

2002

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1st January Coolagh River Cave

Ian Carter Geoff Edwards, Dave Peterson

Water levels a little elevated. In through the field entrance, some flood debris collected in the canal bedding. Once cleared, water level dropped allowing access. Steady trip to the sump; IC expressed concern over foam in the canal and three metres up the walls. Showed where Polldonough North passage enters. Directing guiding from the rear, exited Polldonough into sunshine. Bumped into Wille Scales. Mad session in O'Conner's

2nd January Cullaun V

Geoff Edwards, Ian Carter, John Grant

DP feeling really rough after swilling half a bottle of poteen; he was warned. Boys head away tomorrow. Pleasant trip to the beddings, though water a bit high; chanced it as no rain visible or threatening. The boys delighted at the Red Carpet Series. Uneventful exit. Found Dave in the bar, deliriously happy; the centre of attention of three local women.

Business manic

14th January **UK declared free of the Foot and Mouth**

15th January Swildons Hole

Martin Bishop

Pleasant midweek trip to sump I, and out. In the Hunters discussed digs on the Burren.

24th January Eastwater

Martin Bishop

MB delighted at being nagged to get out and exercise. Boulder ruckle looks a little loose in places. Down to the Twin Verts, and out. Back issue becoming a bad memory.

1st February Thrupe Lane

Martin Bishop, Ian Parsons

Pleasant surprise, IP working in Bristol for the next week or so, then relocating to Frome. Asked to crash here, when in Frome at MB's. Rang MB, who suggested Thrupe, to revise Silly Rope Techniques. Bit of a phaff, though nothing serious. Need adjustable footloops. Inclusion of the ankle jammer worked really well.

4th February Ravens Well

Ian Parsons, Martin Bishop

Realized IP's interest in mining, described Raven's Well, left the Criterion late, back to Lilymead, changed. Entered the river entrance. Little changed here, the railway entrance still partly blocked with a bundle of fence wire. IP delighted, back at Lilymead by 3am.

7th February Wookey Hole

Martin Bishop, Ian Parson

IP wanted photos, so took advantage of a planned trip. IP wandered around whilst MB and PC went to 22. Visibility crystal clear. Back in 9:2, assisted IP with the lighting. Out for a pint and a superb curry. IP struggling with offered promotion, means more money, but, may require working a lot of weekends.

17th February Swildons Hole
Ken James

Pure delight to meet Ken, again, as ever. KJ suggested a reverse round trip. His business going very well, resulting in little time for play. KJ took the lead, got to the first duck to find it sumped, so decided visit Sump II. Hearing many voices, settled down at the top of Valentines Landing to watch a party of a dozen wander along beneath. Sat there for half an hour until they exited; much catching up on each other's family etc. To Sump II; for old times' sake free dived to III, then into IV. Dry grots required a steady pace to keep warm. To the Hunters for a pint; more even catching up. Such trips show how much we miss each other's company. Eckford's ears will be burning!

19th February Coral Cave
Martin Bishop

Bit of fun finding the place; finally shown by a local dog walker. The ladder pitch quite superb; a much overlooked cave.

Illegible entries.

12th March Compton Martin Ochre Mine
Martin Bishop, Charlie Watkins

Superb wander around this very nice mine; condition likely to deteriorate as MB relates how he has heard visitors appear increasing. It is truly a fine example of Mendip mining.

16th March Philps Cave, Brixham.
Solo

Dropped Pauline off with her dive club; arranged pick up after four hours. Wandered to town to locate the cave. Directed straight to the house; met the owner as she was leaving. Told return in an hour. Returned, guided around the place; an understated location of Palaeolithic. Had no idea Joseph Prestwick was involved with William Pengelly, dealing with Bouvier's finds among the Somme gravels. Cracking, really cracking.

20th March White Strand, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare
Pauline Cronin

Dived the bay, prospecting the northern coastline for any sea cave cavities. Ribs of rock have formed, parallel to the shoreline. No limestone; the majority sandstone. The minor crevices encountered, all eroded by the sea.

24th March Philps Cave, Brixham
Solo

Delivered Pauline to her dive pals. Arranged with Geraldine, friend of the owner, to look at records she has access to. Again, did not fully appreciate the excavation protocols invented and developed by William Pengelly, within a cave environment. Quite superb; delighted to see the range of animal material recovered; among them a lovely flint knife.

1st April Current State Diving, Bristol
Richard Bull

Completed the Advanced CPROX Instructor course conducted by Richard Bull.

5th April Lost Dave Yeandle.

11th April Lost Wally, (Black Wal), Willcocks

April (19th?) Dave Yeandle's Funeral, Bristol

Eighteen of Dave's pal's stopping at Lilymead. Following the service at Canning Crem, visited numerous bars throughout Clifton. Things get hazy, Geoff Price, Bab's, Bishop, Lil Romford plus many others. Later thrown out of a Pizza restaurant, after complaints of the singing, conducted by Bishop, standing on a chair. Many more bars. Eventually lost some of the number. Staggering back with Phil Collett, managed to get into The Merchants Arms, Hotwells, long after closing, via a pal, Stuart Gibb, his normal haunt. Conducted a singing session; asked to stop as landlords wife was complaining. Home in the wee hours, minus the shirt???

Illegible entries

28th April Sea Cave, Ballyryan Td.

ITM508162 x 700498

Barry Sudell

Walked from Poulsallagh Bay to the big cave entrance at the cliff edge. Calm seas. Managed climb down the northern end to a large cavity, examined the place, sea erosion in origin. Surfaces green and slippery. Nothing apparent in the immediate area. A real sod to get back up the greasy climb.

29th April Cullaun II

Barry Sudell

Made a good bit of rain last night, large stream sinking. Nice trip along the streamway to the terminal pot, the final part of the stream to the head of the pitch impressive. Made a steady exit. Into the Ritz Hotel for a pint, bumped into Jim Shannon; had several.

7th May Current State Diving, Bristol

Martyn Farr, Phil Dotchon,

Trimix course, concluded, instructor Richard Bull. Offered free use of Current States gas mixing equipment, compression and gas.

16th May Keld Head

Martin Bishop

MB once again arranged access and camping with the farmer. Dived on two tens and chest mounted ten: 3 x Poseidon's (2 x 300's), (1 x Diveair); MB followed after five minutes. The plan: indulge MB's desire to visit "Dead man's Handshake". Driving up, discussed assessing the passage beyond this feature and possibly complete the loop around the western passage. Without precise knowledge of the area, decided check, in preparation of another dive. Had a line map from Rupert Skorupka. Reached "DMH" in poor visibility; the line laid so neat and precise, barely noticed the actual place until the area narrowed. MB arrived after six minutes. Exchanged notes and checked spare gas: agreed exit. Uneventful exit, bumped into "Lugger", (Steve Thorpe); announcing a party on Saturday night. Unfortunately MB needs be in Radstock for another do?

17th May Valley Entrance

Martin Bishop

Up early, and out. High water; to Rowten sumps. Late back to Radstock: after a fine meal cooked by Suzy, sculled pints in the White Post, until late.

27th May – 2nd June Sharm El Sheik, Egypt

Pauline Cronin, Trevor Wiltshire, + nine open water divers.

Temple Reef; Yolanda Reef (twice); Ras Katy; Ras Um Sid; Woodhouse Reef, drift; Thomas Reef; Wreck of the Dunraven; Jackson Reef, drift; Shaf Reef; Ras Ghazhari.

Only the dive at Ras Katy was there anything like cave. At -17m, a rift was followed for thirty metres; light can be seen at the end, coming down a narrow chimney. Ascended to -10m, here the chimney narrows, too tight to continue with back mounted kit. A simple horizontal passage with a vertical rift pot.

21st June Pigeon Hole, Cong

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

High flow rate; PD and DH laying line, but flow too great.

22nd June Pigeon Hole, Cong

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

Following photo session, DH to and through the many upstream boulders, until stopped by impassable gaps.

23rd June Kelly's Cave, Cong

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

DH lost the vote, donned kit and was pushed into the small bedding, with a floor of boulders. With knees still showing above water, DH seemingly found the bedding tight!

24th June Horse Discovery

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

DH pushing sump II, high flow a serious issue, managed twenty metres of line. Exited attempting survey out. PD pushed downstream in low muddy, boulder area.

25th June Horse Discovery – Ballymaglancy Cave

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

SM and DH pushed thirty metres upstream, through boulders into river passage.

Ballymaglancy Cave: Carried MF's kit for diving terminal sump through to resurgence. Whilst assisting MF kit up, noted daylight at the end of a small tube above, to the right of the sump pool. Suggested SM begin clearing the area, within minutes the team opened a short, vertical wriggle, emerging above the resurgence pool; PC emerged as MF surfaced. Informed a delighted landowner, who gave permission to visit the cave anytime.

26th June Horse Discovery – Ballymaglancy Cave

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

SM and DH pushed upstream, ascending through boulders to om; no way through.

Ballymaglancy Cave: Photographic trip along the passage to the sump.

26th June Lady's Buttery

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

Downstream to attempt link to Horse Discovery. Strong flow. Seventy six metres laid in a strong flow through three chambers; all very shallow. No success, area very low.

28th June Pollaloughabo

Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr

Relined to old limit; 360m. Strong flow. Visibility awful. Using tri-mix 37/15

29th June Pollaloughabo
Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr
Staging cylinders for MF's push.

30th June Lady's Buttery - Pollaloughabo
Steve Marsh, Phil Dotchon, Dig Hastilow Martyn Farr
MF pushed upstream Pollaloughabo
DH with PC in support. In lower water flow. DH reached a perched sump, from which the entire river issues. It will need assistance to push; next year?

Illegible entries

July (22nd?) Porth-yr-Ogof RECOVERY
Steve Thomas, Martyn,
Called from MF's place, on arrival found ST already dressed in dive kit, PC directed ST check the far left corner of the resurgence, the likely point to locate a casualty, being just out of the current. In less than a minute ST surfaced; KS found. Instructed surface team prepare receive casualty. ST submerged, brought KS to surface. Remains conveyed to the air ambulance in adjacent field.

Illegible entries

September undated (7th and 8th?) Pegasus CN, Nitrox Training, Newchurch-in-Pendle.
Simon Halliday, Alan Steans, Andy Walchester, Malcom Scothorn
Venue: Pendle Village Hall
Arranged two days of lectures on the physics of extended time diving at depth and usage of mixed gas in cave diving to reduce risk, fatigue and decompression penalties.

29th September Poulcaherrua - Scalpbeag
Barry Sudell, Nick Geh, Michael Davenport
NG had been working on this once mined natural rift for some time. The landowner, Michael Davoren, arrived to show the group a circular waterworn 0.8m shaft, covered with flagstones; similar to a Derbyshire mine climbing shaft. Located one hundred metres downhill from Poulcaherrua, slightly north, in the next field. Cleared flagstones; BS descended 2.5 metres, contorting himself to reach between his legs to grip and hand up rocks. Many of these rocks thrown in by MD's father years before.

Illegible entries

26th – 30th November Professional Dive Facility, Fleetwood, Lancashire
Solo
Completed Semi-Closed Rebreather Instructor training.

19th December S4
Solo
Place devastated from storm damage; started clearing debris.

20th December S4
Solo
Continued to clear debris; lid over the dig swept away. A lot of plastic debris down the hole, spent the entire session clearing it.

22nd December Poulmagrai
Solo

Wandered down to the traverse, decided go along it to the old terminal sump. Squeezed up into the new extension. At the slippery climb, devoid of hand holds, found reported handline missing. Decided against sliding down, just in case. In the crawls the stream seemed larger; outside encountered a fierce storm. Witnessed lightening crackling about the northern end of Sliabh Eilbhe.

23rd December Faunarooska
Solo

Much water on the roads. Parked up at the cross. Left a climbing tape on the wall at the junction. Good sized stream. Made good time down to the grotto, even though having to often crawl at stream level: curious only one such beautiful grotto exists in the length of the cave. Is there an unknown inlet above? Cannot believe no caves are recorded between here and Pollaphuca. Pollantobar being the most recent find; entered early 1980s, with the L.A.D.S. Out to a crystal clear night, Inis Oír lighthouse clearly twinkling. Changed quickly and headed straight to the Dublin house, for the Christmas; Nollaig just not the same without Ma McDermott cheerfully bustling about the kitchen.

29th December S4
Noel Walsh

Cleared more debris; task abandoned as heavy, protracted torrential showers arrived.

30th December S4
Solo

Removed the crap from the previously drilled boulders in the base of the hole; needed to retreat as water level rose. Sea conditions, rough. Nick Geh rang; the trip to help at his dig is tomorrow.

31st December Poulcaherrua
Nick Geh

Last of the Year. A sloping rift leads to a narrowing, just beyond another rift descends to join at this point. Here the obvious way on is straight down, the narrowing is part rock, part stal. Used a real Kango hammer, driven off a generator, the narrow piece of stal removed to create room to dig downward. Both sites offer serious potential. NG has a very fine dig here.