

# UBSS NEWSLETTER

Autumn/winter 2004

## **A Poem About Caving**

A caver went caving  
One fine caving day  
What adventures did he  
Come across on the way?

A river was there  
Running deep underground  
So the caver jumped in  
And went splashing around!

Huge rocks there were too  
Reaching up tall  
So the caver climbed up  
To the top of them all!

Next was a squeeze  
Through the rocks, mud and muck  
Along squeezed the caver  
But the caver got stuck!!

He wriggled and squirmed  
Was as thin as could be  
Pushed, twisted and turned  
And then he was free!

'Hurrah!' said the caver  
'I really can't wait  
To do that again  
Because CAVING IS GREAT!!'

**By Tree**

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Welcome to the Autumn/Winter edition of the newsletter. Sorry it is a bit slim but time constraints getting it out before the end of term meant some articles weren't ready yet. Don't fret though, it should mean a bumper edition next term. Anyway, we've got a lovely poem, some treasurer's stuff, a fieldwork/holiday report and tales of impressively inebriated behaviour in Yorkshire! I won't be able to do the newsletter from now on however so volunteer(s) to take it on would be much appreciated!! Cheers and have a great holiday,  
Ed Hodge

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## Treasurer's Bit

*Graham Mullan*

My thanks go out to all those members (most of you) who have renewed their Banker's Orders and so whose subscriptions are completely up to date. However there are still some who, despite the *freepost* envelopes and all, have yet to renew and are still in arrears. Obviously I will not know until next march all those who have yet to renew their bank mandate, but the following is a list of the outstanding subscriptions at this time:

<b>Name</b>	<b>arrears</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>arrears</b>
Rachel Clay	£18	Andy Cooke	£6
Stefan Creaser	£18	Marcel Dijkstra	£18
Bill Dowden	£6	Paul Drewery	£6
Kit Eaton	£6	Hans Freiderich	£6
Eric Gilbert	£6	Paul Harvey	£6
Rupert Hay-Campbell	£6	Chris Howes	£6
Lesley-Anne Kerr	£6	Steve McArdle	£6
Dave Nuttall	£6	Hugo Pile	£30
Rachel Privett	£6	Dave Savage	£6
Charlie & Galya Self	£6	Simon Shaw	£6
John Telling	£18	Emma Todd	£18
Andrew Wallis	£30	Steve Warr	£6
Martin Warren	£18	John Worley	£6

Some of these "unfortunate" situations have come about because I do not have up to date addresses for people so if anyone knows the whereabouts of Dave Savage or SteveMcArdle, please let me (or them) know.

And finally, for those of you who have recently graduated, Sam, Ed, Helen, I haven't forgotten you - and does anyone have an address for Tom Van de W?

## Yorkshire weekend

by Kayliegh Gilkes

All photos Rob Desbois

My first discovery of the weekend; Yorkshire is a long way from Bristol, this seems even longer when entertainment involves making up games to play which involve maths... the number plate game was damn addictive though. The journey got even more exciting when we left the motorway and Frank began navigating, well I say navigating, map reading is probably a better description. He claims it is not the job of the navigator to look at road signs (he couldn't see them anyway due to not having his glasses) and thus I took to shouting random directions at junctions... probably not the best idea but we got there eventually. Arriving at 11.45pm we were glad to discover that Eddy was not lying when he described the Helwith bridge inn as "the best pub in the world". The place doesn't shut and serves good beer and great pork scratchings.

Finally leaving the pub somewhere around 4.30am, we found space on the sofas in the Y.S.S. hut. Unfortunately for Rob, Andy had gone to bed earlier taking his car keys with him, meaning Rob had no sleeping bag.



Intrepid Yorkshire bound novices

Time to awaken came all too soon and we were up having breakfast and working out what to do, well what to do during the morning as all the freshers were going S.R.T. training in the afternoon. After much deliberation, we headed to Ingleton to purchase various articles of kit before Eddy, Andy and Emily went caving and the remaining 6 of us tried to establish the best way for 6 people to fit into Superted's car (it's small!). Don't ask me why but for some reason, I volunteered to go in the boot, this turned out to be quite a good move as I had the most room, but may have looked slightly weird (no change there then!).

Arriving back at the hut, there was still time to kill, so Laura, Christian, Frank and I went for a walk and got chased by sheep before returning to the hut in order to catch the minibus which was supposed to be coming to take people to Ingleton for the training. This did not materialise, so we decided to fit even more people and kit into Superted's car. There was no room in the boot so I ended up lying across 4 people on the back seat, I feel sorry for the German girl from Southampton who got my feet (although she did crush Frank a bit – last time he says "there is room for a small one").

S.R.T. training was great, although I don't think I will ever remember the order the kit goes on in. Thankfully the minibus arrived with the people we had been unable to fit in the car and was there to take us back, meaning I could sit up!!

Tonight it seemed had lots of plans. A list of competitions was attached to the wall for people to take part in. The first was beer pong which Christian and I entered substituting cheap vodka for the beer. Beer pong involves 2 teams each with 6 pint glasses set up in a triangle at either end of a table, each containing half a pint (or equivalent drink). The aim is to throw a ping-pong ball into the opposition's glass, thus forcing them to consume the contents, the winning team being the one with drinks remaining. Why York were allowed to enter a tea total team I don't know, surely they had drinkers. We defeated Manchester and Ireland on the way to the semi-finals, using the underarm technique, where we met Kent. The game was very tight with one glass remaining on either side, only for us to be defeated by the hand of ... the inflatable woman – she moved the glass at the last minute, my protests were not heard and we were out (not that I'm a bad loser or anything!). Oh well at least I had some vodka left, no mixer though, but we ran out of that in round 2, and Kent lost to Cardiff in the final. I am now known as vodka by cavers around the country (thank you random man from Manchester!). We didn't participate in body traversing, which since having attempted it and been dropped heavily on my back (Cheers Christian! I have bruises), I think is a good thing. A team was entered for the drinking competition, 4 pints drunk from a bucket through tubes by 3 people, step forward Rob, Superted and Christian. We lost badly to Sheffield, much to my anger in my drunken state (Sorry guys, love you really), and Rob and Christian ended up being sick over a wall whilst Frank and I gave advice.



Some people are just so greedy

Having finished the vodka, we headed to the pub to find Laura, Emily, Andy and Eddy drinking in a much more civilised manner and thus missed the rest of the competitions. A consequence of this is that I still do not know what body rigging is. It involves 3 people, 10 meters of rope and a murrain (not sure what this is)...any suggestions as to how this may work?



Andy and Eddy, civilised? - The world famous Helwith Bridge pub

Having gone to and fro from the pub, I finally left when the landlady wanted to go to bed close to 3am and returned to the marquee, to find Rob and Superted, amongst others topless dancing, don't ask me why, I'm not even sure if they know. Once we had danced with all sorts of people the music was finally ceased and we headed off to bed.



I thought it was supposed to be cold up in Yorkshire...

Christian, Frank and Laura were the early risers, up at 8am, in order to climb Pen-y-Ghent before breakfast. Eddy too left early for a meeting and the rest of us rose at varying times. Now without anyone in our number who knew the caves of Yorkshire, we sought advice on non-S.R.T. caves and decided to head to Kingsdale in order to go down valley entrance. All but Superted were feeling up to this, but he drove us there anyway. I now had the opportunity to wear my new kit, apparently I look like an overgrown baby in my furry, but then at least my stuff fits, which is more than I can say for Christians borrowed over suit. He had to be helped into it by Superted, only to discover that he had left his chocolate in the pocket of his trousers... this is obviously why the suits lack arses, one of the most humorous scenes of the

weekend now occurred, with Superted reaching in through the hole to retrieve said chocolate – there are photos of this.



Now, where's that hamster gone now?

Finally kitted up, we headed into the cave through an oil barrel in the side of the hill. The weekend of new experiences was to continue, with a ladder climb down to the stream, which was successfully accomplished by all. The cave is very wet and great fun as a result, with the water being just strong enough to carry you if you lie in it. As you can imagine, this occupied us for sometime and we floated much of the way back to the ladder – brilliant... even in the dark, when your light has fallen off your helmet and into the water. This incident meant my beam was a bit distorted for the rest of the trip, but all was good. Unfortunately for Emily, her light had been on the way out since we entered the cave, so she spent much of the trip relying on the rest of us for light. A dryer area of the cave allowed Laura to invent an alternative to crawling... the sideways roll – much less painful on the knees and very amusing.

Leaving possible the most fun cave I have yet been in, we returned to the car and were in the process of getting changed when Superted returned. Yorkshire is cold! Saying goodbye to Andy, Emily, Rob and Laura, we headed back to Ingleton to return the lights before beginning our journey home. Due to the amount of stuff badly packed into the car, I ended up crawling out head first over Frank to go into the shop.

The journey back was, as far as I know fairly uneventful, but then I was asleep for most of it.

Thank you everybody for a brilliant weekend. I spent way too much money, know some more games and had great fun. Bad luck you haven't scared me off yet!

**Pigs may fly,  
but in Guam it's best if you swim!**

**By Ness Johnson**

As if travelling in style, in the back of a truck with natural air conditioning was not enough, we were about to face Guam's best caves. It was a Saturday morning and Fiona Whitaker, Rich and myself had just met with Mr. Micronesian Cavers himself, Curt. Also came the usual gaggle that had become our field companions, consisting of a local hydrology lecturer John and his masters students Rob, Monty, and Ray.

We headed onto Mt. Santa Rosa and the first test for the day was getting through the tall saw grass in one piece (so called for its serrated edge...believe me, this girl talks from experience!), not slipping into the stream and reaching the cave entrance. On arrival at the entrance to Piggy Cave we suffered as John took his infamous before, and later after, pictures. The entrance consisted of a small room that you could walk into, complete with spiders, which quickly narrowed down to a tunnel where the stream flowed. Soon I felt like a proper caver as my boots flooded with water and we moved slowly into the darkness.



Trekking through the saw grass

This narrow passage then opened up into the main chamber where there was an alternate, but rather slimy and dangerous, entrance. The chamber was rather large in Guam terms, and daylight streamed through the near the roof. A climb over some boulders took you to the back of the chamber where close inspection of the mud reveals a pick flip-flop, apparently the remains of one determined but ill-equipped female Boonie Stomper (Guams answer to country walking!).

We climbed down a chimney and muddy bank to the main stream passage. The roof was low and ducking and crawling was involved. However, submerging in water of around 25°C was not too much of a problem! The passage was divided by curtains of stal which you ducked under into the next small chamber, these were generally highly decorated but had an orangey glow about them (no glistening white calcite to be seen!). Flowstone draped down the sides, and the observant ones heard the tinkling of a crazy black and white crab on the top of the flowstone scurrying away into the darkness. However, as exciting as all that sounded, the best was still to come!



The cave was created from water flowing through the limestone until it hit impermeable volcanic rock, forming stream caves. This means that the base you are walking on is black volcanic rock but you're surrounded by everybody's favourite – limestone! The volcanics gave way to waterfalls which we climbed down to reach deep pools. In the parts where I could stand up the water reached the bottom of my chin. However, the rocks under foot were slippery and resided at an angle so you constantly fell over. The water was also dark as the black rocks absorbed all the light so you couldn't see down into the water, thus swimming became the preferred option! Not the kind of place to take an electronic conductivity meter, was it Fiona?!

A few pools and waterfalls later we reached the end of the cave for this trip (it does go on further but would be very dangerous as we were there at the peak of the rainy season and it was prone to flooding). We then eagerly found the sampling bottles, funnels, string, and elastic bands and got on with the exciting task of collecting drips! Who told you that counting drips was like watching paint dry...



Me Collecting Drips

On the way back out we stopped and collected more drips –Yay! Our bags became heavier from carrying water samples, and the water that appeared to be filling the base which we'd periodically try to empty (without losing the contents). We may have happened to leave some of the slower samples to collect overnight so we would have to return the next day. The things one must endure for dissertation research!?! It's a hard life!



Hi-tech drip collection