

Wed 2nd Jan

Gonzo, Simon, Dave, Duncan and Clive (Flood Sink)

Tav and 'The Voiseys' – 'Pigworld'

Gonzo and Dave (staring ahead of the crowd) had discovered an impressive stream overflowing into the actual dig. This was diverted back to where it should be in time for the rest of the team to actively clear mud etc in the dig. At the end of the evening the stream was allowed to wash back into the dig and very dramatic it was too!

The offending block was popped and the floor dropped by around 18in – 2ft to a point where some of the stream was encountered again. This was seen to be seen flowing merrily ahead along the rift towards the other downvalley sink. The rift was only a few inches wide but there appeared to be a possible left hand turn around six feet in.

It had been thought that it might be possible to stabilise the dig by bracing across between the cliff face and the boulders opposite – the latter appearing to be big and stable.

As we went down though it became obvious that the top large boulder was in fact two smaller ones, there were gaps under and around them as there were around the boulders underneath. In fact it's a heap of unstable 'dinner plates' which actively threaten us as we go deeper (the agreed dig is straight down the face rather than along the tiny rift).

I think that the only safe approach (and before we go any deeper) is to grade back that side of the hole to remove the danger. I suspect that this could be achieved by stepping it back and using the rocks to form the steps (they would obviously need popping to moveable size).

Any views on this?

Jan 16th - Windsor Hill Gonzo, Dave, Clive, Chris, (Dylan & Sky – surface support – fetching sticks and getting tangled in the bang wire respectively!)

Chris had been busy since last week and removed a huge pile of rocks from the hole which needed prising from the frozen ground and moving to the tip.

A large rock was popped and cleared and more downward and sideways progress made exposing a large section of, presumably, bed-rock floor.

The base of the previous concreted wall is now clear, sitting on the aforementioned rock.

The opposite side of the shaft from the rock face is still unstable and will need either grading back in steps or a substantial rock and concrete wall building. There is at least a good base on which this might sit.

Discussion ensued at the W & H afterwards re supply of gravel etc for the concreting and moving it to site. If we do this then it needs to be done soon or the grading needs to be started soon as the hole is potentially dangerous as it is.

I suppose that lengths of timber could be jammed across against the rockface to restrain the blocks but this would of course restrict the digging space.

Clive

Jan 23rd - No digging this week due to the snow and ice.

Jan 30th TJ's

Gonzo and Dylan.

The first half of the evening spent chasing sticks, ferrying gravel, bags, tin sheets and skips to the car.

About ten gravel bags, 3 water drums, one rope, two heavy ladders, miscellaneous timber and hauling gear remain.

The second half of the evening spent rolling in badger poo, ferrying one sack of dust and the tin sheet to Windsor Hill Flood Sink.

Gonzo

Jan 30th Pigworld - Windsor Hill

Matt, Mandy, Tav, Simon

The small hole in the floor opened up on the previous session was quickly enlarged revealing two tantalising black holes.

These rapidly formed into one tantalising black hole and further clearance eventually allowed a good view into a low, man-sized bedding plane approx. 3m wide.

To the left drops steeply towards the 'other' small hole in the cliff - which presumably explains the strong draught. To the right the bedding plane continues sand choked into the hill.

We should be able to get into it properly next session for a better look.

A small find, but beautifully formed.

Feb 06 Pigworld - Windsor Hill

Matt, Mandy, Tav

Matt dug his way into the chamber uncovered last week ... then almost back outside via a lower entrance. Tav opened this up a bit more from the outside - the entrance is actually quite roomy and appears to have been deliberately blocked up. No through trip possible yet but it should be relatively easy to dig open. Prospects for any more look fairly slim.

Mandy continued digging up in the roof and generally made a mess (a green one).

Tav

Feb 13th Thrupe Lane

Clive and Gonzo (in gardening shoes!) minced around the stream by Simon's dig filling bags with stream gravel and looking in vain for football-sized cobbles.

We were joined later by Matt and Mandy who boldly peered at the Thrupe Lane entrance from afar before all adjourned to W&H for an evening of social intercourse with Duncan and Naomi.

Gonzo

Feb 20th - No digging this week.

Feb 27th - Wookey Hole

Photo trip for MU5

Wed April 3rd - Gonzo, Dave, Spike and Clive plus Matt & Mandy at W & H

All to TJs to clear up after the decision to mothball/abandon the dig. Everything on the surface was cleared except for the 'zip-wire' and the two long steel ladders. I hope to get Speedy to help remove them with his trailer soon.

Clive then to the Ferret Shed to deposit timber, dumpy bag and some Dexion for poss future use. The others took the gravel etc over to the Windsor Hill dig for the wall building work.

Clive

Windsor Hill - Gonzo and Spike working on the wall were later joined by Dave.

3 courses.

One more shift should conclude the job.

Gonzo

March 06 Windsor Hill

Dave, Gonzo, Matt & Mandy.

Cemented a few large rocks in situ as a foundation for our wall before adjourning for W&H late night key-jangling merriment.

Gonz

March 13 Windsor Hill

Flood Sink

Dave and Gonzo.

Another couple of courses added to the retaining wall which will pick up the huge encroaching slabs next time

Gonzo

Wed March 27th - No Digging

Wed 20th March Thrupe lane Swallet

Clive, Gonzo, Mandy, Matt, Tav

Cleared a load of flood debris from around the entrance (someone had largely beaten us to it). Tav went down the Old Wells Road to the head of Chimney Pot. Had to dig open a couple of the smaller bits but the cave is basically now completely open again. Then to pub.

Tav

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Wed April 17th - Thrupe Lane Swallet

Tony Seddon, Naomi & Duncan - to Chimney Pot (which has an in situ handline down it). Wuthering Heights & New Atlas direct were rigged for SRT. New Atlas was descended to Marble Streamway and Tony went down Lateral Shaft from the ridge to the borrom. Naomi started on rigging the Ledge Traverse but the final bolt placement proved too much of a stretch. The rest of the rope was left in the bag to do this. Duncan took his two-way radios to test communications between the top and the bottom of the pitch. Unfortunately his small BDH containing one of the radios made an uncontrolled descent from Wuthering Heights down the full depth of Lateral Shaft. Tony found the smashed BDH at the bottom but the radio was still in one piece and found to work when brought to the surface (both suffered from being brought out unprotected but have now been cleaned up and dried out). It is evident that the rigging topo that we were provided with is purely diagramatic. A descent from Wuthering Heights of New Atlas Direct would dump you straight into the waterfall out of the Marble Streamway so its better to pendulum onto the ridge or ledge to avoid this. With powerful lights it doesn't seem so intimidating.

The cave was left fully rigged. The New Atlas Direct rope is tied off at the bottom to the bolts on the ledge of Marble Streamway though swinging onto this creates a slight rub point near the top of the shaft it is unlikely to cause any abrasion of the rope above.

Duncan

Wed April 17th - Windsor Hill Flood Swallet

diggers present: just me (Chris)

after checking out the fine efforts of the wall builder,i began the process of lowering the floor. i have managed to drop the floor,about another foot and a half,and have firstly found a small hole, with a fresh cool breeze coming out of it,but have been stopped by 2 boulders in the floor,which are loose but will probably need the use of bang,so a very useful little digging session.

Chris P

Wed 24th April - Working at Wells Museum on the Netherworld of Mendip exhibition

Wed May 1st - Windsor Hill - No Details

Belated report for Pig World, Windsor Hill, 15th May 2013.

Matt, Mandy, Chris.

Thanks to Chris's efforts over the preceding days clearing the bottom entrance, the first Bedding Plane Caves through trip was completed by Matt, closely followed by Mandy in the other direction.

Chris then gave us the grand tour of his other prospective digs in the same area, before we then moved along to visit the now black moth free Horseshoe Cave. This appears to enter the perpendicular bedding of the left quarry wall, and is of a rather different character to the other caves in the area, consisting of a series of small water-worn rifty tubes with several small prospective leads worthy of investigation.

Matt.

Balch Cave - 29/05/2013

Matt, Mandy, Tav, Ray Deasey, Dave K

First visit for approx. 1 year. Fears of substantial damage following last years heavy rain proved unfounded.

A reasonable sized pile of mud was discovered at the foot of G*'s Rift, but the way on to Sand Aven looks relatively open.

100 or so bags were excavated and moved back to the foot of the pitch. Another 2-3 similar sessions will see us back at 'new' ground. All we need now is some better weather than the last few years and we'll be able to crack it - one way or the other.

The end is currently slurry but should dry out very quickly. A good start to the 2013 summer season.

On a separate note - we no longer have any suitable 'digging' ladders. Tommo of the WCC makes excellent ladders (I've just purchased two off him). How about a whip round to buy some for ATLAS? I'll stick in £10 to start it off. Let me know if you're willing to contribute and I'll negotiate with him.

Tav

Wed May 29th Gonzo and Dylan to FCQ for gravel then to Wed Windsor Hill with Clive, Spike and Dr Nobel.

2 large rocks in the floor of the dig were dealt with to reveal dubious but manageable foundations for our wall and a waterworn boulder choke continuing downwards.

We also demolished Duncan's toy dam with a view to building a more robust structure with a sealable central pipe

June 5th - Windsor Hill Spike, Simon, Dave Clive and Duncan and Naomi later on surface support (plus giving us an opportunity to pull Shiners car out of the ditch by the farmer)

Looks like ~Team Chris had been in the dig and left a huge pile of boulders again for us to remove (thanks Chris!) Also the scrap-metal enthusiast had removed our cement mixing base to their skip again! I have removed it for safe-keeping

Chris had dug a few feet back towards the original sink exposing stream debris and some rubbish. The way on still looks to be to the right here into the cliff.

Spike set to clearing on and around the large boulder we were going to use as a base for a concreted support only to find it was split into two large loose boulders. These were duly cracked with linctus and removed. Further large cracks appeared in the floor but I'm sure these are just a result of the quarry blasting and are not the natural way on.

At end of play we had a large rock in the floor a bit further in which needs removal next time and a further reassessment of what we ought/can do to support the place. To be fair have been in far shakier places but that's no excuse for ignoring potential problem areas.

Midges were very few last night - " maybe because it's so dry there now.

Balch Cave 12 June 2013 Clive, Dave, Gonzo, Mandy, Matt, Spike, Tav.

An evening of wet, gooey, gritty, smelly, thixotropic squalor accompanied by tuneless, banal singing and puerile Antipodean japey in Carpal Tunnel - loved every minute of it!

Gonzo

Balch Cave Dig, 19th June 2013

Gonzo, Tav, Mandy, Matt, Clive, Tony B, Spike

A useful little session with a goodly number of bags filled at the face by Matt and Tav, mainly of sand. We've not yet reopened Sand Aven but are getting pretty close. Meanwhile the rest of the team ferried all of the multitude of bags from Carpal Tunnel to the base of the pitch ready for hauling.

Joined by Duncan at the pub to learn of his early failed career as a DJ, and barkeep Dawn cruelly taunting us with forbidden bottles of Addlestones.

Matt.

Balch 19 June - Smasher, Gonzo, Dave, Tav & latterly Spike

Smasher & then Spike dug and filled while the others dragged and stacked.

A small amount of gardening was done to the cave on exit as there was a dangerously loose formation that could have landed on one's foot if one was to carelessly swing one's size 8 its the general direction.

Dam building next week at Windsor Hill. Windsor Hill 3 July 2013 Clive, Dave and Gonzo to FCQ for gravel.

Joined at Windsor Hill FS by Simon, with a late arrival by Spike as Photographer.

A challenging evening of dam building ensued as the nearest water flowing to mix concrete was back by the cars.

4 pipes in situ, a second layer of pipes will follow before raising the dam wall.

Back to Balch next week if we have enough diggers and haulers.

Gonzo

Balch Cave 10 July " Tav, Gonzo, Matt & Mandy, Rich, Simon MK, Spike, Dave K, Paul & Ali C.

A glorious sunny evening and a very welcome cool draft and the entrance to aid our evening of hauling.

Tav and Gonzo headed for the front with Mandy on the pitch and Matt in-between with Paul and Spike hauling into Erratic. Rich, Simon, Dave and Ali C transported the bags out for emptying on the patio.

A total of 130 bags brought to the surface. Cave bingo was invented to aid the bag count. Simon informed us of the mud wrestling girls of Hamburg and drinks at the W&H were well earned.

A fine evening in all.

Paul.

Balch Cave â “ Gonzo, Matt & Mandy, Dave K, Tony Littler & Spike

After Matt provided the horseflies with a mobile buffet across the quarry, we found the bags laid out in Erratic last week in varying states of dryness. Gonzo, Matt and Mandy set about tidying and consolidating these and we'll need a dustpan and brush to clear up after them next week.

Tony, Dave and Spike headed down where first Dave then Spike dug with the bags being smartly walled up in the first alcove by Tony.

Dave uncovered what he believes to be the fallen boulder which is resting on the near side of the aven but still buried beyond. Spike poked at the gap between the boulder and the side of the aven with a crowbar to be rewarded with a shower of rocks and sand. Some of the rocks to fall out of here were coming down clean - possibly a good sign?

Meanwhile Gonzo, Matt, Mandy and Tony relocated much of the aforementioned bag wall to the bottom of the ladder pitch before we made our way out and to the W&H for a mercifully Dido free end to the evening...Spike

Balch 24 July 2013 Mandy, Tav, Spike, Gonzo, Matt

A small but beautifully formed team filled all the remaining empty bags and moved them back up the passage a bit. A sterling solo effort from Matt shifted a load up to the base of the pitch where another vast wall was constructed.

Digging face is now roomy and the session was enlivened when the very large boulder jammed in Sand Aven suddenly decided to unjam itself. Once the dust settled and Mandy stopped blubbing we

were able to ascertain that this is now a VERY large boulder on the floor with a couple of other large boulders stacked up behind it. It's difficult to progress further without the appliance of science - help needed! meanwhile of course there are several hundred bags to haul out!!

Tav

Balch 31st July â “ Clive, Duncan, Spike, Paul and the drilling equipment made our way into a very damp Balch. Spike headed off to the front to report that it was too wet to complete our task.

A group decision was made to haul a token amount of bags up the pitch and we managed 50 which Clive expertly stacked.

After more discussion it was agreed Balch is far too wet for us to continue at the moment so itâ™s a hauling session next week or back to Windsor Hill.

Paul.

Clive said it was sixty bags, Spike said 111100, Paul said 3C and Duncan thought it was 40 but would call it 80 for safety.

Duncan

The ponds on the surface should perhaps have given us an idea of what we would be faced with...

The low bit just before the left turn down-slope to the dig had 3-4 inches of angel delight consistency slop in it, which seems to have flowed in from the empty bag storage alcove.

From there on it was more than a little greasy - roughly inch deep slurry covering the slope until the water level was reached less than halfway to the dig from the alcove at the top of the slope. ~6 inches of clear water above a silty suspension filling all the rest of it.

Liquid mud made for an interesting exit back to the ladder...

Spike

I made it 50 but no one believed me !

All best

Clive

Clive and Gonzo to Windsor Hill Flood Swallet 07 Aug 2013

No water flowing in the vicinity.

3 more pipes in the dam, another session required to raise the dam higher.

Adjourned to W&H before being key-jangled out at 10.50 as there were only 2 of us.

Balch Cave Aug 14th - Clive, Gonzo, Matt, Mandy, Spike, Tav

Hauled a mighty number of bags from the base of the pitch ... which is now clear! A sterling effort.

Many of these are ready to be emptied to the surface and there are of course still a large number lining the walls down below.

Tav crawled down to the end to check on the damage following the storm. Basically we're back to square one - the passage is filled back further than when we started this year. Sounds bad but on the plus side it's all come from somewhere up ahead so it had to come out at some point. Ho hum.

Tav

21 Aug 2013 Windsor Hill - Gonzo and Clive to FCQ for gravel, then on to Windsor Hill where the dam was finished with the typical 'rustic charm' of the 'post-Witcombe' era of ATLAS wall building.

Gonzo

Balch - Dave, Spike, Paul, Matt, Mandy, Tav

The remaining dregs of Atlas did the work of ten men.

1. Moved all the bags (200+) from Carpal Tunnel to the foot of the pitch.
2. Hauled another 50 skips from JW to Erratic.
3. Emptied 145 bags to the surface.

A 'goodly' is more than 100 bags.

TavClive, Gonzo, Dave, Paul, Tav - 20/8/2013

A photographic foray to Sandford Levvy and a furgle down the fascinating King Mine.

Gonzo

Balch - Wed 28th Aug - Dave, Gonzo, Matt & Mandy.

In Paul's absence the team ferried the bags up from JW to the entrance before moving down to haul another goodly load to JW.

Then on to W&H to discuss Pavlova, Ravel, morning tea and onanism with Duncan, Naomi and Spike. Balch - Wed Sept 4th.

Dave K, Kate L, Tav, Gonzo and Paul

Dave dug at the front and lowered the floor whilst the bags were ferried back for Tav to expertly stack at the bottom of the pitch. Now an epic hauling session(s) await.

Rich met us at the pub and MU5 went to print.

Paul.

Balch - Wed Sept 11

Dave, Gonzo, Paul, Ali, Spike

Cleared the bags from close to the entrance then cleared the ones in JW.

170ish I think but Dave will surely be more accurate.

Gonzo

Wed 18 Sept

Clive, Gonzo, Matt, Mandy, Dave, Spike

101 bags from Carpal tunnel to inside Erratic Passage entrance.

Gonzo

Sept 25 - Thrupe Lane Simon, Richard and Clive

A spot of help was needed at Simons dig at Thrupe Lane where he has opened a new shaft against the cliff-face a few feet to the south of his previous, draughting, bouldery dig.

At around 10ft depth in under the cliff face a small, blackened hole between boulders is emitting a steady, cold, cave draught.

A large loose boulder was obstructing progress and this was eventually hauled out with a rope and a few buckets of spoil and rocks removed.

The next step will be the application of linctus to improve access. The locals have luckily reacted positively to the idea!

Afterwards to the W&H via various devious routes to avoid the road closures in the area (how long will this go on for??) to examine the excellent draft copies of MU5 and quiz Gonzo on his escapades (or should that be escape) in Daren....

Clive

Sept 25 Balch - Dave, Mandy, Tav, Matt, Tav

Emptied a goodly number of bags (100+) on the surface then hauled another goodly number (120) up into Erratic Passage.

Nuff said.

Once more unto the dig, dear friends, once more;

Or close the cave up with our ATLAS dead.

In Balch there's nothing so becomes a man

As modest hauling and sack-filling:

But when the blast of cave-air blows in our ears,

Then imitate the action of the Witcombe;

Stiffen the sinews, summon up the trowel,

Disguise a dodgy wall with a lump of mud.

I see you stand like greyhounds in Erratic,

Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:

Follow your wellies, and upon this charge

Cry 'God for Cider, Butcombe, and Saint Alactite!'

Regards

Gonzo

To dig, or not to dig, that is the question.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The mud and squalor of outrageous crawls,

Or to take up drink before a blazing fire

And by consuming it, drop off into a dreamless sleep

Windsor Hill - 9 Oct -Clive and Gonzo to FCQ for gravel then to WHFS with Matt, Mandy, Spike and a belated Dave.

Work has begun on the delicate job of shoring up the big slab down in the dig on the left, our intention being to work straight down in the floor once the place is stable.

A shame we have to sherpa in our own water - roll on the autumn floods!

Gonzo

Balch Cave - Oct 3 2013 Clive, Gonzo, Mandy, Matt, Spike.

Remaining bags out from the bottom of the ladder and all bags out of the cave.

N.B. I never received Richard's poetic reply to my email - perhaps we should swap to a google group if yahoo is unreliable.

Gonzo

Thrupe Lane - 12 Oct Richard and I have recently started helping Simon with his new dig at Thrupe Lane following the draught he uncovered in his dig in the cliff-face near the northern end of the depression.

Simon has managed to dig down around 10ft on his own but was faced with an overhanging face of rocks and earth which obviously needed to be dealt with before the winter.

As a result Simon and Rich have sorted out a basis for the tip (rather than a random pile of rock etc in the stream bed) and installed a set of steps to replace the muddy slither down the bank to the stream.

Today (Sat) Simon and I installed an old door of mine across the open shaft, to prevent spoil from falling down the hole, and began demolishing the overhanging bank above it.

Good progress was made and another session or two should see it cleared to the point where we can decide whether the bank needs further attention or whether digging came restart in earnest.

All best

Clive

Rubbish Tip Dig - Thrupe Lane..

Wed Oct 23rd 2013. Clive, Richard and SMK A useful afternoon's work clearing the results of Clive's last bang. By the end of the day it was evident that damage was more extensive than we had at first thought. Once the fissure was exposed again, the cold draught started blowing from different points along it. The signs are certainly looking distinctly promising. ---- Simon.

Wed 16th Windsor Hill Flood Sink

Gonzo, Matt, Mandy, Simon & Dave.

Joined later at W & H's by Clive & Spike.

Gonzo did a gravel run from FCQ.

Water was imported by Gonzo (courtesy of Clive) and Simon (in his vintage aluminium jugs).

Simon was hands on (or should that be "IN") mixing a various consistencies of cement. Gonzo & Matt on rock hunting duties, with directions from Mandy half way down the climb. Whilst Dave made the most of the variety of cement and rocks that arrived at the bottom of the dig.

The wall building that ensued bought the wall up to within 8 inches of the slab.

Dave.

Rubbish Pit Dig Sat 2nd nov 2013.

Richard, Paul plus Better Half (Ali C) and Smk

A gusty and stormy autumn afternoon did not deter us from further progress. A significant quantity of debris and gravel cleared from the face. Blackened rock is everywhere where water has eaten out the joints. The air remains very fresh. At least one more session will be required to remove the remaining spoil. Retired to the Ferret shed to admire the advance copy of MU5

Simon.

Windsor Hill FS 06 Nov -Mark, Spike, Dave, Clive

Surface support at pub - Duncan, Naomi

Stream level unsurprisingly high with a torrent dropping into the dig. After fitting a set of 'pipe plugs' to the dam pipes, bought from the builders merchants, the flow was reduced to a very comfortable level which allowed Mark to finish the current bit of underground concreting.

Spike fettled a back-up dam to encourage more water to flow on down the valley past the dig.

There is a new bag of cement and a couple of bags-worth of sand on site for eventualities.

We should be able to turn to a resumption of digging now (although we will have to keep an eye on the dam as there are leaks which may well get worse).

In the pub we met Marco Johnson, Marks contact who wants to include some cave-orientated material in an anti-fracking film he is putting together. We promised some underground experience for him in the short term (not a caver).

Clive

Balch -13 Nov - Kate, Ali C and Paul removed the ladder from Balch. Quite damp and alot of moths to contend with. Retired to W&H for refreshment and to warm up.

Cheers

Paul

Windsor Hill 13 Nov - Clive, Gonzo, Spike & Dr Nobel to WHFS 2.

One large slab at the base of the wall was dealt with enabling the removal of about 20 skips of spoil.

The unstable base of the wall will receive careful attention next Wednesday (please don't touch it in the meantime Chris!) but we appear to be on a relatively solid floor with a narrow slot down which we can see for about 1m taking the whole stream. It will be interesting to see if any water is flowing into the lower reaches of WHFS 1 as we are now below the slot which we presumed was taking the water over there.

A small amount of cementing on the south wall and remedial work on the dam was undertaken before heading to W&H to find that Paul and co. had drunk them dry .

Gonzo

Nov 27 WHFS

Mark and Clive to FCQ for a gravel run. Both to WHFS with Matt and Mandy, followed by Chris and Dave.

Since the previous session Chris had removed quite a large amount of rock from close to where we had previously been building up the cemented wall.

This had caused some concern but all appeared to be well and his work had exposed an area which needed further consolidation with 'instant rock' - ably mixed by hand (a la Simon's technique!)

Next session - continue lowering the floor where possible with a view to possibly banging down the inner 'cliff-side' of the dig (solid rock as opposed to boulders) - it might be worth letting the stream wash through first to see where it wants to go...

Clive

Hobnail Hole (formerly Rubbish Tip Dig) , Thrupe Fri 22nd Nov 2013. CN,RGW,SMK.

On a fine but chilly afternoon, we carried on where we had left off the previous week. Newly equipped with the Mark 2 Witcombe pulley, rapid progress was made with the removal of the remaining flood debris. By close of play the floor had reappeared along with the foot wide parallel rift from which the draught emanates. However the stream has completely choked this cutting off the airflow. Hostilities to be resumed next week. Simon.

Windsor Hill Flood Sink 20 Nov Clive, Chris, Gonzo, Simon, Spike (plus 2 dogs).

More work at the bottom of the dig where two large rocks were cut cleanly at the base of the wall with straight lines of short 6mm holes and the application of Dr Nobel.

The stream continues downwards against the cliff face.

A small amount of cementing ended the day.

Chris popped down WHFS 1 and reported that the water coming in through the bedding was just a dribble and bore no resemblance to the stream heading down the dig.

Then off to W&H to discuss the Heimlich manoeuvre with a snack-bechoked, crimson Clive.

Gonzo

Hobnail Hole - Wed 4th dec 2013. AAudsley/CN/SMK.

A rather destructive afternoon saw 2 consecutive charges laid by Tony to demolish a couple of large boulders blocking our downward progress. The resulting pile of rubble was left to be removed at a

later date. While these were being set up, Clive attacked the overhanging earth bank with a hoe, much reducing the threat of a collapse. -- Simon.

Dec 04 WHFS

Clive, Dave, Duncan, Gonzo

While Duncan surveyed both digs much of the loose fill beyond our retaining wall was removed, together with some large blocks.

This appears to be a parallel rift and it will be worth removing all the debris before we decide on which way to dig.

Gonzo

Hobnail Hole - Thurs 28th Nov 2013. AAudsley, CN, SMK.

Now we're really getting down to the nitty gritty. Some clearance from the draughting rift, although it's still heavily debris choked. This was followed by some enjoyable crowbarring. Almost everything moved to some extent. On Clive and Tony's arrival the pace hotted up and a mixture of leaves and rock was lifted out. Blackened rock evidence of water flow. To conclude the day's activities Tony laid a charge on the left hand near side of the rift. Interestingly the fumes appeared to be rapidly sucked inwards.

Simon

Windsor Hill - 11 Dec 2013

Mark, Dave, Matt & Mandy, Clive

Dave on cementing duty this time working towards finishing the work in the shaft. Matt majoring on hand-mixing support. Mark and Mandy moving rocks and buckets of muck etc from Clive who was thoroughly enjoying his return to underground work following the op on his infamous 'gammy' leg.

This excavation was, in fact, at the bottom of the original shaft to see if there was a possibility there as the connection between the two digs had opened up so much. It did, in fact, look pretty uninspiring.

In addition to the entrance shaft, which needs a bit more work, we need to install more support for the roof and the recently cemented left hand side of the dig. Following this the plan is to open up one of the small rifts which so enthusiastically takes the stream when the water is high.

Not next Wednesday though - that being 'Diggers Dinner' night! Doors open from 6.30, sit down to eat around 7.30.

All best

Clive

Hobnail Hole Hole - Sun 15th Dec 2013.

SMK.

A useful afternoon's work with all banged rock taken out. One stubborn buttress remains but this might yield to some heavy duty sledging. The next task will be to attack the floor and remove an unknown quantity of rubble.

Simon

Hobnail Hole Wed 18th Dec 2013.

SMK

By careful use of the crowbar, a useful amount of rock was extracted. The floor seems to be largely made up of boulders, and fissures between these and blackened walls continue to emit cool draughts.

Excited as a fierce storm was breaking.

Simon

Waggon and Horses Wed Dec 18th

Xmas Dinner

Tuesday 24th Dec - Bigger is the word that springs to mind. Thrupe obviously experienced a severe flash flood last, with much debris still on the road. The dig – Hobnail Hole – is nearly full to the top with silt – many months of work lost. Perhaps a more serious problem is that the main cave gate appears to have been wrenched from its hinges and may be trashed. The debris and depth of water made it impossible to check.

Rich

THRUPE LANE - 26 December 2013

Duncan & Naomi, Tav, James & Rich W

Cleared the main entrance of debris and recovered the gate. The hinge plate has been ripped from the wall and the gate itself is buckled. A new gate will probably be required, but it will be best if the maker, Phil Candy, has a look at the remains.

As a temporary measure, a stout piece of timber and a concrete beam were jammed in the adit entrance, and the gate was chained and roped to them.

Attempts were made to excavate subsidiary sinks, and to enhance the dam formed by the cliff collapse. With more manpower and better crowbars, a loose piece of cliff can probably be added to the pile!

Working conditions were pleasant and mulled cider supplied by Duncan and Naomi was much appreciated.

I will warn Les Williams that the CSCC may have to fund a new gate.

Rich

PS I have left a saw on site. Can the next person to visit, put it in the Ferret Shed - thanks.

Sun 29th Dec 2013 Thrupe Lane. SMK, Paul, Dave, Duncan, Naomi, Chris Jewel and partner, Spike, Simon and Clive

An impressive turnout of ATLAS to assist with reclamation works following the severe Christmas eve storm. Large quantities of assorted crud moved from A to B, C and D. By the time bad light stopped play the defences had been considerably strengthened ahead of more predicted bad weather. A useful start was also made on clearing out Hobnail hole. It appears however that a large boulder has slid in from the bank, wedging itself under the cliff. This will need to be banded before any further digging can proceed. It may however have prevented more flood debris from reaching the face. A stream was still running into the adit, so no attempt was made to assess the situation below ground. Martin Grass called in before lunch in search of Descent material. (It must be a slow news day!) Perhaps RGW could call him to provide him with a better resume than mine, of our activities. Concerning the adit gate, it doesn't seem to have been damaged too much, just bent slightly. The weak link was obviously the bolts, which need to be much more substantial.

Cheers Simon.