

## ATLAS Digging Log 2015

January

WL 6 Jan

Dr Nobel's first WL trip of 2015.

Gonzo

Hobnail 9<sup>th</sup> Jan

SGM, Richard, Dave & Clive (later)

High water levels on arrival with the adit gate well blocked up with debris and water ponded to about 6 inches from the top. Water had obviously overflowed into Hobnail as a result.

An intrepid Dave felt the need to strip to his pants and wade in to clear the blockage! Such a hero! I don't think he lent his phone to anyone to record the event though - a great loss to YouTube I'm afraid!

Hobnail had been washed very clean again and water was still ponded up to some depth in the dig below the entrance. Around a foot of foam was still clinging to the roof and walls above the water level.

Dave baled the water down the adjacent slot (into the Coal Cellar) and work commenced on clearing the pile of rocks that Duncan and Clive had piled up at the base of the shaft. Work in the dig itself pushed the face back by about a foot and revealed the left hand wall which had 'grown' across the middle of the passage around half way up revealing what looked like an elongated oval-shaped tube about 2ft across and approx 14 inches high rather than the 3ft x 2.5ft passage we were used.

The plan is to push the tube a little further to see what develops but we may now have to look elsewhere for another route to the fabled 'lost pot of Hobnail'.

Richard enjoyed the few hours of sunshine by carefully restoring the collapsed roadside wall.

Clive

WL 13<sup>th</sup> Jan Tony Boycott, Gonzo, Paul Stillman.

15-20 skips of spoil removed from last week's pop.

Drilled and popped again on exit.

Gonzo

Fri 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014.

CN/RGW/SMK and Emma Gisborne. (Head hunted from LVS)

On a cold but dry winter's day the work continued to find the key to this complicated puzzle. Despite heavy rain on Wed night with the water overtopping the surface works, the dig face was surprisingly dry with only a few inches of water ponded up. It's clear that the bedding plane is going nowhere, so our next line of enquiry is the draughting hole on the far side. To this end Clive

drilled 3 shotholes in the left wall. Considerable damage was wrought, with the rock proving less resistant than that on the fault. Knowing that open cave lies so close makes it all the more frustrating but we must keep up the pressure to crack it. Meanwhile RGW applied his expertise to the boundary wall with his usual skill. Simon

WHFS 14<sup>th</sup> Jan Mark, Spike, Dave and Clive

A particularly stormy night - driving rain (esp later) and very high winds.

Early arrivals Mark and Spike set to and removed four or so buckets of spoil and large rocks left from the previous session.

Clive drilled and fired 6 holes in the face. The cleft on the left and the joint on the right are now conspiring to join up meaning that extra work has to be done on the right hand side to maintain the width of the passage.

A good hauling session to the surface ensued followed by a trip to the storm-tossed Poachers to recover.

Very pleased to see that Speedy and Les Williams (plus two others) had fitted the grill over WHFS (Lower) - a very smart job. The galvanised steel is especially conspicuous so Spike's idea of covering as much a possible of it with rocks from our dig would be appear to be a good one.

Clive

WL 21<sup>st</sup> Jan Gonzo, Mandy, Matt, Paul, Tony.

More clearing from the end and stacking spoil among the boulders.

There is a pronounced change at the end now with the constricted passage turning sharply to the left and heading up steeply - interesting to see if we have hit the next joint and emerge into something promising or if the draught is coming from the surface.

Gonzo

WHFS

21 Jan

Clive, Dave, Gonzo, Spike.

More measuring up for the gate by Dave.

The dig was duly cleared, drilled, popped and cleared again

Gonzo

WL 20 Jan

Gonzo, Mandy, Matt, Paul, Tony

Removed spoil from last bang.

22 Jan

Gonzo

Drilled and popped.

Gonzo

Hobnail 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan Rich, Simon, Dave and Clive

Luckily no flooding after-effects to deal with this week (but there was thick ice on the lower part of the Thrupe gate).

The usual 'gale' of a draught had reduced somewhat on previous weeks but the warm cave air could still be felt as it left the entrance on what was a distinctly frosty morning.

Whilst Rich did a little more work on the roadside wall 5 holes were drilled and fired in Colditz, the draughting rift we are pursuing heading roughly north at the base of the entrance shaft.

After lunch the ensuing pile of rocks and earth fill from the rift were hauled to the surface and the last half hour of the digging day was spent providing some cement

support in the entrance area. The recent overtopping of the entrance shaft by the stream had washed out the fill around some of the stonework.

What is really worthy of note from the days work was that we had halved the distance to the apparent 'widening' that could be seen along the continuation of Colditz.

Now, around 6ft ahead can be seen an appreciable space on the left which appears to be an ascending rift - the horizontal extent of it though cannot be seen as yet.

On the right of the rift there appears to be some waterworn blocks - that is all that can be made out. At this point there is a small green plant which we assume has been washed in but from where is as yet a mystery.

We reckon that this rift, if that is what it is, is probably directly below Simons first dig in the area around 3 or 4 yards north of the Hobnail entrance.

This dig was abandoned as Simon had been working under a large rock slab supported only by earth and rocks!

Clive

27 Jan

WL Gonzo, Paul, Tony

Cleared, drilled, bust yet another drill bit and popped.

Going up and getting slightly larger above.

Gonzo

WHFS 28<sup>th</sup> Jan Duncan, Gonzo, Spike, Tony.

Drilled, Surveyed, Popped, Partially cleared, Hailed, Snowed, Thundered with fork Lightning, Ran away early!

Gonzo

WHFS The ATLAS dig is running parallel to the NHASA one (14 m east and 2 m higher than the similar passage in the old dig). I don't know where the water enters the NHASA dig when the ATLAS dig is taking the flow (it was flowing down the NHASA dig entrance last night).

Duncan

WHFS Perfect!

When the ATLAS dig is taking the full flow it doesn't reappear in the old NHASA dig and we're (fairly!) confident that, now we are below the rift that used to take the stream, the small amount of water that enters the NHASA dig lower down is coming from one or some of the smaller sinks along the edge of the surface stream.

Gonzo

Hobnail 30<sup>th</sup> Jan

I have been mulling over today's activities and have come to the conclusion that we can no longer risk having anyone positioned at the foot of the entrance shaft. An incident occurred today when Richard was struck on the head by a carabiner when the rope was sent down. If this had been a skip there could have been a serious accident with far reaching consequences, quite apart from serious injury. Once we have acquired a winch then the risk will be considerably less so the sooner this is obtained the better. I meant to mention all this in the ferret shed but forgot. If we can forestall an accident it will be worth it.

Cheers - Simon.

Hobnail 30<sup>th</sup> Jan Rich, Simon, Dave & Clive

While Rich gave the roadside wall a final fettling Dave dug away at the mud and rock infill of the continuing draughting rift at the end of Coldtitz. (Talking of draughts the warm air could be clearly felt blowing from the cave entrance into the frosty air - Simon's new party piece involves putting a fertiliser sack across the open hole and marvelling at it as it billows upwards in the draught!)

A four hole charge finally went into the left hand wall of the rift before lunch - the resulting pile of blocks was a very satisfying result, one which left plenty to do during the afternoon.

By the end of the session the previously seen widening of the rift had been reached (heads could be inserted for a good look at least). A blackened and waterworn cross rift heading left and down dip towards the depression and draughting strongly. The right hand side appears to be large boulders, the left hand side solid. At the end it appears to be blackened boulders again.

To the right the rift is immediately choked with compacted clay and rocks (similar material to the roof at this point).

The entrance to the new rift is muddy sand overlaying jumbled, blackened rocks with spaces through which the draught blows.

No sign of any vertical development as yet (to take us down to the level of our 'lost' open pot) but its a draughting ongoing passage that needs to be checked out - after all the draught is coming from somewhere!

Clive

## **February**

WL 3/2

Gonzo & Paul

Cleared and drilled

4/2

Gonzo and Tony Boycott

More drilling then popped before heading over to Windsor Hill Flood Sink.

Gonzo

WHFS 4 Feb Spike, Tony B, Mark, Dave and Clive

The last two sections of HEAVY gate were carried across from the cars prior to the evenings main events.

There still being rock to clear from last week Spike set to at the end with Mark while Tony and Clive did the hauling. Dave fettled the vertical gatepost and cemented it into place, fitted the gate and finished work on the last semi- horizontal piece of grill (the opening section).

The cave is now locked at last (CSCC key) and so we can hopefully leave our tools etc in the cave with a clear conscience.

Spikes efforts at the end produced a series of large rocks (some VERY large) in addition to the usual assorted rubbish. By the end of the evening everything was set for the next bang with an intriguing looking waterworn continuation heading off at 45 degrees to the right at floorlevel. Around 18inches of progress has been made since the last bang.

No time to drill etc so therefore no chance to try out Spike's MkII fume extraction system so all adjourned to the Poachers to put the world to rights.....

Clive

#### Hobnail Friday 6 February 2015

Simon M-K, Rich W, Dave K. Clive N joined at lunchtime.

A bitterly cold day with a biting north wind. It was much warmer underground! In the morning the trio cleared spoil from the face, stockpiling it at the foot of the entrance shaft. After lunch, with two on the surface and two underground, the stockpile was cleared and more spoil was sent up from the dig face. The blasted, north-trending passage has now ended and a potentially roomy passage heads left (west), with tiny inlets on the right and overhead. There is an air space over the left passage infill extending for about a metre before the roof meets the blackened stream debris and silt. A strong draught is coming from this choke and there are other draughting holes among the stream fill lower down on the left.

Just before 5pm Dave Speed turned up to help with the recovery of the Thrupe Swallet winch.

Rich

WHFS Feb 11<sup>th</sup> Paul, Spike and Clive

A useful little session with 6 holes drilled and fired and the resulting mess cleared ready for the next session.

Spikes MkII Fume Extraction Device (F.E.D?) worked a treat apart from the, now, obvious error of positioning the lightweight trunking in the cave before the blast! The result was a lot of mangled spiral wire and silver foil!

However, enough trunking was left to do the job and the air was cleared very satisfactorily in less than 10 minutes - result! And we didn't even resort to the old burning newspaper trick this time.....

Clive

Hobnail It had to be Friday the 13th didn't it? More later....!

Rich, Simon, Dave, Clive

Pre - lunch activity involved attacking more of the sand, clay and blackened nodule fill in the rift at the end of Colditz.

In doing so it became clear that the rift to the right (up-dip) was very solidly choked with clay and stream debris and this material also formed the rift wall dead ahead. To the left the open blackened rift, around 18in or so wide had a solid, if very waterworn left wall and a bouldery right hand wall and roof. Through gaps in the boulders could be seen a chamber, which later in the day we were able to look into - it appears to be a boulder chamber (not good news) with a potentially hanging death roof.

Strangely, in the middle of the floor amidst the blackened rocks, sits a very light grey, angular, piece of limestone -without doubt bang debris!

Now, there is no way any of our bang debris could have ended up there so it must have come from one of Tony Dingles original digs in the depression - although it must surely have fallen through an open hole, which you would have thought he would have been aware of.

Just before finishing for the day Rich took a look at the end, in the process removing a few blocks in the floor to improve access.

As a result there was a bit of settlement of one or two blocks forming the right hand wall. Rich retreated as a result, then approached again mouthing words along the lines of "the right hand wall seems pretty stable" or something very similar at which point a large block immediately leapt out of the roof at him! Luckily it missed and we both fell about laughing at the precise comic timing!

All this just impressed on us the unstable nature of the area we are heading for (it draughts strongly it has to be said) and the need for a rethink.

The left hand wall of the rift is solid and if the way on is in that direction we might be ok. A camera on a pole might be an option to see what is around the corner out of sight. The only safe way to approach that area though is to utilise the tube we abandoned about 8ft back along Colditz. It did draught but was getting smaller and the open strongly draughting rift ahead seemed a better bet at the time. It must however intersect whatever lies downstream of the dangerous boulder chamber and is the way we will go next.

Hobnail Tue 17th Feb 2015.

Clive and SMK.

A very select team assembled at Thrupe on a beautiful spring- like day to undertake a couple of tasks. The first concerned the recently recovered winch which was reduced by Clive to a manageable size by the application of a portable grinder. In addition I treated the rust preparatory to painting on Friday. These jobs completed and being unable to put it off any longer, we descended into the underworld to examine the anatomy of a boulder choke. This was subjected to an invasive probe revealing a mass of debris awaiting the chance to attack Richard. So in the interest of safety we must retreat 5ft to concentrate our efforts on the bedding plane as an alternative way on. At least we should be gaining depth there which is the prime objective.

Simon.

WHFS 28 Feb Mark, Clive, Spike & Amy, Tom

With the welcome addition of Amy and Tom (don't know his surname) we were able to haul a fairly small number of skips-worth of spoil after the bang.

As we have run out of open rift to bang into the rock is proving very resilient - plenty of cracking but not much loosening.

Spike's MkII Fume Removal Apparatus Kit (FRAK) proved its worth again - all clear in less than 10 minutes.

Spike & Amy, Tom had a look down WHFS Lower as well and on exit found the bolt holding the gate down had come adrift from the concrete. I will talk to Speedy about how we could improve this.

I have informed Kay Watts of the Forest School and Toby at the Retreat that the caves are now gated. Toby has responded with a "well done - see you on Wednesday" message.

Clive

WHFS 18 Feb Mark, Spike & Amy, Tom

With the welcome addition of Amy and Tom (don't know his surname) we were able to haul a fairly small number of skips-worth of spoil after the bang.

As we have run out of open rift to bang into the rock is proving very resilient - plenty of cracking but not much loosening.

Spike's MkII Fume Removal Apparatus Kit (FRAK) proved its worth again - all clear in less than 10 minutes.

Spike & Amy, Tom had a look down WHFS Lower as well and on exit found the bolt holding the gate down had come adrift from the concrete. I will talk to Speedy about how we could improve this.

I have informed Kay Watts of the Forest School and Toby at the Retreat that the caves are now gated. Toby has responded with a "well done - see you on Wednesday" message.

Clive

Fri 20th Feb 2015.

Clive/Dave/Emma/Richard and Simon.

Our 2nd attempt to break out of colditz has now begun. Unwilling to shorten our lifespan unnecessarily, the draughting crossrift examined last week has been abandoned in favour of the choked bedding plane draining the approach passage. Whilst the lower half of the dig is obstructed

by solid and not so solid rock, the upper half consists of tightly compacted sediment filling a nicely rounded tube. Not only is the site much more secure, but it seems certain that we will intersect the area visible at the end of the crossrift which is following the beds dipping to the left. During the day, as well as a considerable quantity of fill removed, Clive laid two charges to enlarge the working area. Once again, there is the feeling that open cave may be quite close.

Simon.

WL 17/2 Gonzo & Tav

Cleared spoil back to balcony in Hammer Rift

WL 24/2 Gonzo, Mandy, Matt, Paul

Removed spoil from balcony.

Drilled.

Cut out the last of the expanding foam around the chockstone of the Hammer Rift choke for replacement with mortar.

Photography in the main passage

WL 25/2 Gonzo

Popped the dig before heading over to Windsor Hill Flood Sink.

Gonzo

Wed 25th WHFS. Spike, Gonzo & Dave.

No drilling and popping. Spike went down to the sharp end to do some rock worrying, whilst Dave & Gonzo cemented in a bar to block up the last COURNA on the left of the grill. Also built up the wall at the same end to consolidate the bar install. No spoil hauled out, but by end of play Spike had created a pile of spoil for next week. We have used up the last of the gravel, but we do have some cement left (in red plastic tub inside entrance).

Dave.

Hobnail Fri 27th Feb

Simon, Richard, Dave.

The weather being so fine it seemed a shame to go underground. Water flowing freely through TLS gate, despite it being largely blocked with leaf and twig debris. This was all cleared and steps down to the entrance cleared of mud. More gravel spread in the lay by to ease the mud. Also some more winch frame fettling. Enough time spent on the surface, so time for an early lunch.

On to Hobnail.

Flood debris at the dig face a couple of feet up the walls, indicated that a fair amount of water had passed through since last week. But it had drained away to leave a muddy slurry, which was dispatched down the slot towards the Coal Cellar. A reasonable amount of shattered rock removed along with the mud all hauled to the surface. Further rocks and mud/silt infill dug out also



dispatched to the surface. The right hand wall is still solid but veering to the right. The roof slab which is still well supported by the right-hand wall, pit prop and what's left of the left-hand wall. The end of this slab is becoming visible and leaving a gap between it and the left-hand wall. As this gap appeared, leaf debris fell from the cavity above it. The dig face is now about 4' wide, with a large boulder partially exposed taking up the left portion of the dig face, whilst the right is mud/silt infill. The boulder is approx 4" short of the roof slab, and it may be that a wooden chock might be useful to ensure the roof slab remains supported as we progress. If this is the case, we can surgically remove the left hand side of the boulder to widen what remains of the dig face. Or we reduce the boulder and remove it completely if it doesn't compromise the roof.

Dave.

Hi Clive,

Hope your lurgy is on the way out.

The boulder and roof really want another pair of eyes cast over them. Time was ticking on a bit on Fri, so neither Simon or Richard had peek.

It may be unnecessary to further support the roof, just keeping an open mind (or as some would say - sitting on my fence) and looking at all possibilities at present. The boulder out completely approach is probably a good option (depending on how big it turns out to be) , after further assessing roof slab. There is still a good session's worth of spoil to be dug out from the RHS of the boulder, so the decision can be deferred, this will also give us a better idea of the boulders dimensions.

Dave.

Ps. It was proposed to give next week a miss.

3/3 WL Gonzo, Paul, Tav, M&M

Cleared spoil from the face.

4/3

Windsor Hill Flood Sink

Gonzo and Spike

An early start to drill and pop the dig before clearing the spoil to the start of Pol Pot.

Tamped the holes this time and the fumes were notably diminished.

Stones can now be heard to continue down the bedding straight ahead which appears to be wider beyond our local constriction.

Arrived late at the Poacher's Pocket to find it closed!

Gonzo

Hobnail THURS 12 MARCH

Simon M-K, Rich W, Clive N and Emma G. Sick note from Dave K.

Started the day's work by blowing up the boulder in the southern arm of Colditz. On returning, EG and CN cleared the broken rock to the usual stockpile, while RW and SM-K had another look at the draughting but rather loose northern arm. RW attempted to attach a

rope to one of the hanging boulders but couldn't quite get to the back of it. Instead a number of the "roof" rocks were hit with CN's long bar, bringing a couple of them down. More fill was also removed from the floor area to enable a close approach to be made to the key hanging rock, but the latter, although it could be moved a little, defied further attempts to bring it down.

The broken rock was then sent up the shaft, and a decision was made to lay a small charge on the offending rock. CN drilled two short shotholes, and in due course the rock was remotely thumped. As no digging is planned for next week, the area will have plenty of time to "settle down" before a further inspection is made. Ahead is an area of voids and very blackened rock, but further progress along the passage will depend on the stability of the post-thump roof.

Rich

WHFS 11 March Mark, Spike and Clive

After an initial few skips of debris left over from the previous week had been brought out, five holes were drilled in the face to accompany the four drilled by Mark previously.

These were subsequently fired resulting in a dramatic pile of rocks some of which had been thrown way back up the passage. Most were cleared by the end of play leaving scope for some serious hammer and chisel work next week.

What did become clear was the continuation of the joint we have been following carries straight on - thus removing any temptation to head off to the right where there was also some development. There is still open bedding plane running across the base of the face.

Clive

WHFS March 18<sup>th</sup> Dave, Gonzo, Mandy, Matt, Spike.

A few hours of shattered rock extraction and associated frivolities before picking the Poacher's Pocket of a sufficiency of cider.

Gonzo

WHFS and W/L 25<sup>th</sup> March Gonzo on a whistlestop to W/L cave brandishing a camera on a fishing rod to see what lies ahead in the dig(s).

Then joined by Spike in the quarry for a gravel run to WHFS where Clive was busy playing with his new Hilti TE7A toy (pic below).

Later joined by Dave for spoil removal and consolidating the wall around the new gate.

Gonzo

WHFS 1<sup>st</sup> April Clive and Gonzo

A chiselling and drilling session with a bit of stream-clearing and spoil-retaining wall building for good measure.

I forgot to put in a change of clothes or we would have made the pub as well!

Gonzo

FRIDAY 3 APRIL 2015

Simon M-K, Clive N, Rich W and Dave K

After bailing a fair amount of ponded water, more hard-packed mud was cleared from around the boulder blocking the southern arm of Colditz, allowing CN to place a two shothole charge just before lunch. In the afternoon the bang debris was sent up to the surface, still leaving a large chunk of the boulder in situ. DK then attacked the overhead blackened rocks with the long bar and a scaffold pole, and after a considerable amount of energy had been expended the key elements trundled down alongside him. He was able to stand up in the void above him and describe its attractions - a few cubic metres of air surrounded by gravity defying slabs and boulders, with no obvious (or safe) way on. A light connection was established with the similarly unpleasant void at the end of the northern arm of Colditz. After an inspection by the entire team, it was decided that only suicidal madness lay in this direction and it would be henceforth abandoned with the title No Escape appended.

Where next? Well, back to the Coal Cellar for yet another attempt to engineer a safe route to the head of the mythical 10m pot. But before then, at CN's request, a brief interlude will be spent excavating a small tube totally filled with stream debris which lies on the right-hand (southern) side of the drop down into the Coal Cellar. We may also experiment with diverting the whole stream into the cliff alongside the Hobnail entrance. It should disappear in the Colditz area (apart from a small leak into the Coal Cellar) and will allow dry access to TLS while we tackle the next phase of this interminable dig.

Rich

8 April

Mark, Dave and Clive into W/L to remove bang wire, bags of gravel, skip and ropes etc from Mark's dig, followed by a sortie into Erratic Passage in Balch to watch Dave thrutch his way through the Erratic Squeeze whilst removing the wooden boards, stemples and several bags of leftover spoil.

Two of the later proved exceptionally difficult to prise from their hiding place half way down the squeeze and required a particularly superhuman effort on Daves' part to remove. Rehydration at 'The Sausage' was especially welcome.....

We still have the aerial cableway and possible another board from the bottom of the pitch to remove.

The drag tray, spare ropes and bags were removed to the Ferret Shed for safe keeping....

Clive

Hobnail Thurs 9th April

Simon, Clive, Richard, & Dave.

Thrupe stream light flow and all sinking under boulders by cliff face 30ft before TLS entrance. The hole where the stream was sinking last week nearer the entrance now dry.

After last weeks decision that the options in Colditz were too dangerous, we returned to re-assess the Coal Cellar. A wall will be required to give us a safe area to dig in the floor directly below the entrance to the Coal Cellar. To reduce the risk of boulders moving as they had done in August last year, rocks were carefully positioned to fill the gaps in-between, this also provided us with a

level base for the wall. A couple of large upright gate post shaped boulders were exposed in the floor. These were then hauled out and built into the wall, hopefully adding to a good solid foundation, the larger of the two being on the limits of what could be lifted by Clive & Simon perched above the Coal Cellar. More gravel and rocks removed from the floor and used as filling behind the wall. The purple rope that was being used to pull out a boulder back in August last year was found, still attached its boulder. Cement grouting was used to help consolidate the boulder choke.

During the day Thrupe stream was diverted down the channel into Hobnail. Most of this flowed into Colditz, although some did find its way into the Coal Cellar where we are digging, so stream re-diverted back.

Dave.

April 8<sup>th</sup> FCQ Mark, Dave and Clive into W/L to remove bang wire, bags of gravel, skip and ropes etc from Mark's dig, followed by a sortie into Erratic Passage in Balch to watch Dave thrutch his way through the Erratic Squeeze whilst removing the wooden boards, stemples and several bags of leftover spoil.

Two of the later proved exceptionally difficult to prise from their hiding place half way down the squeeze and required a particularly superhuman effort on Daves' part to remove. Rehydration at 'The Sausage' was especially welcome.....

We still have the aerial cableway and possible another board from the bottom of the pitch to remove.

The drag tray, spare ropes and bags were removed to the Ferret Shed for safe keeping....

Clive

THURS 16 April Hobnail

Simon M-K, Rich W, Dave K, Clive N and Emma G

A fine sunny spring day with a low stream. While DK and SM-K went down to the Coal Cellar to continue probing the floor, the rest of the team began widening the stream channel and landscaping the various spoil heaps. The best stones were set aside for revetting and flooring the "canal" leading to the cliff.

RW went below to discuss prospects with DK just before lunch and it was agreed to attempt to chop the end off a protruding piece of wall using plug and feathers. In the afternoon DK drilled the necessary line of shotholes but found that he had been a bit ambitious with the volume of rock to be chopped. As a result no breakage could be achieved and he had some difficulty recovering the plugs. The job will be re-attempted on a more modest scale next week (probably Thursday again).

The surface tidying continued and the session ended with RW returning to the Coal Cellar to insert more cement grouting into the walls.

Rich

WHFS April 15<sup>th</sup>

Dave, Spike, Simon, Clive

Tav, Mandy & Matt (inspecting other sites in the quarry)

Mark had previously drilled 8 holes so it was just a case of applying the linctus and clearing the expected enormous pile of spoil.

Unfortunately the bang didn't produce as much as hoped probably, I suspect, due to having used the holes drilled in the upper (very solid) section as well as those at the (undercut) base.

A very useful horizontal crack did appear near the top though which will come in handy later!

A potential disaster occurred with the MFRA (MkII Fume Removal Apparatus) when a tissue paper (how that got into the dig is a mystery) got sucked in and jammed the fan, which promptly blew the fuse and brought the operation to a standstill very early.

Cutting off the plug containing the fuse and hot-wiring straight onto the battery got us under way again.

A lively session in the Poachers ensued .....

More fun and games on Wednesday!

Clive

Hobnail Hole

Thurs 23rd April

Simon, Clive, Richard & Dave.

Another not very successful attempt to take the nose off the rock in the Coal Cellar using plug & feathers. Although a few large chunks were chiselled off from lower down with chisel and hammer. It was decided that to remove any significant portion of the rock would require something a little more aggressive, but before this we need to be sure that everything else is as stable and secure as we can realistically make it. Richard selected and cemented in the last rock to finish the wall that provides more support to a roof boulder and then a pit prop was cemented in place to ensure a large flake couldn't make a break for freedom.

On the surface more landscaping was carried out. This included enlargement of the canal that will allow the Thrupe Stream to be diverted down Hobnail Hole, and rock lining the stream banks to reduce erosion.

More of the same to follow next Friday.

Dave.

WHFS Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> April Dave, Mark and Clive

Just four holes drilled this time on the lower section of the face - the result was a much better pile of rock than the previous session and another suitably overhanging section of rock to attack next week.

A group of passing walkers on Wednesday night and some very young children seen playing by Mark recently underline the importance of checking the area carefully before each bang.

Clive

Asham Wood 21<sup>st</sup> April Paul Stillman and Andy Watson

Dug at a hole in Asham yesterday, stinky smelly nasty badger poo. It will now be called Winnie the Pooh's Tunnel as its near Yogi!

Andy

WHFS 29<sup>th</sup> April Mark, Dave, Spike and Clive plus a brief visit by Chris Pollard.

An early start by Mark meant a good pile of 'chiselled and barred' rocks when the rest of the team arrived.

A series of six well-placed holes this time produced an excellent result, so much so that by pub time there was still the prospect of a serious 'chisel and bar' session before drilling further.

A noticeable inward movement of air could be detected through the evening, more so as the outside temperature dropped. Spike detected a fresh 'burst' of air out of the ongoing rift as he removed a blockage as well.

Clive

Hobnail FRIDAY 1 MAY

Rich W, Dave K, Clive N and Simon M-K

After a brief but spirited debate about the amount of concrete needed to stabilise a boulder ruckle, the protagonists went below to agree a compromise approach. DK and SM-K then carried out some digging in the floor of the Coal Cellar, while the other two continued constructing the new stream channel.

A party of four North York Moors cavers (the Excalibur Pot digging team) arrived, planning to do a traditional TLS trip. We were unable to divert the stream as it would have compromised our afternoon's grouting, so they went underground prepared to descend Atlas Pot from Wuthering Heights. They tried the Ferret Run route but turned back above Perseverance Pot because of the volume of water, and proceeded along the Railway Series, eventually dropping Atlas as far as the main ledge. They enjoyed their 4 hour trip.

After lunch, RW and DK went down to the Coal Cellar and continued walling and grouting. The eastern buttress was finished off and a new western wall started. Surface work continued and the site is now looking a good deal tidier.

RW

WHFS 6<sup>th</sup> May Dave, Spike, Mark, Ray Deasey and Clive

An earlier start for most of the team to enable a series attack on the remains of last weeks bang. Much prising with bars and hammer and chisel work produced a good number of skip-fulls prior to drilling.

The resulting overhung face was soon drilled (five full holes) and subsequently fired, the FRD MkII was deployed and the rest of the evening spent removing the spoil right up to pub-time at 9.45. More chiselling next time is needed, I gather.

Immediately after the bang Mark checked out the Lower sink and reported no hint of bang fumes at all, which is encouraging. Also no sign of the stream which is currently sinking in the bouldery cleft opposite the Upper sink.

Discussion ensued in the pub about the possible need to head downwards and/or possibly heading left in our efforts to intersect the lower stream passage seen at the bottom of Pol Pot. Another look at the survey is needed - can't find the one Duncan sent a while back - anyone have it??

Clive

Hobnail Hole, Fri 8th May

Rich, Simon, Clive, Ray D & Dave.

The first job on the list was to plug and feather the loose boulder in the floor, but on closer inspection lines of weakness were noticed. A few good blows with hammer and chisel soon reduced this down to manageable pieces, some suitable for walling.

Clive had picked up a 6ft length of 3"x4" galvanized angle, so this was offered into position to increase the security of a huge overhead boulder. Some chiselling out was needed to fit the angle, but still a little more required. The padstone and wall were built up ready to support the end of the angle. More landscaping was carried out on the surface to the spoil heap and the stream bed & banks.

Dave.

Thrupe Lane Swallet.

Fri 8th May

After digging at Hobnail I was being joined later by Ian Patrick (Craven member) for a trip into TLS. There was still a small stream sinking under the cliff and down the small hole in the area of the old ATLAS shaft dig just in front of the existing entrance. This was still enough to make the climb down from The Ferret Run a tad aqueous, based on the feedback from York CC members that tried going down the previous Friday.

So I diverted the stream down Hobnail Hole for the evening.

Ian & I then descended TLS armed with a shovel to dig out Cowsh Crawl. On the route down to Perseverance the walls were dripping with water indicating that it would have been a fairly wet descent had I not diverted the stream. A few rocks were gardened out of harms way on route. On arrival at the bottom of Perseverance, the water level in Cowsh Crawl was found to be quite high again. Back to the depth it was before Spike and I reduced the level last year. To get through Ian had to remove his helmet to enable him to keep his head above the water that was a couple of feet

deep. Once both through we shoveled out a channel to drain the crawl. But making only the same impression as Spike and I had made last year. To clear it properly is going to require more aggressive digging with a crowbar and/or entrenching tool. If this is not cleared I fear that the flood pulses TLS experiences will continue to build up the gravel bank and raising the water level further and perhaps it might cause it to sump.

As we passed over the top of Bridge Pot, I was surprised by the amount of water entering the area of Butt's Chamber. It seemed that the volume exceeds the flow that I had diverted down Hobnail Hole.

We continued on down through Marble Streamway and down Atlas.

On returning to the surface the stream was redirected back to TLS.

Perhaps we can schedule a suitable weekend to do another clearing session in both Cowsh Crawl and Bamboo Aven, with a request going out to anyone that would to assist. We can then possibly shift spoil out to the surface rather than trying to find somewhere to dump it below.

Dave.

WHFS 13<sup>th</sup> May

An earlier start for Dave, Ray, Mark, Spike and Clive this week.

An experiment was carried out by tipping water into the bedding plane at the end of the dig, the open rift in the floor at the top of the slope and also in the floor of Pol Pot. The idea was to listen for any sound of running water at the end of the dig.

All went quite as Mark strained his ears to pick up any tell tale sounds. Nothing was obvious apparently and although he couldn't be absolutely sure he thought he could hear water falling some way further down the passage. Maybe he could write this up....

An excellent 'power-chiselling' session ensued which produced great results and a good number of skipfuls - this was in addition to the rock removed following the bang last week.

A six-hole charge was fired before leaving for the pub so there will be plenty to do on arrival next week. The earlier start meant we made the pub by around 9.30 or so!

Clive

Fri 15th May.2015.

Hobnail Clive.Dave.Richard.Simon.

Another interesting day on the hill for the old firm.To start off proceedings Mr King descended to the coal cellar to finish chiselling out a suitable footing for the angle iron girder.This proved quite a hard task given the hard ness of the rock and the awkwardness of the target area. However by lunchtime this had been achieved and with the security it gave Clive took over and laid 2 charges on the offending bedrock protrusion.After a successful detonation all parties retired to the patio for an alfresco lunch.Following this a wrecking team went below to clear the now emlarged working area.With the removal of more debris holes began to appear in the floor below the access shaft Through one of these a sizeable space was visible about 6 to 10 feet beneath,but to reach it extreme care will be needfed.Probably the safest option will be to continue shaving off the solid wall rather than venturing into the adjacent boulder ruckle.To round off the afternoon Richard ,having completed his usual very neat job walling the drainhole channel,completed the grouting work at the face with Dave and Clive.All in all an excellent day's work helped by dry and pleasant weather. Simon



Winnie the Pooh Tunnel 19<sup>th</sup> May Went digging with Paul Tuesday. More badger poo removed initially. Dug successfully and shifted about 25 skips. The cave is now 13ft/4m long and still going with a draft (although likely to be from other holes/fissures in the quarry I suspect).

Description / Reference for Tav: Winnie the Pooh Tunnel at ST71004 45416 your MCRA-AQ-1.

A low arched entrance at the base of the cliff behind a pile of large rocks. Entrance is 1 metre wide and 0.5metres high that slopes downwards into a low tunnel with a soil and loose rock floor with some rock shelves on the left hand side some 3 metres in. Length currently 4 metres - active cave dig. Occasionally frequented by badgers.

Andy W

WHFS Wed 20th May

Clive & Dave.

An earlier start than usual to threaten the dig face with crow bars and chisels had the desired effect of creating more spoil to remove. But since it was just a two man team we couldn't do much hauling to the surface. The larger rocks were hauled and stacked in the approach of Pol Pot. Clive then set about chiselling more off with the SDS chisel before drilling and refilling the holes with Dr Nobel's. Before disturbing the peace and tranquility, the previously stacked larger rocks were hauled to the surface. Unfortunately after we generated a loud bang and smoke signals, we were unable to pull the wire up to the surface so the drum of wire was dispatched down the shaft. Be warned that the first person down next week will probably encounter a birds nest of tangled wire.

To ensure the landlord at Chelynch wasn't going to worry about our whereabouts, we headed off to The Poachers Pocket as usual.

Dave

Hobnail Hole 22<sup>nd</sup> May

Dave, Rich, Paul, Clive

No Simon today due to his Mum being in hospital but we did have his chair out at lunchtime in honour of absent friends!

Dave and Clive set to drilling three holes in the wall adjacent to the dodgy boulders at the base of the dig.

When fired this produce just the right amount of widening to enable us to safely reach the base of the dig - the point where a gap in the rocks appeared to herald the long abandoned pot.

Rich and Pauls arrival enabled the spoil to be brought right to the surface. An annoying protruberance in the narrowest part of the shaft was plug and feathered away and attention given to the hole in the floor between dodgy boulders. It certainly seems to be the pot we abandoned a while back as too dangerous.....

Rocks dropped seemed to clatter and bounce down a steep slope for what must be at least 60-70 feet the clattering getting fainter as they went....All to play for!

There now follows serious concreting of the boulders again, before we carry on banging the solid rock wall in the hope we can bypass the worst of the blockage and pop out into the open rift a bit lower down.

Clive

WHFS May 27<sup>th</sup> Mark, Dave, Ray, Darryl and Clive

An earlier start for Mark and Clive interrupted a friendly group of dog walkers passing the dig followed by the fact that (presumably) kids had been active at the dig....

A pile of rocks - some very big - were dumped by the gate and a good four skips-worth had been thrown down the shaft along with the contents of our one remaining bag of grit.

Annoying, especially when I slipped on a gritty step in the shaft and twisted a knee as a result - very painful! The knee is now very stiff, I'm now fairly immobile and hoping it improves soon - have had to miss Hobnail work today (Thurs).

Mark and I moved several skips of spoil to Pol Pot to await the arrival of the rest of the team. Mark then had a bumper session of rock wrangling and by evenings-end must have produced around 30 skiploads, at a guess. The dig face had become so overhung that it was decided to square it off with 4 holes which were duly fired. (Just before firing a loud shriek from the woods gave the impression of someone close by (not an owl!) but a search proved fruitless).

The dig face is now looking more promising on the right hand side rather than the left (the open bedding-plane is higher on the right). The need for an accurate up date to the survey is pressing!

There should be plenty to clear next week - its good to have got into the habit of banging last thing and clearing at the start of the next session. No more fumes to contend with despite the fun of using Spike fume extractor!

The evening ended with the usual round table (well oblong really) session in the Poachers, not leaving until 11.35 or so!

Clive

Hobnail Hole - Thursday 28th May

Simon, Rich, Emma, Ray D, Darrel & Dave.

Darrel, Ray & Emma viewed the delights of the Coal Cellar and its collection of boulders waiting to pounce at the slightest provocation.

A scaffold bar was then used as a template to establish what length of angle iron could be maneuvered into to place to replace the temp pit prop without upsetting any boulders.

Lunchtime entertainment was laid on by the farm contractors, when two of the tractors hauling trailers managed to get themselves wedged together in the lane near the Ferret Shed.

Probably because neither of the drivers were prepared to slow down or give way. Before long

another tractor, postal van and other vehicles were joining the queue. I particularly enjoyed the spectacle after having nearly been run off the road earlier by a tractor whilst on route to Hobnail.

After lunch, more of the loose rocks gravel infill were removed from between the boulders and then replaced with cemented rocks.

On the surface, more walling was carried out around the top of the entrance shaft in preparation for the gate.

Dave.

WHFS 3<sup>rd</sup> June Dave, Spike, Duncan and Clive

A really early start by Dave put us ahead of the game - all the major chiselling and crow-barring had been done by the time the rest of us arrived around 6.45 or so.

Duncan caught up on the survey update before the clearing work began in earnest. Dave at the front with Spike as 'Cornerman', Duncan in the shaft and the semi-cripple on the surface doing the hauling and emptying!

A very successful bang (thanks Mark!) - plenty of big rocks and not much gravel to deal with this time. Duncan deputised this time with a four hole charge after rehearsing his drilling technique on the surface with his newly acquired and suitably impressive (for the price) cordless drill from Lidl!

By the end of play the face had retreated to the small mud-filled joint running across the face at right angles as reported last week by Mark. The face now, apparently is around 6ft across(!) thanks to the joint on the right veering away at around 45degrees. We will obviously need to evaluate further after we have cleared the bang debris next time to work out which joint to follow - the one on the right or the one on the left, as we obviously don't need a 6ft wide working face in the long term!

Spike did report a noticeable gentle, cold draught emanating from the bedding plane at the base of the face and from the left hand joint which has opened up again into a small rift.

During the evening the hauling operations were enlivened by a passing dog walker, a group of lively teenagers and even Dave Morrison and Louise! (Apologies if you went to the Poachers Dave - we didn't get there until 10.35 and they were just closing up!)

Clive

Hobnail Hole - Fri 5th June

Simon, Clive, Tony L, Spike & Dave.

Surface support Ray Deasy and his daughter Makayla + her daughter.

Clive with home made selfie stick and camera took some video footage below the boulders that currently form the floor of the dig. The footage indicates that we have cavities and more wedged boulders below.

Clive had also procured a length of "I" section beam (approx 2 1/2" x 4" x 62" long). The temporary timber prop that was offering some protection from the boulder that forms part of the foundation of the "Great Wall" (????) was removed and the steel beam positioned below the boulder. TL then

concreted this into position with some of the rocks from our rock stock. DK was then able to use up the remaining concrete mix to reach parts that TL couldn't quite reach due to the limited access space. Since further concreting is still required and couldn't be done until the first lot has set, we had a late lunch followed by an early finish.

Dave.

WHFS June 10<sup>th</sup> Dave, Spike, Mark and Clive

Last weeks bang (by Duncan) had done a good job and there was plenty of rock to remove (luckily very little 'gravel').

A power-chiselling session ensued, followed by a spell of-rock worrying by Spike, then the final hole drilling and firing.

Currently the face is about 5ft or so across with the continuation of the narrow vertical rift on the left, a mud-filled floor-level bedding across the whole face and a open section of this on the right. This latter is a couple of feet across, extends down-dip for a metre or so at least and has fine 'half-tubes' in its roof and is around 6 inches in height.

This weeks bang was across most of the width of the face, close to floor level, and additionally to take care of a large bulge under the roof adjoining the right wall.

When this is cleared we may well have a better idea of which way to go - left or right. Left is favourite survey-wise but right is much better developed at the moment.

Clive

Hobnail FRIDAY 12 JUNE

Simon M-K, Rich W, Clive N, Dave K, Tony L & Spike

The last three of the above went down to Cowsh Crawl in TLS and carried out access/drainage improvements (see separate report).

The others continued work in the Coal Cellar. A tiny rift was uncovered in the corner of the two "solid" walls, and CN exploited this with a small charge before lunch. In the afternoon, more grouted walling was built around the steel beam inserted last week. The session ended with some plug and feather work in the approach rift to the Coal Cellar.

RW

Fri 12th June Thrupe Lane Swallet.

Tony L, Spike & Dave.

Whilst cementing, popping, digging etc continued in Hobnail, the three "youngsters" decided to revisit Cowsh Crawl. Diverting the stream down Hobnail wasn't an option due to the cementing work, but the stream level was quite low and declared not to be a problem. There was a little trepidation with regard to the weather forecast that had indicated a risk of thunderstorms. If however the stream flow (which at the time was all sinking below the cliff face some 20ft short of TLS entrance) were to increase the Hobnail team could divert the stream down Hobnail.

Armed with entrenching tool, crow bar and shovel, the TLS team descended. The stream sinking below the cliff face soon emerged below the entrance shaft as expected, making the Ferret Run, approach to Perseverance Pot and Perseverance itself a little showery. Cowsh Crawl was a duck

but passable keeping just ones head above water. After an initial lowering of the floor between Cowsh Crawl and Bridge Rift a reassessment came to the conclusion that if a couple of large boulders were moved, it would improve the flow and would prevent significant banking up of the gravel in future. The first boulder weighing in at a guesstimated 1/2 Ton was rolled closer to Bridge Rift where it securely settled. The second boulder was a little larger, probably nearer to 1 1/2 Tons and tooth shaped. After a fair bit of clearing around its "root" it was toppled over to lay flat settling against the first boulder. With these two boulders relocated, it was then possible to clear more stream debris away which washed on down Bridge Rift.

Hopefully Cowsh Crawl, although it will remain as a Duck in all but drought conditions, is unlikely to develop into a sump which was a possibility before if left unchecked.

An additional note:-

Most of the gravel, cobbles and rocks shifted from just beyond Cowsh Crawl were either stashed just beyond or washed down Bridge Rift. Obviously there will be a certain amount of gravel and possibly the odd cobble that didn't quite make the descent, but still wishes to, therefore care should be taken if planning to descend Bridge Rift. Hopefully time and a few flood pulses should rectify this.

Dave.

WHFS 17 June Mark, Dave, Spike and Clive

Last weeks bang had done just what was expected of it and Mark enjoyed a very productive session at the face. This included removing what must be about the biggest boulder we have yet produced.

By the end of the session we could see down a well water-worn continuation of the bedding plane at the junction with the small rift on the left. This is partly mud-filled but there is clean-washed gravel visible there as well. The bedding is around 6 inches or so high and we can see around 2 metres or so ahead.

This confirms our decision to concentrate efforts on the left hand route rather than maintain the extravagantly wide working face we had!

Before close of play 7 holes were drilled and fired which should leave plenty to clear next week.

Clive

Andy Watsons digging bits recently:

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015 Digging at Willet's Lane Hole

A short digging session one evening (2 hours) when I was working at Bath and I stayed at MNRC. Drilled, Plug & feathered a large boulder. Pulled several spoil sacks through the choke, lifted two large boulders. Slight updraft noticed out of boulders in dig, but minimal, although air okay. Did some more cementing in the floor of the top chamber. Dig face, if floor, looking okay, albeit pretty muddy.

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015 – Digging with Paul Stillman at Bradshaw's Cave, Asham Wood Quarry

After clearing some 30 skips of mud, rocks and rotted moss (an old Badger lair by the look of it) the short tunnel previously described ascended slightly by about nn and we could see both ways along a low bedding. To the right the low bedding probably goes back to another area on the cliff face. To

the left and by dropping the floor slightly I managed to wriggle forward into a small area of roof collapse with a few large boulders on the floor, some probably brought down by historic quarry blasting. The area has a good outflowing draft. These boulders need some breaking up and without tools etc we could not do this. Next trip in a couple of weeks. At the end up slightly to the right the cave closes down into small water worn phreatic passages. Down and to the left there is an obvious channel in the floor but the way on is currently blocked with boulders. Straight across it may be possible to get into the channel and swing right downslope if we manage to clear it. It appears to be going in the direction of the stream so this is likely to be one of the ancient waterways draining water from Bottlehead and the old Shute Farm area.

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015 – Digging at Willet's Lane Hole

A short digging session (2 hours) hauled two large rocks by 'rope and net' method. Filled about 10 bags and stacked. Plug and feathered one large rock. Hauled out 6 bags through choke into the top chamber. Lots of mossies and no bats.

Hobnail Hole Fri 19th Jun.2015

CN/DK/RW/SMK.

In the hour or so before lunch, Clive and myself carried on with the delicate task of enlarging the shaft being driven to safely enter the voids below. By use of hammer and chisel and crowbar several useful pieces of rock were removed. The black holes in the floor between boulders are a distraction to the real task of securing our progress. Finally Clive fired a small charge to enlarge the working area. After a pleasant lunch break eaten alfresco in beautiful weather the other half of the team, Dave and Richard descended into the depths to continue the grouting works essential to the dig's stability. This was followed by an extended game of pass the boulder before the rock in question was rejected by quality control. An expedition to FCQ will now kick off next Friday's session as we hunt for the elusive perfect specimen. AW paid a brief visit at the end of the afternoon.

Simon MK

Hobnail FRIDAY 26 JUNE

Simon M-K, Dave K, Rich W

Met up at FCQ to select a very large, wedge-shaped rock for a key role in the stabilisation of the boulders above the "way on" in the Coal Cellar. Chose two and took them over to Thrupe, where one promptly broke asunder while being trimmed for the job.

In the afternoon, the trio managed to lower the second, stronger rock to the bottom using the invaluable boulder net. Much lifting up and down, trimming and freeing of the rope ensued before the rock was adequately jammed between the solid wall and a potentially threatening boulder. The area was then extensively grouted.

All being well, the next session will see a route into the netherworld engineered by CN and Dr Nobel.

Both Simon and myself have funerals to attend on Thursday and Friday of next week, and so a Saturday digging day is being proposed - ? CN availability.

Rich

WHFS 24 June

Gonzo, Dylan, Spike and Dave.

Pulley repositioned over main drop on a long strop to good effect, making it possible to haul light loads all the way from the dig face to surface without a third person.

Plenty of spoil to the surface.

More spoil to come but with the late hour and the awkwardness of getting out the remainder it was agreed that a timely visit by Dr Nobel will make things quicker and easier.

mark lumley

WHFS July 1<sup>st</sup> Mark, Dave and Clive.

A potentially very hot and humid evening was in prospect - surprisingly the valley was cool and very pleasant (although the midges etc did appear during the evening)

A lightweight session involving drilling and firing six holes concentrating on 'narrowing down' the width of the passage from the rather unnecessary 5ft it had suddenly grown to down to its previous size. Still concentrating on the 'left hand route' - there should be plenty to clear next week and we should be back to the regular 'clear and bang' routine then.

Clive

Hobnail July 4<sup>th</sup> Simon, Rich, Dave and Clive plus Tuska and Louise on digging tool delivery .....

The object of this trip was to 'gently' break through the final gap between the base of the Coal Cellar and the long-lost 'pot' we had previously abandoned after it had had two, too-many, attempts on Richards well-being in the past.

After much stabilising of the area with steel beams and much concrete grout over previous weeks a final couple of gentle bangs and much persuasion with the mega crowbar were applied. This caused a largish piece of bedrock, abutting a large boulder to come loose bringing down the boulder as well. This opened up the way below quite comfortably but revealed another dodgy boulder in the 'roof' which needed attention.

Rich and Dave spent some while inserting a long steel beam into position to pick up said rock and some mortar was applied as a holding measure until the next session when a serious amount of grouting will be undertaken.

The way on and down, apparently, can be seen (I'll leave that for Dave to describe) and is quite open but not safe to enter just yet.

Ever closer!

Clive

Bradshaw's Cave July 4<sup>th</sup> visited briefly Friday evening. Some rocks successfully broken up in the new bedding area but not fully removed. Good draft outward but no wind to speak of on the surface. Sue enjoyed her picnic dinner sitting out on the surface.

Andy W

Hobnail Hole - Thurs 9th July

Simon, Rich, Clive, Dave and Spike for tea and medals later.

A garden hose pipe was set up to siphon stream water down to the small chamber below the Coal Cellar. This worked really well with quite a reasonable pressure enabling us to jet off the gravel and mud from the various rocks and boulders. Having done this the floor was found to be one very large secure boulder that will act as a good foundation to build up under the less secure rocks above. The two smaller rock/boulders that were possibly supporting this huge boulder were found to be just leaning against it, so these were relocated, one up and the other sent crashing to the floor approx 10ft below, much to Simon's concern (previous boulder crashing & rumblings have not been deliberate).

Over the edge of the foundation boulder is a descent of about 10ft down to the floor where the dropped boulder landed. From here there are two main possible leads. The first is a pot approx 6ft in diameter that drops down a further 10ft underneath the secure boulder, but before descending, a couple of smaller perched boulders will require attention. At the bottom a gravel floor can be seen and no doubt we were responsible for some if not all of this gravel. The second option - a clean washed rift heading West (ish) for approx 20ft with a varying width of between 1 & 2ft. and a floor of silty sand. At the end it either meets a cross rift or turns to the left, but out of sight the sound of water can be clearly heard cascading/trickling(??) down. It will possibly only take one or two digging sessions to push the rift. In addition to the two leads there is a small hole about 8in diameter down which you can see approx a further 20ft.

The afternoon was spent cementing a stone wall on top of the foundation boulder to help stabilize the rocks and boulders above. The gap between the boulder and the solid wall was also filled.

Before either of the two leads can be pushed safely a little more gardening and possibly some stabilizing work will be required.

A very useful session and certainly not without interest!

Dave.

WHFS 8 July Mark, Dave, Spike, Clive and latterly Duncan on book-prize presenting duty to Dave....

Last weeks bang had done the biz and Mark, nursing a bad back, bagged the sit-down job of clearing at the end. This was followed by a power-chiselling session and a six-hole charge.

One feature of interest emerged - a step of a few inches appeared across the bedding floor (the first feature on the floor in around 20ft) bearing at an angle towards the left hand side of the passage where the development is also greatest. This is where we are concentrating our efforts.

Clive

Bradshaw's Cave 15/07/2015:

Andy W & Paul S digging - shifted out all the rocks from earlier 3rd July short trip with Susie drilling P&F. Took some more P&F and drilled and freed one from earlier. Successfully removed a 1.5" layer of rock and ran out of drill power, but it needs a bit more off to squeeze further forward. In a couple of hours we managed to extend the cave 30cm! Draft good, view good can see about 5 feet & hopefully it will get bigger? Paul did a great job hauling and we now have two good drag trays and a reasonable rope system.

Andy W



WHFS 15<sup>th</sup> July Spike, Dave and Clive

A great pile of rocks greeted us on arrival. This was slowly dealt with during the evening and included a lengthy power-chiselling session. This produced almost a third as much rock again leaving no time to drill more holes etc if we weren't going to miss the pub.

(The few chaps propping up the bar soon left after we arrived (was it something we said?) leaving the pub to ourselves.....

By evenings-end we had pushed the face back by about a foot overall. Spike noticed that there appears to be a little more development at floor level off to the left hand side.

Next week we need to drill and pop early, make use of the Fume Extraction Device and hopefully drill and pop again before leaving - this will get us back on track re avoiding the fumes for the foreseeable future.

Clive

Hobnail FRI 17 JULY

Clive N, Dave K, Rich W & Spike

An interesting day of probing and evaluating with no cementing!

The team descended to the Lower Coal Cellar, passing the now stable concreted wall beneath the steel beam, and started exploratory work in the northern arm of the bottom rift, where a cross passage with the sound of heavy drip/falling water was visible but just out of reach. The lowest point of the rift was too tight, but by levering up slabs at roof level on the left-hand side, it was possible to reach the head of a pot after a metre or so of flat-out crawling. The pot, an attractive feature with creamy white, crystalline walls, is half a metre wide at the top, belling out to 2-3m at a probable floor level, 3m below. There may be a concealed way on as the tiny stream which falls from the roof seems to run away freely at floor level. Above the pot, a 2-3m high aven rises up to a reasonably stable choke. After a small amount of gardening, it was decided to switch our attention to the opposite end of the bottom rift, where the 2.5m deep "Ten Foot Pot" beckoned.

First, various voids beneath boulders were filled with rocks to prevent movement, and then a number of large and potentially threatening slabs were lifted up using a strop and safely relocated. The pot was now a shorter, easier clamber, and was duly renamed the Black Pot. Spike, as junior ATLAS member, made the first 2m descent to the gravel floor. The walls around are solid rock with prominent black chert ledges, and three "routes" lead off. To the north (roughly at any rate) a man-sized tunnel leads straight to the bottom of the white pot (a name for this will be discussed with SM-K next week and he will be allowed to explore it). To the west, a too tight inlet enters with the sound of heavy drip a short distance in. Finally, to the south, a slot in stal cemented rocks was opened up to allow a view of an attractive stal coated rift, just too narrow to be passable. From somewhere below comes the sound of falling water, suggesting that the other stream passage may swing around to join it. Plenty of work for next week!

The final session saw the surface stream diverted into the cliff face adjacent to Hobnail, but in the short time we remained underground there was no appreciable change in water

sounds. The day concluded with stockpiled rocks from the Upper Coal Cellar being hauled up to the surface, together with bits of surplus digging gear.

Rich

PS DK found my second best walling hammer in the debris beneath the Lower Coal Cellar.

Bradshaw's Cave 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015 Andy Watson & Paul Stillman

At the end of our dug entrance passage we managed to get through the slightly enlarged squeeze by breathing out and pushing through, now known as Sid's Squeeze due to Paul's huffing and puffing. At the other side a slight twist over a rock led to larger passage 2ft wide and 3'6" high. After Paul followed me through the squeeze safely, I moved forward and was surprised to find some 12m of fairly clear passage with some nice clump coral formations in one wall then we came to a sharp right hand corner of (Chest of Drawers Corner – about the right size) this led on into some 30m of straight passage along a fault line, varying from crawling to walking height (The Long Straight). This has a few small flowstone formations, it looks like it sometimes takes some flowing water but does not flood to the roof. It led to a small area of breakdown straight ahead, but after clearing some large rocks to the left under some wall flowstone (with marginal curtains along the bottom edge) a muddy down slope was revealed about 0.5m high and perhaps 1.5m wide dropping about 2m over the 5m length which we slithered down. At the bottom a wide but low sweep (which probably sumps in flood) turn to the right led into the base of a 3m high aven, 1m wide and 2-3m in length which has some comfortable standing room. Straight ahead and slightly right and about 1m off the floor the passage continues, it is about 1m high for another 5m of crawling to a breakdown boulder choke roof area, probably not too far from the surface judging by the roots showing. Total cave length is 65.5m or 212 feet. About 180 feet found tonight!

Regards Andy

PS I knew that was a good draft, but still unexpected.

WHFS 22 July Mark, Dave, Spike, Clive. Matt & Mandy (surface support - firewood cutting). Rich, Alan (pub support)

An early start drilling whilst Dave and Spike wrangled two lengths of *barely* flexible large bore pipe into position to extend the reach of the *totally* flexible hose attached to the Miracle Fume Extraction Device.

6 holes were drilled and fired and the fume extraction process swung into action. After a considerable wait a goodly amount of rock was removed and another 5 holes were drilled and fired before 'pub o'clock'.

We should be back on track now with clearing first thing before banging later.

Clive

Hobnail Friday 24th July 2015.

Clive/Dave/Rich/Simon/Spike.

A day of continuous rain, but a little thing like that was not going to deter our intrepid band from descending into the unknown. The vertical distance to the current lowest level is now near enough

60 ft and the dig has now taken on an altogether more serious aspect. After a careful look at the ways forward from the bottom of black pot, reached by a rather crumbly 10 ft climb down, I pushed the low connection to the base of cream pot. As its name implies this is a beautiful bell shaped pot with cream coloured walls and floor. This phenomena may be related to its proximity to the fault and there is evidence of fault displacement in the walls. Unlike the adjacent black pot a steady stream of water issues from the roof. The question was: where does this water go? The answer was a choked rift falling to the north on the far side of the pot cutting through the milky heavily eroded limestone. This was enough excitement for the morning session so a retreat was sounded for a lunchbreak in the ferret shed. Surprisingly for the time of year it was necessary to light the heater, whilst admiring the superb birthday cake baked by Geraldine in my honour. Lunch consumed, subterranean activity resumed, and clearance of the aforesaid rift began. Incidentally the other (southerly) lead from the opposite end of black pot is also of interest.

Simon.

Hobnail Friday 24th July part two.

After lunch a temporary "lean to" shelter was rigged in Cream Pot to offer some protection from the stream trickling in from various points in the roof. This enabled Clive take the photographs and for digging to commence in the choked rift in floor to the North. Blocks of aragonite?/calcite? were pulled out along with a number of skip fulls of gravel, which were all hauled back through the tube connection to Black Pot and then deposited in various places above Black Pot to help consolidate the area. The rift was soon cleared and a thundering stream could be heard some distance below. The rift looked accessible and climbable and Dave being a slimmer member of the team, was summoned to descend it, followed by Spike. An easy slid down to a ledge at approx 1.5m, where a football size block was lifted out to enable further progress. The rift continued slightly to the right and down an awkward little climb of approx 2m landing in a small chamber of a couple of metres in each direction. Some of the walls/floor/roof are bedrock whilst some consist of very large secure boulders and a few not so secure boulders. Below is a very large chamber, the floor of which is approx 6m below, is a boulder slope sloping down from West to East. The full size cannot yet be appreciated but it is at least 10m East/West & 5m North/South. The thundering stream is still not visible but can be clearly heard. At present the only way to access the chamber below is through a window between boulders, one of which appears to be supported on a vertical wall by its pointed corner and weighing probably 1.5 - 2 tons. There is a possible option to pop the corner of the boulder to allow it to settle into a more stable position, but this would need to be a surgical strike from a safe distance in case it unsettled larger boulders around it.

The other option is to open up the rift and floor in Black Pot, since this rift can be seen to be trending towards the West of Cream Pot and might offer a safer way in. An exploratory dig was started in the floor of Black Pot, close to the rift. Several skips of gravel and mud silts were hauled out before the need for tea & cake back at the Ferret Shed became overpowering.

The first to surface then redirected the large TLS stream back down Hobnail whilst Dave waited to see if the stream could be detected in the new lower reaches. No significant change was detected from the thundering stream flowing somewhere below Cream Pot. Either the surface stream is of an insignificant volume to make a difference or the two don't meet within ear shot. No change was detected to the stream that can be heard beyond Black Pot Rift. Trickles and splashes of water entered at various points in the Lower Coal Cellar. On exiting the cave, most of the TLS stream was seen to be cascading down to Colditz. Note that the boulder chokes at the end of Colditz are some distance above but possibly not too far horizontally displaced from being above Cream Pot and the chamber below.

Dave.

Hobnail TUESDAY 28 JULY

Rich W, Simon M-K

Built the north wall of the entrance shaft up to the level of the south wall.

There was a large stream sinking into the cliff face, and a peer down the shaft (no kit available) revealed water pouring in from many points. I would expect that a lot of water has gone down the Coal Cellar, meaning that the grouting and shoring will have been well tested! Before we left, we re-diverted the stream towards the adit to give the dig a chance to dry out for Friday.

The first person down the cave should check for any subsidence/undermining.

Rich

WHFS 29<sup>th</sup> July Clive, Dave, Gonzo

Spoil cleared from last Wednesday's efforts, then drilled and popped to give more headroom.

Then off to the Poacher's to meet up with Matt, Mandy and Tav heading home from an evening's caving in the Cheddar area

Gonzo

Hobnail 31<sup>st</sup> July Rich, Simon, Spike and Clive

After the heavy rains of the past week and due to the stream being diverted into Hobnail, the whole cave had had a good wash - not a speck of mud to be seen anywhere, the rock seemingly brand new and fresh!

For a change the outward draught had returned to a certain extent at the entrance and was noticeable in the crawl leading to White Pot, sorry Cream Pot, sorry Aragonite Pot! (final name tbc soon - promise!)

Attention this week was focussed on digging out the base of Black Pot in order to gain access to the well-decorated rift running off it. Last week at least it had the sound of a stream running somewhere beyond but that had disappeared today!

The floor of the pot was dug to a depth of around 18 inches, through muddy sand and rocks, revealing an undercut on the right hand side of the stal-blocked rift. This, if it continues down, should allow access to the floor of the rift beyond and hopefully we can gain access without resorting to bang. The spoil was secreted in the base of the narrow rift leading to White Pot, sorry Cream - oh you know where I mean! - and the larger rocks similarly hidden between and behind boulders in the Lower Coal Cellar.

Another session next week should be decisive re this route off Black Pot.

Clive

Hobnail Hole, Thurs 6th August

Simon, Richard, Clive, Spike & Dave.

Digging continued in the bottom of Black Pot with the spoil being deposited in a few of the available voids above. A broken bucket (£1 a bucket was too good to be true) called a halt to the proceedings so an early lunch was forced upon the digging team. After lunch, with fresh buckets the floor of Black Pot was lowered enough to allow access into the rift. Dave was summoned down from spoil stashing duties to enter the rift and investigate what lies beyond the corner approx 2m on.

The tight 90 deg corner to the right negotiated on one's side leads immediately to an enlargement of the rift to about 1m wide with standing room, but then closes straight back down to crawling dimensions. Approx 3m from the corner, the rift passage ends at a window 2m up in the corner of a triangular shaped chamber. A very cherty climb down to the floor consisting of stream silts and shingle. Each of the three walls are 3 - 4m in length with a roof slopping down from the window. Description from the window - The opposite wall is under cut but filled with stream silts and indications of a small steam that flows to the left corner. The right corner closes up but an impenetrable rift in line with the opposite wall dripping water can be seen ascending. In the centre of the opposite wall the same rift is a little more spacious at the bottom, quickly narrows and closes up after 3-4m.

We had hoped that this might gain us easy access to the previously reported chamber below The Dairy, but unfortunately it doesn't, and there are no reasonable digging options either.

So it's back to The Dairy for a further assessment with more of the team descending below The Dairy and looking at options as to how we gain access to the large chamber below without disturbing the larger boulders. A couple of sessions popping a large slab and clearing the floor should give us access straight down, but these sessions will wait until after some further grouting and entrance gate works are completed before the wetter weather sets in. Whilst there we cleared a second route/option to climb back up into The Dairy.

Spike had a play with his new disto and produced a line survey on his mobile phone, which gave us some useful information regarding the relationship between the triangular shaped chamber, The Dairy, surface features and TLS entrance.

Dave.

Bradshaws Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August Went digging with Paul and after our success with Bradshaw's we looked at another small cliff face potential entrance from where we had earlier removed a large flat boulder and I drilled, P&F'd to take off a small roof obstruction preventing entry. After we removed several rocks and some skips of dry mud, a slope appeared downwards. This, to our surprise, entered Bradshaw's Cave through the boulder choke at the end of the Long Straight and at near the top of the muddy slope down to the aven. This means there is now a through trip of around 50m and the survey needs correcting as the second entrance actually comes out further along the same cliff face as the entrance, rather than going further through the rock towards Pine Root or Severn Springs as we initially thought! Wish I had taken my compass on the earlier trips.

The second entrance now dug open is the MCRA-Q2 hole noted earlier and is a second entrance to Bradshaw's Cave.

Regards Andy

WHFS 12<sup>th</sup> Aug Mark, Dave, Tav, Clive and Mud(!)

For those not in the know 'Mud' is really Alan - a quarryman from Callow Rocks and retained fireman from Shepton who was seconded by Duncan to help us out.

Mark and Tav had sessions clearing and chiselling at the sharp end - producing a satisfying amount of boulderage as well as the smaller stuff.

Mud turned out to be very handy with the rope and emptying duties and helped ferry drill kit underground etc. He may well return .....

Good progress - a further five holes drilled and fired before leaving for the pub where a spirited discussion on the role of the fire service alongside the MCR ensued (after Mud had left!)

Clive

Hobnail SUNDAY 16 AUGUST

Rich W, Clive N

RW arrived early to find about a dozen Friesian heifers milling about in the depression. Having broken through from the field to the north, they had been as far as the gully in front of the adit, but thankfully seemed to have steered clear of the shiny new Hobnail gate. I drove up to Little Crapnell Farm and was able to get a message through to Sean Cowlin, who turned up at Thrupe quite quickly with two helpers in tow. The cows were driven north, and CN later installed some temporary rope "fencing" to protect the depression.

The working session comprised finishing the west wall of the entrance shaft and concreting in the gate hinge (as modified by DK). Flies and midges were biting well but a proper job was done.

The preferred digging day for this week is Thursday 20/8. Spike and Simon - is this OK for you?

Rich

Hobnail 20 Aug Rich, Simon, Emma and Clive

Today's task was principally to further check out the small chamber below the 'Aragonite Slot' with a view to removing/stabilising the jammed boulders there which guarded the drop into the darkness below (from where the rushing stream sound was coming).

I happily found that I could indeed drop through the slot and negotiate the right angled bend at its base to emerge in the little chamber (I am a bit tall to bend in too many directions at once). The rock there is dramatically fretted and water-worn and at its lowest point ends in a rift about a foot wide with a jammed chockstone apparently supporting a pile of boulders behind.

It had been felt that a plaster charge on the chockstone jammed across the pot would be needed as drilling might destabilise the jammed boulders. This was applied and fired from the Coal Cellar. Retreating to the surface for lunch we were quickly overtaken by the escaping fumes!

The bang had done the trick and the chockstone had been safely removed, the boulders immediately behind had held firm and proved to be well jammed.

The view down was now open and we could see there was a free-hang pitch of around 10ft down to a very steeply angled boulder floor (one boulder forming part of the floor must be around 10ft long) in a roomy chamber around 30ft long by 10ft wide. In the middle there appears to be a very large black cobble which, if it does prove to be so, will lend its name to the chamber - 'King Cobble Hall'!

The chamber appears to run back under and to the right of the entry point and down dip to where the sound of the stream appears to be coming from. Apparently no mean stream this either - it is a loud rushing torrent either in an open passage or, worryingly, perhaps running under and between boulders. Either way it is unconnected to the surface stream and our theory is that it is part of the upper reaches of the Marble Streamway in Thrupe Lane.

Our next task is to fit a large wood chock under an apparently gravity-defying boulder, Plug 'n Feather a few inches off the lip of the rift to ease access and rig a natural belay for the ladder. Descent will wait until Dave King is back from Yorkshire as will any further exploration.

I've attached a couple of pictures of 'The Dairy' - the apparently aragonite walled rift (with Simon) and the 'Aragonite Slot' (with Spike). These pictures are not for distribution or publication please.

By the way, Emma Gisbourne joins us now on [Thrupeswallet@googlegroups.com](mailto:Thrupeswallet@googlegroups.com)

Clive

WHFS 26<sup>th</sup> Aug Mark, 'Mud' and Clive

Big stream at the parking area and a reasonable one sinking at the Lower Sink.

Cleared, drilled and popped. The power chisel gave up the ghost as Mud was using it and will have to go for repair :-)

On the way out of the wood the Windsor Hill Wood gate came off its 'new' hinges - I offered to Toby hat we would fit 'proper' hinges for him next time - suitably grateful.

Clive

Fri 28th Aug 2015.

Hobnail Clive,Emma,Rich,Simon.

A day of consolidation prior to next week's push.We all descended to the Dairy where conditions were damper than we have seen since the breakthrough.The draught in the entrance series was also more noticeable.Clive and Rich then slid through to the Landing where attention was given to supporting the slightly worrying boulder on the left.This done Clive drilled the lip and plug and feathered to give us a bit more space at the pitch head.The rock once again proved very resistant and we retired for lunch and a chisel to finish the job.Suitably refreshed Clive and Emma returned to remove the remaining rock,and to take some photos.Much as I would love to have accompanied them,I felt that my presence was more helpful labouring for Rich as he competed the shaft walling.It was also pleasantly dry and warm on the surface! It's no exaggeration to say that the underground waters in the darkness below sounded more like a small river than a stream,but doubtless this is due in part to the noise being amplified by the voids around it.Next week,all going well,we can stop speculating and see what really lies before us.

Simon.

WHFS 2 Sept Mark, Dave (back from his Northern sojourn), Spike (back from a shorter Northern sojourn), Mud and Clive.

Cleared, drilled and popped as usual.....there is a little more development on the left hand side now including a new joint heading off at 45degrees to our passage. We are now going to concentrate our efforts following that.....

We had intended replacing the hinges on the Windsor Hill Woods gate as promised to Toby but his chaps had got there first using an identical set of hinges to the ones we had bought! We left ours at their door as a goodwill gesture.

More next week....!

Clive

Hobnail Hole Fri 4th Sept

Rich, Simon, Clive, Dave and later joined by Spike.

To ensure we were fuelled up for the break through trip we decided on an early lunch first, which would perhaps also give Spike time to arrive.

Lunch over, we couldn't put it off any longer, so we headed on down to Dairy Pot, Rich armed with hammer, Clive with camera, Simon with ladder and Dave with lifeline and rigging kit etc. It was noted that the whole cave had been flushed through and a lot of mud/digging spoil washed away after the previously reported high stream levels entering Hobnail. The ladder was rigged off a rope sling and lifeline from a tape sling around a natural flake. Simon was first to descend the 3m pitch with instructions to be aware of potential boulder movement as he landed on the boulder slope below. Rich, Clive and Dave followed on down, a little later joined by Spike.

The roof and the hole through which we entered consists of very large boulders which appear to be securely wedged in place, although they are best not stared at for too long lest they should become disturbed by the attention. In addition to the boulder slope consisting of limestone, there are some fine examples of marbleized limestone, aragonite and blackened cobbles, hence the name King Cobble Hall, after the large cobble that had previously been viewed from above. The sound of the stream cascading through the boulders below indicated that it was not too far away and it didn't take long to find a couple of small windows through the boulders where some of the stream flow could be viewed, but what could be seen didn't seem to account for the volume of sound the stream was creating. The flow followed the down slope direction of the boulders towards the lowest point in King Cobble Hall. Dimensions, direction of slope etc to follow from Spike provisional survey data.

With care we started to dig out some of the boulders at the lowest point where it's possible to cut under the wall offering some protection and hence keeping the disturbance of the boulders to minimum. A number of photographs taken, with models for scale, were taken.

On exiting, Spike added a few more survey legs to include Colditz, whilst Dave went down Black Pot and into Triangle Chamber to find that a some digging spoil had been washed through to the chamber.

Dave.



Friday 4<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015 Took Paul to see New Hole opportunity and we spent 2 hours clearing rocks and soil from the entrance area and Paul tackled the other potential way in through the calcited rocks. Length now 2m as we managed to open a body sized hole over the obvious but narrow rift/fault line. The rift has a good stable wall on the cliff side and is parallel to the cliff. Both holes draft with a smoke test but not too sure this is conclusive. The flowstone in the little grotto is very pretty.

Weds 16<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015 Digging again at New Hole, Asham Wood with Paul S. Tried to drill, plug n feather the large boulder but failed miserably as it was a calcited conglomerate block so soft in some bits but hard in others. Broke of some small bits and then pushed it out the way into the grotto. I guess it will need removing sometime, perhaps break up able with a larger lump hammer? We cleared a bit more around the top of the rift but failed to move either the keystone or the large block. Not really sure if there is an obvious way on yet.

We then looked along the cliff westward but found no obvious leads. We cycled down to Bradshaw's to see what the rave damage was; very little mess really and no damage. It had been raining heavily all day on Mendip and elsewhere and Whatley Brook was running very high. So we checked out Bradshaw's Cave going in through the second entrance to see if there was much water; very drippy but trench on muddy slope a few metres in was dry, as was the sumpy bit just before the aven. A quick look at Yogi Pot, no rave damage, no water at the bottom of the entrance pot either. Finally, checked Severn Springs alongside Whatley Brook and this had a significant flow, flowing inwards again.

Andy W

Hobnail Hole

Fri 4th Sept

Clive, Dave, Matt, Mandy

Mandy and I found ourselves available last weekend to join a pleasant afternoon digging session at Hobnail. Wow, this place has certainly been greatly extended since my previous visit (last summer?), and it's astounding to see the amount of excellent stabilising work done by the regular team, taming the previously frightening descent into the depths.

Had a good look around before joining Clive and Dave at the base of King Cobble Hall, where they were busy worrying the large boulders above the escape route of the stream with crowbar, net and rope. After a fairly protracted struggle we succeeded in moving one particularly obstructive boulder aside, which permitted Matt access to begin excavation of the undercut beneath the solid wall noted in the previous report. This very quickly offered a (relatively) safe descent into an open horizontal continuation beneath the bedrock of around 4m length and easy crawling size, taking the small streamway neatly to the head of a short vertical rift in the floor into which it falls (and continues out of view). Dave's expert assessment was that the new extension was "eminently diggable", finding the floor and boulders at the head of the rift being fractured and hopefully mobile.

Matt.

WHFS Wed 16th Sept

Gonzo, Mud & Dave.

Before arriving at WHFS, some new containers suitable for digging skips and a couple of lengths of conveyor belt (will come in useful somewhere) were collected from Mud.

The small crack team braved the potential rain, which from an underground view point didn't amount to much.

Spoil cleared from the previous bang, inc a lot of the loose debris from the right hand side.

The horizontal bedding plane that goes off to the left just up from the digging face can now be seen more clearly continuing on the right.

Back to the Poachers where Gonzo & Dave joined Clive who had reserved our usual table.

Dave.

WHFS 23 Sept Clive, Gonzo, Mud, Spike

Clearing the debris from Monday's pop and firing another 5 shotholes.

Not without incident, as a 'grapefruit-sized' rock fell out of the skip halfway up the shaft, flew past Mud and ricocheted down the rift before smashing into the digging skip with which Gonzo, inevitably in the line of fire, was shielding his testicles, deeming them more worthy of protection (and better looking!) than his face.

Then off to the PP to join Al, Matt, Mandy and Dave.

Mark Lumley

WHFS Oct 1<sup>st</sup> Mark, Mud, Spike, Dave, Matt & Mandy and Clive

Last weeks bang had done the trick and Mud spent a fruitful evening enlarging the new route off to the left.

Five more holes drilled and popped before retiring to the Poachers (free chips this time!)

Clive

Hobnail Sun 4th oct 2015.

Duncan/Emma/Matt & Mandy/Rich/Simon.

The first Sunday digging for some time. After enjoying a leisurely lunch and leaving Richard to continue grouting the workings, we descended to King cobble hall to inspect the way forward. The area was noticeably drier than previously after the recent summery weather, although the stream was flowing freely at the digging face. The area feels quite secure under the solid roof, although everything below it is loose. As you excavate, the stream takes the line of least resistance. Initially it was flowing to the left under the slab Clive referred to, but as the floor collapsed it sank there. One large rock was brought up in the net and smaller ones passed up and stacked away. However the point of greatest interest was the continuation of the undercut (on the right as you look down) This has undoubtedly carried the water in the past as evidenced by the large number of cobbles found there. Once cleared out and the floor lowered it should be a reasonable size and prove to be the key to the way on. A small bang might be useful in making spoil removal easier, but only if it is felt safe to do so.

Simon.

Further to my report yesterday, a study of the survey is of interest if we assume that we are now working at a depth of near enough 100ft. A likely destination for the water-the water chamber- requires a fall of a further 100ft to reach that level. The only development at our depth is bypass passage although this doesn't carry a stream until an inlet above Showebath Aven, and is still some way south of our location. All to play for.

Simon.

WHFS 7<sup>th</sup> Oct Mud, Gonzo, Dylan, Dave, Spike

Spike and Dave arrived a bit later to find Gonzo and Mud lazing about on the surface, throwing sticks for Dylan. They claimed to only have been there for five minutes having first relocated some of the larger lumps of bang debris to the other side of the passage.

Spike headed face-wards and began clearing a sizeable pile of spoil, including some reasonable building blocks to eventually reveal the bedding plane, both downhill and onwards in the current direction of travel.

After some persuasion, a large chunk of roof agreed to relocate itself and, along with some sizeable slabs from within the bedding plane, was hauled to the surface sans-bucket.

This has left a nice face to attack, which has a clear 4-5" of bedding plane to drop into, although the roof will also require some attention to increase the height.

The infill in the bedding plane is a coarse, gritty mud, not dissimilar to the stream bed, containing a multitude of nuts, wigs and leaves. It also appears to be getting taller - time will tell...

Spike

*Hobnail Sun 11th Oct 2015*

*Rich/Simon.*

A gentle Seniors Sunday. After shuffling over to the entrance we lowered ourselves carefully into the cave. Leaving Rich to continue grouting in the coal cellar I negotiated the climbs to Black pot. There was surprisingly little drip there or in the Dairy and we kept pleasantly dry. My object was to examine triangle chamber and I was quite impressed by its size. Maybe it was due to my artificial hips and the lack of a stairlift, but I decided that whereas I could have jumped down, the climb back would be tricky. However Dave seems to have had no such problem. (see report 10 Aug) Anyway I shall return with a ladder to attempt the terrible descent to the chamber floor. I think that another careful examination might be worthwhile. Without doubt a lot of water has passed this way and it is well within good solid limestone. Our missions completed we staggered out into the autumn sunshine and after a spot of tea, tottered homrwards for supper at the care home. Duncan paid us a brief visit during the afternoon- what a pleasant young man!

Simon.

WHFS Dr Smasher and I went over to WHFS on Monday evening to catch up on the drilling and popping. Have to say it looks a bit more interesting than previously...

Whilst underground we were hailed by someone on the surface asking if it was big enough for them to come down (permission refused!). Said they were walkers so goes to show people can still be about in the woods at around 8.30 at night....

Its going to be knackered if theres only Spike, Mud and me on Wed evening - Voyseys are you around?? Clive

WHFS Oct 14<sup>th</sup> Spike mud Mandy Matt and Clive

Monday's bang had done a really good job and there was a very large pile of big boulders to deal with - something which Spike and Mud set to with alacrity.

The face is now a full body's length away from the main passage. 5 full holes and 3 short ones were fired by the end of the night.

Earlier in the evening I was able to talk to Mike Oram - the farmer who owns the buildings near our car parking area. I wanted to talk to him about the manhole with the stream below which Sean Wolf had mentioned to me.

Mike confirmed the story and told me where to find the manhole. Its in a barn rather than the farmyard. He also told me about an open hole covered by a removable boulder which is close by.

He felt there was probably nothing to see in either hole except for flowing water in one and dark space in the other - I told him that was exactly what we were interested in

He's quite happy for us to go and take a look - although we do need a crowbar to move the manhole cover. We plan to have a go at this earlier next Wednesday during daylight.

Clive

Bradshaw's 16 Oct Paul and Brian Marchbank (MNRC)

We walked (we usually cycle) to entrance no1 to find our furry friends have moved back in and I made a hasty exit trying to avoid the poo and hundreds of BIG flies. Luckily entrance no 2 is not affected and we made our way past the numerous small animal bones to the other side of Sids Squeeze.

Then back down the Long Straight to the end to assess the boulder ruckle. There are two large hanging death boulders that will require gentle persuasion and a third one blocking the way on. A small inlet probably coming from the cliff face enters on the right.

We removed some of the smaller rocks and made our exit again using entrance no 2.

A visit to the other sites of interest in the quarry.

Paul (Sid)

WHFS etc. 21 Oct

Clive, Gonzo, Mud, Spike

An early start by Clive and Gonzo to investigate the manhole cover reported to be in one of the barns by the parking area.

This was eventually found beneath a thick layer of antiquated cowsh in the barn furthest to the right.

With open rifts reported to have been concreted over when the farmyard was constructed it appears that an attempt has been made to divert a substantial flow of water down a natural sink, close to or beneath the barn, presumably to reduce the main flow down valley of the nearby stream. To paraphrase an antiquated and wizened old ATLAS sage who noted this site some years ago this is 'not without interest' and we look forward to locating the covered hole that was reported to be nearby.

Then off to WHFS where last week's pop had done a good job, enabling a body length of horizontal progress into a section of the bedding with, as expected, slightly larger development jammed with numerous waterworn slabs and rocks trending up parallel to the dig towards Pol Pot.

On digging a small hole in the silt and rock in the bedding on the right a more encouraging reverberation was noted and the occasional 'lucky' rock was heard to rattle away for several seconds down a more steeply inclined section before clunking resonantly into what we guessed to be a calcite floor.

Gonzo

WHFS 28<sup>th</sup> Oct Mark, Dave, Darryl, Matt & Mandy, Clive

A short session of power-chiselling opened up the 'way-on' a bit more so that Mark could try for a picture. Darryl cleared the remainder of last weeks debris pile plus this weeks efforts before a 7 hole drilling session and popping.

The way ahead seems to be getting reasonably higher around 3 metres in and the passage sounds suitably hollow. Stones rolled down the passage do so for a couple of seconds before a definite 'clonk' having fallen somewhere.

Things are looking up a bit at last (or down!)

Clive

Hobnail SUNDAY 1 NOV 2015

Simon M-K (with a slightly dodgy car), Clive N and Rich W

Beautiful autumn afternoon and very dry underground. The rocky rock at the bottom of the entrance shaft was plug and feathered by CN, enabling RW to stabilise the roots ready for grouting. SM-K visited Triangle Chamber using a ladder, but concluded that it was a much longer term dig site than King Cobble Hall. It would be good to have a determined digging session in the latter before the serious rains come.

Can DK (and any other diggers) please indicate availability for mid-week digging over the next week or two.

Rich

WHFS 4<sup>th</sup> Nov Mark, Spike, Mud, Dave, Duncan and Clive

A dramatic pile of rock from last weeks bang was awaiting us on arrival.....Spike spent most of the evening clearing and chipping away at the face whilst Clive cleared the rock pile - Mud on 'corner' duty with Dave and Duncan on hauling and Mark sculpting the advancing spoil heap.

The view down the bedding plane is much clearer now - you can see for around 20ft but the height doesn't appear to be more than 6-8inches. Rocks rolled down though clatter and echo away for (we estimate) around 10 seconds before ending in a distant 'clunk'.

The plan now is to invest in a 1m drill bit to improve and speed up the blast and clear process.

Work continues.....!

Back at the pub - Spike had been doing his homework and with the help of an S & D railway book and maps from the mid 19thC was able to pinpoint where our dig, and the end of the culvert, was in relation to the old quarry workings. We all agreed this was of great interest but didn't take us much further forward!

Clive

Hobnail THURS 5 NOVEMBER

Simon M-K, Rich W, Emma G, Clive N, Dave K

AM - RW finished off the grouting at the bottom of the entrance shaft, while SM-K improved the surface dam to stop a small amount of water sinking in the cliff face.

PM - Full team went down to King Cobble Hall, and work proceeded pulling rocks and cobbles from the choke at the end of the stream passage. There are small voids visible to the right and below but the former area has an ascending cliff of mud and stream debris and is probably best avoided. The stream itself does not back up although an alcove on the left contains some foam.

As we left, the heavy rain on the surface was making itself felt underground - all the drips and trickles were increasing. The Dairy polythene bag shelter was dismantled and brought out. The cave draught was so strong that when the bag was held over the entrance it instantly inflated to its full 3' height!

On the next trip, it will be necessary to break up one large slab in the stream passage which is rocking and obstructing the passage of spoil. Hopefully it will be a plug and feathers job to avoid upsetting the King Cobble roof with a loud noise.

Rich

Hobnail Thu 12th Nov 2015

Clive/Dave/Rich/Simon.

A typically blustery autumn day. This marked the start of the campaign to break out of the bottom of King cobble hall. We descended after lunch (Rich having earlier continued with the grouting) Once assembled below, Clive plug and feathered the awkward boulder and as a result we were able to remove by boulder net some large rocks from the face. This improved the working area from which to push forward. It was difficult to see which direction the sizeable stream was taking as it insisted on changing its mind every few minutes! The afternoon was rounded off with 2 charges laid by Clive on a slab blocking our path. This was fired from the Dairy, hopefully with no collateral damage. We were paid a visit in the morning by our new neighbour, (Mr Wyatt) who has purchased the Parfitt outbuildings and some land down the road. He seems a nice guy and comes from Hallatrow.

Simon.

WHFS 18<sup>th</sup> Nov An early start by Gonzo and Spike, later joined by Smasher and Tav.

An hour was spent clearing the substantial collateral damage above the dig face - a moraine of gravel, roof slabs and splintered wood.

More time was then spent by Gonzo clearing the rocks ahead, loosened by the blast, eventually revealing a window into a slightly more spacious continuation of the bedding below and including a gour and a few small formations, one of which reminded Smasher of a larger version of his manhood (the passage in that section is only about 5 inches high!).

Rather than forcing our way straight down as originally planned this wider section of the bedding heads down at an angle and will be a much easier way to access the depths below.

Another hour was spent with Spike at the face clearing large slabs and gravel from the aftermath of Clive's 5m of holes.

Then off to the Duke of Sausage for Carnival-avoiding refreshments.

With more spoil still to be cleared a visit from Dr. Nobel will not be required until next Wednesday.

Gonzo

Hobnail 21<sup>st</sup> Nov Simon, Rich, Dave, Tony L, Duncan, Matt & Mandy, Clive

After much clearing of the accumulated leaves and debris from the adit entrance half the team headed to King Cobble Hall leaving Matt & Mandy & Dave to concentrate on Triangle Chamber (no doubt they will report in...)

Last weeks bang had done its job and the large block in the floor plus a lot of the solid 'rib' in the floor, at the point where the stream was sinking, had gone.

Much time was spent removing, rocks, cobbles and gravel from the stream bed whilst the stream kept trying to block everything up. After a while a deepish pool had been produced, the previous sinking points for the stream dead ahead seem to be blocked up and the water had started to flow to the right under the wall into the very loose aven area.

Duncan persuaded a large rock in the floor to stop pretending to be a plug and as it came out the whole stream promptly disappeared into the gap. This enabled a lot more 'floor' to be removed.

Clive carried on with this at which point the whole stream decided it preferred to run directly under the right hand wall (under the loose aven) into some largish gaps.

In between slumps of sand, gravel and mud from the aven further gaps between rocks in the floor were opened.

We now need to decide our next step because if we go any deeper at this point there is the obvious danger of serious slumping.

Three options spring to mind. 1 - to use the 'back' wall and left and right sides of the rift as a secure place to build and brace a shaft to enable us to continue down or 2. to 'step' the approach along the rift down towards the dig in the short term and 3. to sink a shaft nearer the start of the rift nearer the base of King Cobble Hall. Some serious head-scratching is called for!

The next session looks like next Saturday.....

Clive

WHFS 25<sup>th</sup> Nov Mark, Spike, Mud, Duncan, Matt & Mandy, Tav and Clive

Half of the evening was spent finishing the clearing from the bang two weeks ago. Several very large rocks had holes drilled in them by Duncan and fitted with eyebolts by Dave. This enabled them to be hauled out intact to the surface - a couple of them were monumental in size!

Seeing the dig face after my missing a week was quite something - it has now advanced to around 10ft from the base of our original bedding plane 'shaft'. The exposed open bedding immediately ahead (horizontally) is around 6inches in height. Immediately down dip though it must be 8-10 inches high for around a couple of metres before appearing to rise upto to a couple of feet in height at around 4m distance. At this point there is an obvious 6inch high stalagmite right in the middle!

The air appears fresh although I couldn't detect the slight draught that others had reported. No bang fumes reached the surface however.....

The latter portion of the evening was spent drilling and firing 3 x 1m holes plus a 0.4m hole in the way ahead and the approach.

Looking good!

Clive

Hobnail Hole, sat 21<sup>st</sup> Nov

Triangle chamber.

Matt, Mandy & Dave.

Since there were enough diggers in King Cobble Hall, three disappeared to have a look at Triangle Chamber.

Digging started in the gravel floor in the down stream left hand corner. The floor was lowered, but with just a crowbar, only a flat out space to work in was created. An inch or so below the gravel is fine silty mud and below that mud/clay. The small amount of water trickling through soon turned the mud to slurry, so a small trench was dug to push the slurry back into the right hand corner of the chamber. About 2m in the walls were closing in with a few rocks blocking what space was left. A few of these were pulled out, but the open space was still too small to see ahead. Further progress will require the floor to be lowered, which will probably expose a wider space between the two walls.

The gravel floor is probably a recent addition to the chamber as a result of digging out Black Pot and therefore allowing the stream to wash the gravel in. Whilst digging, a piece of timber approx 25mm x 60mm x 300mm long with several nails in the narrow face (possibly a piece of pallet wood) came out with the spoil.

Dave.



Hobnail SAT 29 NOV

Simon M-K, Rich W, Dave K, Tony L, Duncan P and Chris Jewell

Moderate stream and drips. All to King Cobble Hall except for DK who continued his investigation of the left-hand corner of Triangle Chamber.

There was a general clearing of the dig face and a probe into the right-hand side. Initially there is a solid wall at the back of the mud and cobble fill but this ends at the loose 3m aven. A possible air space to the right of the rock flake was investigated but it proved to be illusory. Significantly, water diverted into the right-hand side soon came back into the main passage. We concluded that the aven area is no more than an inlet, possibly connecting with the cleft halfway along the right-hand side of Triangle Chamber.

The main way on would seem to be in the floor of the main passage. The closing in of the walls straight ahead suggests that the passage has dived down steeply at this point but has been blocked by large slabs and stream infill. The approach passage is probably above a rift potentially running back to King Cobble Hall itself. It makes sense, however, to concentrate on the present end of the passage but seek depth. A little of Dr Nobel may be required but we can also stack large rocks up in the aven void.

Probable Saturday digging again next week.

Rich

Hobnail Hole - Triangle Chamber - Sat 28th Nov

Dave K.

The crawl was wetter than the previous week with a little more water dripping from the roof.

With the aid of a shovel, the floor in the flat out crawl was lowered further to gain better access to the end of the crawl. A few more smaller rocks and one large rock/flake approx 600mm x 300mm x 150mm were removed. It was then possible to allow some of the water to trickle away although very slowly due to its muddy/gloopy viscosity. The view beyond the end is still obscured by more rocks that can be jiggled with a crowbar and therefore are not too big to be removed once better access gained by digging more of the floor out at the far end.

There were more bits of washed in rubbish buried amongst the clay and silts in the floor, inc the bottom of a glass jar/bottle, another very short piece of timber, pieces of white moulded plastic and some bailer twine.

Dave.

Asham Wood Andy Watson and Paul Stillman 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> work continues full report to follow.

WHFS 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec Mark, Dave, Mud, Spike, Duncan and Clive

A 6pm start for half the team in order to clear the debris from last week.

High water this week in the valley with a part of the stream sinking in the dig. Time to break out the 'bungs' again - ages since we had to use them last.

A trickle of water was flowing down the blasted bedding plane on arrival which made for a damp evening.

There was need for three of us at the bottom - Mark clearing last weeks bang and passing it back via Clive to Mud who stacked it ready for the rest of the team to arrive.

Despite some highly unstable and well cracked slabs teetering at the top of the bedding plane above the dig, Mark soon got down a few feet into a slightly higher section of the on-going bedding where he could look further down to where a few more stals and a short curtain could be seen.

The high spot of the evening though was the sound of the stream - audible as a loud but muffled roar. This was constant and unaffected by our 'bunging-up' the dam.

Whilst the rock pile was heading to the surface Clive enjoyed some close-quarter rock wrangling in the confines of the bedding plane, removing the teetering shattered slabs mentioned above. The conveyor belt was jammed across the way on in case the rock should become jammed-up there. Some time was spent wrestling the rocks clear - no easy task in the confines of the bedding plane when everything, including oneself, wants to slides off downhill at an angle of around 40degrees! During this exercise a large lump of roof came down, luckily just behind me and just brushing my back. This was too large to remove and so was banged before the end of play. The intention had been to bang two more long holes in the roof but that had to be postponed until next week.

Still looking (and sounding!) very good!

Clive

Hobnail Rich, Simon, Dave, Spike and Clive

On arrival the stream was found to be flowing into Hobnail and it was feared a very wet trip would ensue. Having diverted the stream though the cave turned out to be just as dry as usual - weird!

Before descending, the usual chore of clearing debris from the adit gate had to be done - it was choked up tight to the roof with sticks and leaves following the recent rains.

Once back at the dig below King Cobble Hall we spent our time persuading the stream to find new routes down into the unknown. By the end of play the floor had been dropped a few more inches and large boulders had found a new home blocking off the base of the adjacent, choss-filled, aven.

A session with a short bar found a water-worn possible widening on the left of the rift which I think would repay further probing with the mega-bar (will take it next time as I think it will just fit through the Slot). Five short holes were drilled and banged, before leaving, in the back wall of the dig where at the moment the stream disappears merrily to the right then immediately to the left out of sight.

Next potential session - Friday.

Clive

Hobnail Hole - Triangle Chamber

Hobnail Dave & Spike once not required in King Cobble Hall.

The spoil heap from the previous digging session had partly been clean washed, with the smaller finer clay and gritty silts being washed away. This had refilled the trench that had been dug with the grittier components from the spoil heap, the finer mud silts probably having been washed out of the chamber completely. It didn't take long to regain the trench to the end of the dig since it was loose grit that was easily dragged back with a garden hoe. At the end another large rock was dropped from the continuation ahead and pulled out before the message came through that a loud noise was about to be generated in King Cobble Hall dig. It was suggested that a tarp might be useful over the spoil heap to reduce the amount of spoil likely to get washed back into the dig.

Dave.

WHFS 9<sup>th</sup> Dec Mark, Mud, Spike, Tav, Duncan and Clive

The surface stream had reduced in volume from last weeks high and the noise underground reduced considerably as a result. A small stream had though appeared 2/3rds of the way down the upper slope flowing to the base of the slope.

Mark cleared last weeks banged boulder and associated debris whilst the rest of the team set-to clearing the rest of the accumulated rock pile at the base of the upper slope (including a few mega boulders moved in Duncan's boulder net).

Clive fitted a bolt and angle bracket, courtesy of Dave, in the wall at the head of the lower slope. This will be good for a handline and pulley but it will need a krab attaching.

Drilling of three holes in the roof didn't go to well as the 1m drill snapped in have almost immediately (something I have seen a few times before in Templeton with these cheap Titan drill bits. The alternative is massively expensive so its probably worth persevering with them - we got 8 x 1m hoes out of it - and they are easy to get at Screwfix)

The way on is still clear but will need more work.....

Clive

Hobnail FRIDAY 11 DEC 2015

Simon M-K, Rich W, Clive N & Dave K

Reasonably dry conditions underground. The "big bar" was taken down to the face and used to good effect by CN and DK to break up the bang shattered rock. Attempts to encourage the stream to disappear into the floor proved unsuccessful, and digging concentrated on mining a route straight ahead. The water is following a very narrow slot in marble-like metamorphic rock, and we shall have to enlarge it to CN size.

There may well be a choked and sealed rift below us, but until we pass beyond the potential run-in zone from the aven on the right, we are best off keeping up in solid roof area.

The session ended with a two shothole charge.

Rich

WHFS Tues 15th Dec.

Gonzo, Mud, Clive Mandy, Matt, Spike, Duncan, Tav, & Dave.

Digging evening was brought forward a day due to the ATLAS Xmas dinner on the Wed evening.

An earlier start at 6pm to clear the previous bang debris from the bedding plane.

Unfortunately the conveyor belt matting had done little to prevent the spoil spreading itself down the slope. Much of the spoil was cleared, first back to the previous corner, before being hauled to the surface as the team numbers increased. A few shattered rocks removed from the roof to increase the height of the bedding plane. The stream could still be heard roaring down below.

Time for Spike to venture down into the newly opened section of bedding plane. About 3-4 metres down a small brown cracked stal column (75mm dia and about 200-300mm high) in the middle of the highest part of the bedding plane blocked the route on down. Gonzo then tried but was also unable to pass the restriction.

Mandy & Matt were then summoned. Mandy slid on down and with a deft kicking of a few rocks to clear the way, managed to squeeze past the column. Just beyond the roof height increased, but soon lowered back to an impassable height further down, with the way on also blocked with some of the rocks that had tumbled down. Matt then joined Mandy and they were able to pass each other half way down the slope. Matt was able to take a closer look at the bottom by turning head first down slope. A few stones could be tossed between the blocking rocks to land beyond with a plop into water in which the ripples could be seen. The stream flow was still out of sight somewhere beyond.

Duncan's turn next, not to get down the slope but to fire his laser down to measure the length of bedding plane to about 12m.

After the rest of the team had taken a look from the top and a listen to the stream, Matt went back down, head first this time with a watch and instructions to listen for Spike and Mandy shouting from the bottom of the old NHASA dig at a predetermined time. Not surprisingly, no voice connection was established.

The roof of the bedding plane will need popping to allow access for the team to progress down the slope. There will be a small amount of brown cracked stal that will suffer as a result, but with the promise of what may lay beyond the cost will be worth it.

Dave.

Asham Wood, Andy Watson 15<sup>th</sup> Dec

Hobnail Dec 18<sup>th</sup> Rich, Simon, Duncan, Naomi, Emma and Clive

After a bad start (flat battery for me) and a relaxed lunch break we all headed for King Cobble Hall to see what had happened after the last bang.

Duncan set to with the mega-bar trying to open up a route in the floor for the stream to take, but to no avail. The floor is now a mass of tightly compacted stream debris etc and the water has no intention of going anywhere except down the cleft at the back of the dig. There

is a rib of solid rock running through the middle of the floor right to the back of the passage, which is not helping either.

Whilst Richard and I were working at the end the large boulder which had been jammed across the passage and which had made a useful step, whilst holding back the teetering rock slope, decided to join its mates at the base of the dig. Damage was limited luckily and it was re-incorporated into the rock slope with its friends.

As some of the party were getting cold they exited early leaving Simon and I to drill and bang at the end.

The previous bang, although comprising only short shotholes, had done a fair job in shaking up the back wall and I was able to remove a reasonable amount of rock before drilling. Three 0.5m holes were drilled and later fired from Black Pot.

At the face the stream is disappearing down a two-inch wide cleft between, on the left, the solid 'metamorphosed' pink and white bedrock and on the right a wall of aragonite. This forms part of the 'chossy' rift we have been previously avoiding and which appears to lie below one side of Triangle Chamber.

My feeling is that the stream may well soon divert down into that rift to the right (the cleft is turning that way already) and therefore it may well open up again soon. In the meantime a fair amount of banging will be needed.....

All best

Clive

Dec 23 WHFS

Clive, Duncan, Gonzo, Mud, Tav

After a brief detour for mulled wine and mince pies by Clive and Gonzo, work resumed on the dig, with an impressively large amount of spoil removed and taken to surface in 2 stages while Clive drilled the top of the second drop by the pulley to make a hauling station suitable for a large carthorse.

After another 'incident' a decision was made to retire Dave's springless krab from skip duties.

Another 1-2 sessions will move things down the bedding to the stal boss.

Photo attached taken pre-clearance showing 'before' and 'after' roof heights and the plank wedged above the boss.

Regards

Mark Lumley

WHFS 30 Dec 2015

Duncan, Gonzo, Mud, Tony Littler.

Cleared, Drilled, Popped, Pubbed

Gonzo







