

# 1977

2<sup>nd</sup> January St Cuthbert's

Jarratt, John Dukes, Andy Sparrow, Rich Baker

An opportunity to see areas previously unvisited, JD an excellent guide.

3<sup>rd</sup> January GB

Jim Smart, John Dukes + 2?

To the great chamber via the Devil's elbow route.

9<sup>th</sup> January Browns Folly Mine

Dave Edwards, Gary (Bazza) Clarke, Nigel Burns

An incredibly enjoyable trip around this superb mine; so many remains intact, most significant the crawl through to the loading bays protects this time capsule.

15<sup>th</sup> January Swildons Hole

Chris Batstone, John Dukes, Gary (Bazza) Clarke

After taking much drink; dammed up Duck II in an attempt to create a sump; almost.

21<sup>st</sup> January Purchased Alastair Simpson's series 1, 80 inch, 1951 Landrover: Deep joy.

22<sup>nd</sup> January Uphill quarry

Alistair Simpson, Ross White, John Widley

Abseiled the cliff face, investigating crevices. AS acted the twat tying the rope to the motor and driving away whilst PC 100 feet up on a figure of eight; stuck in mid air.

30<sup>th</sup> Jan Manor Farm Swallet

Andy Sparrow, John Dukes, John Turner, Jarratt

Assisted the others digging in the bottom of this blind pot, removed a lot of spoil, stream sinking beneath a big boulder; this needs busting.

10<sup>th</sup> February Aran View to Fisherstreet Pot

Solo

A late start: delivered three Oldham's to Martin Droney, for use in rescue incidents. Laddered Fisherstreet then walked up to the Church; chatted to Mrs Linnane for a while, as rain began headed off. Slow trip as the place was scattered with broken glass and tin cans. Got to main junction and found river level almost normal, arrived at Fisherstreet to find a party of six from London, with an agitated leader. They had seen the pot rigged and decided to leave their equipment at the top, but did not noticed the absence of a lifeline; the leader became quite upset voicing his disapproval, repeatedly. Weary of being told the importance of using a lifeline, scampered up and recovered the offending gear, as it disappeared upward screams of "*where's our fucking ladder*" echoed up the pot. Though their leader was very unpleasant, swiftly set up their kit and offered to lifeline the first up, offer accepted; when deployed their lifeline was too short, only some eighty foot long. So set up an Italian hitch belayed around a waist length off a dodgy looking root, only from here could the rope reach the bottom and be tied in a knot. First up was Steve, the leader, who began to complain further about the belay location, even though their rope was too short; quickly packed personal kit, swiftly leaving the leader to lead; later in the bar approached by two of the group, Gordon and Dennis, explaining their leader was upset at the thought of having to climb without a lifeline, hence his

protracted rant. As the evening wore on they enquired of caves safe enough to visit during this wet spell.

11<sup>th</sup> February Poulballynahown

Solo

Christy Byrne led up the track to the entrance, warning of terrible dangers underground. At the bottom of the entrance rift it's a narrow rift and a long awkward crawl, after an age, and squeezes, reached a ladder pitch, guessed it as ninety foot, only have fifty: need return with more ladder; stowed the ladder and lifeline above stream level in the rift.

12<sup>th</sup> February Cregg Lodge Swallet

Solo

Asked the owner, Myles Arkins, for permission, told to come back in the afternoon as he would move his cattle from the field by lunch. Rather than loose time followed the stream in the field opposite; noted several places which could be potential sinks: foliage obscured a clear view. Told to return at 1pm for lunch; enjoyed a very nice hour with Myles. Afterwards, descended CLS about twelve feet down through boulders into a low stream bedding; a lot of water, and little air space, crawled along what was effectively a duck; bitter cold. After some fifteen feet the way became obstructed with boulders, some loose; unable to accurately assess the place: need return in drier conditions.

13<sup>th</sup> February Poulballynahown

Solo

Picked up ladders from Martin Droney, but found no lift, walked. Found the crawling a ballache; the place is not inspiring. Recovered the gear and laddered the pitch; belayed the ladder on a reasonable flake; abseiled, the pitch became, in part, freehanging. Estimated depth a reasonable guess, it's about seventy; almost an entire ladder lay on the floor. Arrived at a sump; an uninviting dive prospect: a solo carry would be a real task.

14<sup>th</sup> February Cregg Lodge Swallet – Poulanian

Solo

Called at the house and had tea with Mrs Arkins, soon joined by Myles, who told PC to visit the cave when cattle weren't in the field; no need to ask each time, and to camp in the field. The stream appeared much higher than previous, actually filling most of the bedding so abandoned the trip. Crossed over the road to Poulanian: the stalactite still an impressive sight; down to the sump, taking a good sized stream. Steady trip out a very wet entrance passage; called to thank Myles who offered to drive PC to O'Connor's. Left gear with Martin Droney and Noel Walsh for next time. Gear = 2 x 25ft ladders, 120ft rope, 1 spreader, 2 x 10ft belay, 1 x 3ft belay, 5 krabs, Ceag and charger, dry grots, overalls and boots; need a spare wetsuit to leave here.

12<sup>th</sup> March Tynings Barrow Swallet

Roger Sabido, Clare Chambers

Set up radio location and removed same following conclusion of event.

13<sup>th</sup> March Tynings Barrow Swallet

Roger Sabido, Clare Chambers and many others

Requested by owner to stabilize the surface collapse; spent a couple of hours sorting it.

19<sup>th</sup> March Pooles Cavern

Invited by Dave Allsop to see his new venture; at the appointed time encountered a host of others at the entrance; after an hour most went back into town for fun and frolics; learned a similar arrangement occurred last week for BSA attendees, and also next week, to allow lads a final chance to enjoy the place; DA is so proud.

8<sup>th</sup> April Bonsal Level Fawr Cwmystwyth

Dave Edwards, Nigel Burns,

The squeeze through the truck was fairly stable, but obvious deterioration occurred since the previous trip. NB taking photos. Climbed down the magnificent timbering installed in Kings Lode; reached flood level at about sixty feet below: difficulties getting back up; back on the surface, after tea, explored the Nant-yr-Onnen valley, which cut up Copa Hill; many adit openings and evidence of hand processing of ore using stone malls.

9<sup>th</sup> April Probert's Level Fawr, Ysbyth Ystwyth

Dave Edwards, Nigel Burns,

A superb level driven to un-water four mines, Glog Fach, Glog Fawr, Logulas and Penygist; hoped for a through trip into the other valley. Got a long way in to a serious collapse, passed beneath several rises, each need a maypole to access the upper levels.

10<sup>th</sup> April Glog Fach & Glog Fawr, Logulas, Ysbyth Ystwyth

Dave Edwards, Nigel Burns,

Found a free climbable shaft fenced off, near an engine shaft, managed to get down around twenty feet to an undercut, likely where it assumes the vertical; back at surface carried on with the walkabout. The area is receiving attention from "developers"; the place has the appearance of being tidied up by dozers.

11<sup>th</sup> April Frongoch Mine

Dave Edwards, Nigel Burns,

Another vast mine site used as a prisoner of war camp for rebels captured during the Irish Easter Rising, 1916; Michael Collins was incarcerated here. Adjacent the main engine house the shaft is blocked with the pump rod protruding almost to the surface.

26<sup>th</sup> April Sally's Rift, (Sally-in-the-Woods), Bathford, Bath

John Widley, Gary (Bazza) Clarke

Evening trip, this time to satisfy Bazza's curiosity, uneventful trip

27<sup>th</sup> April Swan Mine - Browns Folly

Gary (Bazza) Clarke, Dave Edwards, Nigel Burns

A long evening trip to have a good look around: found the loading bays without too much difficulty; pile upon pile of cut stone ready for removal, a lost world, superb.

28<sup>th</sup> April Triple Hole,

Gary (Bazza) Clarke, Dave Edwards,

Evening trip to inspect the collapsed shaft, hoped to dig it out to access the low chamber with miners tallies smoked on the ceiling; the floor of the collapse feels very loose.

30<sup>th</sup> April Gautries Cave

Ken James

Grotty enough trip, the further in the place was flooded, unsure of how long the duck was so abandoned trip for the bar.

1<sup>st</sup> May    Giants Cave

Tony Dulsondo, Ken James

Round trip to clear the head before home journey; surprizing amount of stream flowing.

22<sup>nd</sup> May    Cwmbryno

Nigel Burns, Gary (Bazza) Clarke, Dave Edwards

A very nice place, like so many mines in Wales somewhat forgotten except by David Bick and George Hall. An open cut with shaft, adjacent is a discarded, decaying angle bob. It is possible to access an adit to reach the shaft only some twenty metres below, from here flooded; the immediate area in a state of collapse. Bazza lost his helmet peering over the edge, so disappeared down hill, entered the wet adit to retrieve lost helmet.

23<sup>rd</sup> May    Grogwinion - Llwernog Mining Museum - Penrhiw

Nigel Burns, Gary (Bazza) Clarke, Dave Edwards, Jim Smart

A lot of remains down near the river appear later than the main mine area further up the hill. Several adits open, leading to big stoped out areas. Visited the Llwernog mining museum, which is assembling a superb collection of mining remains; delightful visit.

5<sup>th</sup> June    Sink, East Mendip

Andy Sparrow

AS found this site; an active sink close to another swallet, this one draughting well. Presently some thirty feet long, passing two squeezes to where it becomes tight. An excellent site worked by the Salisbury Caving Club.

17<sup>th</sup> June    Old Ham to New Dunn Mine

Stuart MacManus and many other Pegasus

After a serious afternoon session in the bar went underground memory of trip a total blank. In Bristol dumped at Brunel College to begin sitting math finals at 7pm.

3<sup>rd</sup> July    Charfield – Yate

Jim Smart, Nigel Burns

Trip to locate a basalt vein and the Hoffman brick kiln, both found in excellent condition.

19<sup>th</sup> July    Hollock

Dave Blake, Eric Blake Geoff Bartlett, Bob Stallard

DB rang and offered a trip if prepared to work for it; his pal, GB has contacts via his University with studies at the Hollock, and is invited out there to conduct research. Rang Bishop, who isn't too well, so unable attend. Permission for trips is tightly controlled, appearing mainly by academics conducting research. Either way its an opportunity to visit avoiding normal channels; two days of travel then checked over by the Swiss; who have no humour at all. Excessively long lecture on what not to do; and that GB was solely responsible for our behaviour. Spent the next two days carrying kit in and out; the place is big and in truth soon becomes boring. Not allowed to stray off route. Every so often a couple of Swiss turn up to check on our party. GB remained on site while the others returned to the UK. The place is hellish expensive; drove back through the night, changing drivers, dropped off at Bristol after two long days; not in a hurry to return.

7<sup>th</sup> August    Compton Martin Ochre Mine

Jim Smart, Nigel Burns, Andy Porter

The lower, original, (?), entrance has collapsed years before and is covered with corrugated iron; located below a disused quarry, at the end of the track, on the left.

Follow the track straight up some hundred feet, to a small cliff face, an entrance is at the foot of the cliff among boulders. Many features remain in situ, rails, shoring several tools, air door. Close to habitation, it's likely this place will suffer damage once its unique presence becomes known.

10<sup>th</sup> August    Compton Martin Ochre Mine

John Widley, Peter Moorman, Nigel Burns

Feel the need to record and enjoy this place before the worst happens: NB wants to return ASAP for a longer photo trip with better lighting equipment.

17<sup>th</sup> August    Compton Martin Ochre Mine

Jim Smart, Nigel Burns

Extensive photographic trip recording the place before the inevitable occurs.

27<sup>th</sup> August    Goyden to New Goyden

Eric Thompson, Dave Blake, John 1? John 2? Chris? Eleanor? Jane? Richard? Alan Johnson, Andrew?

Friends of EB's had arranged an exchange trip with members of Red Rose, Northern CC and Happy Wanderers. Split into two groups EB with one PC in the other; though didn't know a soul it's a great way to make friends; had some great fun; SRT not practiced enough, needs improvement: some fine lads, a cracking night.

28<sup>th</sup> August    Manchester Hole to New Goyden

Eric Thompson, Dave Blake, John 2? Chris? Eleanor? Richard?

In the bar it was suggested as the weather was set fair, and the place was rigged, to leave NGP rigged and do a pull through to Manchester. Easier said than done; but after a few minor delays with a jammed rope arrived at NGP, here is where the practise is needed. PC took quite a while, consequently weary at surface; no excuses, need more practise.

7<sup>th</sup> September    Browns Folly Mine

John and Patricia Widley, Nigel Burns

Another photographic trip to record the deteriorating features.

10<sup>th</sup> September    Swan Mine & Browns Folly

Nigel Burns, Jim Smart

After a late start managed to extensively explore both mines to record more remains and artefacts, which need remain in situ; wonderful, often very personal items are becoming targets for vandalism.

18<sup>th</sup> September    Lathkill Head Cave

Mick Durdy, Phil Nuttall, Victor Holland

What appears an entrance to a superb cave becomes one of tortuous crawling along floodable tubes; abandoned the trip as lower area was flooded.

19<sup>th</sup> September    Carlsark Cavern

Solo

Entered via Eyam Shaft, a pleasant wander about the place; mused on Shag's fate.

20<sup>th</sup> September    Gautries Hill Pot  
Solo

Told of possible dig in bottom of this cave; at a loose end so went and had a look: dug for a couple of hours, it does have some potential.

21<sup>st</sup> September    Great Masson – High Loft – Ox – King Mines  
Cheg Chester, Paul Thompson, Bill McGuinness, Stuart MacManus, Al Harrison, Richard Gough, Alan Steans  
A small taste of a vast interconnecting complex, superb

22<sup>nd</sup> September    Gautries Hill Pot  
Solo  
Three hours of digging; some progress.

23<sup>rd</sup> September    Gautries Hill Pot  
Solo  
Gave it another three hours, but as the sun was shining also went for a walk up Winnat's Pass looking at entrances.

24<sup>th</sup> September                                      Lost Mick Nelson

24<sup>th</sup> September    CDG Derbyshire section meeting  
Arrived late; a surprising number in attendance: talk of structured training; it could improve skills over a shorter period. Went for a walk after the meeting; returning heard that Mike Nelson had died in Ilam, bugger.

25<sup>th</sup> September    Ilam Risings, RECOVERY  
Host of divers in attendance  
Arrived with others to offer support and perhaps some sort of assistance; heard Ken Pearce had dived and found Mike Nelson some fifty metres in. Tom Brown had already retrieved the kit. Phil and Bear had engineered a route and later successfully removed MN. Lots of theories voiced in the bar on the state of the line and why it was not belayed through the winding and low bedding: not much good theorizing about it now.

1<sup>st</sup> October    Swildons Hole  
Martin Bishop, Ken James, Pete Eckford  
Long Round Trip, lost on occasion, hurried on from the presence of CO<sub>2</sub>: out to MB's place for a great many pre B.E.C. dinner drinks.

15<sup>th</sup> October    Swildons Hole  
Ken James  
Climbing in the streamway to inspect another possible high level passage got to within ten feet; from here the view remains inconclusive; left kit in for tomorrow.

21<sup>st</sup> October    Swildons Hole  
Ken James  
Returned to the climb; the last bit very slippery; KJ did well to reach the top; yet another dam alcove.

13<sup>th</sup> November Charterhouse

Nigel Burns, John Widley

Near the car park investigated a rumour of masonry and machinery being found. The wrought iron machinery consists of gear wheels and mounting frame set within a cruciform pit, the ends of the pit are formed as radii; estimated dimensions, 16 feet long by eight feet wide. The depth below surface to the main gear spindle is about 12 feet. Some timbering is in situ as is a length of square section iron pipe. Though appearing of lightweight construction it may be a form of winding equipment. A nice, unusual find of mining remains on Mendip.

19<sup>th</sup> November Plynlimon Mountain, Mid Wales

Nigel Burns

Rough weather conditions: heavy rain - gale force winds; snow. Planned to search for mining features, and remains in this lead rich area; in turn visited Geufron Mine; Nant Melin; Nant Ricket; Haffod Feddgar; Nantiago. Only Nantiago Mine is free of dense forestation. Located high on the mountain, remains include a 50 foot water wheel pit and associated buildings; below are adits, well flooded behind extensive collapses. May have, possibly located the boat level: removing some of the collapse would allow the adit to drain to around waist level: permission and tools required to reach the mine area. Found Pelton wheel suspended above the stream about a mile downstream of the mine.

20<sup>th</sup> November Bryntail, Van, Penyclun Mines

Nigel Burns

Left the storm lashed high ground to search more sheltered sites. Located the adit into Bryntail, issuing a huge flow; too high a flow to force against, abandoned trip. Weather clearing; headed over to Penyclun and Van to investigate the surface remains, the small engine house of Penyclun a pure delight. Very few surface features remain at Van Mine.

26<sup>th</sup> November P8

Martin Bishop

Incredibly wet trip, the ladder a real experience, would have been more enjoyable with a wet suit, breathing gear and for MB a working lamp.

27<sup>th</sup> November Mandale Mine, Lathkill Dale

Martin Bishop

Walked through the dale to the Mine, somewhere nearby is a chamber just beneath the surface which once held a pumping engine, (Batemans House shaft). A very fine trip; of particular note the use of large stone lintels as supports, superb.

20<sup>th</sup> December Poulanian

Solo

Dropped off at Doolin church by the lift from Ennis; called on Myles Arkins asking permission to Cregg Lodge Swallet. Over tea and cake he repeated it no problem, but cattle would be in the field for the next few days. To get in a trip headed once again across the road to Poulanian, the stream at the bridge was running well, but not too high. From main chamber climbed up slope and dropped into the sump passage; the joint control here might well allow a parallel development to the sump, looked about but found little, the stream here high and too noisy to hear a returning echo. Found a small crawl, followed a rathole to a small aven and smaller tube leading off; potential here low.

21<sup>st</sup> December Ballymahony Cave  
Solo

Took quite some time to locate the site; sought help from a farmer, Michael. A stream passage ends at a twenty foot pitch; lost the ladder tether somewhere between road and entrance; left kit at the cave until tomorrow; dug a hollow further west, full of iron crud.

22<sup>nd</sup> December Ballymahony Cave  
Solo

Found lost tether in grass. Last night scrounged a fence post from Martin Shannon; now belayed ladder to it. Last night's rain had swollen the stream; a wet trip. At the bottom followed a short gravel crawl which soon became too wet to follow; it has potential.

27<sup>th</sup> December Faunarooska  
Solo

A steady trip in high stream conditions to the head of the first pitch: out into dark and rain, had fun finding Bishop's black tackle sack. Walked to Lisdoonvarna; had a few pints in the Roadside until offered a lift to Doolin; walked in the bar to a serious bollocking off Doll, who heard of the caving trip from Michael Sherlock but had no idea of which cave, or expected return time.

28<sup>th</sup> December Poulmagollum  
Enda Gibbons, Paul McMahon

Among last night's festivities arranged to meet the two new friends in Lisdoonvarna. After an hour gave up on them and hitched. They arrived as PC was rigging the handline in the entrance. The stream from the resurgence, seen at the bridge, showed near normal conditions. Their slow pace suggested both were overly cautious. At the first waterfall their demeanour became one of concern as they looked at the large cascade. A remark at main junction ultimately revealed this was their fifth ever caving trip. Guided them to Poulelva then back upstream to where Branch Passage Galley pitch enters. On the surface showed them where Poulelva Pot is located; they're planning a through trip.

29<sup>th</sup> December Pouldubh  
Solo

Rained a lot last night, and is still; surface streams everywhere. Lift to Faunarooska Cross from Mattie Neylon once again; he's home for Christmas; presently working in Derby. The plan: enter North entrance, down to the terminal choke and out via South entrance. Surprised at the size of the stream sinking in the northern entrance; walked through the forest to middle entrance. Inside found a similar spectacle, a large stream. Headed off downstream; the crawl challenging. The spectacle and roar of the cascade through the eyehole was captivating. At the bottom ledge of the climb down to the lower streamway, a swirling mass of dark water quietly swept by. Entirely entranced by the whole experience; wishing for a camera to record the event. Some difficulty getting back through the crawl to the middle entrance, actually desperate; outside the rain had not stopped. No cars about, began to walk back to Doolin taking the track between Blakes Mountain and Knockaunsmountain. Passing a croft saw a woman, Aine, (70-ish?), sat in the open door, saluted, stopped to exchange pleasantries; invited to take tea and shelter a while from the rain, the kettle boiled on a crane in the open fireplace, over a turf fire, no electric or water in the house. She spoke softly, proudly of her children, none now in Ireland, all gone to America these twenty years. Such domestic circumstances yet exist in Ireland; though disappearing as the elderly pass away. Rain continued, darkness fell, wished her well, walked back to Doolin.