

UBSS

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Newsletter

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Annual Dinner '09

Read who did what and where

A SUSpect Trip...

Edd's antics with Sheffield up North

President's Piece

90th AGM Anniversary Musings

...and more!

Spring 2009

FREE!
For all UBSS
Members

Editor's Extended Piece

by **Frank** ...the editor

Welcome to my first newsletter (possibly my last if I don't get them out quicker!) Thank you to everyone who has helped flood the newsletter@ubss.org.uk inbox with articles (hint hint), especially Ms Ekaterina from Asbest in Russia who kindly sent me her photo. They didn't say being newsletter editor came with such perks! Unfortunately I'm not available but if anyone else is looking for love let me know and I'll hook you up.

Anyway I hope you'll enjoy reading this issue. If not there's always the crossword. Please let me know if there's anything you'd like to see in future publications, and keep sending me your stories!



Perks of the job

!!NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS!!

The Good

- The committee would like to record a vote of thanks to Chris Pepper, for all his hard work repairing our hut, it's greatly appreciated by all UBSS members.
- The Red Lion - which was under threat of closure - is staying open under new management, so we won't have to move pubs!
- Linda Wilson and Clive Owen were voted in as vice presidents at this year's AGM.
- Charterhouse cave has gone (again!) with 500m of new passage and lots of leads.

The Bad

As you're all probably aware, the club's stock of tackle has been 'going missing' recently. In response to this the committee has decided that the club will no longer maintain a set of karabiners and slings in the tackle store for members to borrow. Everyone will need to purchase their own kit or beg/borrow/~~steal~~ from others for caving trips.

And The... Rump



The things people get up to in the Forest of Dean! If you can name the amorous one-socked attacker (and you aren't him/her) you *may* win a prize.



AGM and Annual Dinner

witnessed by **Ruth Briggs.**

The preparations were almost completed by the time the AGM started, in the recently refurbished stables. Ali Moody gave this year's fabulous talk on exploration in GB and Charterhouse. The talk gave us the opportunity to see what some of our members and our counterparts at Wessex get up to. There were also some amusing stories about how they've broken the rules in the past. Ali brought with her the Wessex cave publications to sell to our members and as I understand they made healthy sales.

The Dinner took place at the *Muset*. It was very well attended by 46 people, with a variety of both student and non student members, coming out of the woodwork. The food and service were excellent, in my opinion. The only negative comment I have heard is that the vegetarian dishes were not on the same level as the meat dishes. But we cannot account for everyone.

Once all the food had been served it was time for the most important part of the evening: the awards. Public speaking is not my favourite pastime, so this was a little nerve-wracking. With the help of my beautiful assistant Geoff the awards were handed out smoothly and with great hilarity. The awards were:

Silver compass award. Awarded to *Christian and Rob* for driving the wrong way up the M6 on the way back from Derbyshire. For 50 miles.

Amundsen award for polar exploration, and being probably the most southerly travelled member of UBSS. Awarded to *Andy Wright* in recognition of his recent trip to Antarctica.

Mr Muscle award. Awarded to *Jack Paton* for being buffer than one might expect.

Mugabe award for right wing thinking. Awarded to *Dickon Morris* for his slightly questionable comments.

Booker award for most entertaining trip reports. Awarded to *Mike* for his exceedingly humorous and well written reports, see the forum for full details.

TARDIS award for excellent utilisation of work holiday. Awarded to *Richard Rossington* for – according to his out of office automatic response – arriving back at work ten days before he left.

The golden boot for the most impressive caving injury. Awarded to *Frank* for damaging his little finger on a loop of rope on a descent.

Little Chef award for culinary excellence. Awarded to *James* for his appalling lack of culinary skills.

Mr Kipling award. Awarded to *Edd Willatts* for his exceedingly good cakes.

Most of the award recipients were made to explain their misdemeanours, in front of the crowd. With one notable exception being Jack, who was bullied into removing his shirt by most of the other forty five people in the room. He obliged after a deal of chanting and clapping from the outrageous audience! This trauma was further added to by being groping from Mike, whilst showing off his chest to everyone.

The awards ended a good meal, and the party disbanded, many returning to my house for the after party. Much drinking ensued at the party and a good time was had by all. The usual repertoire of caving games was played, with the absence of table and body traversing. To make up for the lack of traversable tables, I liberated the squeeze machine,



Andy Wright receives his award from Ruth

from its usual place in the tackle store, to my sitting room. Here it remained, getting much drunken use. I have been informed it was turned into a real caving experience, with water being thrown on them as they wriggled through.

Very rapidly the party split into two groups, the drunks and the ones on the tea! The drunks congregated in the kitchen and the sitting room, with the hardier of them venturing upstairs, to join the tea drinkers. Many were subdued by the level of tea drinking and had to return to the

alcohol in a dazed and confused state.

The level of drinking took their toll on some, most notably Dickon who passed out almost as soon as he arrived. Much vomiting then ensued before he was escorted home.

The evening then continued with few incidents, and people filtering out the door or rolling out their sleeping bags. Some were more forward than others with the places they expected to sleep. Upon, not taking no as a suitable answer and sleeping there anyway, they were subjected to much singing of

ABBA and beating of wooden spoons on pots and pans. Eventually with this cacophony, and much verbal abuse, they relented and made camp in the sitting room.

It was about three thirty when the last people left and people went to sleep. The carnage the next day was not as bad as anticipated. There were some very hungover people in my sitting room. There was one notable absence, who sheepishly returned from an unknown location later in the morning, only to receive much abuse from the sitting room whilst standing on the doorstep.

President's Piece

AGM 90th Anniversary Remarks

as recalled (partially at least) by **Arthur ApSimon**.

The President began by saying that he had been thinking that he had run out of fresh remarks to make, until Thursday night, when recollection dawned: "It's the Society's 90th anniversary, I'd better make some remarks, just in case ...".

Obviously no time to write a polished oration and in any case presidents don't do Annual Addresses any more, we have really interesting speakers instead. So on Friday evening after dining, Desmond and El Pres sat down with a bottle of Rioja between them, and AMA set about roughing out a decade-by-decade survey of high and low points in UBSS history. Sadly by the time the bottle ran out, inspiration was beginning to flicker. It's hard to say something snappy, amusing and penetrating about each of nine decades, so the later ones were even more sketchy. So, at the AGM on Saturday, El Pres'

remarks were improvised from a bare outline, afterwards he had to go to do other things, so this version probably has only an accidental resemblance to what was said on the day (but, after all, how many people were really listening all that closely?).

1919-1229 *The heroic decade - great discoveries, bad excavations.*

President was Prof. Eddy Fawcett, Professor of Anatomy. George Wills was our Honorary President, signalling a valued connection with the Wills family which endures to this day; Prof. Boyd Dawkins, veteran of the Wookey Hyaena Den excavations of the 1860s, was senior Vice-President. Leaders of investigations included John Davies, Leo Palmer, Reg Read, Herbert Taylor, Tom Hewer and E.K. Tratman. Top archaeologists came to speak at our sessional meetings.

The outstanding event of the decade was excavation of the Aveline's Hole Mesolithic cave

cemetery, the one site of undoubted national & European importance investigated by UBSS; followed by the discovery of the Iron Age use of Read's Cavern; other excavations took in Rowberrow Cavern, Sun Hole, Wye Valley caves and Bronze Age barrows on Mendip and elsewhere. Sadly these excavations, though interesting and important, were sometimes technically bad' UBSS was falling behind standards elsewhere.

1929-1939 *Decline. Presidents: Eddy Fawcett, until 1936; Prof. Dobson.*

On Mendip there were the Gorsey Bigbury and Tynings Barrows excavations, technically good, but with little or no student participation there, or on committee. Tratman had gone off to Singapore, Palmer to Hull, Davies died, most of the other 'leaders' were busy with their careers, annual publication of Proceedings lapsed.

1936 *Shall we close the society down?*

Bertie Crook was sufficiently depressed by the lack of activity to convene a General Meeting to consider just that; on the day, the zombies came out of the woodwork and voted him down, and on we went, but with a revised constitution requiring a majority of students on the committee.

1939-1949 *War years and recovery; the decade of the secretaries. Presidents: Prof. Dobson to 1947; Prof. Tratman from 1948.*

The high point was the discovery of GB Cave in November 1939, the first major cave discovery by UBSS; the low point - the lowest in the Society's history, was the destruction of library & museum by fire due to enemy action in November 1940. General activity almost ceased during war years, Tratman was a prisoner of the Japanese in Changi jail in Singapore from 1942, and the Society was kept going by Secretary Rodney Pearce and Treasurer Bertie Crook. The early post-war period was marked by cave discoveries at Longwood Swallet and then by the first trips to Co. Clare from 1948, as well as to South Wales; by tentative resumption of archaeological work and salvage work on surviving museum material. 1948 saw a rumpus over Secretaries doing their own thing regardless of committee, ending with a further revised constitution: monthly committee meetings in term date from then; much needed, because excepting Bertie, there was no senior member at hand to give guidance.

1949-1959 *The Golden Decade. President: Prof. Tratman, throughout.*

The decade was marked by return to annual publication of Proceedings, by the new survey of GB cave, which set standards not bettered until the advent of modern electronic and computerised survey methods; by the systematic annual exploration of Co. Clare caves. It was marked on the archaeological front by study and excavation of stratified deposits from Ice Age through to post-medieval, at Brean Down Sand Cliff, probably the most cited archaeological work by UBSS, excepting only Aveline's Hole; by discovery and excavation of the Brean Down Roman temple, and excavation at the Priddy Circles; as well as many minor excavations. The museum and library were effectively re-established; a vital feature of all activities was the major role of undergraduate members in investigation and publication

1959-1969 *To the 50th Anniversary. President: Prof. Tratman, again throughout.*

As well as exploration and survey, spelaeological studies took in cave formation, solution of limestone, dye tracing, hydrology; fruits of this were seen in the publication of Caves of North-West Clare (1969). Archaeological work saw the excavation of the Ice Age site of Picken's Hole, and publication of the Brean Down sand cliff site and the temple, also of the Priddy Circles; 'guest' articles included one on the 'Row of Ashes' Romano-British settlement at Butcombe. The decade ended with a special anniversary number of Proceedings.

1969-1979 *The Lloyd years. Presidents: Prof. Tratman, to 1972, Prof. Peel, to 1978, Prof. 'Bob' Savage, from 1979.*

In these years, Oliver Lloyd, as the most senior active member, filled in his own idiosyncratic and

charismatic way, some of the roles formerly filled by EKT, especially after the latter's death in 1978.

On the archaeological front, there were papers on analysis of the Glastonbury Lake Village Iron Age site, on the Charterhouse Roman site, on Gorsey Bigbury, now with radiocarbon dates, and on the Romano-British cemetery in Wookey Hole 4, Tratman's last archaeological project; also excavations at Westbury-sub-Mendip and Wookey Hyaena Den, both nationally important early man sites. Cave hydrology and geomorphology remained important topics.

1979-1989 *The Lloyd years to 1985, fire in March 1982, fattest Proceedings ever. President: Prof. 'Bob' Savage, throughout.*

After Oliver's sudden death in 1985, Graham became Treasurer. In this decade Bob Savage was largely instrumental in getting the Tratman Fund set up, with a studentship and funds available for UBSS fieldwork projects, EKT having trustingly and naively left a large bequest to the University without conditions; without Bob UBSS might have got nothing.

Fortunately the second fire left only water damage to library and museum, but these were without a proper home for several years.

Important papers reported on quantitative fluorometric dye tracing; radiolocation in GB; Charterhouse Cave, Cornish Miners at Charterhouse, studies of Gough's Cave; Charterhouse Warren Farm swallet; Caves of County Clare, published in 1981.

1989-1999 *Proceedings page changed for 2nd time. President: 'Bob' Savage until 1990; Prof.*

John Thornes to 1993; Prof Malcolm Anderson until 1996; lastly Arthur ApSimon.

Bob's last service to UBSS before his untimely death, was the re-negotiation of the Tratman Fund conditions, so that while the Tratman studentship is preserved, a reasonable, though much smaller proportion, remains available for UBSS projects.

Pete Smart becomes editor in 1990, after an disastrous editorial committee meeting, when one member, without his brain switched on, slagged off a paper written by the then editor (annual dinner afterwards was pretty grisly); later Graham took it on. King Arthur's Cave re-interpreted after about 65 years, Bos Swallet re-interpreted after 33 yrs; a whole Proceedings on Gough's Cave somewhere about now.

1999-2009 *To the 90th anniversary. President: AMA; Treasurer & Editor: Graham, both throughout.*

Articles on Mendip topics, & Ireland, Proceedings getting thinner as suitable articles get harder to find; Oliver Lloyd fund revived and able to give substantial support to Society

projects; meanwhile financial support from both University and Student's Union has virtually ceased.

A couple more papers on Brean Down; Aveline's Hole engravings; in 2006 a whole Proceedings on Aveline's; Gough's Cave mammoth engraving, stratification of Gough's Cave re-analysed; Caves of Co. Clare & South Galway published 2003, much the best of UBSS publications on Irish caves.

In the two walkers' maps and guides to the geology of eastern and western Mendip, published 2008, by British Geological Survey, the contribution from work by UBSS is warmly acknowledged - just a coincidence that the editor is our esteemed member, Andy Farrant, but still very nice to read.

2009-2019 *to the centenary.*

El Pres painted an alarming picture (quite unfit for gentle readers) of the Centenary AGM, were he to continue in office till then; NOT his intention.

Envoi

Sorry that it became a bit breathless towards the end; don't be offended if I didn't mention your seminal ground-breaking paper on a topic

never attempted before (I forgot it). There is only so much you can get into an improvisation, a comprehensive in-depth study would have needed at least another bottle.

But seriously, after my remarks, I had the pleasure of introducing our excellent speaker, Alison Moody, to talk about Charterhouse Cave, and found myself apologising for the black hole of Calcutta environment provided by "The Stables", members crowded in every available nook and cranny, the excess crowded in the museum able only to hear, the ancient El Pres wedged against a corner of the screen, unable to move and only prevented from falling by the press around him. I'm sure I've said this before: we should be making the AGM a special occasion, advertised, "All Welcome", in a decent lecture room, with toilet and refreshment facilities at hand. As it is, the impression given is of a pretty placent little coterie, with a piffling membership of 70 odd out of, is it 17,000 students? Even then if more than 1/3 attend the place is over-crowded. But then, who ever listened to Presidents?

Little Neath River Cave in the 21st Century

by **Graham Mullan**

The Little Neath River Cave remains, to date, the Society's most significant find in South Wales. It was discovered on January 22nd 1967 when Chris Gilmore dived the Bridge Cave sump and was explored and surveyed, mainly by UBSS members, until 31st May 1975 when Bob Churcher made his final push into Sump 9. It has been the subject of three papers in Proceedings, in 1967, 1971 and 1988 and numerous Newsletter reports. Type "Neath" into the Literature Search on our web site.

By the end of the 1970s it was regarded as largely worked out and, though I have heard reports over the years of other cavers taking an interest, only a little more has been found.

This cave was the first for which the data was actually processed by computer, by us, using a program written by Adrian Wilkins. However, that program has long been obsolete, having been

written for an IBM mainframe. But, being a sad person with no life, I recently got hold of the survey data for the cave and started to type it up in *Survex* in order to build a 3D model of the system. The current version of this model can also be found on our web site at the bottom of the Cave Survey Archive page. This has thrown up a number of interesting points:

Firstly the quality of the instrument work by the surveyors, led by Pete Standing, was excellent with very low misclosures on the closed loops. Secondly, however, Adrian and Pete did cheat in part when producing the final drawing, in the 1971 report, and lifted certain sections from the 1967 drawing without going back to the raw data. There are, thus, a few minor sections of Neath 2, effectively the cave from Flood Entrance to Sump 2, which are not on my model – we do not have much of the 1967 data in the Library – and need resurveying. I hope to entrust this task to eager keen young student cavers in the coming Summer. I might even do some myself! The biggest gap, the underwater survey

of Sumps 2, 3 and 4 and the short passages between them, Andrew Atkinson has promised to do for me. There are some bits beyond Sump 4 which should also be done, but unless someone is really keen ...

More interestingly, however, are the possibilities for exploration that are thrown up. Go and take a look at the model yourselves, but here are a couple of ideas:

In section, it really looks like Gyrn Fawr passage should be the key to a dry bypass to the sumps. It so looks like it's heading straight for New World.

And at the end, I cannot rule out the possibility that, as with Neath 8, a further section of strike passage will take the flow back up above sump level and into open streamway. I admit that pushing Sump 9 remains a miserable prospect, but has anyone looked at the choke in Pwll Ddu recently?

A SUSSpect Trip...

by Edd Willatts

In the New Year I went to Derbyshire to cave with SUSS's Rob2. The big trip was to go down Titan and through the Donatella's Aven sump.

There are two things I'm not so keen on underground: big pitches and sumps. Naturally you might think my plan a bit stupid then, however I joined UBSS after going canyoning and thinking caving sounded too much fun to be scared so I try not to let such things get in my way too much.

Starting on Friday afternoon, we tore around Giant's Hole with Tom2, a SUSS fresher. It's a mostly horizontal cave with a few pitches, a big rift (Crabwalk) and a streamway — it's rather Swildonsesque in places and good fun. As it's a popular Derbyshire beginner's cave, we explored holes and avens Rob normally ignores before finally derigging it after November's CHECC.

Saturday was to be the big event. My dislike of big pitches comes from thinking about failing bolts and ropes on long ascents. In August I'd been bricking it before rigging Rumbling Hole — Jon said, "You'll be fine", before giving his 'reassuring' laugh. He was right though and I was hoping my big-pitch fear was gone for good, hence the Titan Test.

Rob had spent a day trying to wind me and Tom up, so far without success. This made me suspicious of myself. Dropping down the 40m entrance shaft into the streamway I found what I was missing: a healthy dose of unease. By the time I thoroughly checked my SRT



kit twice and was dangling over the pitch, I'd gone paler (this was video-ed so you can judge for yourselves when it surfaces).

Titan main shaft is approximately 15m in diameter, 70m to Event Horizon (a slight constriction) and then 60m to the floor via a free-hanging rebelay. Far from being scary, it's brilliant; it's just a huge tube, you, a rope and the echoes of those above you. The view kept me entertained and furious stop-feeding, busy but Tom & Rob made light work of the descent on their faster racks.

From the bottom we crawled through a boulder choke into the Titan streamway (part of the Peak system) and headed to Calcite

Aven, our route to Donatella's Aven. Some nice rope ascents followed (via a ridiculous traverse) up wide tubes, though none of them held anything compared to Titan.

Unfortunately I was too slow in scraping my way to the sump's siphon in my SRT kit to give Tom a good soaking at Donatella's Aven. I didn't mess about and sumped the duck, violently shivering on the other side for my efforts. I'd left my SRT kit behind and so couldn't explore and besides, neither Tom nor I was in the mood to hang about, so I parcelled the Daren Drum, Red Bull and Lucozade through (our mission) and dived back.

I'd passed my pitch-fear test but the second part was not tiring on the ascent. The 170m sailed by. My prussiking technique was finally efficient and by estimating how many prussiks I'd take and counting, I stayed focused and knew my approximate progress — two huge bonuses. It wasn't without events though. At the free-hanging rebelay, I jammed my Croll into the knot. Clipped in, my catch-waggling began in earnest and thankfully I was soon free.

It took me 55 minutes to get out from the bottom: OK but 5 minutes could be lost at the rebelay and another 5 when I was waiting.

I finished off on Sunday afternoon destroying my finger tips bouldering on gritstone and completed the job practicing rescue techniques on frozen ropes in the evening, shredding my palms.

However the weekend wasn't without failures. I'd only made a half-batch of chocolate biscuits in my haste and ran out on Saturday evening: never again.



These photos belong to Robbie Shone and have been used with permission. More pictures can be found at www.shonephotography.com.

Survey Data and other Practical Matters

by **Graham Mullan**

Regular visitors to the Society's web site will notice that, as well as uploading the Society's publications, we have also been putting up computer models based on our survey data. These can be found at http://www.ubss.org.uk/cave_survey_archive.php

One of these was mentioned in the last issue, as the Co. Clare data from last September's trip was added to the "Burren 3D model". Other models are of the Burren area, very useful to Andy Farrant in writing a major paper on these caves due out in the next *Proceedings*, and a third shows the Little Neath River Cave. These models – produced in the widely available cave survey program, *Survex* (available from <http://survex.com/>) as the Society's own computer programs were not developed after the late 1970s – are extremely useful for visualising caves in three dimensions as they can be rotated in all directions and zoomed in on, on screen. They should be read in conjunction with the published drawings, however, to gain maximum information.

It is hoped that other models can be added to this archive, indeed it is hoped that the sort of collaboration that has taken place with other clubs in producing, especially, the Burren model will enable us to add larger and more detailed models of other caves and caving areas.

One thing that has come out of this, however, is awareness of the value of raw survey data even many years after the work was done and the plans were published. Much of the material on which our surveys is still extant in the Library – had it not been this work could not have been started – but it does seem that quite a lot has gone astray. We seem to be better than many clubs in this regard, but we are by no means perfect. I am therefore issuing (yet) another of my forlorn appeals to members:

If you have ever done any cave surveying and if you are still in possession of any data at all, can you please send it, or a good copy of it, to us for archiving.

In other news, I still have had no detail on the 1963 Pyrenees expedition. Is anything yet known about this trip?

Random Filler Photo



Ross Hemsley enjoying a phallic stal in Daren. (Forest of Dean weekend '09).

OUCC Picos



Doing anything this summer? Want to take part in a world class caving expedition and explore deep caves in Spain? Then I have just the things for you: Oxford University Cave Club is planning an expedition to Spain, and is looking for more members.

The primary aim of the expedition will be to continue exploring *Asopladeru La Texa / Sistema Julagua*, a cave in the *Picos de Europa, Spain*. As of the start of this year it had been explored to a depth of 1,060m. An expedition summer explored the cave further, mainly concentrating on diving in the sumps.

One of the dry leads that they pushed, a climb up an aven near

the downstream-most sump in the cave, led to wide phreatic passage, which is most likely the continuation of earlier phreas. The passage immediately after the climb is spectacularly well decorated, and passing through will inevitably lead to some damaging of the pretties.

Those involved in the expedition chose not continue pushing that year as they lacked the capacity at that late stage in expedition to put proper conservation measures in place, or to photograph and document the pretties. So our aim is to go and put conservation measures in place, take lots of photos, and carry on pushing!

The lead is particularly exciting because it is heading straight towards the resurgence at *Culiembro*, and is close in both a horizontal and vertical sense. The possibility of making that elusive and long sought after connection is very real!

Excited? No previous expedition experience necessary - we'll have a mix of experience out on expedition from newbie cavers to old lags, so this would be a great first expedition. The setting for the expedition is fantastic — we camp high in the *Picos de Europa* mountains with stunning views and generally good weather. The site we plan to set up an underground camp is very comfortable with a flat sandy

floor, no draft or damp but not too far from fresh water.

When? 4th July to 14th August 2009. We ask that people either come out at the start or stay to the end (or both of course!) This is to prevent a few people doing all the work rigging / de-rigging etc.

How much? Not very much:

- Contribution to expedition costs (gear etc): £70 student / unwaged or £90 if you have a job.
- Kitty contributions of €35 per week to cover food, fuel, etc.
- Travel costs. An Easyjet flight from Stanstead to Oviedo

Asturias is about £80 return. Busses to from Oviedo to Los Lagos are about €20 return.



For more info check the expedition website <http://oucc.org.uk/expeditions/expedition2009/> or e-mail Nick: **ijustlost@gmail.com**



Christian's
Cryptic
Caving
Crossword
Conundrum



4. Leading members of Her Majesty's Ship offered another name for this type of crustacean. (4,6)

5. Initially something really technical, you'll soon get the hang of it. (3)

9. Take down a container, without it you'll probably drop something (6,3)

13. See 5 down.

14. If you start with the route of forty, then take eight, then eight again, drop twenty, take double and go down from there, what do you arrive at? (3)

16. This yellow suit is perfect as you wade through wiggly waterways. (7)

19. See 4 down.

20. After I and some kind of rodent get together, the result will be sadly missed. (4)

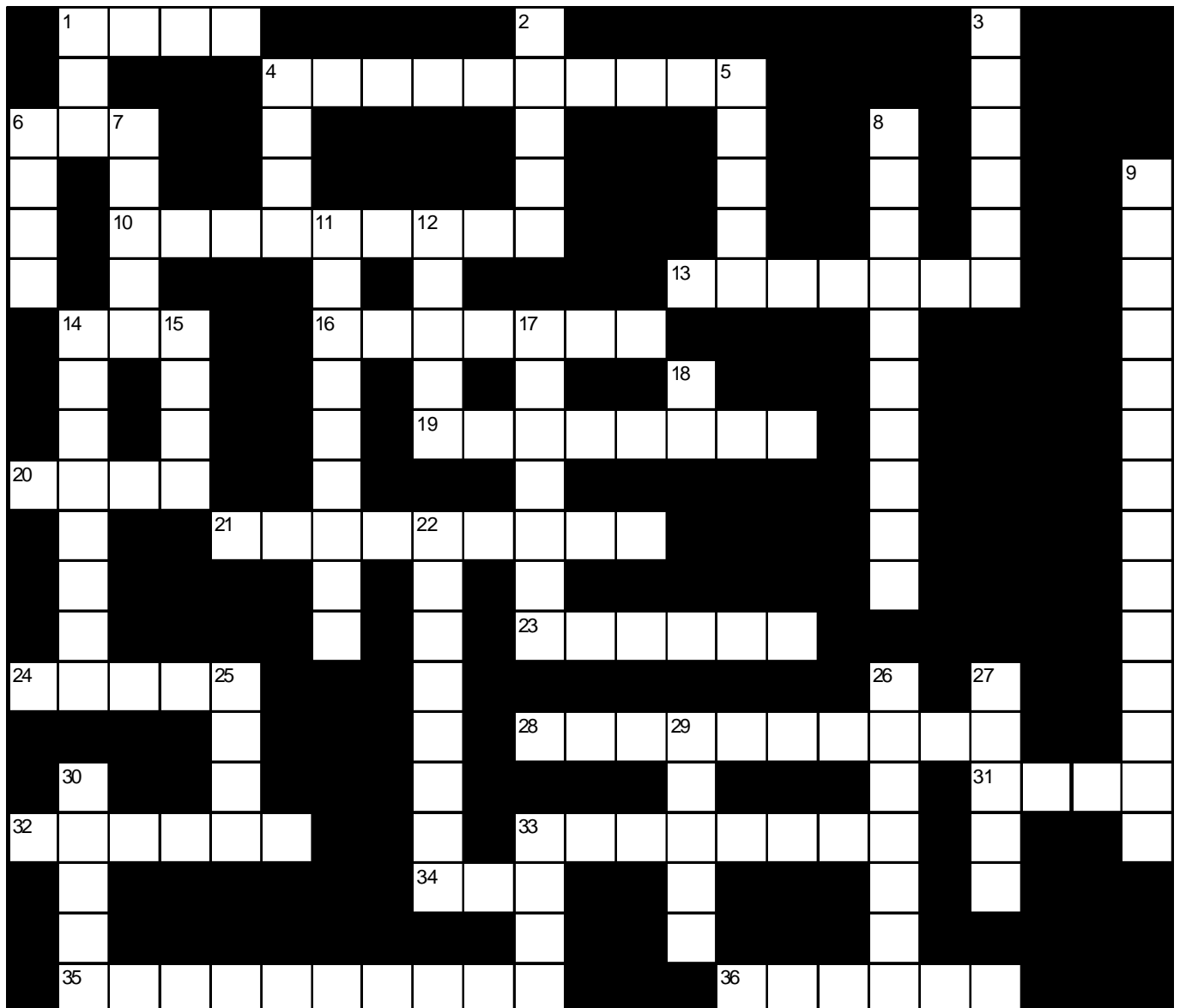
21. If somebody from the matrix went caving, this is surely what they would wear to keep warm. (9)

Cor! Christian's given me a hard one! If you give up you can beg him for the answers by e-mailing

cc2800@bris.ac.uk

Across

1. Carved without any research & development, not like a mine or dig! (4)



23. Have a snooze while you queue for this pitch. How many winks would you like? (6)
24. The bum of a river dwelling mammal? (with 33 down) (5,4)
28. Bracelet worn by a male, perhaps? You won't be dripping by the end of the whole thing. (6,4)
31. See 15 down.
32. Abandoned the trip because too much water lifting was involved. (6)
33. The place where this wading bird got stoned. (5,3)
34. See 27 down.
35. Stalemate ends and reveals pretties once a letter of objection is removed. (9)
36. Rig twice with a bit of adjustment to make a belay device appear. (6)

Down

1. Something parked inside, incarcerated near the top of what could be mistaken for a very British cave. (3)
2. Should you share the rigging? Why not? (1,4)
3. Sounds like panting is a thing of the past if you use one of these on long pitches. (6)
4. High up in this area you'll find many fine caves. (with 19 across) (4,8)
5. Bravo Charlie, you've found something triangular to name after yourself! You could use it to fasten your harness. (with 13 across) (5,7)
6. Useful piece of kit to have around pots. (4)
7. In amongst it anti-gravity would be useful to make your way to the top! (5)
8. Study of caves and karst is only deemed valid if you know where you can dip things to avoid being under an American spell... (10)
9. Finally, a Humble tale of potholing. (8, 6)
11. A Citrus fruit that's too hard to eat? (9)
12. You'll need one if you want to be 'ard in the caving world (5)
14. It's hard wearing nylon on top of part of the ensuite...I hope it has the usual damage! (8)
15. A Chinese doppelganger nestled between the elephant and the goat... (with 31 across) (4,4)
17. Almost decent publication about cave exploration. (7)
18. You could be going round in circles all day if you don't know the way on from this OFD1 chamber. (2)
22. Extensive forest where innuendo can easily be found. (8)
25. Take some of this inside, proper exploration of vertical caves requires it. (4)
26. Running away! That's what you should be doing if this has been done badly. (7)
27. Many cavers find enlightenment when donning one of a pair made in France. (with 34 across) (5,3)
29. Gee, a song for crystals in a rocky shell. (5)
30. These should be no obstacle if you hold the key to accessing somewhere around the stage. (5)
33. See 24 across.