

2004

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1st January Doughbranneen
Solo

Mimicking Bishop; arose at the crack of Noon! Late night/early morn. Headed for the mountain above Black Head. From the lighthouse searched the area for evidence of cave. Sites adjacent the lighthouse somewhat uninspiring. This huge lump of limestone must surely hold other prospects; nice day for a walk. Nothing found in the three hours.

2nd January S3, Marine resurgence.
Solo

Previously calculated the tide, to locate S3 intertidal resurgence. Overnight weather gone to hell in a handcart. Force Eight, from the southwest. Lay prone, clung to the low cliff to observe any visible outflow. No evidence; the area tumbling with large waves.

3rd January S3, Marine resurgence.
Solo

Sea conditions lessening. Tried again to precisely locate S3, after the recent heavy rain hoped for a brownish silt laden outflow. Though tide low, no flow seen in the large pool below the small cliff, except sea wash.

21st January Thrupe Lane Swallet
Clive North, Richard Witcombe, Simon Mead-King, Mark Lumley
Spoil collected at the base of the shaft was prepared for removal, while others worked at the face.

24th January Grogwinion/Gwaith Gogh Mines, Mid Wales
Nigel burns
Illegible text

25th January Sunday – Pantmawr Mine, Mid Wales
Nigel Burns
Illegible text

4th February Thrupe Lane Swallet
Mark Lumley, Rob Taviner, Richard Witcombe, Simon Mead-King, Dave?
General consensus the potential way on appears too small. Assisting, SMK suggested, to push on with his dig.

11th February Thrupe Lane Swallet
Mark Lumley, Rob Taviner, Richard Witcombe, Simon Mead-King, Clive North, Nik-Nak, Dave?
Relocated to Bamboo Aven, spoil deposited in the previous digs location.

12th February Swildons XII
Martin Bishop
Plan, to visit XII to resurrect interest in digging it. Used a four litre each. Reached Nine, MB dived first, found line busted at the far end. Joined MB, repaired line. In XII dived to assess the state of the sump choke. Memory likely faulty but little progress appears done. Agreed sit and watch where disturbed silt entered the choke; ran bottle to half, gave task over to MB. Both agreed that the area to the left of the choke was where most of the silt

cloud was vanishing. Slow trip out, well knackered after the earlier day's effort involving a difficult gas boiler change. Missed the bar.

18th February Thrupe Lane Swallet

Mark Lumley, Rob Taviner, Richard Witcombe, Simon Mead-King, Clive North, Nik-Nak, Dave King

Roof debris cleared, following demolishing a duck. CN to Bleak Hall to assess digging facilities; debris required removing from Chimney Pot.

20th February Swildons XII

Martin Bishop

Afternoon trip. Swiftly to twelve, each took a seven litre; encountered a group of four near Duck II. Most of the dive taken up with deciding where to best stack spoil. A chill hours' worth of digging; minor progress.

25th February Thrupe Lane Swallet

Mark Lumley, Nik-Nak, Amp? Rich Whitcombe

Worked removing the debris from Bleak Hall, dragging it beyond Bamboo Aven for eventual removal to surface. Sustained crushed finger, heaving boulders.

26th February Swildons XII

Martin Bishop

Late afternoon trip. Swiftly to XII, using over pumped sevens. MB emerged having damaged his hand; minor crush injury. Plan is to start at the top of the pile and excavate a sloping trench, into the floor. Roof offers no clue to direction of development. MB suggests the sump entrance might be of similar form to the pool in nine. Got into the Hunters for last orders. Two cripples with dodgy hands.

28th February Wheal Friendship leat walk, Dartmoor

Nigel Burns

NB had for some time wanted to walk this important leat; a superb, wheel pit at East Wheal Friendship mine. The fine weather was bonus.

29th February Wheal Friendship, Dartmoor

Nigel Burns

Walked the East Wheal Friendship & Wheal Jewell leat; a fine example of engineering.

3rd March Thrupe Lane Swallet

Mark Lumley, Simon Mead-King, Amp? Dave E, Dave King, Richard Whitcombe

Finger still wrapped up; so useless to anyone. ML sent back much spoil, which the others backpacked into ever available crevice. The flow released from creating a small pool in Bleak Hall, chuckled away, with little evidence of watery echoes ahead.

5th March Swildons XII

Martin Bishop

Late afternoon. Used over pumped sevens; a handy option. Continued with the trench. The intended trench, not as well defined as would be liked: may guide others to the dig. MB to ask who is visiting and if serious about digging? Or maybe just touring.

10th March Thrupe Lane Swallet

Mark Lumley, Clive North, Pete Hellier, Nik-Nak, Richard Whitcombe

ML and PH sent back a lot of spoil, though a good bit left after the session. The bedding looks good; two metres wide and six inches high, with a two foot wide channel in the floor, along which runs the little stream.

12th March Swildons XII

Martin Bishop

Uneventful trip in. MB surfaced, informing that the deepened area was now full of rocks, seemingly rolled from the XIIb side. Spent a frustrating half hour removing same.

17th March St. Patrick's Day, Thrupe Lane Swallet

Rob Taviner, Richard Whitcombe, Clive North, Simon Mead-King, Dave E, Amp?, Dave King, Mark Lumley

A steady session, moving a lot of spoil into the abandoned dig.

22nd – 29th March Sharm el Sheik

Pauline Cronin, ten of her dive club members

Five days diving in a seven day trip; fifteen sites dived, including two night dives. Many of whom very unhappy in the dark. Only two caves noted, explored with the search reel, in the canyon, which descends from Middle Garden to -1000m, vertical drop from -40m. Bedding formed in the land side of the canyon, left looking down the gulley. Nothing longer than eleven metres, at -18m. The low beddings, previously visited have not undergone any clearing from storm washing.

31st March Thrupe Lane Swallet

Clive North, Richard Whitcombe, Dave King, Mark Lumley

A wet session. Spoil deposited in the top of the Old Wells Rd from Bleak Hall; provided by DK. Steady progress, all well soaked by the end of evening.

2nd April Swildons XII

Solo

Waiting for MB, call from Suzy Bishop, MB not well, feeling crook. Decided to go. Resumed removing rocks from the previously created hollow/trench. Foolishly breathed the bottle to twenty-two ats. Slow, cautious, free dive trip out. Missed last orders.

8th April Swildons XII

Martin Bishop

Afternoon trip; abandoned. Waited for MB at nine, a no show, retraced steps. Found MB in a V air bell. Out of breath, feeling crook. MB very pissed off, apologizing. Shrugged off the issue. Though MB replied it would be PC's last trip for a while; Carpal Tunnel op due next week.

14th April Bristol Royal Infirmary

Tunnel Carpal operation to left hand, severely informed, no heavy work, or caving for at the very least three weeks.

6th May Peak Cavern.

Martin Bishop, Geoff Pickering, Frank Mitchel

GP's aged pal wanted to revisit the place having done so many years previous. Tied the trip in with taking MB to Otter Watersports to introduce him to John Womack, and pick

up a drysuit. MB delighted with the suit, invited for tea with JW. Goodbyes, straight to Derbyshire. Met FM, previously warned as aged. Aged, my arse; he scampered about the place, delighted with himself. Later relating his involvement in the Niel Moss tragedy. Stopped at the old TPU hut, spent a cracking session in the Peak. Drink suggested, enroute home, should stray into Wales, maybe try for OFD? Fine trip, but wrist very sore.

7th May Little Neath River Cave – Porth-yr-Ogof – Swildons II
Martin Bishop

Prised MB out the bed 06:00; left Castleton 07:00. Breakfast in Buxton. Arrived at the SWCC, no one about. Changed plan, headed to Ystradfellte. Had a pint in the New Inn, headed for LNRC. Low water allowed for a swift round trip. Emerged, suggested another quick trip. At Porth, not a sinner about, other than the parking attendant. Swam through to the resurgence. Quick change and fled for Mendip. Approaching Temple Cloud suggested Swildons to off finish the day. Into the wet kit, sped to sump II; at the twenty encountered some Birmingham boys. Finally into the Hunters, for an evening pint. Fairly shagged out. Delighted at the filled day.

12th May Wookey Hole
Martin Bishop, Ian Parsons

Needed test an alteration to the harness. Used three tens, one chest mounted. The method of releasing and securing, when changing the chest mount, becoming an issue. Used thicker, elastic cord and larger steel krabs, with hook teeth filed down. Settled at the elbow; removed chest mount and resecured same. Continued to 22; in the deep section repeated the process. Surfaced, checked the straps and cord; no twists, or anything out of alignment, delighted. Conducted two more tests; grand. Met MB and IP in 9:2. photo session almost completed. Swiftly into the Swan and the Curry House.

18th May Lost Gussie Russell

19th May Keld Head
Martin Bishop

Another ask to accompany MB. The plan, to pass Dead Mans Hand Shake and venture as far as took his fancy. Driving up, last night, MB dozed for most of the latter part of the journey; not like him at all. Camped the usual place, permitted by the farmer, who seems a good pal of MB's. MB slow to start in the morning; assisted kitting him up and saw him off. Each using three over pumped tens. Agreed dive ten minutes apart, as it was it became twenty. Noted visibility as two metres; occasionally poorer, likely where MB disturbed silt. At DMHS silt disturbance suggested MB had passed beyond. After some thirty odd metres, no sign of MB, or any silt disturbance. Turned about and made a slow sweep of the passage. The silt had increased at DMHS, reducing visibility to zero; the neat line laying made for easy, blind negotiation of the feature. Continued for some hundred metres, no sign at all of decreasing vis, or MB. Headed back in beyond DMHS to check for evidence of MB actually taking the Dark Side Loop,. Committed self to route, to confirm if MB had taken it. At the deeper part of DSL found silt disturbance, strongly suggesting MB was indeed somewhere ahead. Decided plod along rather than attempt catch MB; encouraged by occasional silt clouds slowly followed him; cursing him of missing the arranged stop to confer and check remaining gas prior to actually taking the loop. Became increasingly cross with MB. Exited to find MB sat on the pool side, in the sunshine, grinning like a Cheshire Cat. Raged at him; tension release enormous and a relief. Ran the compressor, topped up all bottles. Expressed some concern at MB's gas consumption, though after calculating dive time and depth visited not appear too severe.

Three pints in the Heifer. Noted MB nodding by eight o'clock; in camp fast asleep by half nine. Ran compressor filled bottles. Not a murmur from him..

20th May Keld Head

Martin Bishop

Agreed MB would dive first, reversing yesterdays circuit, exiting via Kingsdale passage. Surprized to catch up MB around half way along Dark Side Passage. MB signalled go ahead, refused the offer. Took station three metres behind him. At DMHS conferred; all good. Visibility had cleared ahead, though the slow pace along the streamway meant silt clouds enveloped the team. Noted MB moving slowly; lost visibility. Occasionally felt contact with MB's fins. Eventually surfaced; did not say it, but it's a big ask to accompany MB on such trips. But, it is on his bucket list, and he is a pal. After a mug of tea and one of MB's doorstep sandwiches, checked his breathing rate and took his pulse, under much protest. MB's blood o2 level 97%. After fifteen minutes, MB's breathing rate, twenty six, pulse 93/min. Voiced concern, asking if he took his medication regularly? Had a brief, sharp exchange. Told everything is fine and to stop mothering, apologized and pointed out was worried. Into the Marton Arms for a pint and a meal. Dropped MB to Radstock by 23:30.

21st May Rang MB 09:00, insisting he visit the Doc for a check-up, or would tell Suzy.

23rd May Rang, nagged MB, spoke with Suzy, assured he will make an appointment.

27th May Long chat with MB; the Doc has changed the dose, but pressed MB to ensure medication taken regularly. LIKE, WHAT IT SAYS ON THE FUCKING TIN!!!

3rd June Quinns Cave, Moy.

Solo

Thought to check the status of the boulder slope; more new houses being built all around John Quinn's place. Issues hacking a route along the boreen to the pool. Visibility some two metres. Used wetsuit and two sevens; found an area in the base of a cone; better vis confusing the diver as to the place previously visited. Began to carefully move boulders, stacking them away from the entrance. Vis reduced to zero; headed out. It needs a coordinated dig to remove the boulders to surface and clear the top of the pots.....

4th June S4 – Poulmagollum

Solo

Found the shaft covered with flotsam and jetsam; cleared the area. Exposed the shaft; minor amount of debris had fallen in. Took three hours to clear small boulders out of the base to surface, using the waistlength. If only another pair of hands. Headed over to Poulmagollum. Very little stream at the bridge gate. Free climbed the entrance. Into Branch Passage. Downstream to the pitch, a small stream present; abseiled. Continued to Poulelva. Steady, uneventful trip out, via Gunman's cave climb.

5th June Pollcahercloggaun west one

Solo

Dry weather prompted another go. Seemed like a losing battle from the start. Chest size did not do well in the crawls and narrow passage. After an age, digging out some of the crawls out, reached an inlet. Believe it to be the stream from Pollcahercloggaun west, decided to look up this inlet. After a hundred metres decided it must be the inlet and headed off downstream. Passage dimensions a little larger. The few short climbs similar

those in Cullaun II streamway, below Pool Chamber. Very low bedding encountered; had a fleeting sense of being a long way from anywhere, further suggested by the long haul out. Well knackered; into the Roadside for a pint, slept in the van.

7th June Quinns Cave, Moy.
Solo

Poor visibility, expected it to have cleared more. Air from the Ennistymon compressor, tasted awful. After an hour of moving boulders had to give up. The metallic taste of the gas, terrible. Just as well operating at five metres, or so. Abandoned trip. Called the Burren Sub-aqua lads informing of the issue. Told "Fuck all wrong with our compressor". Stripped bottles down and checked interior, found no corrosion or particulates at all.

21st June The Matthew, Liverpool – Bordeaux

Dropped off by Barry Sudell at the Albert dock Liverpool, 20:00. Reported to the ship's Master, Nigel Otley; assumed duties of Bosun. Watches; four on, eight off. Experienced minor discomfort with the right hand, though the Tunnel Carpal operation now months ago; excused sail hauling; designated responsible for navigation.

22nd June Caernarfon

Remained on deck to take up watch 04:00 - 08:00. Dawn, noted wind turbines off the North Welsh coast absent from digital charts, corrected paper chart, informed Master, 08:05. Also related Storm warning approaching from Mid-Atlantic. Master took shelter running the Menai Straits anchoring Caernarfon; prepared moorings for wind predicted of >35knots.

23rd June Caernarfon

On watch 00:00 – 04:00, repeatedly adjusting moorings as tide changed. 02:00, timber braces and large tyres fitted to protect the hull from the concrete pier stantions, needing repeated repositioning on this ebb tide. During the desperate operations, strained right wrist; remained at station. 12:00 – 16:00 wind >28knots; asked to return early to watch 20:00 – 00:00. To replace Ken, who was not well at all. Wind >30knots; rain easing.

24th June Caernarfon

Wind >26knots: heavy rain. On watch 08:00-12:00. Stood watch 18:00-20:00, covering Francis, who is also ill. Also asked by Ken to cover part of his watch, 20:00-22:00; as he remains unwell. Hand painful if used at all, attempting rest it using a sling where practicable. 21:00 reported to Master, wind decreased slightly, storm moving northerly. Sailing orders; prepare ship for departure; in bunk at 22:10, knackered.

25th June Caernarfon

Stood watch 04:00 – 08:00. Torrential rain, 48knots of wind, Force 9, six metre seas. Vessel floats like a tub. Current flowing northerly at five knots, both engines producing 5.5 knots; ship barely holding station. Francis and Ken very ill. Unable to record quarter hour positions on paper charts in the cabin below the open bridge. Predicted appearance of the Fishguard to Rosslare ferry, crossing the bow, around 03:15, a useful, visual reference in the fierce storm. Crew shook, ill; sheltered in Fishguard harbour for repairs. Forcibly retired from duties with the injured hand, along with a crewman with a broken leg and another with a fractured wrist; achingly slow train to Bristol. Ship repairs took almost four weeks.

Instructed, no heavy activity, or caving for two weeks while wrist repairs.

17th July Wookey Hole
Martin Bishop

Requested assist electricians with the underwater lights, and to pull in a new cable. That done, swam off to 20; wrist behaving itself. Awful visibility.

Illegible entries

26th August First Aid, First Responder Course, Bristol
Course and exam conducted by Trevor Wiltshire.

Illegible entry

29th August Mine adits, Cornwall
Nigel Burns

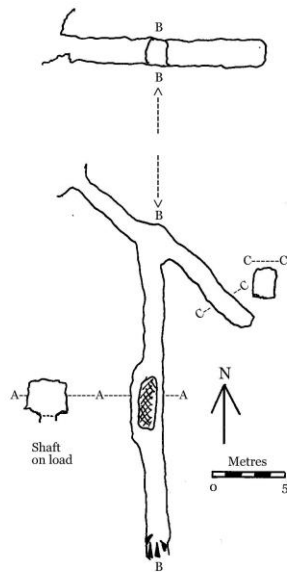
Site One. NGR: SW37233x35570

Entrance is adjacent the coastal path. From a junction an eight-metre branch passage meets a forefield. The main way on runs for forty metres passing another branch, partly flooded and run in. Beyond this second junction a small collapse is passed to a final fifteen metres of passage.

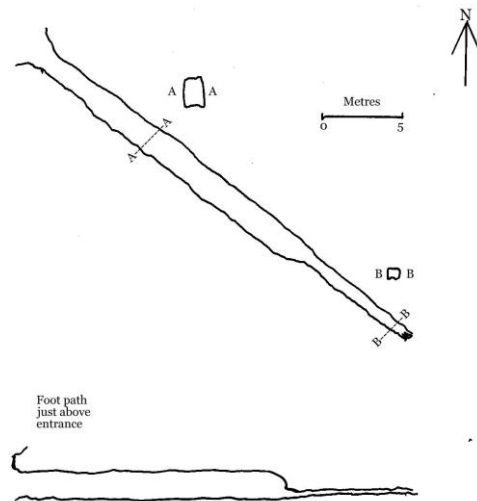
Site Two. NGR: SW 37279x35659

North of Site One, below the coastal path. A short adit some twenty metres in length; becomes too low to follow.

Illegible entries



Mine adit One
SW37233 x 35570
Cornwall.
Surveyed Nigel Burns & Pat Cronin
29th August 2004
Cross sections, to scale.



Mine adit Two
Cornwall.
SW37279x35659
Surveyed Nigel Burns & Pat Cronin
29th August 2004
Cross sections to scale

13th – 14th November Devon

Nigel Burns

Six short adits and two shafts recorded. Illegible text and sketches

1st December Thrupe Lane

Mark Lumley, Dave King, Amp?

Assisted the team heaving spoil along the Old Wells Road; wrist slightly painful.

3rd December St. Cuthberts.

Martin Bishop, Ian Parsons

Delighted to meet with IP after so long a break. MB arranged a trip for IP, en-route to his flat in Leeds. Pleasant trip, MB navigated a series of loops around the place, calling out their names in passing. IP delighted. After four hours, exited to a cold night; suggested a curry. Into Wells for the curry, then the White Post for pints.

Business manic.

21st December Fergus River Cave – Poul naboe

Solo

Only light rain the last week or so. Fancied a trip to try and identify where the draught is coming, and going. Took along smoke pellets and 2 x two metre lengths of plastic electrical conduit. Again had issues at the “Nick”. Had also forgot the slow progress along the crawl. Connected the conduit, forming a four metre “wand”, wandered long the lofty section like a magician, waving the tube around with a cluster of smoke pellets secured in the end. In this section of passage the smoke swiftly flew away, but, after some thought it may be because the hotter smoke simply rose as any thermal would? All in all, inconclusive. Into the Irish Arms for a meal, a few pints and more thought.

22nd December Oughtdarra

Solo

Weather turned very cold, bitter. Attempted systematic search of the western limits of the limestone terraces. Glacial action and weathering has done a lot of damage. Some possible remnants have survived but, closer scrutiny casts some doubt on their integrity. Believe Poul nagrai comes this way, so, surely, there must be potential feeders/sinks? Headed to Dublin for the Christmas.

28th December Robber’s Den Cave

Solo

Grim weather, the wind cut like a knife. Eventually found the site; after a lot of phaffing about. Hidden behind Ivy. The squeeze a real sod, tied knots in the waistlength; the poor man’s etrier. Tony Boycott related of archaeological finds; all the obvious cleared. A collector’s piece. Exited to fierce wind, rain and cold. Soaked, frozen by the time had got to the motor a mile south and two terraces below. To McGann’s fire for a warm up.

29th December Polldonough South

Solo

Weather bitter, heavy showers all night. Visited Coolagh to see affects. Main entrance very wet. South entrance submerged. Field entrance flooded to within a metre of the surface. Doolin Road Sink, a huge, deep pool. Headed for a bar. Still raining at 01:00.

Weather - rainfall serious, much flooding to roads.

31st December Poulmagollum
Solo

Last of the Year. Free climbed the entrance. Entered Gunman's Cave, entered Muddy Links, followed an enticing, low rumble echoing along the crawl from Branch Passage. Headed upstream, failed to pass the swim, could not overcome the current at the corner. Pushed downstream. The stream significant. Could hear the thunder of the waterfall. Spragged the canal and reached the pitch. The noise stupendous, reverberating around the chamber. Wish had thought to bring along a rope to descend and do a round trip. Headed out, tiring against the high flow. Into Frawley's, Lehinch, for an early pint, cracking fiddler, bumped into Sean O'Conner and others, invited accompany them into O'Looney's Disco. Crazy night dancing with dozens of women, great fun. Thrown out around 5am. Cracking.