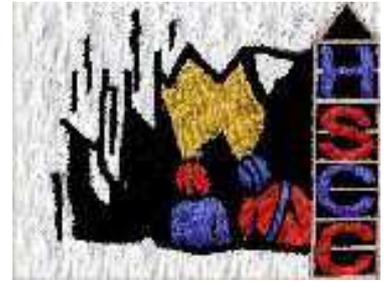




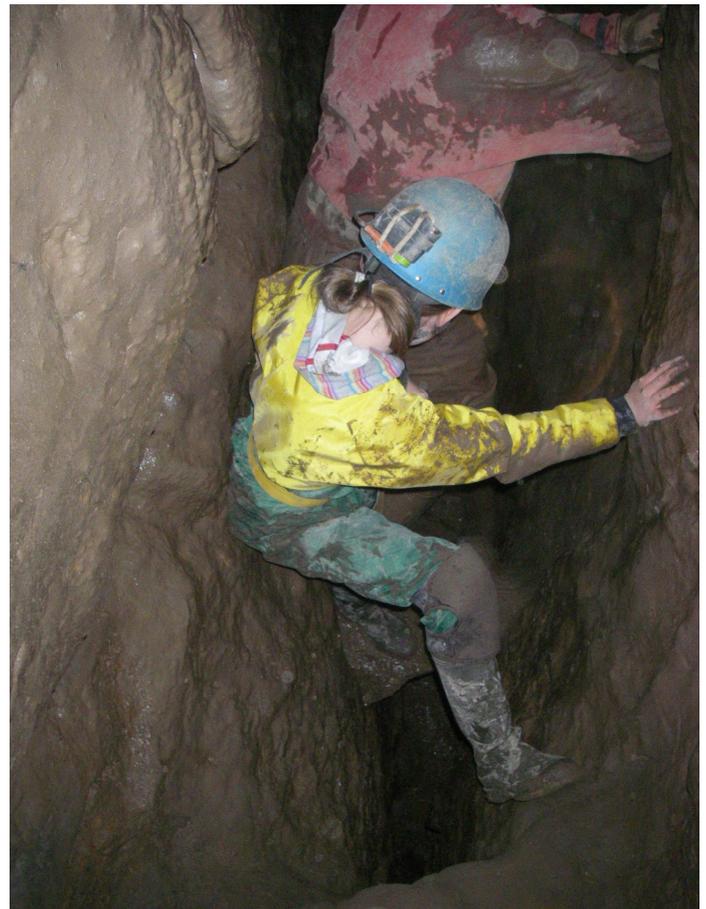
Hampshire Scout Caving Club



Summer 2010 Newsletter



Scout caving day in Goatchurch Cavern. Taken by
Dave Chadwick.



Scouts in Hilliers Cave. Taken by Ros White.

Website: www.scouts-hants.org.uk/hbcc
Hampshire Scout Caving Club Newsletter produced by Sally White.
Please send suggestions and articles to sally@randomstuff.org.uk

Contents

HSCC Contact Details of Officials and Programme	2
Bat Training Session	3
Daren Cilau Digging Trip February 2010	4
Otter Hole	5
The Grand Circle	7
Meghalaya 2010 Caving Expedition : Pushing Pala shaft	8
The Day I Become A Real Caver	9
Attermire Area	10
Mangle Hole	11
Mini Quiz	12

Online Sources of Information

HSCC website: www.scouts-hants.org.uk/hsc

UK Caving Forum for caving news, updates and chat: ukcaving.com/board/index.php

Caving UK (in association with Descent magazine): www.caving.uk.com/Resources/Pages/frame.html

CSCC website with updates: csc.org.uk/wiki/doku.php

Mendip Caves Map: www.ukcaves.co.uk/map-mendip

Free caving techniques book by Al Warild: cavediggers.com/vertical

Caving Shops

Cave Climb – Cheddar, Mendip – www.caveclimb.com

Hitch n Hike – Bamford, Derbyshire - www.hitchnhike.co.uk

Inglesport – Ingleton, Yorkshire - www.inglesport.co.uk

Bernies – Ingleton, Yorkshire - www.berniescafe.co.uk

Starless River – mobile shop - www.starlessriver.com

Excellent Stuff – www.excellentstuff.co.uk

JumpSuits – www.jumpsuits.randomstuff.org.uk

CAVE RELATED ISSUES AND NEWS

Credit Crunch Expedition – this was held in Derbyshire over the summer and was such a success, it is likely another one will happen next year

The combination lock on **Draenen** has been replaced with a key system. Unfortunately the fiasco with regards to access is still ongoing and the gates have been removed without permission.

HSCC Officials

Chairman	David Chadwick	Home Tel: 01425 654025 Mob: 07768 040088 The Roost, Abbotswell Rd, Frogham, Fordingbridge SP6 2JA David@theroost.Demon.co.uk
Administrator	Sue Chase	Home Tel: 02380 616056 Mob: 07817 636655 10, Drake Road, Bishopstoke, SO50 6EU schasesusan@aol.com
Equipment Warden	Phil Candy	Home Tel: 02380 616056 Mob: 07891 826195 10, Drake Road, Bishopstoke, SO50 6EU
Bookings Secretary	Andy Watson	Home Tel: 01256 354510 Mob: 07881 420048 lemoncandy@btinternet.com
Membership Secretary	Sue Watson	Home Tel: 01256 354510 Mob: 07766 523694

HSCC Programme 2010

Date	Time	Activity	Venue	Contact
7 July	19:30	Barbeque	Andy's house	Andy W.
13-18 Aug		Yorkshire	YSS	Phil C.
6 Oct	20:00	First Aid		Ros W.
30 Oct	10:00	Caving Day	Priddy Green	Andy W.
31 Oct		Caving Day	Priddy Green	Andy W.
3 Nov	20:00	Talk	12th Eastleigh Scout Hut	
1 Dec	20:00	Quiz	12th Eastleigh Scout Hut	Graham

MEMBERS NEWS

Alan Bannon, known as Norm, sadly died whilst at work as a fire fighter in April. He used to be in the caving club and will be missed by those who knew him.

Gemma Jones and Tom Nye are getting married in August

Dan Carter and Zecky Sayer are getting married soon.

Dave Chadwick has bought a house in the Yorkshire Dales.

Bat Training Session

By Sally White

Andy Chapman booked me and Ros on a bat training course as he thought we'd enjoy it. Nearer the time Dave decided he'd join us too, so off we all went to a tiny road side cafe in Derbyshire. Jim, the bat expert, met a small group of us there. He told us lots of interesting facts about bats and got us all handling bat poo, called guano. He talked about the many different species, their features and their different personalities!

Then we went off bat hunting. After a long time scouring the walls of an old mine, we found a bat. It wasn't what I was expecting to see, it was a little brown bundle of fluff sitting in a corner. I was used to Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats wrapped in their black wings and hanging from their toes. The

brown bundle was a Daubenton's bat that lives near water. There was a big pond not far outside the entrance.

I took a photo of the bat with the camera's flash turned off. Taking photos of bats is usually illegal. They are an endangered species and if they wake up it wastes vital energy and can cause them to starve if they cannot find prey. However, Jim had a license so we were allowed to take photos in his presence, if he decided it was safe to take them.

We didn't find any other bats but at least we had seen a species we'd never seen before. We learnt a lot about bats and really enjoyed the day.

About Bats

By Ros White

There are about 18 species of bat in the UK. The smallest is the pipistrelle, weighing about 5g weight. The biggest bats in the UK are still smaller than the palm of your hand. They all eat insects, usually catching them on the wing and find their prey by echolocation rather than by sight.



Photo from www.bats.org.uk

They roost rather than build a nest, in caves, eaves of houses etc. They mate during the autumn and then hibernate for the winter. The females store the sperm and do not become pregnant until spring when the weather is warmer. They gather together in maternity roosts to have their young, often at the same site each year. Pregnancy lasts between 6 and 9 weeks (depending on the species). They usually give birth to a single baby each year. Bats are very sensitive to disturbance during the maternity season and may abandon their young if this happens. For 4-5 weeks the young are suckled by their mothers until they are old enough to fly and they begin to venture out from the roost to forage

for food.

All UK bats and their roosts are protected by law. You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost

Lots of information at: <http://www.bats.org.uk/>



Photo from www.bats.org.uk

Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Pipistrelles are the commonest British bats. A single bat can eat 3,000 tiny insects in a night!

Daren Cilau Digging Trip February 2010

By Andy Watson

After the great discoveries of Frog Street, Cheese Aven and Southend passage we were determined to press on with the passage past Hopping Mad and The Inconvenient Truth. Some of the team went in early on the Friday, 26th February to work on the inconvenient truth and to have a quick look at the hopping mad potential. On Friday evening after we had all gathered together we shared a very appetising chilli con carne courtesy of Andy Snook at the exclusive Hard Rock Café. The full weekend team, after various cancellations and non-arrivals consisted of Steve Sharp, Andy Watson, Mark Lumley, Andy Snook and Charles Bailey.

After an early rise on Saturday morning for a breakfast of tea, more tea, bacon sandwiches, sausages, porridge and potato cakes saw Mark leaving to look at the inconvenient truth while the others went to work hopping mad and then as we progressed slowly Andy Snook went and joined Mark at the inconvenient truth. Later we all went to join them finding Mark with a headache and him and Andy Snook resting at the top of the hole in Frog St. We took the lunch of pitta bread with cheeses (brie & sliced chilli cheese) or ham slices lubricated by chilli relish. This was followed by chocolate bars all washed down with fresh cool Crystal Inlet water.

The new drag tray, a 10 L dishwasher fluid container kindly provided by the Methodist church in Shrewton, now suitably modified to be a good size and shape for the inconvenient truth's awkward access passage worked very well and this was put into good use along with Charles's drill bag for shifting a large amount of debris and rubble. The dry stone walling continued to rise above the access hole and it is now a significant climb over this to get to cheese aven and to the far extensions of Frog Street.

On Saturday evening we returned in phases to Hard Rock Cafe to find Charles offering to cook and what a creation; an interesting salmon pasta mix with spicy tomato relish which we all rather relished eating. It was elegant watching Charles cook in his long Egyptian dress and headwear and I must confess I was rather waiting for this to catch fire. It was my 50th birthday in January and Charles's 51st birthday also in January and we celebrated by having a Christmas cake complete with candles for our desert on Saturday evening. I was even allowed to sing for a very short time!

It was remarkable by the end of Saturday evening even after a few cocktails that we had four paraffin stoves working well and one Tilley lamp working exceptionally well while the other one was rather average. Any Tilley lamps out there please let us know.



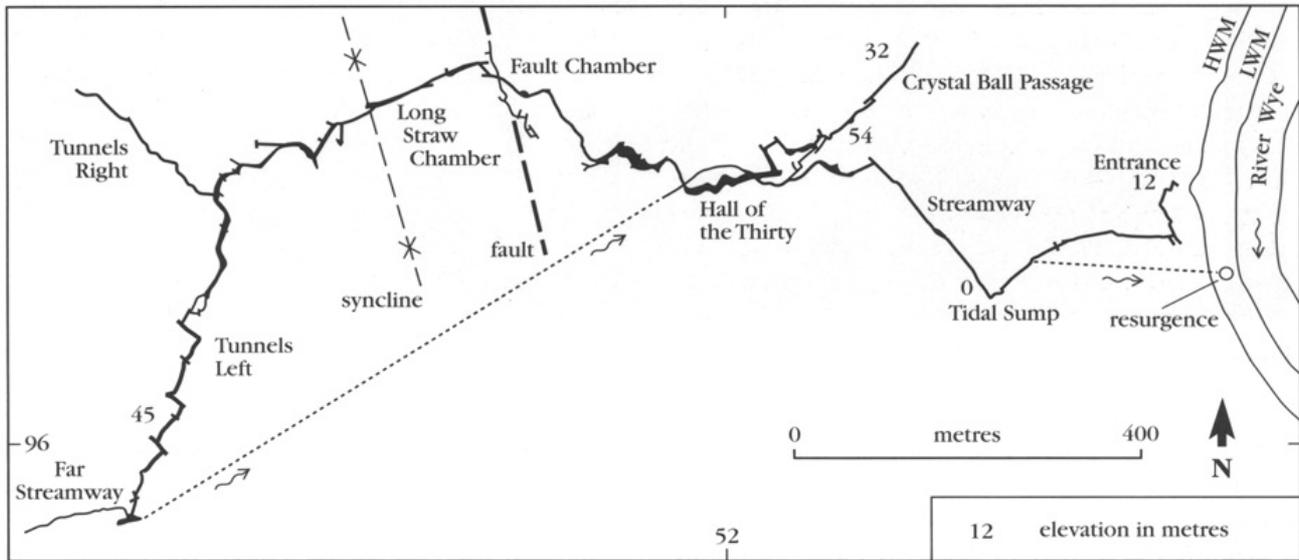
Birthday celebrations in Daren Cilau.

Somehow on the way in Steve Sharp managed to plunge his camera into the water and it failed to take any more photos that you could interpret. So on Saturday evening when Steve wanted to take some photographs of the sump at the end of the long square passage (can't remember the proper name) he put his memory stick into my Canon camera and used the borrowed tripod from camp and we made the 30 minute journey down to the diving sump and posed for Steve's photographs. It was extremely slippery on the rocks near the sump and all of us managed to get one wet foot, we must hope that our overnight shoes do not go mouldy between now and the next camp.

On Sunday morning we had some sausages and bacon for breakfast and phased leaving camp taking out some empty paraffin and water containers as required. The entrance series was extremely chilly and the weather outside was very windy and cloudy with patches of snow still on the high parts of the Brecon Beacons. Overall we had a very successful weekend underground camp and with some more digging both leads look like they will proceed into new passages, perhaps it is a leap of faith believing in caverns measureless to man?

Otter Hole

By Ros White



It was our turn again – having been on the first club trip to Otter Hole in 2003, just after there had been an accident in there when someone injured a leg. The rescue was interesting!!

Andy and Sue2 were also coming and as we were to meet at the car park at 8am we camped at Botony Bay camp site overnight. Our guide, Mike Skegg, arrived on time and we were soon on our way. Once he had ascertained that 3 of us had been in Otter Hole before he decided a trip to Long Straw Chamber was on the cards as it was an over-tide trip (10 hours or more in the cave).

The walk down to the river seemed longer than I remembered. Last time we were early at the car park so popped down the hill to look at the cave entrance, came back up before kitting up to go down again. As we went on further and further down I realised what a stupid idea this had been! Older and wiser now!

The entrance is fine, but after about 30 yards you slide down a rift and start crawling along a shallow bedding plane in tidal sludge. This is how I remembered it. A bit of a tortuous entrance series wriggling around in slimy, salty silt.

Before long we were at the sump – in quite good time apparently. Some time after the sump, we dropped down to a pool in the stream and using scrubbing brushes provided washed some of the glutinous mud off our oversuits. We went on towards Hall of Thirty, passing some impressive

formations on the way, but also squeezing through more muddy passages to get covered in a slightly less gooey mud. We stopped briefly for some food just before Hall of Thirty.

Last time we were there we encountered Gemma, unmistakable in her yellow Meander with "GEMMA" written boldly across it. Usually only one group is permitted in Otter Hole at a time, but because of the rescue, several trips had been cancelled and that day there were 3 groups in so enable the backlog to be sorted before the end of the Otter season (summer).



Hall of Thirty

Hall of Thirty is still awe inspiring – a climb up a large chamber among huge formations, large stalagmites of different colours due to mineral seepage - but difficult to photograph.

We didn't stay long but pressed on.

We came across some large black stalagmites and were warned that they contained arsenic, don't lick your fingers if you touch them, but best avoid touching! How the arsenic came to be there is another story (but the MOD deny all responsibility).

On to the camp (no longer used, but still a feature of the cave). We were carrying various containers of water and scrubbing brushes at this point – to do our conservation bit – cleaning the formations. We then re-filled the water containers at camp and took them on to deposit for other people to do some cleaning of formations further on.

The next section is quite hard work, lots of ups and downs, no walking. We went the wrong way very briefly at a junction - but our guide soon realised it was wrong, so we backtracked and found the turning to left.



Formations in Otter Hole

On we went until we encountered a huge formation on our left – floor to ceiling – the start of Long Straw Chamber. I heard Sue 2 saying "Wow" and "Oh! Wow" and "Wow". Apparently I was about to get to the really good bit of Otter – and it was. Totally impossible to describe – huge straws over 12feet long, flowstone all along the wall, 30feet high "angels without heads" (Sue's description), gour pools, crystal pools – everything – amazing. Sue and I elected to just stay and gawp at the formations whilst Dave, Andy and Mike went on a short way.

The end of the cave is not that far (time-wise) beyond Long Straw Chamber, and there are some nice formations, but nothing to compare to this – so there seemed no point in going on – stay and enjoy this.

On the way back we realised how far it was between long Straw Chamber and the camp. Once at the camp it seemed no distance to the Hall of Thirty, but then quite a slog back to the sump, now with the tide just out, liquid mud everywhere and slithery climbs near impossible to stand up on. Nearly 10 hours in the cave now and the final crawls in sloshy mud before finally daylight.

We wandered slowly up the hill to the wash-off area near the top. It was at this point that David decided he had lost his camera (I was seen bringing it out of the cave camouflaged in a large blob of mud), so we retraced our steps down the hill to the cave entrance – where there was no sign of the camera. We inspected the ground all the way back up looking for it and went back to the wash area where our bags were. David went to where he had sat down – and there on the ground was a large blob of mud!! Once again we had been up and down to the cave twice – maybe we'll never learn!

Despite the trudge up the hill, it was voted a fabulous trip, Hall of Thirty still brilliant but Long Straw Chamber definitely not to be missed – don't do the between tide trip – go for the big one.

The Grand Circle

By Sally White

Dave Chadwick had been considering doing The Grand Circle in Agen Allwedd for some time. Andy Chapman joined us on one of the research (i.e. try and find part of the way) trips and he decided that the next time we would complete the circle.



Photo by Dave Mason.

So the next time we packed our bag with plenty of chocolate and maltloaf before setting off. We went through the entrance section and continued down the same route we had taken last time involving some climbs, followed by stomping down the streamway. I found the wide traverse over Deep Water just as difficult as last time, but Dave gave me lots of encouragement.

The next obstacle was Boulder Choke 4 and where we turned round last time. We spent some time looking for the way on and eventually found the high

level crawling passage we had been searching for. It was very different to the large streamway passages previously. It led to some down climbs which dropped us into a huge passage. There was a streamway in the bottom of it and the size of the passage made it quite stunning. We ploughed down the streamway and I saw a rift passage leading off that could have been our way on, but Dave thought it was later. We continued on and the roof got lower and lower until we were at a sump. Back to the passage I'd spotted then. Once we'd retraced our steps to it we got out of the streamway and had our first proper rest, some four or five hours after going in.

We continued up the passage which was mostly at stooping height. Then we continued up this passage some more, then some more and finally, close to two hours later, we popped out back in the big sandy passage that linked with the entrance section.



Photo by Dave Mason.

It was a fantastic trip and well worth doing, but I was glad to be out and give it a big 'done' tick ... only to find out that Andy now wants us to do the Figure of Eight, which is The Grand Circle plus another circle!

Meghalaya 2010 Caving Expedition: Pushing Pala shaft

By Andy Chapman

After a long train journey from Delhi, I arrived in the Indian city of Shillong, in order to meet with the other members of the 2010 Meghalayan expedition. Two days were spent amassing gear, supplies and musical instruments for the camp in the Jaintia hills. This was followed by a 4 hour jeep journey which finally clocked in at 9 hours, after problems with suspension failure on one of the jeeps. We eventually arrived at the campsite, pitched tents and began planning the caving to be done over the next three weeks.

Next morning, Tom Chapman and myself decided to push Pala shaft in order to connect it to the river system, Krem Diengjem. A team of myself, Tom, Erfan, Leila and Cookie were assembled to push the system and set off on the back of a jeep to the cave entrance. 3 hours later, we arrived at the depression where Pala shaft is located. However, after looking at the map, it was found that the camp lay around about an hours walk away and we could have saved ourselves a number of bruises caused by being thrown around in the back of a jeep.

We pushed Pala shaft through a particularly dubious boulder choke, reminiscent of Eastwater, leading on to a 15 metre pitch. After sitting at the top, waiting for the team, I eventually decided it could be free climbed and set off down climbing, on slightly dubious footholds, eventually managing to get to the bottom unharmed. Tom followed and we climbed through a hole into a large passage, which continued on. Tom and I decided to leave it for tomorrow and both free climbed up the pitch, stopping to quickly rig a rope for faster and safer descent. Whilst Tom and I rigged, Cookie, Leila and Erfan surveyed the cave to the continuing passage using a DistoX and notebook.

The day after, Tom, myself, Erfan and Leila decided to push Pala shaft further. We followed the continuing passage until we hit 3 large shafts. After closer inspection, it was decided to rig the final shaft. We descended and discovered a short duck which surfaced in the Diengjem streamway. As no-one was wearing wetsuits, the team backed off and headed out for beer and curry back at camp.

Tom and I decided to head back to the streamway on the next trip, so suitably clad in wetsuits, we went through the duck, donned buoyancy aids and floated off downstream using Tom's 'force' to find

the way on into the mainstream passage leading to the Diengjem entrance. Whilst finding the way, Tom and I found a large amount of unsurveyed passage, which we made a mental note of and decided to return to.



Photo by Simon Brooks

The next trip, a team of myself, Simon (Brooks), Tom and Rashan returned to survey the new passage. A long day was spent surveying, floating in very cold water. A tired but happy team surfaced at 10pm, having surveyed some very complicated passage way.

Further trips revealed more side passages but other teams pushed the main passage while we concentrated on other cave systems in and around the Jaintia Hills for the rest of the expedition.

Meghalaya 2010 discovered over 25km of passage in numerous cave systems, with going leads being left for next year, so it is hoped the 2011 expedition will be equally as successful

The day I Became A Real Caver

By Sue Watson

Although I have been caving for 4 years and have made about 160 trips I never felt I was a real caver. I went on trips with 'real' cavers just tagging along.

The weekend of the 4th of April 2009 we had made plans to take some explorer scouts caving in Eglwys Faen. A few weeks before Andy had received an e-mail from Adrian Fawcett one of the Darren Cilau diggers to say on the Monday he was going to make a day trip into Daren to dig at the end of Frog Street and said he thought would go. Andy had brought a Tilly paraffin stove which he wanted to take in to Hard Rock Café camp, but he didn't want to take it on a weekend trip so thought it would be a good opportunity for him to take it in. He said flippantly did I want to go with him and in a moment of utter madness I said yes!!!! (anyway it was a long time away so didn't think any more about it).

The scout trip came, went and it was Sunday evening and we were due to go in the next morning and it suddenly hit me what had I agreed to. There was not much sleep that night and the alarm was set for 06.30 as we were due to go in at 8am. Andy had arranged for Andy S to join us because he wanted somebody to be at top and bottom of the pitch the first time I went up. No sooner had the alarm gone off than Andy received a call from Andy S to say he was unwell and would not be coming. A way out I thought!!! No such luck Adrian said he would follow us in a little later and would be at the top of the pitch for me! No way out of it then.



Heli beds in Daren Cilau. Taken by A. Watson.

So just before 8am we set off all kitted up minus belt so it wouldn't get caught in the entrance series. Even though I had been in Daren before on a day trip to the main pitch and back I had forgotten how near the cave is from the path so there wasn't even a long walk to delay things.

Fortunately there was very little water in the initial entrance crawl and off we set. Andy had his usual Daren bag filled with supplies for the day plus the Tilly stove which I was grateful for because it would slow him down and a small china frog which we had bought and were taking in to go in Frog Street. It was at the Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance that Adrian caught us up and I was beginning to feel a little tired!!! So by the time I reached the bottom of the pitch I was feeling even more tired. Although I has been to the bottom of the pitch before I had forgotten how big it was. I knew it was in two bits and the first bit is longer than the second part or so Andy had told me. So once clipped on I set off and reached the platform and looked up and discovered the second part is shorter by a fraction!!! On I went Andy had suggested I use my cows tails to help me get off the top but Adrian's instructions were very good and there was no need to use them. Adrian life-lined Andy up and then we set off to Frog Street. We plodded on and as we were talking about what was coming up Andy slipped in two rope climbs!! I knew about the traverse because that was another reason for having cows tails, but the rope climbs? Being only about 5'2" crawls are usually not too much of a problem but rope climbs made with foot loops made by giants are always a challenge. We were too far in now to turn back and we had come along way already or so I thought!!!

The traverse wasn't too bad and with a bit of help I managed to get down the rope climbs. How I was going to get back up was something I decided not to think about. On and on and on and on we trekked. Eventually I spotted the runway reflectors of Time machine. I had expected it to be big, but as we travelled along well, with my short legs it was more of a plod. As we continued along it reminded me of a hill we had climbed in Ireland, where you thought you were at the top and then another bit would appear then another and another. Just like that you thought you had got to the end of Time machine and then some more would appear.

Eventually we slipped down into Bonsai Streamway which I had expected to be a bit like the streamway in Swildons Hole but I should have guessed like everything in this cave it is longer and except for the entrance series, as I thought bigger than any other cave I had been in. We continued on and on and on by this time I was thinking, me who had no intention of sleeping underground, that I really fancied the

idea of curling up in a sleeping bag at Hard Rock Cafe, no such luxury as that for us. Eventually we got to the turning for Frog Street and another short rope climb and a ladder which I hadn't been told about! In for a penny, in for a pound I'd come to see the newly found Frog street area and we were there so I thought and I was going to be allowed to choose where the china frog would sit, if it was still in one piece. I should have known better to think we were there, because nothing about this cave is short, small maybe but short no.

Everybody says the entrance series is a tough crawl but being small I don't find it too difficult. So having done the entrance crawls I thought this crawling wouldn't be too bad, but what followed, in KPs dig was not what I could call a crawl, even I couldn't get my knees up. It was a flat-out tummy and face to the floor and uphill for what seemed like an eternity in reality about 40 minutes. I couldn't believe that anybody could be as mad as to go along this passage, never mind dig it. I have nothing but admiration for the diggers who dug the passage, but does admiration and lunacy go together, I'm not sure. What I was about to see was absolutely amazing something I've never seen and may never see again, the most breathtaking formations you could imagine. I was frightened to move in case of damaging anything in the formations as it went on

for much longer than I expected and continued in parts to the end of the Frog street and when we stopped at the Cheese Aven and we sat and had our lunch. Andy went up the aven to find Adrian (who was doing a day trip and a few hours digging!).

While Andy was away I contemplated the fact that I had to go back along that long long crawl. At least this time it was downhill. Andy got our lunch and found the china frog had survived in one piece. So where did I want to put it? To be honest I was so exhausted I couldn't have cared less. I was keen to get started on the return journey as I was starting to get cold and I knew if I could survive the crawl could survive getting out of the cave. Even the rope climbs paled into insignificance compare to that crawl. With the help of Andy's knee and shoulder the rope climbs weren't too bad and after Andy retrieved my lost wellie from the middle of The Vice, we eventually climbed out of the entrance 11 hours after we entered it and it was still light.

It was now raining but I was alive and what a sense of achievement I felt as I walked down the hill to the Chelsea Caving Club hut. I had survived the most amazing and gruelling caving trip I'd ever done and now felt I could call myself a real caver.

Attermire Area

Ros and Dave went to explore some minor holes in the Attermire area, near Settle in the Yorkshire Dales.

Although Yorkshire is known for its SRT and large cave systems, there are plenty of Mendip style caves too.



Mangle Hole Caving Trip

By Andy Watson

Over the weekend of 30 January 2010 Sue and I were planning to go on the winter walking weekend but unfortunately Sue's mum passed away recently and we had to carry out preparations at church on Sunday for the funeral which was on the Monday. However on the Saturday there were some HSCC people at MNRC celebrating a birthday weekend, which is an annual event. I had contacted Phil Candy and Sue Chase a couple of days earlier to see what they were doing on the Saturday as we figured we could make a short caving trip on that day prior to coming back up to Shrewton, near Stonehenge that evening. He said he had thought about doing a SRT trip in Rhino and I suggested that I had talked to Sue some time ago about doing Mangle Hole on Sandford Hill.

So we met up and made our way to Rhino, however, just as we got to the pothole another group were just going in and doing the same route as we had planned so we decided not to shadow them in, but decided that we would go over to Mangle Hole and do that as an SRT trip instead. Walking back from Rhino we met another pair of cavers going to Rhino, it was a glorious sunny morning and the sunshine obviously brought out the cavers, they had been to Thrupe first but as there was water pouring in the main entrance and down the first shaft they decided to try Rhino instead. We parked at the Avon Ski centre with its various on lookers (before and after the trip) and then walked up the access road and across the side of the hill on the public footpath and just past Sandford Levy and slightly higher up we found Mangle Hole.



Mangle Hole entrance

We belayed off the tree and used a sling and karabiner at the top onto the scaffold pole to get a

good hang and then I descended the nasty knobbly and muddy rift into the depths. Phil said he thought it was only one ladder length to the shelf and I said I thought it was probably 1.5 or 2, I think I was right it was a good distance to the middle platform. We then had to use two natural belays with slings and krabs to go across the top of the next slope as a traverse before descending the third section sloping down into the main chamber. The whole descent is fairly muddy and slightly constricted in places but I did remember it pretty well from my last trip there some four years earlier. At the bottom I tried to use my sling ladder to get into the main pot, but it wasn't quite long enough, at which Ralph Candy said he thought it used to be full of water and led to a sump, it just looked like a muddy hole now with no apparent water.

We also did a bold step and found a pair of hangers which gave us access down another pitch about 6 m below, I use my spare rescue rope to safety line Sue across the bold step, as she only has short legs, with Ralph precariously balancing over the hole and then we use the same rope to abseil down to the next level. This led us to the beginning of a very slippery muddy slope which went down about another three and a half metres and after a short squeeze leading to another quite large rift chamber which had a high mud bank in it and a tiny hole on the left-hand side with a trickle of water in it, I assume this is probably the way on to the lake, it looked very tight and I decided not to venture any further.



The mangle in Mangle Hole

We made our way back up out using SRT with Ralph getting rather funnily caught in the first 3 m and then the rest of us did a short free climb to bypass that bit after watching Ralph struggle and

picked up the rope slightly a higher up from a muddy, rather exposed shelf. We had arranged to meet Sue Chase, as she had gone off hill walking, at the entrance after about an hour or an hour and a

half unfortunately we didn't appear until about two and a half hours was up, but she could hear us shuffling up the rift. Overall a very enjoyable caving trip and it is worth a visit if you get bored anytime.

Mini Quiz

1. What is the smallest species of bat living in the UK?
2. What do bats in the UK eat?
3. Where are the reflectors that Sue Watson spotted in Daren Cilau?
4. How many bats did Sally, Ros and Dave see on the bat training course?
5. What do the black stalagmites in Otter Hole contain?
6. Which cave entrance is in this picture?
7. Which cave was this photo taken in?



8. Think of a suitable caption for this picture.



Answers and the best caption to be printed in the next edition of the newsletter.