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Gonzo

29th Feb Ham Hole

Chris, Tosky, Dave, Matt, Mandy, Tav, Gonzo, Richard, Alan, Dylan.

More of the same ending with Chris trying to chisel through a constriction into the small void below while Dylan chased sticks with abandon...

Gonzo

Wed 22nd Feb

Ham Hole

Richard (Spike) Neal, Gonzo, Matt, Mandy, Tav, Chris, Tosky and Dave.

Further digging in the floor of the decorated chamber. Just about room enough for two diggers to work.

Still digging down to access passage that Chris has managed to squeeze into (NB for passage, read cavity).

Additional support at the W&H's provided by Rich, Alan (with acceptable dig exemption passes), Duncan & Naomi (unacceptable dig exemption passes - watching Harry Potter).

Dave.

the rift that you can see next to the stal bank, is going back underneath where we are digging, but in the other direction i could not get a good photo. the picture looking straight down into the chamber, is probably double of what you can see but it undercuts where the picture was taken, if you look at the the floor in the photo, it looks like there is mud, covered with flowstone. after atlas left on wednesday, i broke a small hole into the chamber below, but it needs more digging out. Chris P

15th Feb Ham Hole

An early start by Chris and Tosky who were continuing the enlargement of the entrance passage that they had begun at the weekend.

While Tony worked on the calcited boulders with plug and feathers, Dave, Tosky, Chris, Mandy and Clive cleared spoil from the low passage before the chamber and Gonzo mercilessly patronised Richard who was walling (not wailing) in the shaft.

When Tony had concluded his work Chris managed to squeeze into a 3m continuation beneath the boulders and, after 20 minutes with a hammer and chisel, successfully reversed the procedure.

Then on to the W&H to join Duncan and Naomi in beer and cider.

In Fred Wedlock's words:

I said, 'What you drinkin' kiddo?'

She said 'Sommat, long and cool man'

I said 'Beer or Scrumpy?'

She said, 'Cider, cider, the distillation of the forbidden fruit of Paradise

Full of the true, the blushfull hippocrene, with beaded bubble winking at the brim and purple stained mouth.

Cider, loosens my libido, transports me into realms of ethereal delights and blows my cosmic mind -
Yeah, wow, too much

I said, 'Bloody hell,' said, 'How do you rate beer then?'

She said, 'Ah beer's a drag man, makes me fart'.

Regards

Mark Lumley

Wed 8th Feb 2012 Ham Hole

Last night was a photographing/surveying and general tidy-up trip with some ridiculously sticky spoil coming from the far end.

Alan, Chris, Dave, Duncan, Gonzo, Richard, Tav. Tosky.

Matt and Mandy on pub support, Vogon making a brief appearance on his way home from Cloford

Gonzo

hey everyone just to let you know, i had look over the top of the new chamber, with just my furry suit on. i can report that it goes around the corner, to a blocked alcove, with some small stals, and a very nice decorated aven, that closes down after about 3 foot. there is also a glimps of what is below us, you can look downwards for maybe 5 or 6 meters, and when dropping a small stone down you can hear it fall alot further down, and roll off in front of you.

Chris

Sun Feb 5th Ham Hole

"05/02/12 (Ham Hole)

after having a nice breakthrough on Wednesday, it was time for another. me and tosky started the day but digging at the sharp end of the passage, which is about 2 foot high, going downwards. after spotting a small black hole on the right side of the passage, we broke into a nice sized chamber, with a mass of boulders staled together. but you can see open passage underneath the boulders, but there is a boulder blocking access to the passage."

[There are apparently some very nice photos on online but I don't have access to them. I guess the way on may need appropriate attention.]

Chris

Sat Feb 4th Ham Hole

Gonzo, Dr's Smasher & Boycott

Drilling was delayed by some creative type making us drill a hole where a hole didn't need to be. Gonzo then left to watch the rugby and three shotholes were prepared – two in the floor of the "ledge" into the new stuff and one in the roof. These were fired and we left amid the snow.

Duncan

Wed Feb 1st Ham Hole

Chris, tosky, dan, gonzo, duncan, dave, mike, tony, Rich, Alan & Tav.

Well the mission was on, to get to the new passage. after a massive boulder destroying session on tuesday night, we started the night by clearing a massive rubble slope, all the way to the bottom of the cave, and then started work enlarging the hole at the bottom, to the new passage. after a very hard graft after atlas left, we were determined that we were getting in there, and we did, me and tosky managed to squeeze through, the hole and found about 8m of new passage, sloping downwards to a mud blockage. there are some really nice formations, about half way down the new passage and is all looking very good.

Chris.

Tues Jan 31 Ham Hole

Duncan, Dave and Clive but preceded, as ever(!) by Chris!

The pit prop was put into position and has taken care of the rear end of the roof block very well.

The new way on looks very promising appearing to be a low chamber – its impossible to see much due to a low threshold.

Between us Duncan and I drilled a dozen holes in assorted boulders and fired two sets of charges including a small one (last dregs of drill battery) on the lip of the chamber which may be enough to grant access.

I suspect that there will be a fair amount of rock shifting to do tonight plus there are a number of bags and a pile of mud to move as well.

I won't be at the cave but will join you at the W&H for an update.

Chris, Dan and Toskey will not be going down before the main Atlas contingent to give as long as possible for the fumes to disperse.

Clive

Wed 25 Jan Ham Hole Chris, Dan, Tosker(?) – early shift

Dave, Rich, Alan, Mandy, Tav & Clive – late shift

Gonzo, Dylan – later still shift

Matt – even later shift

Apart from Daves efforts at the sharp end a fairly relaxing evening removing a couple of dozen bags and some (often large) rocks.

The end is now a metre wide rift with three very large boulders jammed across with a couple of medium sized ones sitting on top of them. A lot of mud has been removed to reveal their size.

All is ready for some chemical persuasion. I've arranged to collect supplies next Tuesday (the earliest we can both do it) so the options could be

- a. Bang on Tues evening having put in place a 90cm timber to finish off the support for the 'roof boulder'
- b. Bang on Wed evening (including the timber work) but no digging as a result (could do some cementing perhaps above the pitch).

The Tuesday option would mean there could well be fumes present on Wed at the bottom (no air movement yesterday below the pitch level)

And the Wednesday option obviously means no digging.

Any thoughts either way? I'd favour the Wednesday given the choice.

All best

Clive

Sat 21 Jan Ham Hole

Saturday 21st – Dave and Clive with coverage by local 'pap' Paul carried various lengths of scaffold pole, drills and cameras across to Ham Woods to sort out the 'roof boulder'....

After a lot of careful measurement, sawing of poles to length etc and drilling of two 25mm holes, two short lengths of 24mm rod were inveigled into place followed by the scaffold tube. (Makes it sound really easy!)

The result is that the boulder now has a really substantial support at its upper end (there is a tiny gap yet to be filled between it and the bar).

We looked again at its lower end where we were proposing to put cemented rocks and decided it would be easier and probably more effective if we install a length of sleeper or telegraph pole onto a prominent ledge about a metre below.

We have measured this against a steel rod – Dave will ‘convert’ this into feet and inches and let us all know so we can look out for suitable timber.

I have ‘tapped’ the roof boulder with the lump hammer and it does sound good and solid – but no reason not to have taken the precautions we have in respect of the banging expected there.

On which subject we can start this when I get new supplies which could be this week. Unlikely to be in time for Wednesday though.

The dig itself looks very dramatic – what a change since the last time I was at the end. No draught apparent but looks very good down there.

It would be good to see a survey – I fancy the right hand wall is a parallel to the cliff face. Where we were drilling on the right was definitely limestone.....

Clive

Wed 18 Jan Ham Hole

Earlybirds: Dan, T... (?!), Marie, Chris.

Later: Gonzo

Late on parade: Richard, Alan, Mike, Duncan, Mandy, Ian (ACG), Dave K and Clive

The dig is progressing downwards nicely with more clay removed and boulders put aside for later demolition.

A couple of holes were revealed today with a slight draught coming along a small rift and through a tiny hole, probably from the downward continuation of the parallel rift that Chris entered in 2011.

Gonzo

Wed 11 Jan 2012 Ham Hole

Chris (plus 4 friends), Tav, Smasher, Gonzo, Mandy, Clive, Dave & Alan

Digging downwards continued with much happy banter and repartee despite Richard’s absence. The more keen having been on site since 4 pm. A large boulder was exposed which requires reduction though not perhaps before the rock in the roof which is supported by the force of

habit is restrained. A significant breakthrough is predicted before the world ends/next ice age/UNIX clock falls over.

Duncan

Wed 4th Jan 2012

Ham Hole

Alan, Chris, Dave, Gonzo, Mike, Richard.

An enthusiastic 2 hours of removing loose spoil from the floor of the dig on an inclement evening.

More of the same to follow...

Gonzo

Balch 25 April - Alan, Clive, Dave (late on parade), Duncan, Gonzo, Richard (on car park duty).

Wet.

Cleared and emptied the bags in Erratic before an early shift at the W&H.

Gonzo

Balch April 18 - Alan (base of pitch), Duncan & Naomi (top of pitch), Tav & Mandy (JW), Dave & Rich (Erratic) - 169 bags evacuated from the stack at bottom of ladder to a heap inside entrance. The exit via Pool Passage was somewhat aquatic. Clive and Matt joined us in the pub later.

Duncan

Wed 11th April - Balch

Duncan, Naomi & Mike all took turns at the front exposing a bit more of the rock that had fallen down Sand Aven. Bags of sand and slop from the front, augmented by those stashed along Carpal Tunnel were moved back to the base of the pitch by Mandy, Tav, Matt, Dave K, Alan and Gonzo. A substantial wall of spoil awaits disposal. Our spiritual leader, Rich, joined us for refreshments.

Duncan

Wed 4th April, Balch.

Small crack team consisting of Mandy, Matt & Dave + Tav in the W & H's.

Two black moths spotted in Erratic, the "greater" of the two sporting a bracelet.

We took a load of empty sacks down with us and spent the evening filling more bags from the dig face. These were all stacked in either the alcove on the left or along the left wall (when facing up passage). Whilst Matt and Mandy were digging around the now partially exposed huge boulder, more sand and rocks continued to cascade down in the usual aven self digging fashion. Before we left a little more sand was cleared from under the boulder causing the boulder to settle down another inch or so.

We could pop the boulder at any stage now, but I think it would be best left until we've got as much of the sand infill out whilst the weather holds. The boulder can be reduced and removed even if the weather has turned wet. Stacking space running low, will soon need a couple of good hauling sessions.

All three exited up the rift and back to the W & H's, joined later by Tav.

Dave.

Balch - 28th March Gonzo, Dave, Duncan, Tav, Clive, Alan, Richard

(no Matt and Mandy, probably because Tav was so rude to them in Brownes Hole the night before!).

More of the same with sandy spoil bagged and stored in Carpal Tunnel.

One more session is needed to shift the remaining loose fill before chemical persuasion is required on the big rocks that now block access to the aven.

Several people away next week so all hands to the pumps!

Gonzo

Sat 24 March - Atlas visit to Chelms Combe, Cheddar.

Balch Cave - 21.03.2012

Tav, Naomi, Duncan, Mandy, Gonzo, Matt, Dave, Clive + Richard in the pub

First trip of the year into Balch. The dig face was in much better condition than previous years. Basically only silted as far back as the base of Geoff's Rift. After clearing a few dozen bags of glutinous mud, rapid progress was made clearing the underlying sand. at this rate we might make it back to Sand Aven next week.

There were quite a few black moths in residence but they were well awake.

Tav

Wed 14th March, Ham Hole.

Numbers were a little low this week.

Mandy, Chris, Tosky, Dan & Dave.

Chris, Tosky & Dan headed down to the far end and I think continued to try and break up the calcited floor with limited effect.

Mandy and Dave continued digging and clearing out the mud bank on the approach to the front end. The first batch was bagged or wrapped and then emptied on the surface. The majority of the second batch was just moulded into large balls apart from a couple of wraps/bags for the spoil that didn't bond together very well. The mud balls worked very well, negating the need to un-wrap or empty on the surface. Due to the difficulty in distinguishing between balls and wraps, Mandy moulded faces on the balls. This did help a bit, but also compromised the integrity of the balls structure rendering them more vulnerable to breaking up.

After the second batch, the whole team headed off. Chris, Tosky & Dan back to S/Mallet, Mandy and Dave to the W & H, eventually joined by Matt (when he remembered).

Dave.

Advantages of mud balls:-

No need to carry so many empty bags in.

Peeling open empty bags or wraps not required.

Easier to stack and they stay where you put them.

Once on the surface the mud balls can just lobbed straight down the slope.

Disadvantages:-

Can't be throw as far bags/wraps.

Best passed where possible.

They tend to stick more readily to the floor.

You can't stand on them.

7th March Ham Hole

Chris, Tosky, Dan, Gonzo, Duncan, Mandy, Mike, Dave, Alan, Richard, Tav.

Ineffectual lumphammering on the calcited boulders made no progress so a rethink is required as to how we can progress without damaging the formations (snappers?).

An approach was dug towards the formations on the left hand side of the approach passage (Bacon Boulevard!) but this quickly closed down.

Work began on removing the spoil that had been crammed into the sides on the initial push to the chamber before urgent rehydration needs stopped play.

Gonzo

27th June – Ores Close again – Dave, Gonzo, Ray Deasey and Clive

The concrete pad around the manhole was uncovered along with the inscription 'MNRC 1967' and a set of holed drilled followed by the use of a stone cutting disc on an angle grinder to delineate the margins of the new 'gate'. Much hammering and swearing led to the required amount of concrete being removed revealing two stout reinforcing bars which should suffice as belays for ladders etc.

It being pub time and getting dark it was left until – the next Wednesday session?

Clive

20th June – Ores Close – Duncan, Naomi, Tav, Dave, Gonzo, Mandy & Clive plus Sue Jago

Dodging the dog poo and midges Dave eased himself through the manhole and down the pitch. A extra ladder was lowered to enable to take a look down the second pitch. A sweating Dave forced himself back up through the manhole then Mandy made it look all so easy!

Clive

Wed 13 June

A hard night's caving!

While the wastrel King shirked his digging duties Gonzo checked the Balch dig (slurry!) and removed the ladder before joining Duncan and Naomi on a whistlestop tour of the resurgences of Ashwick Grove, Clare's Crevice, Harwich Wood Hole and St. Dunstan's Well (and an interesting gate latch that Geoff would be proud of!) before finally succumbing to the siren song of the W&H, thus preventing Clive and Alan from looking like solitary drinkers . . .

Gonzo

Rushy Ground Swallet 30 May

Atlas visit to Rushy

TJ's Wed 23 May - Gonzo, Dave, Alan, Rich, Duncan, Matt & Mandy (surface support) and Clive

After clearing accumulated sticks, leaves, mud and the occasional rock from the shaft an inspection was made at the end.

It was as claggy as we remember it and there had been changes.

Where there was once a small window into the previous base of the dig there is now a hole comfortable enough to pass through, the loose rocks that had previously lined the window having dropped out revealing a clear view of the underside of Richards shuttering supports!

After much conflag (it being clear that there was little enthusiasm to actually restart digging that night) it was agreed that the only way on was straight down as we had originally planned. It was also agreed that we would give Balch a last summer season (haven't I heard that somewhere before??) and return to TJ's in the winter.

Before leaving we gathered up all the pulleys, krabs etc for safe storage.

An early adjournment to the W & H ensued....

All best

Clive

Balch, Wed 16th May.

Clive, Smasher (Duncan) Price, Gonzo, Alan & Dave (+ Naomi boosting numbers in W & H's).

Smasher was at full stretch (but out of reach of any pretties) loading at the bottom of JW Pitch, whilst Gonzo & Clive were on hauling duties at top. Alan at transfer station, whilst Dave took his usual seat hauling in Erratic.

67 bags hauled up, out and emptied. Plus the 93 bags left inside the entrance the previous week, were also extracted and emptied. Total of 160 (Nb not 150:-) bags tipped on spoil heap.

No more bags worth lifting at present and still too wet to return to digging for a few weeks, although there are a lot of empties just inside the entrance and at the top of the rift in Erratic.

Suggested that next week over to TJ's.

See what effect the winter has had (if any), bit of house keeping, assessment and digging??

Dave.

9 May -Balch -Alan, Dave, Duncan, Gonzo, Mandy, Mike, Naomi, Richard

Groundhog Day!

Conditions were wet and squalid but the levels had subsided enough to see that (unsurprisingly) the dig has backfilled as far as Geoff's rift.

The bags in Erratic were sent out and emptied.

Gonzo raised the retaining wall at the bottom of the pitch and levelled behind with small rocks and around 40 bags of spoil.

The remaining bags at the bottom of the pitch were sent up to Erratic.

Then the bags down as far as the bend in Carpal Tunnel were ferried back to the bottom of the pitch

Gonzo

2 May 2012 – Balch Cave – Alan, Clive, Dave, Duncan, Gonzo, Richard.

Another very wet week. Alan loading, Duncan and Gonzo hauling, Clive in the link and Rich and Dave in Erratic. 144 bags are now stacked by the entrance gate waiting removal to the daylight. It is estimated that after another hour and a half's work the bags at the bottom of JW Pitch will also be in

Erratic then there is the stack of bags in Carpal Tunnel to remove – so probably a session will clear the cave.

Before hauling started Alan ventured downwards to have a look at the dig face to see what devastation the endless rain had caused. Unfortunately after he slid down Carpal Tunnel, just before the right angled bend, he met a lake that was lapping against the stack of bags. Entering the lake and looking along the 12 foot of passage before the next right angled bend the air space varied from two to twelve inches. This means that the rest of the dig is completely underwater probably to a depth of 15 feet!

Clive, who is unable to use the link passage to descend to the further reaches of the cave, used the Pool Passage route. The whole cave was very wet with standing deep puddles where none have been seen before. Clive spent ten minutes bailing the pool (30 buckets) that leads to JW Passage but the water level did not drop so he plunged through the two foot deep pool.

With water levels like this the cave will take some time to drain so we will probably need a plan B for the week after next.

On exiting the cave, guess what, it was raining!

Alan

Aug 15th

MU5 work. Sue & Andy, Dave K, Rich, Clive, Tav, Matt & Mandy, Paul, Duncan met at W&H.

Report for Wednesday 1st Aug (Home Close Hole).

Clive North, Duncan Price, Mike Richardson and Tony Audsley (7ish - 9ish)

If I am allowed to use the phrase, 'a useful little session', then it was!

Clive and Mike went to the bottom and worked at the bitter end. Duncan was at the bottom of Tollens' shaft, hauling the bags of spoil up the conveyor belting slide and guiding them out of the third pitch. Tony worked the windlass at the top of Tollens' shaft and Rich ferried bags through Rough Diamond Rift (all six feet of it) and stacked them in the chamber below the entrance shaft.

By 9pm Clive, Mike and Duncan were feeling the effects of XS CO₂, I was certainly breathing heavily, but put that down to old age and infirmity.

Apparently, one of the effects of inhaling high levels of CO₂ is the production of a raging thirst, so all went to the W&H to take the cure. Clive, however, insisted on pouring his beer all over the table. Is this a new form of ATLAS ritual that I am not familiar with ??

Tony

Wed 25th July.

Ores Close

Tony Audsley, Mike R, Clive N & Dave K.

Donated to the cause, was a more suitable manhole cover than the new one purchased a few weeks ago. Although second hand, it's a cast iron cover complete with cast iron frame (as opposed to the polypropylene frame on the new one). The cover is also slightly larger and sits better over the enlarged opening and will blend in better due to its weathered brown colour.

We first put a ladder down to gain access to inspect the large cracked capping stone that lies just below the surface. This stone was not very secure, so we decided it had to come out. With the aid of a strop to prevent gravity getting involved, the two halves were levered out to the surface. A further inspection confirmed that nothing else needed to be removed, but cementing in a few chosen rocks into the void vacated by the capping stone and some general pointing around the top of the shaft will be required.

The cast iron frame was then cemented into position and the cover fitted.

All work carried out with muffled tools and whispers so as not to disturb the Lord of The Manor's afternoon tipple on the veranda in the sunshine.

Then re-group at the W & H's.

Dave K.

Windsor Hill Bedding Plane Caves ("Pigworld" Dig) 12/12/12

Matt, Mandy, Tav

A useful session extending the fine work done by Mr. Brock the Badger. A large quantity of compost, clay, rock and nesting material removed, providing access to a low drafting tube that we suspect must connect with the surface, though we were unable to prove vocal connection from any of the nearby extant holes in the quarry face.

Tav reckons we've gained about 8m of passage in this dig, which must surely be a contender for top of the Atlas league table for 2012...?

Matt.

Wed Dec 12

Windsor Hill Flood Sink Dave, Gonzo, Andy Watson (with moral support from Dylan, Sky, Chris and Chris's friend Richard).

An evening of spoil removal in the corner beneath the cliff.

We are now down a few more feet.

The stability of the cliff would benefit from closer scrutiny but progress is straightforward.

Doctor Nobel is now needed to remove a couple of errant boulders.

Gonzo

Wed Dec 12 - Nelson Butt (Middle Thrupe Farm) passed away this morning.

Nov 28 - Windsor Hill A belated report for last Wednesday incidentally, we all seem to be getting a bit lax with our reports nowadays (I know – not much to report!)

Gonzo, Dave K, Duncan, Simon, Naomi. Richard, Matt & Mandy (before they went off piggery-wards...)and Clive

A really good stream again (although it had dropped from the previous weeks height and was no longer flowing across the road by the house)

Top of the agenda was banging (as quietly(!) as possible the big boulders we had accumulated after the cliff-gardening session.

During the evening three separate small bangs were applied to three boulders followed by some nifty sledgehammering. The latter also resulted in a rock fragment in one of Gonzo's eyes and a flying shard gave me a bloody cleft chin!

The last of the bangs was to a giant rock at the base of the cliff which was half demolished – more attention to that this week.

As there was a stream also running through the next flood sink (3?) and as it seemed to be somewhat less than that flowing into our dig, someone had the bright idea of a 'dye-test' to prove/disprove the connection. Quantities of moss were duly thrown in but nothing appeared downstream so much churning up of the streambed ensued producing a very coloured stream.

The report soon came back that yes there was obviously a connection (which appeared to make a bit of a mockery of our digging at the upper sink).

It was agreed though that the size of the stream was approx half(?) of that sinking in the upper sink. In lower water conditions apparently there is no stream at all in the lower sink ie the lower sink must be acting as an overflow to the upper.....therefore keep digging chaps!

See you on Wednesday.....

All best

Clive

WEDS 28 November Windsor Hill

B Team – Matt & Mandy, Rich

After a brief but noisy stay at the Flood Sink, the trio made their way to Pig City, armed with a 1960s sketch survey of Horseshoe Cave. The Vs pointed out their dig which RW identified as one of the Bedding Plane Caves. After a quarter of an hour's scrambling along the overgrown and very thorny western face of the quarry, Matt stumbled across another small entrance which RW recognised as the true Horseshoe Cave.

The mud floor at the entrance was lowered and Mandy entered. In accordance with the survey, to the left was a short slope down to a bend and to the right was a short crawl to a left turn, giving a view along another 3m of passage to a choke. The ceiling here was festooned with sleeping moths (of the Lesser variety), preventing access. RW later counted seventeen.

After some more digging at the bottom of the left-hand slope, Matt was able to peer around the corner into the fabled Footpenny Extension, alleged to be about 20m long. Matt, however, could only see a short distance to a bend and was prevented from entering by another single outcast moth.

This site will certainly repay further examination, but visits will clearly not be possible during the winter months. In the meantime the Vs (or one of them at least) are keen to pursue the Bedding Plane Cave dig. The adjacent cliff face has a number of other small but potentially diggable holes.

RW

Windsor Hill

1. Wed 21 Nov

Chris Pollard (plus unnamed husky), Clive, Dave, Duncan, Gonzo, Matt, Mandy, Naomi, Peter Lumley (who last caved in the 1960s), Richard.

While Matt & Mandy worked on Horseshoe the rest of us carried on grading the cliff above the flood sink, winching back 3 large rocks for further reduction before libations.

Chris informed us that he had been digging the flood sink and gave up at a point several metres in where it became too unstable.

Hopefully we will be able to pass this point when we shift the overburden.

2. Sat Nov 24

Gonzo & Dylan (stick-retrieval and squirrel-bothering).

Quick trip to take photos of the flood sink and the 2 sites in the quarry.

The flood sink is taking a considerable stream (a greater volume than that at Viaduct Sink) and not backing up.

N.B. Between the 2 digs in the quarry and about 8ft up there is a small tube that has not been dug and might be worth a go with a bar.

Regards

Mark Lumley

Weds Nov 14

Windsor Hill - Flood Sink

Clive, Duncan, Gonzo, Naomi, Simon

An evening spent gardening the cliff face above the entrance.

Next week will recover the entrance which is now buried beneath our pile of spoil!

After that we should almost certainly be into something similar

Gonzo

Nov 07 Horseshoe Cave Windsor Hill. Whilst Team 'A' significantly disrupted the local topography above flood

sink, Matt and Mandy made passage into the adjacent quarry now known as

"Pig World" to look for Horseshoe Cave. After a short search of the far

end quarry side and being variously lacerated by brambles and stung by

nettles, Matt spotted a small entrance roughly meeting Richard's

description of "triangular" about 2m up. This was partially blocked by

soft earth but soon enlarged to allow viewing of a small chamber at the

base of a steep bedding plane. To my eyes it appeared that someone had

been there before, but that a significant amount of collapse and run-in

has since occurred, mostly filling what perhaps was the ongoing route.

The fill is mainly an earthy compost.

Taking turns with the crowbar we soon greatly enlarged the entrance and

were able to work inside the chamber, removing the soft in-fill, a fair

number of rocks, and some interesting green clay.

More sessions are needed, but it's probably still a 2 person dig at

present.

Matt.

WEDS 7/11 Windsor Hill

In rough order of arrival: Simon, Duncan & Naomi, Rich, Clive, Dave, Gonzo, Kate, Claire, Matt & Mandy. The last two went off to seek Horseshoe Hole and probably found it. (It needs digging out.) At Windsor Hill Flood Sink, where a stream was sinking, there were scenes from Ancient Egypt - teams of sweaty labourers, under the lash of overseers, hauling and toppling mighty rocks. Dave provided a primitive hauling engine which proved quite useful. By the end of the evening, great boulders were lying a little further to the south-east, to the general satisfaction of those present.

Mike joined us at the W & H.

2. Food for thought - some East Mendip water tracing results from the Bristol Avon River Authority and Wessex Water Authority 1973-74 (courtesy of W. I. Stanton):

Swallet	Time to Wells
Maesbury Swallet	72 hours
Thrupe Lane Swallet	44 hours
Thrupe Swallet	40 hours
Viaduct Sink	39 hours
Windsor Hill Swallet	24 hours
Hansdown Swallet	20 hours
NB Swildon's to Wookey	25 hours

RW

Oct 31st Windsor Hill

Dave, Rich, Alan, Naomi, Duncan, Mike, Clive & Tony A (in approximate order of arrival).

A very wet evening in the Waggon & Horses. Dave had actually been to Windsor Hill Farm and finding no one there had decamped to the pub early. Rich & Alan had been digging in the libraries at several caving club huts - the Shepton one being the most promising. Naomi & Duncan had spent the evening enduring self imposed light failure as a means to deter trick or treaters. The other admitted that they had no intention of digging that evening.

Plans were made for next year's activities. It was proposed that Tav be after dinner speaker at Xmas titled "What we found in 2013".

Duncan

Oct 31st Chancellors Farm

Kate L, Paul and Ali C

Spent a damp evening prospecting at Chancellors Farm.

A 'not without interest' level 3 has been located.

Paul

Oct 24th Windsor Hill

Simon and Clive were going to set-to with a sledge at the 'Crescent' dig – Simon had brought a sledge especially but after just a couple of blows the head fell off!

Dave K came to the rescue though with a Tirfer winch which enabled us to drag the offending boulder clear of the cave. This sufficed to reveal solid rock underneath (and almost everywhere else in fact!) Whilst some of the rock surfaces appear to show scalloping the development seems to be pretty immature and only prolonged banging would get us anywhere (possibly).

So maybe the 'A' team will be augmented by refugees from 'Crescent' this week.....

Clive

Duncan, Gonzo, Naomi to the second flood sink.

Removed much of the smaller debris dropped from above last week before setting to the bigger overhanging blocks with Dave's sledge hammer which was brought over later by Matt and Mandy.

The team were joined much later by Claire, Kate and Paul and the dropping of the final huge boulders from above gave the team much amusement before the siren call of the W&H proved too strong to resist.

Gonzo

Oct 17th Windsor Hill

Whilst waiting for the Windsor Hill 'A' & 'B' Teams to file their reports heres the one from the 'C' Team.....

Mike, Alan and Clive braved the rain to check out the mysterious Horseshoe Cave behind the pigpens in the north-west corner of the quarry.

We found a possible blocked entrance at the base of the cliff and a small triangular entrance about 30ft up. It was about a foot high and one could see in horizontally for around 6ft perhaps running off at roughly 45degrees from the cliff face. Earth-floored mainly and no obvious sign of it having been entered, disturbed or filled in. I assume this was Horseshoe. An easy dig if we wanted to with gravity-assisted spoil removal available!

The rain got so heavy that even the pig which had come out to see what we were up to, snorted and went back to bed!

Clive

Team A - Duncan, Naomi, Ken Smith (Aus), Forrest Wilson (US), Gonzo, Claire + Tony L.

Visited Windsor Hill Quarry Cave, Tav's Futile Dig and thence to Windsor Hill Flood Sinks after Hawkeye Price had got lost twice. #2 had the "roof" brought down and the resulting debris will need dealing with.

Duncan

Oct 10th Windsor Hill Cave

Al, Claire Cohen, Dave, Gonzo, Matt, Richard.

Carried on down past the old oil drum to reveal a low passage heading down a body length and turning right.

Claire then Matt entered a short, narrow, unpromising rift, loosely choked (Matt?) at one end and with a possible connection to the higher part of the cave at the back, beneath the hanging death.

No obvious ways on without 'persuasion' but plenty of signs that there is cave to be found here with perseverance and 'persuasion'.

Does the passage so far account for the 45 feet described or have we missed something?

Meanwhile Kate Lawrence, Mandy and Simon continued work on the dig nearby.

Gonzo

Oct 3rd - Windsor Hill Cave – Rich, Matt, Mandy, Gonzo, Paul, Dave K and Mike R

Dave K worked at the front and provided many rocks for Rich's fine wall. Mandy made some steps to prevent being dragged into the cave, Paul took some pics and Gonzo donated his belt for hauling.

On walking back to the cars we were met by a badger charging towards us. Other than that a normal Wed night with much p*@s taking and general accent abuse.

"Feed the bats, tuppence a bag"

Paul

Sept 19th

Cast of thousands descended on Windsor Hill for a reconnaissance trip to locate and assess digging possibilities.

Those present were – Clive, Tony A, Rich, Tav, Gonzo, Matt, Mandy, Dave K, Duncan, Naomi, Paul, Alan, Simon MK, Mike R (who did I miss?)

A walk back to the cars along the railway line and two tunnels added to an interesting evening.

Sept 26th

Rich, Simon MK, Tav, Gonzo, Matt, Mandy, Dave K, Paul, Naomi, Duncan.

The entrance to the quarry cave was cleared and made safer. Rich started on building the wall with the aide of the many rocks coming out of the cave.

Tav attacked the hole on the left of the face. I will let him update us further.

A productive evening and more of the same next week.

Paul

Sept 12 Balch - Dave & Gonzo to the Carpal Tunnel dig.

On my last visit to the dig (June?) I signed my name in the glutinous mud and the signature is still there with large cracks where the mud has shrunk back.

After doing a few digger-poser sketches we exited taking out the ladder and pulley for the winter.

Met up with the ATLAS armchair division at W&H.

Gonzo