an interesting and detailed article on Ores Close to both the Wessex Journal and The Belfry Bulletin. The BEC made a good job of publishing it in their Autumn edition and it seems unnecessary to duplicate it here. However, it featured Wessex members, including Luke Devenish and it is well worth a look at in the library. Thanks Dave. Now you are a Vice President perhaps you will continue to keep us in mind.

The proposed Swildons book

The group set up at the AGM to progress the book held an initial meeting, with Jim Hanwell as Co-ordinator. Those also involved are Dave Irwin, Rich Witcombe, Brian Prewer, Phil Hendy, Adrian Vanderplank, Alison Moody and Pete Hann.

The History section has been completed and photographs are being sought. If you have any photo's that you think may be of use, please contact Phil, Prew or Pete. Of particular interest are those taken on exploration and early trips and trips into difficult places where few photographers venture.

Next year is the 70th anniversary of the formation of the Wessex and it is hoped to produce the book in time for the Annual Dinner.



A happy party on the Chamechaud. Photo Noel Cleave.

Contents

List of Officers.		Page 102
The Club trip to the Chartreuse.		Page 103
P40 a personal Memory.	By Noel Cleave	Page 103
Fairman's Folly.	By Phil Hendy.	Page 105
Extracts from the Upper Pitts Log.	By Brian Prewer.	Page 106
Fourth Time Lucky Digging at Thrupe.	By Richard Witcombe.	Page 110
Swildons Twelve update, from the Log.	By Andy Chell et al.	Page 112
Club News.		Pages 113 and 118
The Dent de Crolles Log Book. Part 1		Page 116
Liber Exoniensis.	By Friar Westerne.	Page 118

Forthcoming events.

Committee Meetings ; 7 Dec 2003, 8 Feb, 28 March, 6 June, 25 July, 5 Sept, 2004.

Herault Cave Diving Trip; 7 – 21 August 2004. Details from Malc Foyle or Mike Thomas.

Club trip to the Jura; 24 July- 8 August 2004. Details from Kevin Hilton.

AGM and 70th anniversary Annual Dinner 16 October 2004.

Watch the Web Page and E Mails for updates of trips and other news.



“Wessex Girls 2004” Calendar

Limited edition. Get your copy now.

Price £7-50 from the sales cupboard.

Ask a committee member.

Cave Rescue Callout Procedure

Now that many call centres are moving overseas, it could be awkward when dialling 999 for Cave Rescue. This was the case with the Otter Hole Rescue. The advice from the UK's Search and Rescue Group, adapted for caving is as follows:

(Descent 174, Oct/Nov 2003)

1. Dial 999 or 112
2. Ask for the police (if known, ask for the specific Police force for the area.)
3. Once in contact with the Police, ask for Cave Rescue.
4. Give your location and the nature of the emergency.
5. Give your telephone number.
6. Note that mobile text messages may get through where voice cannot.

We congratulate Gavin Newman. His Wookey video won first prize at the Kendal Film Festival.