



Hampshire Scout Caving Club



Newsletter – November 2014



Formations in Ogof Cnwc

Website: <http://hsc.randomstuff.org.uk>

Contents

Devon	April 2013	Andy Watson	3
Gibraltar	December 2013	Andy Watson	4
Derbyshire	May 2013	Andy Watson	5
Forest of Dean	April 2014	Andy Watson	6
South Wales	May 2014	Andy Watson	7
The Frozen Deep	May 2014	Dave Chadwick	8
A Scout Trip in Swildons Hole	March 2014	Dave Chadwick	9
OFD 1	May 2014	Ros White	10
Photo Quiz			11

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Provisional Programme

(All Events are Subject to Change)

29 th November 2014	Wales Weekend (staying at Whitewalls)
3 rd December 2014	Quiz (12 th Eastleigh from 20:00)
20 th December 2014	Mendip Caving Day (meet at MNRS)
7 th January 2015	Christmas Meal (Winchester)
4 th February 2015	SRT Practice (1 st Sandleheath)
4 th March 2015	Training
21 st March 2015	Scout Caving Days (staying at MNRS)
1 st April 2015	Easter Egg Hunt
2 nd May 2015	Derbyshire Caving (long weekend at Taxal Scout Hut)
6 th May 2015	Kayaking (probably Mudeford)
9 th May 2015	Scout Caving Days (staying at MNRS)
3 rd June 2015	Car Treasure Hunt (Hampshire)
1 st July 2015	Annual Barbecue (Shrewton)
5 th September 2015	Training weekend (staying at MNRS)
7 th October 2015	First Aid Refresher (probably Oakley Scout Hut)
17 th October 2015	Scout Caving Days (staying at MNRS)
4 th November 2015	AGM

HSCC trip to Devon in April 2013

We all met up at the White Hart in Buckfastleigh and stayed at the Devon Speleological Society bunkhouse, now known as the South Dartmoor Bunkhouse and there were 14 of us on this club trip. The bunkhouse has been tarted up a bit since our last visit with two showers and an upgraded drying room.

On the Saturday I had arranged for a leader to take us to Bunkers Hole which is one of the prettiest of the Devon caves; it has two entrances that are not gated with a squeeze in between them and a locked gate before a tight squeeze that leads into the pretty Fin Chamber.

The entrance is a rift with side shelves that drops onto a muddy floor (Note: straight on is the link back through a squeeze to exit via the second entrance). Heading down a slope drops to a short level passage before the gate and squeeze into Fin Chamber. Fin Chamber is taped to prevent damage to the nice formations around the long chamber and up mud passage.

The squeeze into the chamber is quite tight and unfortunately we had a refusal from David, the rest of us managed with a lot of pushing, panting and grumbling. There are a number of fine formations in Fin Chamber, a lovely curtain some good flow stone and many crystals.

In the same wooded quarry there is a small short cave by the Limekiln called Shaky Hole which Gavin, Richard and I went in and we found a small stream and some pretty formations.

Geoff Dommett our hallowed leader for Bunkers Hole, took us to Potters Wood Mine/Cave and showed us the entrance and then he had to leave. The mine entrance, an old oil drum, leads to a sizeable passage which has about 14 inches of water on the floor and after about 120 feet or so it closes down. On the right side there is a climb up on precarious boulders which leads to a wriggly connection to Potters Wood Cave which comes out nearby. Ralph climbed up this and nearly plummeted before deciding it was too slippery, Gavin was more successful and I followed him. We managed to get through the slightly awkward and rather dirty connection tube to Potters Wood cave which is very muddy. We emerged from the other entrance slightly worse for wear and met some of the others coming in to have a look. We washed our kit in the river

and I caused much amusement when I lost my balance and fell in!

In the afternoon we went to Hennock to find Great Rock Mine for which we had the key and this was a quick visit as we had no kit just head torches. This mine was for micaceous iron oxide, also known as MIO, micaceous haematite or 'shiny ore'. It is a flaky form of iron oxide known for its anti corrosive properties and is used in Hammerite paint.

On the Sunday we split into two groups and went to Afton Red Rift and Bakers Pit. Our group went to Afton Red Rift and it has not improved very much into since our last trip. After this we drove to the Rock Garden Centre in Chudleigh where a local caver lived and worked. John showed us round the caves from the artificial Rock Garden Cave which is a 'made up' Victorian grotto, along to Chudleigh Cave No.21 which is a short corkscrew rift, then to Little Africa Cave which



Sue enjoying Afton Red Rift

is a reasonably sized wide rift albeit short in length. After this we went to John's dig which they have renamed Big Breeze Cave (the dig is quite promising and has some pretty formations). We progressed onto Chudleigh Cavern which is the short show cave and went to the end and down below into quite a deep rift 'not without interest'. We looked at the excavated cave to the left of Chudleigh Cavern but did not go in.





Andy showing off in Bruce's Rift

We then left the garden and went into the Clifford Estate where there are a number of caves on the cliffs on the north side of Kate Brook. Pixies Hole, the largest of these, is gated cave and has restricted access due to roosting bats. Just past here is Bruce's rift where John was trying to prove that I was rather fatter than he was and I promptly went in the wrong way up and got rather stuck and decided that this was not really a cave, it was notable that we have no other volunteers. From here we went across Kate Brook to look at Clifford's Cave, the description of which had put off all other cavers in our group; However, John was very enthusiastic and we (John and I) spent about an hour in the cave it was a very interesting stream cave albeit rather tight and muddy. I will revisit his cave at some point in the future without a doubt, but having done Afton Red Rift in the morning and being rather short of time I did not carry out a full trip.

Andy Watson April 2013

The Watsons' Trip to Gibraltar (December 2013)

Day one : we flew to into Gibraltar (see photo) and caught some buses to the bottom of the cable car and then went up on this to the top of the Rock and walked along towards the North end venturing into a small old World War II tunnel with a torch.



Gibraltar



Waterfall Issuing From Cave

Day three: Went by bus to Europa Point Lighthouse. We walked back along the one-way road through the Keightley Way Tunnel, this has been mined out at some point but now is part of a one-way system. At the end there is an impressive waterfall coming out from what appears to be a cave. Then we walked back up the rock/hill via Jew's Gate to visit St Michael's Cave. The cave is pretty impressive in both in size and

formations wise, this show cave is sometimes used as a concert hall. In my opinion it is very unusual geologically and its depth and stunning formations make it worth a short visit.



St Michael's Cave

Andy Watson December 2013

HSCC Trip to Derbyshire 24th-27th May 2013

We stayed at Taxal Scout hut at Whaley Bridge.

Saturday: Dave, Ros, Anne, Ray, Andy & Sue went to Giants Hole and took three hours to do a very pleasant round-trip. We parked at the farm, paid our dues and walked down the valley to the large entrance. To start with we followed a stream course and then turned to the left down an enlarging passage Giant's Highway that eventually arrived at Garland Pot. A 7 metre deep pot that we laddered down. At the bottom is a winding narrow passage with a stream in the bottom that is known as the Crab Walk which has a challenging wet squeeze before two cascades, the second of which has a fixed iron ladder in position. Before the sump we took a right passage into the Eating House before an awkward 3.5 metre rope climb which we put a ladder down to make it slightly easier. At the top a short crawl leads into a small chamber where we all gathered. All of us were rather chilly having been wet earlier. Taking a right turn we went onwards in a large walking passage to an 8 metre roped, rather damp climb which Dave kindly put an assisted hand line on. We had a quick look at the decorated Poached Egg Passage before doubling back and taking an earlier right-hand turn passage that took us through the low, wet and cold Giant's Windpipe before turning right along a pretty flow stoned rift and this came out above Crap Walk at high level near two convenient eye bolts. So we abseiled down the 14 metre pitch to the stream way and went back up the Crab Walk to Garland Pot. Up the ladder, back a long Giant's Highway to the entrance and the glorious sunshine.

The other group, Phil, Sue, Gavin and Ralph went to Eldon's Hole, abseiling in down the main shaft down to a snow plug that they had to dig through. Going up from the chamber using the washing line pull through and a wire hanger at low level they used SR T up two more shorter pitches leading to the superbly pretty formations located at the top. A four hour trip.

Sunday; Dave, Ros, Andy & Sue went to Peak Cavern and Phil, Sue, Gavin and Ralph went to P8 (Jackpot) and Ray and Anne went to a Tramway Museum on a steam railway. We went to Peak Cavern by meeting at TSG in Castleton to sort the permits and check-in etc and then we walked up to the very impressive cliff entrance through the initial show cave section and down the 'cavers slide' before going through stream passage and the wet ducks. Looking for a straight on/right junction and going right-ish into Treasury chamber we found the fixed iron ladder into the Wind Tunnel and the Trenches. These were muddy, wettish crawling until a left hand passage led to the bottom of a short iron ladder. At the top of this the right-hand passage closes down and up to the left is another iron ladder that leads up into a large high roofed chamber, where there is apparently a high-level connection to the White River Series Passages (2x30 m pitches apparently, normally they are now done by coming downwards in the reverse direction). Here which were stumped with no way on, so back down the to fix iron ladders into Colostomy Crawl which we pushed towards Egnaro Aven, but turned round before this. Heading outwards with very sore knees. Trip length three hours.

In the evening we went through a short walk to locate Dr. Jackson's (Swallet P1) and Perryfoot Cave (also known as Boulder Cavern).

Bank holiday Monday; Off to Carlswark Cavern. Ray, Anne, Ralph, Andy and Sue, we parked in the power transformer entrance area, crossed the road and put two ladders down the Eyam Dale shaft entrance (it's only 1.25 ladders) with a lifeline. Philip had mis-guided us regarding the location of the Gnomes, but not to worry. Ralph fortunately remembered bits of the cave and we went along Eyam Passage past South Crawl into Oyster Chamber with lots of fossil oyster beds. We investigated a couple holes along the way and one needed at least a rope, I think this went down to a lower sump level perhaps? The other hole in the floor appeared to close down. Andy investigated a low bit at the end of Oyster Chamber for some distance only for it awkwardly to close down and force his return. After a small climb upwards we exited via Gin Entrance and the tree roots. A short trip, but our aching backs persuaded us to do no more. Trip was about 1.5 hours. We found an entrance to Triple Hole on the way back towards the cars and walked back along the cliff face path to the car to then de-rig the entrance pitch we laddered earlier. We met some other caver's and they had walked up from the village to go into Carlswark Cavern via Eyam Shaft and when we went to up to de-rig they were going to abseil in as a one way trip through. We drove back to Taxal Scout Hut to cleanup and all headed southwards.



Sue in Colostomy Crawl

HSCC Weekend 26th & 27th April 2014 in the Forest of Dean

We camped at a small site – Heather Dean, Maryland, Nr.Trelleck not far from Monmouth, the site has one loo and one hot shower and is pretty quiet. The weather forecast was showers with sunny periods but wetter on Sunday. Susie & I arrived at about 8pm and Philip & Sue had gone off to get some cave keys having already pitched their caravan and awning and kindly Gavin & Ralph's tent. We put our tent up just managing this before it got too dark as did Dave & Ros.

Saturday: We all went to **Slaughter Stream Cave** where we parked on the verge by the field gate and got changed. We walked down the sloping field, past the ancient hay turning machine which has been there for years to the Wet Sink entrance which was pretty dry. After unlocking the gate we descended the three short fixed ladders and then one at a time down the long fixed ladder made from cable ladder racking into Mouse Aven. There is then a crawl through a scaffolded choke, which has been repaired after a collapse about 3 years ago. Followed by a short 2m climb and a 3.5 m abseil into Balcony Chamber where you can gather, which is the top of the 12 metre ladder (10m ladder required) pitch. Once safely down there is some zig zag rift passage and a little 1.5m climb up and down before dropping into the water of main stream passage at



Group Photo near Coal Seam Passage

Cross Junction. We went up stream for a little bit, then decided to go down stream towards Sump 1 just before which there is the beginning of a sandy/muddy crawl into some dry passage called the Dryslade Series. After a fair distance of crawling and walking there is a right fork and then a right turn up into Coal Seam Passage, a familiar route. Next time we may fork left and visit Kuwait Passage a few 1000 metres the other way we think! Coal Seam Passage is mostly walking passage and has some nice whirlpool holes which are fun for little people to climb out of. At the end we climbed up and popped out into a cross rift passage from here you turn left and shortly climb up into a larger passage called The Chunnel. Going left and then right you can go through the three Deserts, low sandy crawls with lovely beach ripple sandy formations that are taped off, this passage runs for over 1000m. At a point around 360m after the Deserts the passage splits in an area of breakdown and left leads to the crystallised broken down dogs skeleton and right leads to a large chamber and passage [Susie put her head into this crawl but then David and myself recognised the left route as being where we went last time – something for next visit Dave!]. We turned around a short distance after the dogs' skeleton and headed back to the Chunnel. We briefly visited some of Kiln Passage and then continued along the Chunnel past the other animal bones in the dry Graveyard Passage which continues past some stalagmite formations known as the Gnome Garden. By following this over the first active stream way (this downstream route is taped and we think it leads to the main stream waterfall pitch of some 10-12 metres) and to the next bit of stream it is possible to carefully free climb down albeit whilst getting wet down to the flat floor of the aven and follow the stream back through some wet crawls to Cross Junction then back out of the cave via the 12m pitch, one awkward 3.5 metre climb (always use life line here as an uncontrolled fall off is likely to be serious here and you could be very unlucky and fall even further down the 12m pitch too). Up the four fixed ladders from Mouse Aven and out into sunshine some four and half hours after entering the cave system.

Sunday: the others went forest walking and Susie and I visited Clearwell Caves near Coleford which is The Royal Forrest of Dean's Iron Mining Museum which is well worth a visit if you are in the area.

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Sue on Entrance Pitch

Andy Watson (April 2014)

HSCC trip to South Wales 24th-26th May 2014

We stayed at Ystradgynlais Scout Hut which has showers and a kitchen so is caving weekend friendly and not too expensive at £60/night. It was good to stay 3 nights over the bank holiday weekend.

Day 1: Two teams caving; One was going to do the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu 1 through trip and come out Cwm Dwr but as the rain had been pretty hard in the last 24 hours and the ground was already wet we accepted the advice at South Wales Caving Club not to do the through trip. So we opted to join the second team (Dave, Ros, Gavin & Sue) who had plans to do the OFD 2 top entrance and go via Gnome Passage and work towards Smiths Armoury; they got as far as the Shambles. Team 2 consisted of Phil, Ralph, Andy & Susie, we went in the same way but took a right turn not far from the entrance and visited the Mini Columns (very pretty) abseiled down a short pitch then popped out of a small hole very near the entrance on the left. We found our way to the top of Arete and went skirted over the top of the aven on the right hand side and explored a few places to the left and right on the continuation passage. In time and by a strange route we managed to get to the bottom of the Arete pot. Off to the right there was a short climb down over flowstone



Straw Gallery

and we proceeded off down a narrow wiggly rift passage and came out at a place called Timmo's Table a large flat rock sitting high and to one side of a main dry passage. Going right along this for a while we came to a bold step, or rather a bold jump on to ones front at chest height into a left hand rising passage (Susie did not like this manoeuvre much) that led up high above the main rift and into a pretty straw filled passage called Straw Gallery. Turn right here and it leads to an exposed edge that is slippery with the wrong camber that could easily lead to an unplanned plummet (approach with care). Up another passage from near the straws we found lots of interesting high level passages which we spent a good half an hour exploring and not reaching any end points! We will no doubt return to these sometime. Back down

the funny bold step where we used a life line to abseil down over the edge to stay safe. Finding our way back to the bottom of Arete successfully we then took a wrong turning and got rather lost and eventually had to back track to Arete to then find the correct way to Selubrius Passage which we went straight across and up the corkscrew climbs, without falling down the big hole, and out via Gnome Passage and Sandy Passage.

Day 2: We were all rather tired after a meal in the pub the evening before but went east to the Llangattock escarpment and changed at Whitewalls before wandering along to Ogof Cnoc with the aim of getting to the Antlers. A team of seven entered a very muddy and a bit squashy entrance section that leads into the bigger rift and Price's Prophecy and Busman's Holiday. After extensive small boulder hopping and about a 100 foot crawl we found the way down to the hidden four metre climb, which now has a chain ladder fitted rather than the old knotted rope, then slipped down the muddy slope and into the boulder choke around the bottom of the wet aven and into the end of Antler Passage, a high rift passage for the most part and I reckon perhaps 1000m long. The large boulder 'challenges' along here are fun for the shorter members of the party and slowed us all down and we think we got about two thirds of the way along before deciding to turn around as we had agreed a 14:00 turnaround time and we were all pretty tired. We made good progress on the way out, finally crawling out into the Welsh rain after five hours. All in all a good trip that we will no doubt revisit from the Daren Cilau entrance end.

Day 3: Most people decided they had had enough caving and went walking or visiting places etc but Dave, Ros and Ralph visited OFD 1 with a view of going along the traverses and up to high places and Hairy Fairies but I have no information on that trip yet.



Sue in Busman's Holiday

The Frozen Deep

Having visited Reservoir Hole with Sue and Phil a number of years ago, shortly before the discovery of the Frozen Deep, Ros decided to try to get a trip into the new section of the cave. Being short of available weekends it was decided to try for the Friday evening before the May Scout Days. Ros contacted Dave King, who was more than happy to take us on a trip. The trip is leader plus three, so Dave asked anyone in MNRC if they were available for the trip, but unfortunately there were no positive responses.

We met Dave at MNRS at about 18:00 and set off to get the key from Martin Grass and then on to the cave.

The cave is situated behind the covered reservoir near the top of Cheddar Gorge, the route to the frozen deep is initially the same as the old cave until just before where the old route starts to climb up to Herbert's Attic, where it takes a dug passage on the right. After a short crawl it opens out to a 10m pitch and then to the huge chamber of the Frozen Deep.



The trip lasted about three and a half hours with the majority of the time spent looking round the Frozen Deep and taking photos.

Dave Chadwick (October 2014)

Scout Trip to Swildon's Hole

In March 2014 we took some Explorer Scouts from Sandleheath for an advanced trip in Swildon's Hole. The plan was to abseil the old forty and then ladder the twenty head down to Barnes Loop and Tratman's Temple returning via the streamway and doing the old forty in the normal way. The trip went well until the twin pots where some of the little darlings decided to have a swim and got a bit cold, so the route was aborted at Barnes Loop. On the way out some of them struggled a little on the twin pots but by rigging the twenty as an assisted we were able to help the more tired members of the group. We left the cave without further incident a little later than intended.

I am using this article to suggest an interesting Scout trip in Swildon's and recommend a different way of rigging the ladder pitch.

The trip suggestion is to take the group up to the top of the old forty and abseil them down, take them to the ladder pitch and then return using the old forty in the normal way. This trip will take significantly longer than the traditional top of Swildon's and give the Scouts an extra adventure without requiring any more ability or stamina from them and without risking a long tiring trip below the ladder. The way I organised the abseil required harnesses and cow-tails for the group, an abseil rope (about 15m) and an SRT rope (about 40m), three spit-hangers and an SRT kit for the leader. The pitch is rigged for SRT and the abseil rope attached to the bolt nearest to the landing using an HMS caribina with a locked off Italian hitch. The group are belayed using the SRT rope doubled through a carabina on their harness and back up through a stop hung from the Y hang. Once the group have descended, retrieve the stop and abseil the pitch in the normal SRT way. When leaving the cave, send the group up the normal 8 foot waterfall climb while the leader de-rigs the old forty. To use this suggestion the leader needs to have a permit with SRT for leader progression and the second should have a permit for "Top Of Swildon's".



Scouts Waiting with Cow-tails



Young William in Barnes Loop



Swildon's Ladder

On the club training weekend in September, John Crowsley recommended a similar system for rigging the ladder pitch.

Using a ladder instead of the abseil rope and an SRT rope long enough to rig the pitch doubled. This has the advantage that a small amount of extra kit allows the rigging of a hauling system, it is much easier to assist a climber and the leader becomes self sufficient, not requiring a second to belay him up and down the pitch.

OFD 1 Trip - 26th May 2014

This is Ros' report of the trip in OFD 1 which follows on from Andy's South Wales report.

We followed the normal route in, over the Toast Rack then in the Streamway, which was quite high. Ros positioned Dave at the front to locate the bars across the pots (which were well under water) and Ralph at the back to catch her if the streamway got the better of her. We soon arrived at the rope climb out of the streamway into Low(e)'s Passage. Ros went up first, making sure there was someone underneath in case of error. Dave followed, then Ralph, a bit hesitant due to an injured shoulder.

We proceeded steeply uphill to Roundabout Chamber, passing some nice formations, the Bees Knees, and on to Pi Chamber. We failed at first to find the boulder which hides the hole down into the Traverses. Another group went past us, so we followed them. We had not gone on far enough. Ros was aware this time that there was a vertical drop immediately after the slot down! We were soon descending to the Traverses. These are quite innocuous, but we did clip on. At the "comedy boulder" Ros managed the inside route, while Ralph and Dave took the fat-man's route over the top.



Comedy Bars in Stream



Navigational Faff

At the end of the traverses we knew not to drop left,

into the streamway, as it emerges too far up the stream, between the 2nd and 3rd pot. Instead we turned right then followed the group in front, which we had caught up. Very soon there were more traverses. These were very high over the stream and this time we were very pleased to be clipped on! Were these were the Airy Fairies? We continued to follow the group in front, over "The Step" a bold-ish step over the stream, and soon the only way on was into the stream. We followed it downstream almost to the sump, then turned right up a calcited passage. We followed this for a while,

until Ralph, at the front, spotted a ladder. David was just starting to say "We are at" when there was a loud splash and Ralph shrieked and squealed "..... Pluto's Bath" continued Dave. Amid hilarious laughter about Phil's encounter with the Bath, Dave & Ros managed (with some difficulty in Ros's case) to traverse it. We were soon out in daylight and sunshine. Back at South Wales Caving Club, Dave ascertained that we had indeed done the Airy Fairy Traverse. To finish the emergency route out we should have turned right just before them.

A great trip, enjoyed by all.

Ros White (May 2014)



Formation in OFD 1

Photo Quiz
Name the Cave

