



Hampshire Scout Caving Club



Spring 2011 Newsletter



Juniper Gulf in the Yorkshire Dales

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

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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

Ogof Draenen currently operates a key system. Until the missing gates are replaced, visitors are still expected to bring a key as proof of permission.

A new species of bat has been found in Ecuador, South America. The species is called *Myotis diminutus* and weighs just 3.5 grams. Unfortunately the bat was discovered in a forest in Ecuador that is threatened by deforestation.

Speleo Technics, a company that made caving lights, has ceased trading. The instructions for products can still be found at their website www.speleo.co.uk.

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 2011

Date	Time	Activity	Venue	Contact
29-30 Jan		Mendip Birthday Weekend	MNRC	Dave
2 Feb	20:00	AGM	12 th Eastleigh Scout Hut	Dave
2 Mar	20:00	Skittles	TBC	Sue
19-20 Mar		Scout Days	MNRC	Andy
6 April		Training	12 th Eastleigh Scout Hut	Phil
4 May	20:00	Cycle/Walk	New Forest	Dave
14-15 May		Scout Days	MNRC	Andy
28-30 May		Wales Long Weekend	Brecon Scout Hut	Dave
1 Jun	20:00	Walking Treasure Hunt	TBC	
11-12 Jun		Peak Weekend	TBC	Sue
25-26 Jun		Scout Days	MNRC	Andy
6 Jul	20:00	Canoeing	Mudford Harbour	Sue
7 Sep		Talk	TBC	
24-25 Sep		Mendip Weekend	MNRC	
5 Oct		First Aid	Basingstoke	
29-30 Oct		Scout Days	MNRC	
2 Nov		AGM	12 th Eastleigh	
25-27 Nov		Wales Weekend	TBC	
7 Dec		Quiz & Social	TBC	

HSCC Training Policy for LCMLA Qualifications

The club's policy is to encourage everyone to do level 1 training. If individuals want to complete their level 1 and level 2 the club will support that decision.

Stage	Individual Pays	HSCC Pays
Registration	£45 (reclaimable from BCA)	
LCMLA Training		All
LCMLA Core Skills (1 st Try)		All
LCMLA Core Skills (Other)	All	
LCMLA Group (1 st Try)	£50 (reclaimable from BCA)	Balance
LCMLA Group (Other)	All	
LCMLA Revalidation		All

MEMBERS NEWS

Congratulations to Gemma Nye (previously Jones) who married Tom Nye in August. See photos below.

Sally White has moved up to Otley in North Yorkshire with Andy Chapman.

Congratulations to Sue Chase for becoming a Granny (again) and getting a new job in Southampton.

Phil Candy has completed his LCMLA revalidation in Yorkshire. It was an extremely wet weekend so he now knows all about flood risks!



The Day I was Thin

By Dave Chadwick

During August 2010, Phil, Sue, Ros and Dave (well mainly Dave) decided it would be a good idea to try Boggarts Roaring Hole. With the plan settled we needed a second copy of the "Book of Death" (aka Not for the Faint Hearted), Dave's copy having been left in Hampshire. So a quick trip to Inglesport ensued. With no scanner or printer or laminator Dave tried to photograph the directions to the cave and description of the cave to help with the trip. Having packed the bags and parked on the back road near Cold Cotes we made our way onto the plateau part way up Ingleborough and then spent about an hour looking for the hole (the photograph being useless).



When we eventually found it, we put SRT kit on and rigged the first drop, then re-rigged the first drop to make it easier (possible) to get off. Dave descended to the first ledge and spent a few minutes looking over the large pot for the next hangers before trying in the opposite direction over a (well) dead sheep (called Sally) and through an unlikely hole to the head of the second shaft. This ended with some

scaffolding and a snug looking hole. Dave tried the hole head first with kit on but that wasn't going to work. Having removed some unnecessary SRT kit (Stop and Hand-jammer/leg loops) and clipped it into a cows tail, the other being in the rope, he tried the hole backwards he found he was a much better fit, ending up sat on a small spike he had spotted earlier. He then dragged the rope and kit through, redressed and rigged the pitch before heading down.



Neither Sue nor Phil managed to get through the crawl, so that was the end of the trip. Ros couldn't get near enough to try due to the traffic jam ahead. Dave was declared thin (at least for the day), though it didn't help with future trips down Meregill or Sidcott where he still seemed to be overly fat.



Albania Expedition

By Sally White

I was invited to join the Eldon Pothole Club on an expedition to Northern Albania. A few of their members had gone out there before and found some potentially promising caves, but in general, we didn't know what to expect.

The minibus that most of the members had intended to use to get to the airport broke down a few days prior to the expeditions. If this was how the expedition started whilst we were still in the UK, what hope did we have in Albania? To our relief, we met up with the other members of the expedition at Tirana airport in Albania, and then two minibuses swiftly turned up for us. The roads started off in a pretty reasonable state and got worse and worse as we progressed north, until my seat could take it no longer and we slid to the back.

Once settled at the hotel, we were offered meals containing "meat". When we asked what meat and if it was chicken the reply was "not chicken, another meat" but that was as good as it got. Despite this, our hosts were very welcoming.

We divided into groups and some went to prospect areas, while I went to help push one of the caves they had found the year before. On the second visit we crawled under an ice sheet that had a beautiful tunnel carved into it by water. We broke through into a chamber, complete with frozen lake. It was a magnificent chamber but the cave ended soon after this.



Photo: Andy Chapman looking at the edge of the lake

Meanwhile, the other groups were having plenty of luck with several other new caves that were still being explored. These didn't

contain the beautiful ice like the first cave, but they proved to me more promising. In fact by the end of the expedition no one had managed to get to the bottom of these caves!

On another day I joined a group investigating an entrance they had seen. Two of us went in and dropped the first pitch of 12 metres into a tall chamber. This led on but we needed to go back for more rope, a drill and surveying kit.



The next day we returned and the cave was pushed down three further pitches, the last one being 50 metres. The cave was still continuing but due to the success of the expedition and there being a total of three caves still going, gear was running out!



Northern Albania is a fantastic place for an expedition as there is a vast amount of potential out there and relatively few cavers or foreign expeditions visit it so most of the cave is yet to be discovered.

Andy puts Sue down the Drain

By Andy Watson

Having driven through Waterlip village, East Mendip, regularly for several years I was convinced that the road drains here probably drain into natural cave below the adjacent swallet hole. After doing a Waterlip search I can across Hannah's description of the drain exploration on UKCaving and I have copied much of her text for this article, with a few alterations (thanks Hannah). There are potentially several small caves in this region of limestone, one of which has two long concrete storm drain tunnels carrying surface water into a supposed Norman Culvert (not sure it is all Norman but may have bits, some of it is probably 18th or early 19th Century, but I am not a culvert expert, see pictures) before it enters the Waterlip Cave rifts. The water then moves over 120 metres and 15 metres in depth before now appearing out of a hole in the face of the nearby disused, water filled, quarry. The water from the very old, higher, quarry resurgence was once also piped to empty out of a long rusted pipe also into the quarry lake. This appears to only flood now in very heavy flood conditions.

After speaking to Hannah, on Saturday 9th October 2010, Sue and I drove to Waterlip to knock on a Dave's door (a reference we were given) to see if we could have a look down the cave/drain. The drains take a vast volume of water when the area floods and the drains/cave backs up, I suspect from the rifts. We could not gain access to the resurgence cave and pipe as the area and quarry is now primarily owned by Aggregate Industries. But we could have a quick look in the drain, culvert, cave rift. Rather than lift the heavy manhole cover we entered via the two field drain pipes.

The two pipes lead into the base of the main man hole shaft, which the road drains off into. One larger but short concrete pipe leads to another square chamber. The main way on under the road has been lined with concrete rings 10-15 years ago in the threat of subsidence from quarry lorry traffic.

Once through the concrete storm drain there is another small square section. Hereabouts, to the North there was a low square tunnel which led on for 5 metres under the side of main road. This was believed to be a possible slab covered Norman culvert. The main tunnel bends 90 degrees to face West and continues

as concrete for another 3 metres or so. The culvert then opens out slightly into a beautiful stone built structure some of which is believed to date from Norman times. The culvert walling was very pretty and excellently made with no visible mortar between the stones.



The culvert then heads southeast for at least 10 metres before reaching a junction. To the southwest it continues for about 8 metres (tight and silted up) to another small square manhole (not really accessible) and it still continues further but is silted up to within a couple of inches of the roof, you can see for about a metre. These parts appear to drain back towards the junction.

At the junction there is a 90 degree bend to the Southeast which continues, sloping downward slightly, as a much smaller culvert for 4 metres before ending at the entrance to the cave in the floor. The rift cave entrance is approximately 20 centimetres wide with probably 1 metre length is visible and can be seen to drop at least 2 metres down the rift, where some more water flowing can be heard. This cannot be accessed, even a skinny caver won't fit! Also on this passage of culvert there is also a hole in the western wall approximately the size of an A4 piece of paper which also breaks into the narrow cave rift, but has a wide supporting slab which prevents further access and I suspect it could not be moved without bringing the roof down. There was no rubbish or blockages found. The presence of flood debris in the culvert roof on some stals shows that this culvert does flood to the roof. There were several small straws on the Norman culvert roof (see picture) and lots of pretty snails with different coloured rings on their shells.

Skirwith Cave

By Ros White

HSCC had decided en masse that South Wales was off (due to traffic chaos preventing us getting there Friday evening and steep, narrow snow-covered roads preventing us getting to the caves on Saturday). So David and I decided to go up to Yorkshire a day early.

Saturday evening at Drumochter (Giggleswick) was spent on the usual game of Whatabout. The weather was VERY cold and there was some snow and it would just be me and David caving on Sunday, so we wanted something which did not involve carrying lots of rope and was not difficult or very wet. Eventually I resorted to Google and typed in "Yorkshire cave easy". It came up with some caves I expected, a few that we considered were not worth the effort and Skirwith Cave. Googling Skirwith Cave was the next step. It sounded fascinating and easy and near to the road (just out of Ingleton). Thus it was decided on. The only kit required was a short piece of rope in case we needed it at the waterfall climb.



After calling in at CHECC to buy a tackle bag we went on to look for the cave. We parked in the wrong place and so walked up the hill too soon and had to traverse around to find the correct bit of hillside. It is described as just a hole in a field and the photos I had seen confirmed this. We scoured the hillside and eventually found it NOT in the correct grid square, but in an adjacent one. It was exactly like the pictures (a hole in a field) and had an inviting warm draught seeping out. That it was the right place was confirmed as soon as we were underground (felt a bit like going down a rabbit hole) there immediately was the old metal gate.



I'd better say something about Skirwith Cave at this point. Skirwith Cave was open to the public as a show cave in 1964. Guided tours lasted 30 minutes and went in about 250m to a waterfall. There were along the way many formations, including long straw stalactites, gour pools and some stalactite curtains. It had concrete floors, steps and wooden planks to make it accessible for the public and also electric lighting, but it is along a quite narrow rift, so is not what you would expect of a show cave. As it is not wide you have to sidle along.



It closed in 1974, probably because there were other show caves in the area which were bigger and easier to negotiate and there were not enough tourists to provide a good income. Over 25 years of neglect means that that the planks are rotten and the concrete walkways and steps are disintegrating and in a dangerous state.

Once you have slithered in and past the gate you emerge in a passage. It is straight forward, you follow the old show cave route, along concrete walkways, planks over the stream (care), up some concrete steps to a point where there has been a collapse. A quick wriggle through boulders and you emerge at the top of the flight of steps, back on the show route. There are many formations to admire, so don't rush, especially as you can keep dry in this section! You soon arrive at a chamber with a water fall - this was the end of the show cave.



The climb up the 15' waterfall looks daunting as the bottom is undercut, and it is wet!!.

There are some good holds but they are quite high up so you do have to pull yourself up by the hand holds and there isn't much for your feet. Once at the top it opens out and you soon have a choice of ways. Left soon chokes, the way on is right. Out of the show cave now, you stoop and crawl along a low passage in the stream (cold) which varies in depth up to a couple of feet. It continues like that for quite a way, with just odd sections where you can walk upright or go over a boulder choke out of the stream (I think you get out of the stream on 3 occasions). In this part of the cave we found some excellent coral fossils (see photo).



Eventually the roof lowers and you are stooping, then crawling in the water with just a few inches of air gap between stream and roof. This section is 20-30' long, it is quite a long duck and the water was flowing. At this point we were thoroughly soaked and VERY cold – so decided to stop and turn round. Beyond this duck is only a short section of passage before a chamber and terminal sump.

The cave has about 1km of "dry" passage. The whole trip took us less than 2 hours and was very enjoyable, despite the cold. A wet suit would probably have been good though!

Caving (sort of) in Sri Lanka – October 2010

By Andy Watson

My caving trip started with a passing comment regarding caving to my colleague who I work with there. It is important to remember that I was on a business / work trip rather than a holiday and it is rare to get any time off whilst on overseas factory visits, apart from the occasional evening dinner. So it was quite a surprise when my colleague, Wasantha suggested that we should go out on the Sunday during my visit. He contacted his uncle some 50 km away and asked if he knew of a cave that we could visit, his uncle's father had visited a cave a couple of times many years ago and roughly knew of its location.

We left at 5:30 in the morning and set off for his uncle's house, which was an old British survey house handed over to the shrunken government at the time of independence. It was built in 1890 and had a great deal of character about it. When we arrived the uncle's wife had prepared as much English food as she could for breakfast including sliced white bread, Bernard Matthews turkey burgers or some equivalent, tomato ketchup from Heinz and of course the obligatory fish curry.

We set off on our adventure in a work 4x4 Jeep that we had borrowed for the day and with myself and Wasantha in the front seats. The grandfather, the uncle, and his daughter piled into the back. The younger son was not allowed to come as he had to attend a Buddhist Sunday school.

We drove for about 50 more kilometres on reasonably good roads through a small town where we stopped and looked at a gemstone mine and met the miner, this was not a career I will be pursuing. As the road got narrower and rougher some 7-8 kilometres from the main road we then came across a sign which was an old Sri Lankan tourist board sign pointing towards the cave, clearly at some point the government had issued some sort of grant and the two cave signs had been put up along with a small concrete platform close to the caves entrance.

The road got decidedly dodgy with large parts of concrete being washed away and it was only just wide enough for the Jeep with one wheel on the vegetation and the other hanging over a precipice in some areas. We were descending deeply into ravines and clearly this was right on the edge of the rainforest and jungle. We ended up among a few very poor

houses and driving adjacent to a dried up riverbed, always a good sign for cave areas.



We were greeted by some villagers and upon questioning, it turned out we were in the right place to visit the cave some 400 m further down the valley which we would have to walk to. There was no running water and no electricity in the village and the houses were built using bricks which they made themselves from digging clay out of the ground and then putting them in a kind of charcoal oven. The staple diet appeared to be rice from the little paddy field and bananas but the small kiosk at the end of the track sold Pepsi-Cola in very old looking bottles which was very out of date. I came to the conclusion that the people living

here were very much on the poverty line and clearly there was little way out of this poverty. There was a school building which had 20 pupils ranging from 4 to 18.

After some discussions in Sinhalese, a local man and his friend said they were going to get their flashlights to show us around the cave. They turned up with milk bottles with burning rags and the very old and fairly ineffective Tilley lamp which was obviously from the man's house. We walked the 400 m down to the cave and the temperature was some 35°C and the humidity was probably 80 to 90% it was very uncomfortable. The cave itself was at the bottom of the valley and as we approached the cave, a 4 or 5 foot alligator slipped off the rocks into the waters. In the cave there were clearly a large number of bats, mostly large fruit bats. We climbed down a vertical cliff to gain entrance to the sinkhole and the main chambers, it was rather hairy and slippery, particularly for the grandfather and the young girl.

We made our way into the cave with the burning milk bottles and climb down into the base of a large chamber (30-40 metres high) which had many bats flying around, some flow stone on one wall with a waterfall and a rather large number of cockroaches on the bat droppings some of which were also dropping on me. We went in about 50 metres before we reached a flooded area, I was told I could swim if I wanted, I politely declined.



This was a real adventure for an HSCC/MNRC/CSS member. I survived, although a bit smelly and dirty. Guhawa Coheada means "where is the cave" if you ever visit!

Answers to the Quiz From the Summer 2010 Newsletter

1. What is the smallest species of bat living in the UK? Pipistrelle
2. What do bats in the UK eat? Insects
3. Where are the reflectors that Sue Watson spotted in Daren Cilau? Time Machine
4. How many bats did Sally, Ros and Dave see on the bat training course? 1
5. What do the black stalagmites in Otter Hole contain? Arsenic
6. Which cave entrance is in this picture (not shown)? Titan
7. Which cave was this photo (not shown) taken in? Goatchurch Cavern
8. Think of a suitable caption for this picture (see below).

Best caption suggestion: "Dave are you stuck again?" by Andy Watson



Scouts Caving Quiz

By Ros White

These photos were all taken in Mendip, in places where we have taken Scouts or Explorer Scouts. Can you identify the locations?

1.



4.



2.



5.



3.



6.



7.



10.



8.



11.



9.



12.

