



# Hampshire Scout Caving Club



## Newsletter Autumn 2007



*photo – David Chadwick*

### Swildons Long Dry Way

**HSCC web site URL : [www.scouts-hants.org.uk/hsccl](http://www.scouts-hants.org.uk/hsccl)**

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Date	Time	Activity	Venue	Contact
3.10.07	20:00	Meeting - climbing	Fort Purbrook	Sue Chase
6/7.10.07		Caving days	Mendip	Andy Watson
7.11.07	20:00	Meeting - talk	12 <sup>th</sup> Eastleigh - Bishopstoke	Sue Chase
24/25.11.07		Wales trip	Brecon Scout Hut	David Chadwick
5.12.07	20:00	Meeting - Quiz	12 <sup>th</sup> Eastleigh - Bishopstoke	Sue Chase
23.12.07		Caving - Thrupe Lane	Mendip	David Chadwick
30/31.12.07		Caving	Mendip - MNRC	David Chadwick
2.1.08	19:00	Meeting - SRT practice	Sandleheath Scout Centre	Ros white
12.1.08		Christmas meal		Sue Chase
2/3.2.08		Birthday caving trips	Mendip - MNRC	Sue Chase
6.2.08	20:00	Meeting - AGM	12 <sup>th</sup> Eastleigh - Bishopstoke	Sue Chase
5.3.08	20:00	Meeting - rigging practice	12 <sup>th</sup> Eastleigh - Bishopstoke	Phil Candy
15/16.3.08		Caving days	Mendip	Andy Watson
21-25.3.08		Derbyshire	Orpheus	Sue Chase

## HSCC News

Kirsty was 18 in August. Most of HSCC went to her Birthday party, which raised lots of money for Royal Marsden hospital.

Sally has moved back to Bristol (from Cardiff). She went caving in Romania with UBSS over summer.

Chris (Carter) married Abbie earlier in the year.

Tim Clarke was a member of the scout Sky high team which climbed Everest this year. We hope he will come and give a talk to Caving Club about it later this year.

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### HSCC trips 2007 (so far) :

These include : SRT practice at Sandleheath Scout Centre, Alum pot, Aveline's Hole, Barr Pot, Bixhead Stone Quarry, Black Head caves, Bridge Cave, Calf Holes & Browgill, Coolagh River Cave, County Pot, Craig y ffynion, Cullaun 2, Cwm Dwr, Doolion River Cave, Eldon Hole, Fairy Cave, Fermoy East cave, Fergus River cave, GB, Goatchurch Cavern, Great Douk cave, Heale Farm cave, Giants Hole, Hilliers, Hunters Hole, Jackpot, Kilcorney, Lancaster Hole, Longwood August, Lost John, Manor Farm, Marble Steps, Maskhill Mine, Miss Graces Lane, Noxon iron Mine, Odin Mine, Ogof Carno, Oxlow, Pierre's Pot, Pillar Holes, Poldonough, Poulmagollum, Poulelva, Rod's Pot, Sell Gill, Sidcot Swallet, Singing River Mine, Slaughter Stream Cave, Swildons Hole, Town Drain, White Lady, Wigpool Iron Mine, Yordas Pot & Cave.

Tell me what I've missed off. I took this list from the Club Log - so if its not on the list, its probably because you didn't put it in the log

## Beer Head Cave, East Devon - 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2007 by Andy Watson

Back in 2005 Sue and I (Andy Watson) visited my elderly parents in Seaton, Devon. We took out caving kit so during their necessary afternoon rest we could do some HSCC/MNRC member intrepid exploring. I bought a reprint copy of the 1986 Tony Oldham book 'The Concise Caves of Devon'. In it is Hooken Adit also known as Beer Smugglers Cave which we successfully found and visited previously. It is a beer stone mine come natural bedding plane, which is worth a visit if you are in the area. Also near Beer there is Beer Quarry Caves, a show cave/mine that is moderately interesting too.

Also noted in the caving book is Beer Head Cave in the same area, which after 5 visits with maps we failed to locate. This visit however armed with a GPS I was determined to find it, if it still existed, as many of these chalky type based caves don't always last long. I ranted and raved through brambles and gorse and finally; A stunningly impressive entrance with some knotted rope hanging out of it. Excellent job.

A climb in of 8 foot onto slippery chalk floor drops away down into a small chamber at the foot of an impressively high fairly but dodgy looking rift, with an 'interesting bouldery roof'. You can progress along the bottom for a while until it becomes too tight. A small side chamber also contains a delightfully unstable rocky roof and a smiling Sue, see the picture. It has a few juicy spiders (see photo).



Sue 2



Spiders



Climb Out

The climb out from the main chamber is also shown with the dodgy rope.

## Ogof Carno - HSCC Wales Trip 26<sup>th</sup> May 2007 by Andy Watson

Having visited Ogof Carno before we knew what to expect, and we hoped to get further this time. You tend to forget what a "sporting" cave it is.

The initial group was Sue Chase, Phil Candy, Ralph Candy, Gavin Bankcroft and myself (Andy Watson) and the plan was for Dave Chadwick, Ros White and Sally White also to do the cave later in the day.

The entrance is in the valley below the empty Carno Reservoir at the back of the housing estate, so car security is fairly important. You park on a bend on the rough access track to a couple of detached houses up the hillside.

The entrance to the cave was discovered with a few other cavey rifts and holes from an adit that was dug in the 1800's connected with the construction of the reservoir and dam. The access route is through this adit which has a locked gate (unsurprisingly), it is essentially a horizontal mine tunnel some 3000 metres long and absolutely straight, driven straight into the mountain. It is partly bricked and partly naturally supporting. Water is fed into Adit via various drainage pipes now and it is known to flood rarely, but unfortunately we are told this flooding is rather unpredictable at the entrance end of the adit.



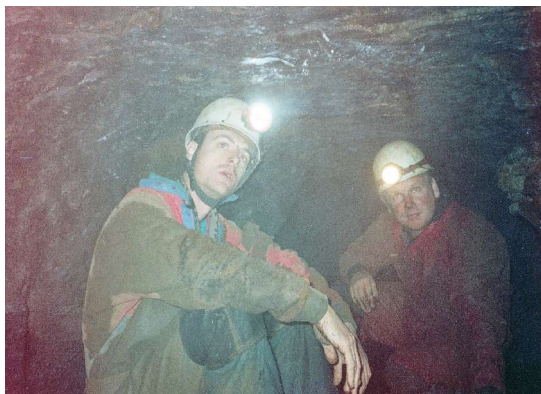
**The Team**

After walking some 1750 metres in this tunnel (distance not validated as pacing left stone variability in ones mind, especially Ralph's) marked by the large distance wall markings. There is a gap in the right hand side of the brick tunnel lining (just after the road works sign) and a 1750m marking.

A short climb down on a dodgy plank and acro support leads to a square dug crawl and through to the entrance into the top of a medium sized chamber with a fairly exposed fixed ladder to allow the climb down of 20 feet or so to the rocky chamber bottom.

The passage then zig zags through some wet bits one of which does sump sometimes and we progressed through some more rifts and an interesting bit called 'sponge work' passage eventually to Dump 1, a place with some emergency kit (see picture of us).

Somewhere along the way Philip got stuck in this hole (see photo) and got very grumpy trying to get out of it and nearly strangled himself.



**Gav & Ralph**

Also after exiting the cave after about 4 hours and completing the adit walk, I went to find the man who had left a note on our car last year. He had claimed to have a cave in his garden. The others were all warming up having got changed, but I persuaded them to get their kit back on to have a look. We investigated his 'garden hole' with his blessing and found he in fact had a small coal mine on his property. This went in about 50 feet and had been back filled in places. We decided it was probably an old free miners mine and it was suitably smelly and fairly unstable - a very short visit was definitely enough - see photo of Gavin and Ralph.

Which cave (a) : " The entrance crawl opens into a small chamber and a squeeze into a larger boulder floored chamber..... Again carefully descend through the floor choke to the first pitch. This is tight, and a further, tighter boulder squeeze leads to .....

Which cave (b) : "A partly wet flat-out crawl ends after 45m at a squeeze. The next 55m are a meander maze with up to three possible routes though shelving limestone. After this, the old dry route leaves to the right, following an oxbow for 275m in the shelving layer before rejoining the main stream.

## Ireland 2007

The Club's third visit to Ireland started on Friday August 24<sup>th</sup> with members setting off from various parts of the south of England for the 2am Holyhead ferry for Dublin. Darrel found a large, white Land Rover on the M6 and decided the easiest way to navigate to Holyhead was to tuck in behind and follow. He was somewhat mystified when the LR detoured into Chester City Centre, pulled up at a roundabout, whereupon someone leaped out from the kerb and into the driving seat and proceeded to Holyhead (ask Ros about it if you are mystified too). The rest of the journey was fairly uneventful.

Four vehicles set off across to County Clare with directions to our cottages in Fanore, (near Doolin, which were strategically placed for the caving area of Burren) and without prior planning all met up in Athlone.

Sunday - plan A (good weather) was put into operation - Doolin River Cave through trip - 5 setting off from St Catherines and 6 from Fisher Street. Amy was coaxed down the ladders from Fisher Street and David navigated through from St Catherines. The two groups met up in the main streamway. After various discussions the teams were re-organised. David moved into reverse to show the Fisher Street team the way out and Amy decided to go back to the Fisher Street entrance (so Darrel had to go that way too). David still found navigation back a challenge and Phil commented that they would never have found their way out that way without David's help. All went well however and both teams emerged (Amy having been coaxed back up the ladder) to wonderful sunshine. Having exchanged car keys in the main streamway there was



*Doolin River Cave*



*St Catherines exit*

no hike or shuttle necessary, so we got back to the cottage in time for a swim/walk/grotty cave rummage or sleep. Trip time about 3 hours. Note - we had previously done the Arun View - Fisherstreet through trip (ever since known as the Arun Poo trip) but the St Catherines trip on our last visit was abandoned as both entrances were flooded (but this did mean we knew where the entrances were).

Monday - plan A (good weather) was engaged. Fergus River Cave. Sue, Phil, Susan, Ros & Dave. We eventually found the farmer to get permission and with much less difficulty found the entrance and set off (never done this cave before - always too wet). Amazed by the pretties. Route finding not a problem - but we seemed to hit the end of the cave with no way on!! We went back to look around again - and again!! Rummages everywhere. We were just about to give up when Ros commented on the draught about her head - look up - hole in the roof. - impossibly high and small. It was undoubtedly "The Nick". (We thought we had done that a couple of hours earlier!). After investigation we all decided we could not reach and / or fit through - so we went out - admiring the formations again on the way out.

The rest of the group had done the Pollnagollum/Poulelva through trip (Richard, Ralph, Andy and Sue 2) and found it unpleasantly smelly in places. Graham, Conner, Darrel and Amy rummaged about at the Pollnagollum entrance.

Tuesday - plan A - good weather - Ros, David and Darrel to Coolagh River. Intending to do trip from Poldonough to the main drain and out Poldonough South. Started ok - first bedding water very low. We then went wrong and the passage sumped out. Darrel was about to exit the cave (rapidly) but was persuaded into a high oxbow passage he had seen on the way in. This led on to the 4' pot. We were on course again. A little further on the water got deeper again - it looked as though it was going to sump out again and the water seemed to be backing up. We were all thoroughly wet and cold now, so we decided to abandon the trip as it seemed we could not get through. The other team (Sue, Phil, Andy, Sue 2 and Ralph) did Kilcorney to the top of the second ladder pitch. Lots of mud. Awkward ladders. Had fun!!

Wednesday - plan A - good weather - was employed - Kilcorney - Ros, Dave, Susan, Richard. Phil's directions took us straight to the cave entrance. Right about mud. We had bolts with us so we could rig the ladders from spits, but it was still not a good hang and the ladder twisted around as you descended. We went to the enormous gour pools

and waded through very cold, neck-deep water to find the next pitch. David thought it was too tight for him so Richard, next in line, climbed over him and rigged the pitch (2/10 for rigging - must do better), and went down followed by Susan (after a play with the rope to set up a bottom belay). Ros went through the "tight" bit easily and suggested Dave was being a wimp and could get through too, which he did. Ros got onto the ladder and was about to go down but was not impressed by rigging. After re-tying the releasable on the ladder (which was undone), she suggested Dave redo the rest of the rigging so the safety was off 2 hangers. Ros being part way down now continued. At the bottom here was more mud and a slither down to a sump. Richard rummaged, but the rest of us went back up (gour pools still cold and deep). All were now wet and cold, so we decided to go straight out. Ladders and rope were now coated with a thick layer of slimy mud making belaying difficult. All agreed it was fun trip.



*Kilcorney entrance*

Thursday - Pollnagollum/Poulelva through trip - Ros, Dave, Sue, Phil. The P-p through trip people took a while to locate entrances (resorted to Ros's GPS) and then went in wrong entrance at bottom of Pollnagollum pot and took a



*Poulelva Pot - rigging*

while to realise why did not recognise the route! We were looking for side passage with a pitch (we had ladders with us for it), but never found the pitch!. Phil found his way through more by instinct than good navigation. We found an inlet with flowstone so knew we were near where you go off right away from the stream. It took a while for us



*Sue In Poulmagollum*

to find as it was further on than we thought. The rest of trip was a bit of a scrabble through dry passages. The bottom of Poulelva Pot was full of frogs. Lovely SRT pitch (those who did it on ladders on our first visit to Clare will never forget the experience). Hope the ladders and lifelines we took with us enjoyed their trip - they didn't get used.



*Formations in Poulmagollum*



*Sue stopping for a cup of tea!*

After a cup of tea we went to look for Cullaun 3. Having read the description we had no intention of doing it. We found it with help from the GPS. The entrance was overgrown and a bit collapsed, you would need a shovel with you if you wanted to go in. David got half in!

Darrel, Amy, Graham, Conner, Richard, Ralph, Susan, Andy and Sue 2 all went to do Cullaun 2 - but never found it! They were looking in the wrong place.

Friday - Coolagh River Cave - through trip from Poldonough to the main drain - Ros, Dave, Sue, Phil. Andy, Sue 2. Went straight through to main drain with no problems. Lot less water in second bedding than last time we did it 7 years ago (only just enough air space to breathe). Fixed a line to old piton then David launched himself with the line into main streamway and swam to far side. Phil went to the edge and was looking about, but fell in! Dave and Phil then held the line tight, so everyone else could get across more gracefully.



*David half in Cullaun 3*

We went on down to where you start clambering over large rocks, went on for a while, then returned the same way. All very uneventful, but a good trip. The main drain was a bit disappointing. Last time we were there the water was stonking down, incredibly noisy and washing you downstream. Awesome. Bit tamer this time. Richard, Susan, Ralph did Cullaun 2, they managed to find it this time.

Saturday - Ros, Dave, Andy, Sue 2 went walking in Fermoy East area, found cave but couldn't find a second one which should be there, despite use of GPS. We had a good walk though, with antastastic views (limestone pavement!).



*David on a cave hunt*

After a leisurley drive across Ireland, stopping to admire water polo being played on a canal somewhere, we all met up just outside Dublin for the 9pm ferry home, arriving back in Hampshire in the late, early hours of Sunday!!



*Sue 2 in entrance of Fermoy East*

Good caving all week and amazing scenery. No doubt we will be going back again.



*Wild Flowers*



*Harebells*



*More Wild Flowers*

Photos by David Chadwick and Ros White (can't remember who took which ones).









## Images of Burren

Limestone, grey and ancient, cracked and scoured and bleached, tidied up into walls and boundaries,  
Huge boulders left behind, full of fossils,  
Pavement forming the ground, the very foundations of the place,

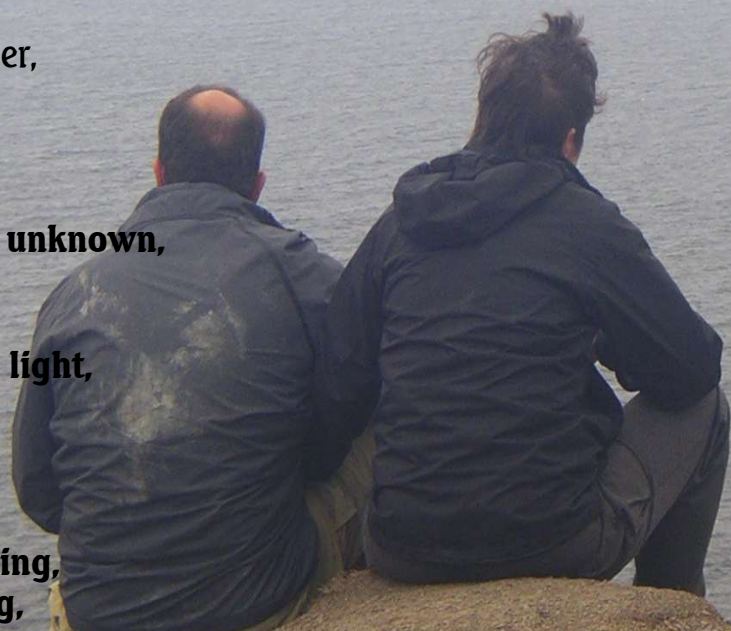


And everywhere flowers, pink, yellow, blue, white and thick green grass,  
Knapweed, scabious, medic, self-heal, woundwort and nettle, harebells and brambles,  
Ox-eye daisies floating in drifts along the pathways,  
Exotic orchids hidden among the grasses.

Sea the colour of washing powder adverts, deep blue and swirling white foam,  
Edges of yellow sand, limestone reaching out under the sea,  
rock pools with sudden flashes of life,  
slow moving whelks, waving anemones  
Gannets flashing past,  
vivid white, terns diving for dinner,  
each meal a little white splash.  
Big fat banana seals stretching lazily on the weedy rocks.

Hidden beneath it all, unseen, unknown,  
dark, damp places,  
noisy with the rushing water  
carving its way through to the light,  
sculpted shapes, scallops,  
stone flowing over stone,  
quiet undisturbed, peaceful.

Explorers, new territory, climbing,  
descending, wading, swimming,  
seeking ways on, choices, companions, team-mates... friends.



Sue Chase, September 2007

## Caving in Romania with UBSS - Sally White

I visited ten different caves while out in Romania. There was a huge amount of variety; streamways you could swim in, interesting climbs, SRT, crawling sections and plenty of mud to get through. There were plenty of bats, amazing crystals (I can't remember their name), masses of intricate helictites, and huge calcite formations.

My favourite cave has to be Topolnita. The top section has a ridiculous amount of formations, including a crystal pool and calcite formations on a scale far grander than I have seen in the UK.

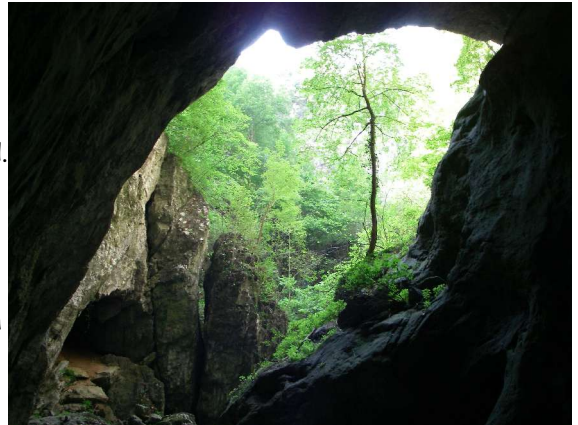
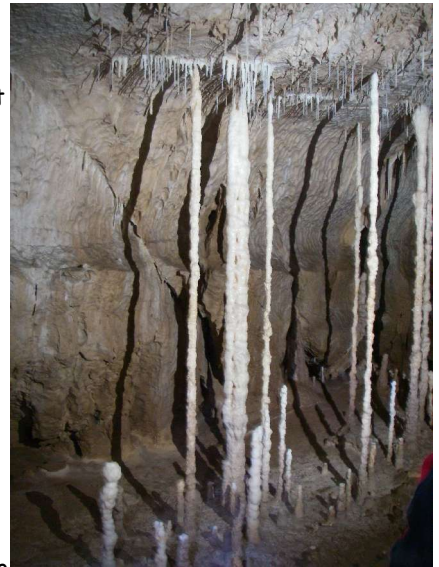


After admiring all the pretties, we returned out the same entrance we had entered. We then walked down the cliff to the entrance of the bottom section (they do

meet up under the surface ... somehow). This section of cave

was very different to the top section we had visited. It consisted

of a rather straight, large passage. The rocky walls having no decoration, yet it had one redeeming feature that turned it into everyone's favourite cave: lots of water! We swam through the cave and popped out on the other side of the hill, where everyone played in the water.



The areas we stayed in felt like a step back in time. Farmers rode on horse and carts down the bumpy, dusty tracks. Driving required much concentration as you had to constantly veer to either side of the road, depending which had less potholes. The marketplaces were laid back, with people selling their home-grown produce. On the last day we visited a city, which was more modern although most of the cars were still fairly old-fashioned. Taking into consideration the traditional methods of transport used in Romania, we decided to bop around the city. Yep SPACEHOPPERS! Adults gave us bemused looks, while kids looked jealous. In fact, we had to stop and let kids have a go on one. Luckily our Romanian friends had already got used to us. I'm not sure if they now think everyone in the UK is a bit odd.



## Lava-Tube Caves in Iceland

Ros offered Dave a weekend break somewhere as part of his birthday present. He choose Reykjavik! Needless to say, when we got there, we could not resist the temptation to find a cave to go down. We had no transport so had to resort to a grockle trip - but the leader abandoned us at cave entrance as he though we knew what they were doing. We were left to explorer on our own as the rest of the group went with the leader a different way.



The rock is not limestone, it is all volcanic (Iceland is all volcanoes). Lava from volcanoes usually leaves the point of eruption in channels. During long-lived eruptions lava flows tend to become "channelled" into a few main streams.

Overflows of lava from these streams solidify quickly and plaster on to the channel walls. These channels tend to stay very hot as their surroundings cool. This means

they slowly develop walls around them as the surrounding lava cools.

Sometimes the channels can get deep enough to crust over, forming an insulating tube that keeps the lava molten and serves as a conduit for the flowing lava. These types of lava tubes tend to be close to the lava eruption point



Tubes may also form when lava follows trenches or gulleys on the surface, which then roof over as lava accumulates along the top edges, cools and solidifies.

Such drained tubes commonly have step marks on their walls which mark the various depths at which the lava flowed. Also, lava tubes generally have flat floors and roofs. They contain many features similar to those in limestone caves, such as stalactites and

stalagmites, helictites, and a sort of flowstone.



Lava **stalactites** are rare in lava tubes. However, short lavacicles on the ceiling of a lava tube form as the lava in the tube retreats and the viscous lava on the ceiling drips as it cools. Dripstone is created when lava splashes on the inside walls of the tubes.

The tubes may run a long way - many kilometers and sometimes branch.



The entrances are where the roof is thin and has collapsed, and so you tend to drop down a hole into lava tube caves, rather than walk into them. If this has happened in more than one place you get a "through" trip. The cave we went in went off in both directions from the "hole" and also had a branch. Not exactly difficult navigation!



Although not rich in formations and not very long, it was certainly an interesting trip for those interested in geomorphology.

Photos by Ros White & David Chadwick