

UBSS

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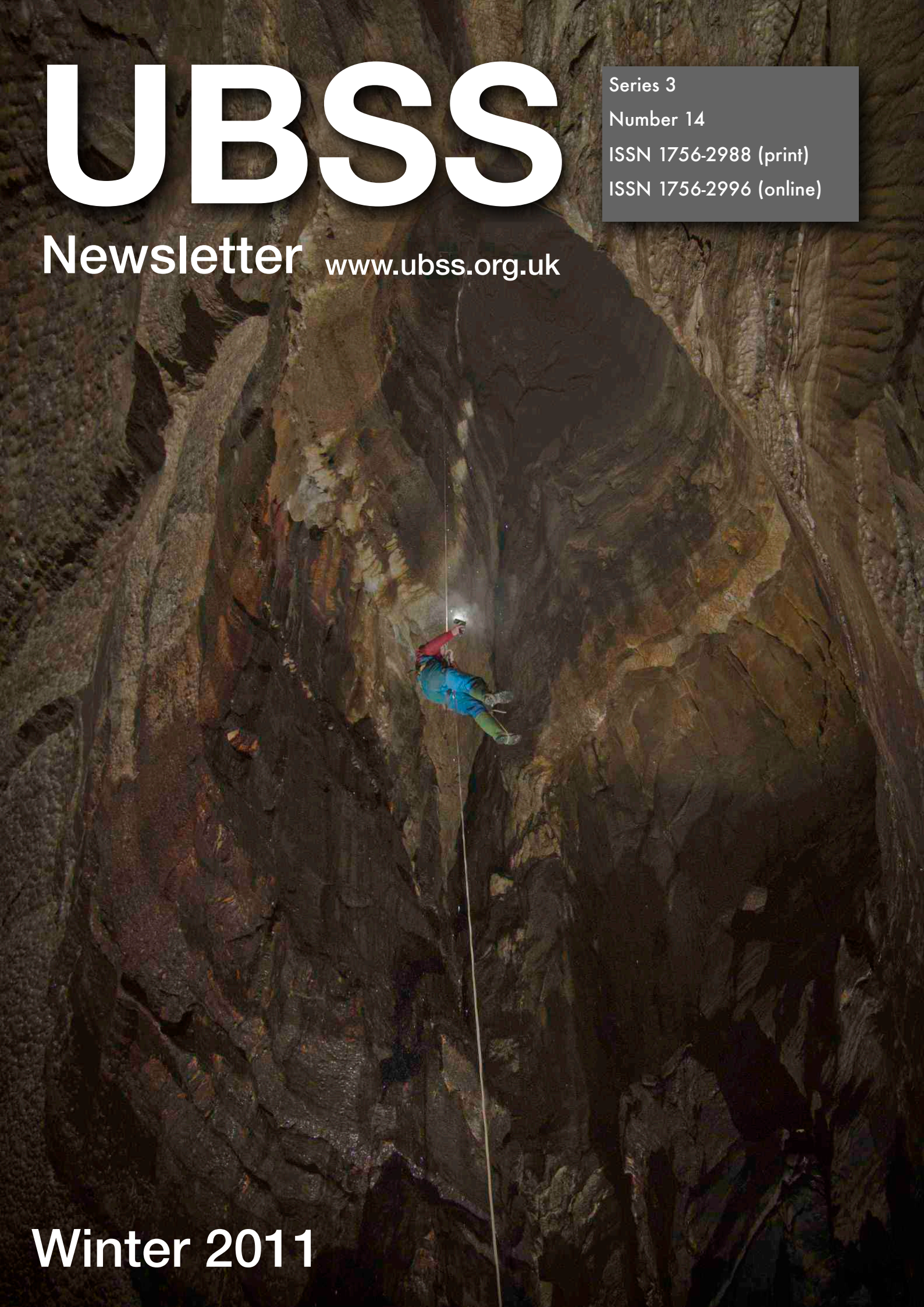
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Editor's Piece



A disgruntled editor (despite the smile)

Blimey! Would you look at that...a newsletter!
It's only been about 15 months since the last one...

When I first agreed to take on the role of newsletter editor, I thought it would just be a simple job of collecting a few articles and compiling them into a document. Little did I know it would take months and months of badgering people to write things and then a few more months to remind them what they agreed to. (Who knew students were so allergic to short essays?).

I very nearly had to carry out my threat of producing a newsletter containing nothing but colour-by-number pictures, featuring such classic scenes such as "GB when your batteries have run out" (mostly black) and "Swildons - after turning off all torches and waving a hand in front of your face" (even darker).

As it turns out though, I can save that threat until next time, as here we are at long last! Six whole articles for you to read at your leisure!

A lot can happen in a year and a bit, but contained right here are some of the highlights, from drunken parties, to new discoveries and drinking Espressos at -600m.

Before I finish, I would like to say two things:

1) A HUGE thank you to those of you who contributed to this edition! Without you, this newsletter would be rubbish and contained far too much colouring in.

2) Enjoy reading this newsletter, but be warned...I will be asking for more articles again very soon!

Stuart

Austria Expo - 2011



The annual Cambridge University Caving Club Expedition to Totes Gebirge in Austria took place this year from the 16th July to the 20th August. During this five week period a grand total of 31 cavers descended on Hilda's Gasthof, which formed our base camp, to join the expedition.

With UBSS member Chris Smith organising the expedition, it seemed only natural that a large UBSS contingent would travel across Europe to join the expedition. This was seen as the first UBSS car, driven by Robert Adams with Chris Smith as a passenger, traversed Europe at breakneck speeds to arrive in time for the start of the expedition. Jon Hauser also flew across to join the early parts of the expedition. The second UBSS car arrived at the beginning of the third week of the expedition, after a



Base Camp

somewhat longer and more laid back journey. UBSS and CUCC member Alex Crow was at the expo from almost start to finish. Andrew Atkinson also put in an appearance towards the end of the expedition.

The second UBSS group to head to Austria, Adam Henry, Cat Hulse and myself, took advantage of the drive across Europe to call on the hospitality of friends and family. A first overnight stop in Luxembourg allowed us to take advantage of the cheap wine and low petrol prices while staying with Adam's cousin. The second night saw us in the very south of Germany and despite being within a few miles of the expedition; we stopped for a second time. This time our host was Erasmus student and UBSS member Theresa Stolle. This stop provided one of the highlights of the trip; as on our arrival after driving the length of Germany in 30° heat in a car without air conditioning, we were greeted by the phrase "Would you like beer first or a shower?". That phrase set the precedent for the stay, as we

were then treated to a traditional Bavarian meal with, of course, a selection of the local beers to try.

Early the next morning we arrived at the base camp



Top Camp

of the expedition, after an even earlier start. Shortly after arrival we were taken on our first trip to the top camp. As a first time expedition caver, I was unsure what to expect from

this; however I was pleasantly surprised. After a 2 hour walk across the rocky plateau, carrying all our sleeping things, we descended over one final ridge to get the first view of the stone bridge. This amazing natural structure formed a perfect bedroom/ kitchen for caving, with spectacular views across the mountains.

A few days later saw the expedition dinner, where all the cavers present at the expedition gathered at Hilda's for a night of eating, drinking, and being merry. The dinner featured traditional Austrian food, another highlight of the expedition. The pudding, germknodel, was a massive hit among the entire expedition. This



Hilda's

evening saw the fulfilment of the tradition where the expedition leader gets thrown into the river.

After this our group finally got down to the serious business of the expedition: caving! With three caves on the go at once there was a lot variety in trips available. From the rigging trips to the large pushing trips to the scrotty little side passage exploration; there was something to suit everyone. The three systems under exploration were 258/ Tunnockschacht, 204/Steinbrückenhöhle and 161/ Kaninchenhöhle.



Group pic

Many important discoveries were made during the course of the expedition.

In Tunnockschacht pushing trips extended the cave below the bottom of String Theory with the discovery of the chamber Above and Beyond, as well as a pitch called The Beast. At the northern end of the cave beyond Flying High, the cave was extended on the higher level with the passage March of the Penguins.

Steinbrückenhöhle had a lot of work put into it, with 2 camping trips in the earlier stages of the expedition, although no major passages were found on these trips many smaller side passages were explored to completion. The 100m pitch Brian's Phat Shaft was the subject of a number of rigging trips, as it showed promise of a connection to Kaninchenhöhle. In the last week of the expedition

the long awaited connection to Tunnockschacht was found.

In Kaninchenhöhle many large and important discoveries were made, considering the main aim of the exploration of the cave was the bolt climb, Irony of time. Beyond this was

discovered a large phreas called Country for Old Men. Other discoveries in this cave included the Mordor series, Turd in the Hole (for reasons unsuitable for print) and a chamber, whose size caused much argument between UBSS members and other cavers, finally called Massive for Mendips! On the very last day of caving the largest find of the expedition was found, a full 700m of passage- this was a major highlight of the trip.

When not caving there were a number of other festering activities to enjoy; such as climbing, via ferrata, walking, and visiting local towns and tourist attractions.

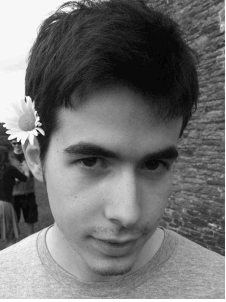
In total the expedition was a success with a grand total of 5.5km of new passage being surveyed.

Amy Matthews



Chris Smith

Northern CHECC - 2011



On a Thursday afternoon, the first UBSS car left for the North containing Stuart, Chris, James and me. The plan was to get a decent day of caving on the Friday before the rest of UBSS descended on Bullpot Farm followed by drinking and a strange loss of desire to cave the next day.

The trip chosen was the enticingly named Disappointment Pot. Apparently, if we were lucky we may even make it to a Main Chamber. Stirring stuff. I had the chance to read about this trip beforehand in the book *Not For the Faint Hearted*. The description includes "The entrance of choice for a rich and inspirational return trip...". Given that this sounded (literally) like a walk in the (particularly scenic) park, and that I had no cardiac trouble, I was ready.

Thursday night was partly spent on lighting the fire, filling the hut with smoke, opening the windows and freezing in my Woolworths sleeping bag. Fortunately, the mood was lightened by cheap northern ale and Stuart's cheese feast.

Next morning, we made our way over to the Gaping Gill system carrying what seemed to be an absurd amount of rope, harnesses and hardware. However, the weather was glorious, and a scenic walk through the Dales was enjoyed. Not sure if many of the hikers found the sight of four sweaty, topless and pale men to be a welcome addition to the landscape though.

Once underground, some straightforward caving led to the first pitch where the man who packed the tackle sacks happened to have the appropriate rope. Still burdened, I made sure to remember this trick for future use.

The first amusing (possibly even thought provoking) feature followed in the form of a flat out crawl. The low ceiling and six inches of water in the bottom made it impossible to turn ones head from side to side. I went in chest down, face to the left and dragged myself for about five metres. At this point the roof had lowered until the water was lapping at the side of my mouth. Probing with my head suggested that the roof lowered in all directions minus backwards. This left me in the unusual situation of having to ask for directions in a duck. It turned out that I could have exited the crawl a metre ago into a tunnel on my right.

Entering this I was greeted by James describing, in no uncertain terms, just how much fun the next duck is. This feature had around a foot of water in it leaving several inches of triangular shaped airspace under the rock ceiling. Its design ensured that a helmet could not be

worn and air breathed. My approach involved first floating my helmet through, leaving me with only the dim glow from my light through the duck. I attempted to line myself up with this and floated through on my back. To give some urgency the helmet slowly sunk, bringing to mind the possible situation of being on the wrong side of a duck to ones light in complete darkness.

Following this were a series of winding passages that often required sideways walking and squeezing to pass. These were never exceptionally tight or awkward, but it was fairly sustained exertion particularly with the tackle sacks dragging and getting stuck. This was mixed in with some crawling passage and the remaining four pitches. These were only of heights between five and fifteen metres and contained nothing as awkward as the barriers in the Union stairwell, yet a couple were oddly enjoyable and fairly impressive.

We left the NFTFH route after the last pitch to enter a maze like section of crawling passages on the route to the main chamber. A fair number of side passages, some pleasant, some half filled with foamy mud, were also explored, though none deliberately. It was clear when we were finally on the correct route and near the main chamber, as there was a strong wind accompanied by a dull roar echoing down the tunnels.

The chamber itself consisted of a colossal, flat pebbled floor, with a high arching ceiling. However, what really caught the attention was the waterfall. This is the waters of Fell Beck stream freely falling just over a hundred metres through the huge hole in the chamber ceiling. As it was mid afternoon when we were underground, an eerie blue glow of daylight could be seen filtering through the waterfall down the vertical tunnel into the chamber.

The way out was uneventful except when I miscounted the number of pitches I had climbed leaving Chris to carry his own body weight in tackle. A walk back to the car, a pub meal and a few pints left us ready to return to the hut where the rest of UBSS, and a couple of other societies including MUSC and SUSS had arrived. Drinks were drunk and other clubs met, but the caving caught up those who had been and we went to bed relatively early. I was assured that few others did though.

After an obscene, heart stopping and largely fried breakfast we split into groups to mix up people from different clubs. How much it achieved the given aim of learning different techniques and approaches to caving from each other is debatable, but it was a good way to meet other cavers. My trip was down Bull Pot. This is a short, mainly vertical pothole that offers good SRT and rigging practise. One of the deviations required an acrobatic swing on the rope for a horizontal distance of three or four metres which was surprisingly good fun.

The road back from Kingsdale provided some entertainment as, after one particularly hilly section, all four wheels of the van momentarily left the ground. This was particularly unexpected as we were travelling fairly cautiously and well under the speed limit.

A chili was cooked in the usual ridiculously large portions found at caving weekends and the drinking began. At one point I was introduced to the idea of caving songs. These turned out to be surprisingly well written and it was good fun singing about the less glamorous aspects of our sport with thirty or so other cavers. I was familiar with the saucepan and sling game of which a small tournament was held. However, I hadn't come across table rugby before and naively volunteered. The aim was to get one member of your team of three over a (large) table, under it and then lying down on it. The other team started at the opposite end of the table and had the same goal, but in the opposite direction. Stopping them was as much a part as helping your team member. Rules were minimal, potentially for injury was not. Chris' elbow came off worse than the floor when the two met, and one member of UBSS sacrificed some dignity, but showed

great dedication, by leaving her trousers in the hands of our opponents in order to escape them and win that round.

Many of us were feeling a little tender the next morning, so UBSS split up for two short trips and one long one. Though it took many hours, the last trip was perhaps less challenging as it was around the cafés of Ingleton. I went to Aquamole with Adam and Stuart. This was largely an SRT trip, with little time off rope. After struggling to find the entrance and passing the many rebelay, we reached the final pitch. This is a very impressive aven with forty meters below you and another ten above at the entrance. Standing at the top, my light was completely unable to illuminate the bottom and it was only when Stuart abseiled down that its depth became clear. Adam kindly made my descent of this more pleasant by trying his best to deflect the small stream down on to me. After some confusion with the starting of British summer time, our lack of watches and the call out, we made our apologies to the others and began the long drive home.

Bill Smith

The Caves of Co. Clare and South Galway



The book has sold out! That is, I think that Tony has one copy left in stock.

This was our third book on Irish caves. The first was *The Caves of North-west Clare* edited by E.K.

Tratman and published in 1969 by David & Charles. The second was *Caves of Co. Clare* edited by Charlie Self and published in 1981. The third book was published in 2003.

The first book wasn't really meant as a guide to the caves, though it could be - and was - used as such, rather it was a treatise on the geomorphology of the caves. It was really the culmination of twenty years of exploration and study of the caves of the area and gave a picture of what was known about them at that time. The second book was a guide book and was intended as such. The original plan was to produce two books, that one and a more sciency one but owing to Trat's illness and death in 1978 the second book was never produced. The third book included overviews of the geology, hydrology and geomorphology and more detailed looks at the area covered by each chapter as well as detailed guide book descriptions of each known site. I like to think that we included enough to satisfy everyone's interests in the caves, though room could not be found for accounts of archaeology and biospeleology. As can be seen from their titles, each book covered a wider area than its predecessor.

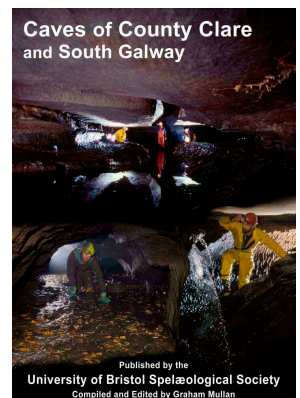
So, what do we do now? There is clearly still a market for this sort of book, but how do we go about it? We

could simply update the text of the current edition; thanks to Tony Boycott and his contacts, we still know just about everything that has gone on in that area. We could, however, expand the area once again. It would seem logical to cover the remainder of Co. Galway, but if one does that then one inevitably creeps into Co. Mayo as well. We could then round-off the area by including Roscommon too. We have already published an account of the caves of the latter area, in *Proceedings* in 2004 so much of the leg-work there has already been done.

What this would require is two things: a series of new photos covering the entire area and, more importantly, field work especially in Galway and Mayo to ensure that we have first-hand accounts of their caves and their settings. Dave Drew has said that he knows of a large number of sites that need visiting and checking, there may be *caverns measureless to man* just waiting to be discovered. Is there anyone willing to take up the challenge?

If anyone is seriously interested in getting involved with this project, please contact me. We can then take it from there.

Graham Mullen



The New Survey of Gough's Cave



This is Andrew's fault, really. A couple of years back, as Andrew got involved in the work at

Charterhouse and started to do most of the survey work, there, we worked out that it was possible to produce 3d models of caves and could, given the data, cobble together an overview of the whole catchment area around G.B. and Charterhouse. As well as being an interesting project in its own right, this would become a useful tool for the study of the geomorphology of the area, thus keeping Dr Farrant happy(ish).

This project has moved on apace over the last year or two and thanks to our own work (Andrew does the techie stuff and I do much of the grunt work), the enormous generosity of Mendip's cave surveyors and some additional backroom assistance (thank you, Alex Crowe) we now have a pretty good model of the area. All the output from this has been published via the Society's website, and can be found at http://www.ubss.org.uk/cave_survey_archive.php.

As the project progressed, it soon became clear that the one major cave that we did not have data for and that we could not digitise or otherwise cobble together was Gough's Cave, the main show cave at the bottom of Cheddar Gorge. Gough's has been surveyed and three surveys exist. These are:

A theodolite survey of the show cave, alone, carried out by one C.M. Hayes in 1935 on behalf of the owners, the Longleat Estate.

This was never published, though an annotated version can be found

on the Mendip Cave Registry and Archive website, and I have no idea whether the underlying data still exists in the Archives at Longleat. However, it is a plan only and thus no good for generating 3d models.

A magnetic survey carried out by Ralph and Arthur Stride of this Society along with a Mr Manning in 1948.

Published in *Cave Science* in 1951 (Stride and Stride, 1951). This publication does include both plan and elevation, but was published at quite a small scale and suffers, also from our perspective, from the main problem that we have with the third survey. I do not know whether the data for this version is still extant, anywhere, either. It is certainly not in the Society's archives.

A magnetic survey carried out by Willie Stanton in the early 1950s.

This was published in 1952 and again in 1965, with additions. (Stanton, 1952; 1965). This is the most comprehensive version and we do have the data for it. Willie very kindly lent me his survey records for copying before he died and the original volumes are now in the Wells & Mendip Museum. However, despite many hours of trying, I have been unable to satisfactorily locate any of Willie's fixed survey stations 'on the ground' a prerequisite for adding in the various sections that have been discovered since then and not properly surveyed in. Hardly surprising, given the many changes that have taken place in the show cave since 1951.

Thus it was clear that we would have to start again and do the whole job from scratch. I therefore contacted the management to

secure permission for this and they have been very helpful, enthusiastic even.

Work started in October 2010 when we borrowed the Arch & Anth's department's differential GPS and established a fixed point outside the entrance as a basis from which to work. On the same day we took a DistoX surveying tool into the cave and to see whether we could use it. In those conditions we could not as the electricity powering the lights etc. interfered too strongly with the magnetic fields and some time was lost whilst we attempted to sort out a method of collecting the data without recourse to a compass. As it happens, when underground work started in earnest in early December we discovered that, for most of the cave, we could do a magnetic survey, providing we worked after hours and with the electricity turned off. This got us started, but we ran into the same problem after a couple of trips when we reached areas with loads of iron railings and steps. Thus it was that I was put in contact with Lee Hawkswell of the Chelsea SS and the next two trips involved him and a Leica total station. After a bit of faffing we worked out a method for tying this directly into the magnetic survey and Andrew entered the data, by hand exactly as if it had been generated by the DistoX.



Using the Leica Total Station in King Solomon's Temple

Interestingly enough, the loop misclosures for this part of the work are comparable with those for the magnetic data.

Parallel with our own efforts, we enlisted the assistance from Duncan Price of the CDG to carry out a survey of the sumps and of the dry bits beyond the sumps. At the time of writing we have centreline data for all the sumps and full surveys with passage dimensions up to the end of Bishop's Palace between Sump 1 and Sump 2. The data for Sump 3 was collected by John Volanthen (CDG) using a clever automatic recorder that he has built.

Thus far there have been 16 trips, mostly of an evening, after the show cave closes, and I estimate that we need a further four or five. The further reaches of the cave could be done during the day, providing I first unplugged the power to a pump which keeps one passage from flooding, but the multitude of connections around Boulder Chamber and the steel ladders on the *Adventure Caving* route did give us some problems.

The survey work has been done by teams including Stuart Alldred, Andrew Atkinson, Tony Boycott, Liz Green, Lee Hawkswell (CSS), Amy Matthews, Ali Moody, Clive Owen, Rosie Tulloch and John Williams (Tangent). The diving has been done by Duncan Price and John Volanthen (CDG) with sherpasing help from Antoinette Bennett, John Bennetts, John Cooper, Fiona Franklin, Rob Franklin, Tangent and Gary Powell, as well as some of the surveyors at various times. It might be a short carry to Dire Straits, but it takes three helpers to get a kitted up diver into the water there.

Our grateful thanks go also to those staff members at Gough's who have stayed after work to unlock the cave for us, especially Chris Castle and Phil Hendy.

A detailed account of the methodology will appear in *Proceedings* once the work has finished. The plan version will also appear there, though that and the 3d models will also be made available

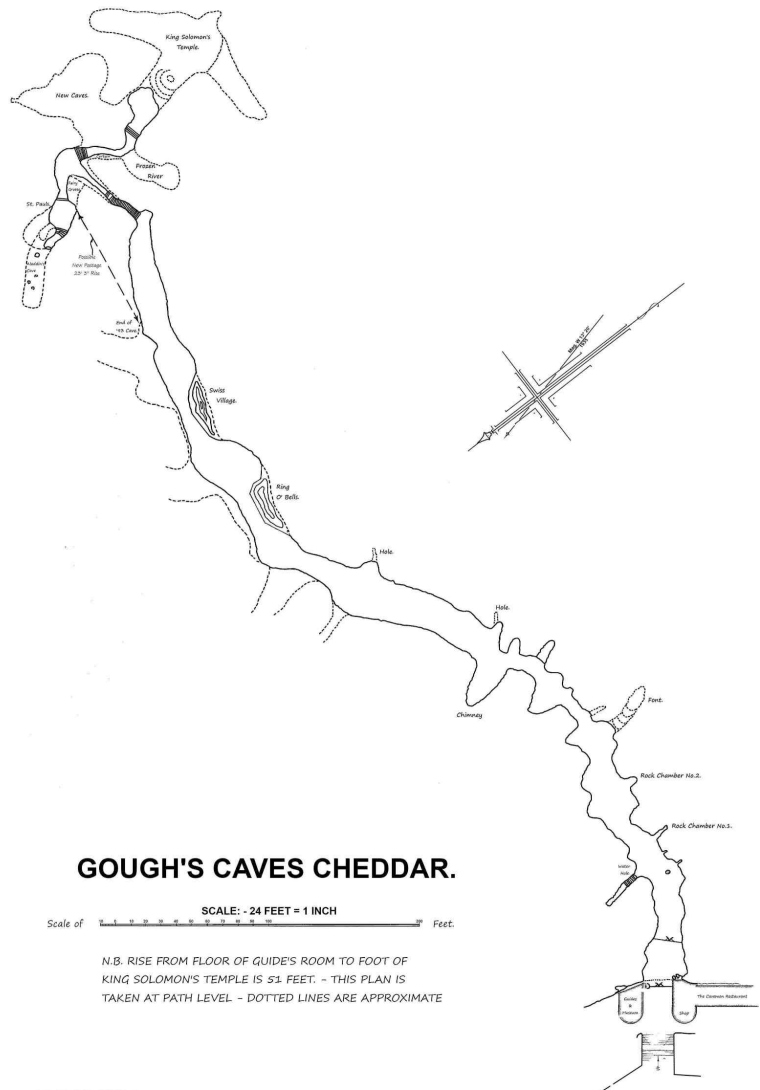
by downloads from the survey page of our web site.

Refs:

Stanton, W.I., 1952. The survey of Cheddar Caves. *MNRC Reports* **44/45**. 16-23.

Stanton, W.I., 1965. Notes on the survey : The caves of Cheddar and neighbourhood. *WCC Journal* **8** (103) 324-329.

Stride, A.H. and Stride, R.D. 1951. Gough's Cave. Cheddar. A survey and some explanatory notes. *Cave Science*. **3**. 18. 62-65.



1935 theodolite survey of Gough's Cave. Redrawn for publication by Graham Mullan

Annual Dinner - 2011



So ended another year of UBSSey fun. To celebrate, Friday night was spent in Bierkeller by a large student contingent, then a

limited few made it out of bed early enough to go caving and for a Hunter's lunch before the AGM. All seemed like a great idea apart from for some ridiculous reason the secretary is expected to stay awake for the entire meeting. However this was battled through by all involved, and it is truly a commendation to Helen Donoghue for giving a talk that kept most people awake. An extra thanks to Geoff, who helped ensure the excellent turnout for the time put into advertising the event while procrastinating from doing more university-work related things.



As the day drew to a close it was time for the real festivities to begin. As per usual the most dedicated arrived at the Lansdown pub to begin drinking soon after the AGM ended, all scrubbed up and looking our best as we remind each other what we actually look like under the normal coating of dirt.



The dinner itself this year was held at No 4 in Clifton, where a more civilised round of drinks was enjoyed before the meal and finally awards. The prestigious UBSS annual awards this year included:

Golden Compass: Amy Matthews and Chris Burnley, for managing to walk for half an hour in the wrong direction trying to get to a minibus 3 minutes walk away from the cave entrance.

Mike's Buff Fresher: a tradition made over the last 3 years, this year involved a blindfolded assessment of the 3 male fresher's tone and form, from which Bill emerged victorious.

Key-on-a-String: To Alice Whale, for reliably managing to lose every key that she came across even when only required to look after it for a couple of days



After young and old had once again come together in the yearly gathering that is the amalgamation of the generations of the society, it was time for us to go our separate ways; so that the more experienced in the ways of the world don't have to put up with the rowdiness of the youth, and so that we can keep our illusion that they're more sensible than we are. So one lot went to Clive's, and the rest of us to Alice's. Obviously nothing but responsible drinking ensued, and nothing silly like arranging people into compromising positions, nearly going through the roof downstairs due to 20 people jumping simultaneously synchronised by the

Macarena or anything else untoward happened, and all awoke thoroughly hangoverless in the morning.

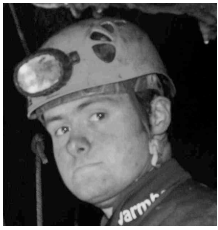


Sunday began (very late in the day) with a mass exodus from Alice's house to the Bank pub where we had a roast (highly recommended), went for the hair of the dog technique of dealing with the night before and (in some cases) were filled in on the events of the night before which memories were slightly patchy on. Not very well unfortunately, hence the rather sparse description of Saturday night. But overall I'm quite confident the whole thing was probably excellent fun.

Catherine Hulse



Desperate Squeezes and Uninspiring



When I started caving I was told that the only way to find new passage in the UK was by digging chokes

or diving sumps. I thought this to be rather a sensible assumption but it did not stop me ferreting up likely looking side passages, often to the exasperation of my fellow cavers. These side passages were often what cavers aptly term 'collectors pieces', although they were by no means pristine, bearing the scars of the passage of masochists such as myself.

In September 2010 I fell rather a long way down a waterfall in an Italian canyon, breaking my wrist in a number of places. A six week entombment in plaster was the inevitable outcome and this proved to be a serious irritation, it was in fact extremely depressing. Wet Mendip caving was of course out of the question but when the Wales weekend came around midway through October I was determined that I would go caving, I had organised the bloody thing after all!

A big dry cave was the only option in my condition and I had found a description of a cave called Ogof Tarddiad Rhymney online and was immediately interested. It was off the beaten track and in an area with loads of potential but little known passage. Pete Talling had done some surface bashing in this area and was keen to have another look with some fresh pairs of eyes and so it was that Pete, Ryan Warwick and I set off for Trefil mountain. We looked at a number of interesting holes that went nowhere and finished the day with a trip down Tarddiad Rhymney.

A small hole in the base of a quarry led to a walking passage roughly 5m wide which just goes and goes and even with my arm incapacitated we motored easily



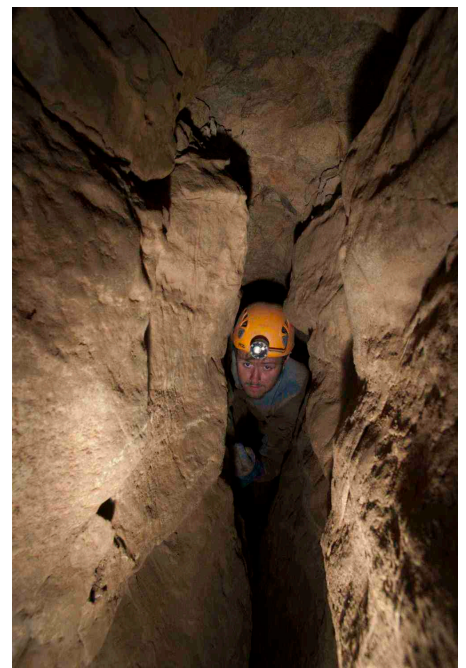
to the end of the cave where the large, heavily collapsed passage degenerated into a rift which eventually got too small, a deeply disappointing conclusion but also something of a geological conundrum. The cave just slowly dies.

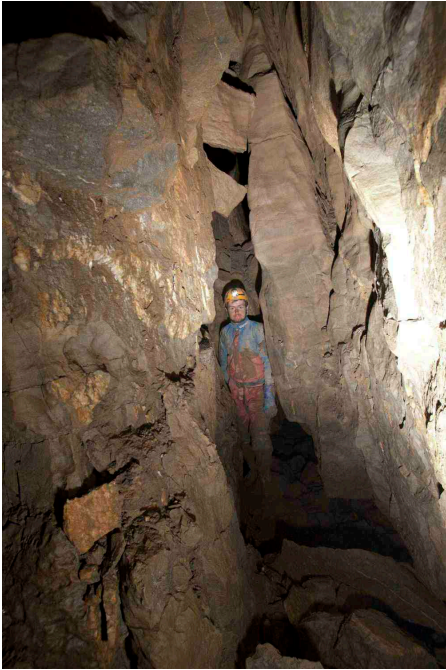
On the return journey we stopped for a break where, according to the description, a side series, Nant Criiban, led off. Seated on the jumbled boulder floor so typical of Welsh caves I gazed idly at my surroundings. The passage walls were also fairly typical with flat faces where chunks of a geological bed had sheared off and crashed to the floor at an indeterminate time in the past. They were not however as featureless as they at first appeared. A very narrow water worn rift broke the dull uniformity of the rock. It was not tremendously interesting but certain warranted a closer look.

A small steam trickled feebly out of the base of the rift and flowed off beneath the boulder floor and if one was a glass half full sort of person it appeared that there may be a widening of the rift just before it met the roof.

So to convince myself that it went nowhere I shimmied up the wall making copious use of a specialist climbing technique known as the plaster jam. The inevitable disappointment did not follow for surprisingly there was a way on. A right angled bend led to a squeeze which looked tight and would certainly be unsuitable in my situation. There did appear to be space beyond so I sportingly offered the challenge to my companions but they were not to be taken and while saying it looked interesting were clearly not about to dive in without an understanding of how the squeeze would be reversed!

That space was tantalising and it was at the back of my mind over the next few months. In early February I managed to persuade Pete to make a return trip and so it was that in the company of





Fleur Loveridge we made the long, cold hike onto Trefil mountain and the trip to the beckoning squeeze deep(ish) beneath the mountain. It is a short trip to the passage and not long after leaving the pale winter sun we were back at the place where I had sat on the boulder floor the previous October

I climbed up, somewhat more easily than on the last visit, and examined the way on. There was no denying it was tight, but how tight? There was, as always, only one way to find out.

I dived in. The rock closed in. Tighter and tighter. Its cold unyielding embrace comfortingly familiar to most cavers. Menacing in an unpushed squeeze. It fought but was forced to allow my passage and I slithered through, dropping headfirst into a small chamber with a rift in the floor.

It went on and I gaily followed, crawling and squirming like an animal closing on his prey. It would open up around the corner, of that I was certain. It didn't, but of course I had been mistaken, the next corner would be the key to the mountain.

Shortly the passage came to an end. Floor came to meet roof and while they did not join the continuing passage was very

small and draftless. A waste of effort.

Heading back to the breakthrough point a passage to the right attracted my attention and up this I hurried, leaving a pair of scratches through the pristine dry mud that confirmed the kill; virgin passage.

I crawled up a slope of choss and reached a junction with a slightly larger passage that went both left and right. It was still going!

However we were out of time and reluctantly I returned to my companions, buzzing with adrenaline from my, admittedly modest, discoveries.

Early in March I was back in the company of 3 more cavers who proved (I shan't name and shame) too large or inflexible to get past the breakthrough point. This was a devastating blow as it meant I would have to explore the ongoing passage by myself! Still in the interests of British speleology I agreed to do this.

The left hand passage from the junction closed down almost immediately but the other went on. The passage was pleasant; so far as a crawl can be considered pleasant and led to a drop into a chamber. There was another choice of route, I went left, following a tall narrow rift with a stream in the bottom. As is the nature with new passage the rock was very loose. Boulders crashed. The passage went on. To a choke. It was only a mud shelf and would be easy to kick away. Yet I was alone and there was another way on back at the junction.

This unpushed passage was clearly the downstream continuation of the rift. It carried the stream. Yet while the upstream rift was high and dry, this was low and forced sideways crawling in the water. After several acute bends I gave up. It most likely connected to the rift in the main passage anyway and

this was impossibly tight at stream level.

The next trip later that month was in the company of Frank Doherty who had promised he would come while inebriated and couldn't really back out. Any worries that I had about him being unable to pass the squeeze were soon allayed and we progressed rapidly to the mud choke that had halted progress on my solo visit.

The choke gave way after a few good kicks. I slid through. There was a good drop on the other side. This was negotiated on crumbling ledges to a solid mud floor. Rift around 50cm wide and a number of metres high led off...with a significant enlargement a few paces away. I communicated this to Frank and he insisted I go ahead and be the one to make the unknown known.

Sure enough the rift soon opened into the base of a large aven. The first new passage that it was actually possible to stride around in, it soared to a respectable height in sheer unassailable walls of chossy rock. Certainly not a climb to be attempted without a rope and suitable runners.

Frank meanwhile had taken a turn at the front and pushed on around 5m to where the passage again became tight. There was a small hole at floor level but it showed no signs of opening. Climbing up at the point where the rift narrowed Frank had found a tube in the top of the rift that he considered too tight. By this point my excitement was reaching a crescendo. I was not to be deterred. It was exceptionally tight. An irrelevant truth. It was not impenetrably tight and...there was another widening a few body lengths away!

I dived in. My body was a snake. Arms clamped to my side and writhing. Tiny movements. I could barely move. Maybe it was too tight. I refused to entertain the

idea. It became a desperate thrutch. Making my body big to avoid sliding down into the assuredly too tight rift below but at the same time trying to fit through the eye hole at the top. This was a passage for only the most discerning collectors!

Finally I was able to swing my legs underneath my body and chimney down into sizeable passage on the other side of the rift. Arm swinging walking passage at last! I had to get my companion through the rift before the klondike passage bagging could begin. There was space at the bottom of the rift and funnily enough the insignificant looking hole at floor level that had been dismissed was an alternative route.

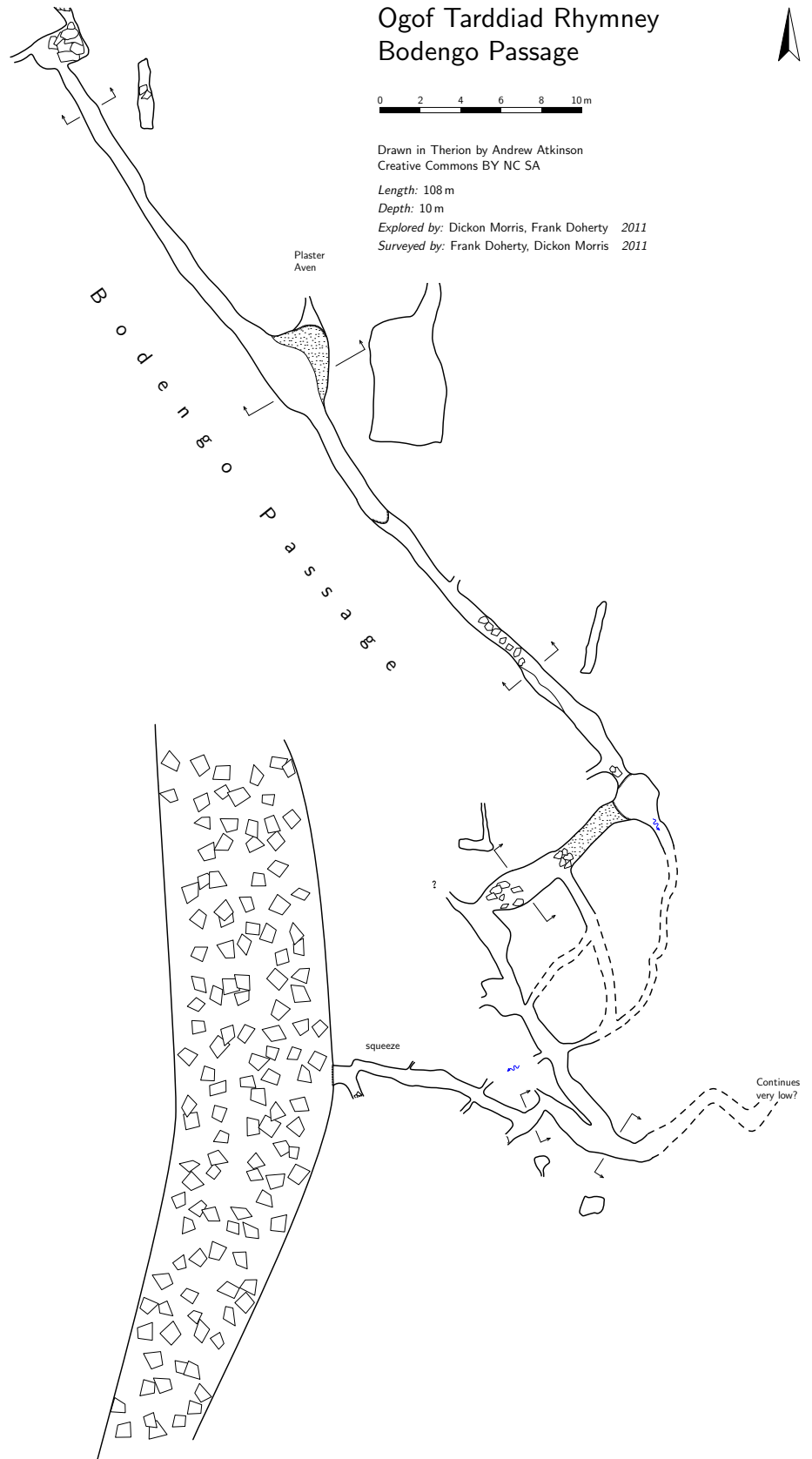
With Frank through we strode off down the new passage, rounded a corner and...met a total dead end. The continuation wasn't even tight. It was absolutely minuscule. Probably too tight for a rat. It was a disappointing end but we had surveyed over 100m of passage. Not bad for the amount of effort expended.

On a final trip with Andrew Atkinson the aven was climbed with excitement after obscene amounts of choss gardening but unfortunately led to no new passage. So while it is possible to bag insignificant inlets without resorting to digging, as this episode shows, you are unlikely to find anything good without breaking out your shovels and crowbars.

Happy digging!

Dickon Morris

N.B. The passage is named Bodengo passage as that is the name of the canyon where I broke my wrist. It seemed appropriate as I probably wouldn't even have been in this cave if my arm hadn't been in plaster.



Treasurer's Report - March 2011



Those of you who were listening to this report a year ago will remember me talking about the deficit that we had run. This year, the

Receipts and Payments account shows what at first glance seems to be a healthy surplus, but is it? In this year's report I'd like to focus on three specific figures which together demonstrate that although we are keeping afloat, like the serenely sailing swan this is only by dint of some furious paddling underneath.

Firstly that deficit and this surplus. Look at the Receipts and Payments account sheet and it does seem that in a remarkable turnaround has taken place from a deficit of £661.28 to a surplus of £1,293.76. However, that surplus includes the repayment of VAT from the printers from the previous year, which lowers the previous deficit to only £335.18 and when taken into account lowers this year's surplus to £958.58. Also, you will notice a large donation income and will, shortly, see £2,000 of that transferred out and spent. Thus rather than a surplus we, arguably, have a current account deficit of £1,041.42. Can we deal with this in the future? To an extent, yes, as it is covered for a while by our R&P reserve, but that has dropped from £4761.91 two years ago to £3,349.39 now, so it's not simple. We do need to be careful about what we spend. More income is also nice. I had some useful input from Jim Walmsley on the subject of investments, but sadly nothing has improved for us yet.

That £2,000 is the second figure. This was grant income spent on new overalls, helmets and lights. As the Secretary has said, we are extremely grateful to both University's Alumni Foundation and the Oliver Lloyd Memorial Fund for these grants. This is the most significant financial help from outside we have had during my tenure of office.

Lastly, please look on the balance sheet at the Total Assets figure. This has changed from £23,319.71 to £23,375.18, an increase of 0.24%. That is quite remarkably stable given the wild fluctuations above. Never trust the figures without the explanations.

In addition to the grant-giving bodies above I should like also to give thanks to the Student's Union for continuing to support us with a grant for tackle and equipment and I need to give my personal thanks to Derek Allen, our auditor, without whom my life would be much harder.

Graham Mullan

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST JANUARY 2011

2009/10	<u>Receipts</u>		£	£
£				
2,335.00	Members subscriptions			2,558.00
612.00	Student member subscriptions			600.00
165.06	<u>Union Grants:</u>	Capital	875.50	
		Current	<u>0.00</u>	875.50
750.00	Tratman Grant			150.00
34.63	<u>Interest on investments</u>	AMC Bank		21.54
551.88	Sales of Publications (not C.of CC)			511.37
351.00	Donations			2,067.00
548.03	Tax refund on Covenants			544.26
0.00	Sales of Charterhouse Permits			1.20
555.00	Personal contributions to PI Insurance			400.00
0.00	Miscellaneous			326.10
<u>5,902.60</u>	Total Receipts			<u>8,054.97</u>
	<u>Payments</u>			
2,500.10	<u>Proceedings:</u>	Printing	2,125.00	
381.97		Postage	440.47	2,565.47
165.06	<u>Tools & Equipment</u>	Capital	875.50	
0		Current	<u>103.54</u>	979.04
401.35	Library Acquisitions			289.00
25.00	Sessional Meetings			25.00
95.99	Other Postages			115.75
0.00	Hon Sec's Petty Cash			0.00
50.42	Stationery & Duplicating			305.07
1,347.50	<u>Insurances</u>	Third Party	1,382.00	
503.40		Property	<u>549.11</u>	1,931.11
154.00	Subscriptions			154.00
50.00	Donation to Mendip Rescue Organisation			25.00
0.00	(Surplus) /Deficit on Annual Dinner			0.00
103.50	IT expenses			173.67
15.59	Fresh			38.10
20.00	Miscellaneous			10.00
750.00	Tratman Grant			150.00
<u>6,563.88</u>	Total Payments			<u>6,761.21</u>
<u>(661.28)</u>	Surplus/(Deficit) for year			<u>1,293.76</u>

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST JANUARY 2011

2009/10			£	£
£	<u>Assets</u>			
21,207.88	<u>Investments:</u>	AMC Bank		21,773.68
2,088.16	Current Bank Account			1,552.16
16.80	Cash in Hand	Hon. Secretaries		16.80
6.87		Hon Treasurer		32.54
<hr/> 23,319.71	Total Assets			<hr/> 23,375.18
	Represented by:			
	<u>Reserves</u>			
3,064.79	<u>Hut Fund -</u>	brought forward	3,021.32	
(43.47)		add/(subtract) year result	31.92	3,053.24
	<u>Printed Publications</u>			
4,830.00		brought forward	4,830.00	
		Tfr from R&P reserve		4,830.00
	<u>Library & Museum Fund</u>			
981.69		brought forward	465.82	
52.26		Tfr from CoCC Res.	65.79	
0.00		OCL Fund Grant	0.00	
(568.13)		add/(subtract) year result	79.00	610.61
	<u>Equipment Hire Fund</u>			
486.47		brought forward	269.07	
		Trf from R&P	2,000.00	
(217.40)		add/(subtract) year result	(2,007.15)	261.92
	<u>Caves of County Clare Reserve</u>			
10,203.87		brought forward	10,677.87	
(52.26)		Tfr to Lib & Mus	(65.79)	
526.26		add/(subtract) year result	657.94	11,270.02
	<u>Receipts & Payment Reserve</u>			
4,716.91		brought forward	4,055.63	
-		Trf to PP Fund	0.00	
-		Tfr to Lib & Mus	0.00	
(661.28)		Trf to Equip Hire	(2,000.00)	
		add/(subtract) year result	1,293.76	3,349.39
<hr/> 23,319.71	Total Reserves			<hr/> 23,375.18

HONORARY AUDITOR'S REPORT:

I have examined the above Receipts & Payments Account for the year ended 31st January 2011, and the attached Balance Sheet as at that date, and certify that they are in accordance with the Society's accounting records and explanations provided.



honorary auditor