

Wednesday 4th January 2006 - (THRUPE LANE SWALLET)

Rich, Gonzo, Dave K., Clive

**Rich's sketch survey of the digging area:
BA=Bone Aven, OWR=Old Wells Road,
GWR=Great Western Rift, SMK=Simon's
old dig**

To the end to investigate X Corner and take pictures at the top of Bone Aven.

Whilst Rich and Gonz started to remove the spoil secreted in X Corner early last year, Dave and I took a series of record pictures in Bone Aven. [These to follow

shortly (T.A.)]

I was about to climb into Boulder Alley - the draughting horizontal extension leading off, when I noticed fresh broken rock on the floor. In addition one of the dodgy boulders Dave and I had noticed last week had scars on it where it had been hit by something.

Further investigation showed that one of the rocks we were suspicious of had fallen since last week and the whole place looked unstable enough to deter any thoughts of further advancement for the time being. I suggest we let it settle for a while.

Returning to Rich and Gonz [at the X corner] a lot of spoil was removed to GWR only to reveal possibly - nothing! It could be a blank wall yet

Clive North

Wednesday 11th January 2006 - (THRUPE LANE SWALLET)

Dave K, Clive and Rich

Returned to the foot of Bone Aven for another ponder on what it all means! A thought had occurred to RW that perhaps the water from Bone Aven did not simply follow our 45 degree approach passage down into the phreatic meander, but that it may have bored straight down into the floor and on into the depths. The Archway Dig could be the roof level of a buried rift.

With all this mind, the team started to dig out the mud floor between BA and GWR. Apart from a few small rocks, the fill is thick clay under BA, changing to soft sand against the opposite wall, which is already displaying undercuts and vertical flutes. The hope must be that some slabs have dropped into the floor from the aven, bridging open passage, and then silting has taken place to conceal them. Our dumping space is limited and if there is a vast amount of fill in the floor, we shall simply never be able to get rid of it all. For the time being we will dig on and think positively.

Rich Witcombe

Saturday 14th January 2006 - (THRUPE SWALLET)

Dave King plus Andy & Steve Watson (MNRC)

A small stream was sinking by entrance, but no more than expected. Cleared leaf debris off entrance cover, obviously no visitors for some time. The entrance shaft seems sound, no sign of iron work having shifted.

Continued on down and through Advent Chamber, encountered the usual shower whilst dropping out of The Rubicon. The wooden wedges are still firmly in place chocking the large boulder on the LHS. At this point the stream usually drops through the floor by the chocked boulder, but instead it remains on the surface of the passage, all the way to Inside Out and along to the head of Persistence Pot. The whole length of Inside Out is water logged up to a depth of about 10 inches. I managed to get the stream to sink once again by the chocked boulder, only to have it reappear at the bottom of the 3ft step into the approach to Inside Out. The Gonz'ole at the start of Inside Out couldn't be re-established despite digging down to a depth of about 1ft.

Decision time, de-rig the old kit, get wet and pull out, or de-rig and drop fresh ladder down and

accept a good drenching. Decided to descend pitch and call it quits at the bottom. Once at the bottom, suitably wet and chilly, we couldn't exit without Andy and Steve at least having a little look inside Upside Down while I just listened to their squeals as they ducked under the shower and back.

Ladders, Lifeline & L/line krab removed. Unable to de-rig spreader or pulley due to seized gates. Another trip will have to follow to remove last pieces of kit, perhaps try and re-establish Gonz'ole etc. and take a more thorough look at general stability of stacked boulders.

Regards

Dave

King

Wednesday 18th January 2006 - (THRUPE LANE SWALLET)

The C (Clapped out) Team (Clive & Rich)

Investigated possible dig sites in the Bamboo Aven/Poltergeist Passage area. The terminal bedding plane in PP is very small, albeit with a slight draught, and spoil removal would be very labour intensive. All side passages are immature. Up dip from BA is similarly juvenile and heading to daylight. On balance, there is nothing in this area worthy of our talents.

Rich Witcombe

Wednesday 1st February 2006 - (THRUPE LANE SWALLET)

Rich, Dave K., Clive

Not much digging accomplished - mainly due to the fact we were sitting with Nelson and Gilda chatting about old times etc!

They were both in very good spirits and working towards moving to their new home in Shepton sometime in the spring.

I've taken a few nice shots of Nelson and Gilda in front of the farmhouse for Descent etc

Clive North

Wednesday 8th February 2006 - (THRUPE LANE SWALLET)

Gonzo (solo digging trip)

Nobody else about last night so progress was a bit slow. Dug down about a foot or more. There's a football-sized block that I can't quite get hold of (could do with a bolt in it to pull it out), and there's either another big boulder or the opposite wall is pinching in. Crowbar still goes down a full length and fill is loose in places.

It was noticeable that, despite the fact that GWR is now full, there is a resonant, booming echo from above that does not relate to Bone Aven - might be worth our while drilling straight up GWR, as it appears to be stable and there may be a negotiable section above that will take us back down dip.

Mark Lumley (Gonzo).

Wednesday 15th February 2006 - (THRUPE LANE SWALLET)

Two x Daves (King and Everett), One x Clive

Gonzo's football sized boulder turned out to be like a large loose molar awaiting extraction! The two Daves wrestled with it for a while and Dave K. finally succeeded in removing it. It was in fact pinched between the two solid walls.

The floor is loose enough but the walls are only about a foot apart with one wall apparently undercutting away somewhat. The feeling was though that it was not worth pursuing further....

Looking at GWR it is perfectly feasible to bang across and up and there is plenty of tipping space below (and in the recent dig) to enable us to follow the, still very evident, draught. We would need a committee meeting to decide if that is the best course of action though. What we agree would be worth doing though is to get compass bearings along both the OWR and GWR rifts to see if they really are parallel, or whether they converge.

With the latter in mind, I kept a look at on the way back up the OWR and spotted, at floor level on the left, a small rift running into the wall at 45degrees. It's about 50ft up from the end of OWR near the block across the passage which we squeeze over (old firing point).

With the aid of a chisel I was able to dig out Simon's compacted bang debris from years gone by and open what appears to be possibly a bedding plane running off horizontally to the west. I was able to probe it for about 2ft to the limit of the chisel through stream debris and cobbles. It would be well worth a poke next time - if it gets anything like serious the drag tray is close by which can be used to take the spoil up to the area above the block.

Clive North

Wednesday 22th February 2006 - (THRUPE LANE SWALLET)

Gonzo, Richard and Dave K

A trip to draw up a _____ of Bone Aven/GWR and investigate Clive's new dig.

While Dave and Richard sorted out the tools to move back I drew up a rough survey of the area.

This confirms that GWR is heading N while OWR heads away ENE. Went up into Bone Aven to continue the survey into the 'ify' rift. This time, without adrenaline pumping out of my ears it didn't look so intimidating so, after a cautious look under the gravity-defying block I called to Dave who came up and guided me through. On the other side I was disappointed to see that the rift pinched out into a tiny slot with a crazed mud floor.

Standing up, with solid walls on both sides I could see back to where Dave had by now climbed up, and look over the full span of Bone Aven which is pretty stable at this higher level.

So where did the bone come from? There's just a hint that at the N end it might be turning E but you would have to traverse over the dodgy, hanging blocks to tell for sure.

We inspected Clive's dig on the way out. **Uninspiring.**

Mark Lumley (Gonzo).

END OF AN ERA

That was about it. The team's enthusiasm for the Thrupe digs had finally evaporated. Both digs left unanswered questions. Thrupe Swallet had an open way on at the end, but was proving too difficult to dig and there was little promise of a breakthrough in the foreseeable future. At Thrupe Lane Swallet, there were problems with lack of dumping space and the way on was not obvious. It was time to look somewhere else and the general opinion was that the Fairy Cave area would repay investigation.

And so

Wednesday 1st MARCH 2006 - (FAIRY CAVE)

Gonzo, Mandy Voysey, Dave K, Rich and Tav (Yes Tav!)

Reconnaissance visit to Fairy Cave to look at the Fernhill choke. The Fernhill choke is accessible from four points. Gonzo pushed some way into the lowest access point, some trial digging was done at the two midway points and Graham Price's large Disappointment Chamber was located by Tav by climbing up between the wall and boulders in the highest access point. This chamber is probably too high and too far to the west to provide an easy route into Fernhill but it is certainly on the line of the choke. All agreed that there were plenty of underground options to pursue. A number of tools were left in the top access point.

On the surface, the spoil tip above the blocked Fernhill entrance was briefly investigated as well as a new surface dig site in nearby Limekiln Wood. Photos of the old Fernhill entrance will be sought from Prew in an attempt to locate its position in relation to the present cliff face.

Fine starry night with a light dusting of snow.

Rich Witcombe

Wednesday 8th MARCH 2006 - (FAIRY CAVE)

Mandy Voysey, Gonzo, Tav, Dave K and Rich.

Although Tav had a further look at Disappointment Chamber, the main digging effort was focussed on the middle access point to the choke. Gonzo pulled out rocks from the lower middle route, following an inclined solid left hand wall, while Rich watched over him from the upper middle route, inserting rocks now and again to prevent run-in. Rich then had a short spell at the lower face, uncovering a large stal-covered block which just might form a fortuitous roof ahead. The rocks beneath will have to be carefully removed next week and we must hope that it stays

"overhead". When more room has been created, it might just be possible to dry stone wall the vulnerable right hand side. We are now about 6' into the choke. All the rocks were taken up the terminal passage by skip and dumped close to the upper choke access point.

Adjourned to the Oakhill Inn for yarns and drinks.

Rich Witcombe

Wednesday 15th MARCH 2006 - (FAIRY CAVE)

Gonzo, Dave K, Rich, Tav, Mandy & Matt Voysey.

The smaller rocks supporting the large slab in the lower middle dig were carefully removed until it became obvious that there was very little holding up the slab. After a general reappraisal it was concluded that to push on at this point would be suicidal. Attention switched to the upper middle access where there is a solid rock roof extending inwards for about 6'. Ahead is the usual jumble of rocks with a void up to the right. As digging progressed, rock slides increased the size of the void and a halt was called. A further check on safety will be made next week.

Tav examined most of the side passages on the way in and out, and one high level rift chamber showed some promise. There is a stalled-up choke which may yield to a bang.

Rich Witcombe

Wednesday 22nd MARCH 2006 - (FAIRY CAVE)

Rich, Gonzo & Dave King.

Gonzo earlier in the day took a walk around the quarry to take photographs to match with early photographs from when Fernhill entrance was still exposed. Preliminary results viewed, further photographs and matching to be done. Three of us then proceeded

on down Fairy cave and up into Disappointment Chamber for a short photographic session.

This was followed by further investigation in the boulder choke upper middle, it looked as though there might be larger cavities beyond the immediate obstruction, so an attempt to move a couple of large boulders using a rope from a safe distance. No significant movement achieved.

With no further progress possible, time to exit. But before doing so, Gonzo went down to the lowest entrance to the choke, while Dave stayed in the middle choke, as it turned out the cavities viewed from the middle choke are the upper reaches of the lower choke entrance.

A significant draught blowing over the duck from Hillier's was evident. More interestingly, just inside the lower choke entrance, an outward blowing draught from the rift in the left hand wall. The rift is heading East and Hillier's turns back on itself to run North & West parallel with Fairy. Could the rift lead to the continuation of Fairy running parallel or into Curtain Chamber (Fernhill)?

No hanging death boulders, no unstable boulder slopes, just a 6" wide rift to enlarge.

I think "**Not Without Interest**" is the appropriate phrase at this point.

Dave
Thu, 23 Mar 2006 21:43:30 -0000

King

Wednesday 29th MARCH 2006 - (FAIRY CAVE)
Gonzo, Richard, Mandy Voysey, Dave [K].

A quick look at Brian Prewer's radio location points for the end of Fairy and the presumed site of the Fernhill entrance before popping down to the dig at the end of Fairy.

Old dig spoil was removed from the rift to suggest that it might widen out a little lower down. The next job is to enlarge the approach (carefully!) and drill along the rift.

Tony Boycott (plus drill etc.) are coming down next week. Both Clive and Tony will be there the following week so we could split into 2 groups and tackle the dig beyond Jonathan's chamber in Withyhill as well.

Mark Lumley (Gonzo).
Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 09:19:09 +0100
X-Mailer: Apple Mail (2.733) **[good man!]**

Wednesday 5th April 2006 - (FAIRY CAVE)
Gonzo, Mandy Voysey, Rich & Dave K

It being a fine evening and there being no bang man present, the team decided to explore surface possibilities in the region of Fairy Cave Quarry. A few small holes were looked at, but nothing exciting.

We wandered on to look at Harridge Wood Hole which has been bat-grilled by the Somerset Wildlife Trust - good site, probably a collapsed chamber. Then took a moonlit stroll around Ashwick Grove, noting the strongly running risings.

Adjourned to the Oakhill Inn.

Rich Witcombe
Date: Fri, 7 Apr 2006 12:06:30 +0100 (BST)

Wednesday 12th April 2006 - FAIRY CAVE
Rich, Gonzo, Mandy, Matt, Tav and Clive....

Gonzo spent a happy hour or so removing boulders, rocks and mud from the approach to the rift. A brief visit by three BEC (Pete Hellier, John Noble and Sean Howe), held things up for a while but eventually two full length

holes went into the right-hand side of the start of the rift where the bedrock is in fact split into two large blocks, one on top of another.

Another short hole went into a large block at floor level on the right, which is supporting a 3ft high pile of boulders which will need to be dealt with as a result, plus a little hole in a block in the floor at the bend.

All this should produce an intensive evening of rock shifting next week.....

(I'm not there then!)

Clive

North

Date: Thu, 13 Apr 2006 10:26:05 +0100

Wednesday 19th April 2006 - FAIRY CAVE
Gonzo, Tony Boycott & Rich

After clearing a good deal of broken rock and instigating a few "controlled" collapses, Gonzo drilled three holes in the left hand wall of the rift. Tony B applied the necessary, adding a loop under a loose block on the opposite wall. The evening concluded satisfactorily.

Rich

Witcombe

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 2006 17:30:34 +0100 (BST)

Wednesday 26th April 2006 - FAIRY CAVE
Dave King and Gonzo.

The last session had done its job on the left hand wall but the intimidating boulder was still in situ. We brought this down, together with its big brother in an 'exciting' ten minutes, before removing more spoil, which now resides in the duck, awaiting a larger team for removal.

In the long term the right hand side of the corner requires a bit of TLC to make it completely safe.

Along the rift prospects look interesting, with an encouraging, choke-filled enlargement downwards at floor level. Ahead the rift is solid-walled, narrow and totally choked after about 6 metres.

Looking up, the rift is narrow, with completely solid walls

on both sides but you can see up, past a nice, white curtain and a few small stals to a section that appears to be more spacious. (Dave and I deliberated about whether this was negotiable, but it is difficult to tell from this angle). The larger section would be on about the same level as the archway where we initially hid the digging tools. Could this be the continuation of Disappointment Chamber?

Mark Lumley (Gonzo).
Date: Thu, 27 Apr 2006 09:05:01 +0100

Thursday 27th April 2006 - FAIRY CAVE
Gonzo and Clive

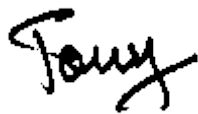
To the end to drill the large boulder, blocking the way on at floor level plus another in the approach. This was done successfully.

Clive North
Date: Sat, 29 Apr 2006 21:01:58 +0100

Monday 1st May 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Tony Audsley, Rich Witcombe

Started walling a cement/stone permanent lining for the second shaft at Rose Cottage Cave.



Tony Audsley

Wednesday 3rd May 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Mark Lumley [Gonzo], Richard Witcombe, Dave King, Clive North

A busy evening spent repacking the rocks in the 'middle' dump area (Rich), removing the spoil heap from the approaches to the duck and clearing back the bang debris etc from the face (Gonzo et al)

A small cross-rift has been opened in the floor of the dig, the right hand branch of which appears to draught

slightly. Much rock was removed from the whole area making work at the face quite comfortable.

Looking horizontally along the rift I noticed that there is rock 'fill' in the rift, about 8ft ahead, with pieces apparently larger than would be able to fall down the rift from above. Could this be the start of a boulder choke or choked chamber perhaps? Gonzo is keen on the possibilities of going vertically up our rift as he feels it looks a lot wider about 15ft up. I haven't been able to see much widening myself as yet. Gonzo may poke a camera on a stick up there for pictures to find out. This is worth doing as it would be a long campaign to get up there - not that the lower route isn't a considerable undertaking....

More frolics in fairy next week...

Clive

North

Date: Thu, 4 May 2006 20:38:58 +0100

Monday 8th May 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Henry Bennett, Tony Jarratt (JRat), Darryl I, Richard Witcombe, Tony Audsley

Bailed out the surface dig and commenced clearing the debris from the week before. In the afternoon, TonyA and RichW continued walling in **[very ta]** unpleasant weather.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Wednesday 10th May 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Richard Witcombe, Mandy Voysey, Dave King, Clive North + two Barnstable cavers! (Matthew Amner and Simon Tanner)

The arrival of the two from Barnstable to do a Hilliers trip caused a few headaches at first working out the safest strategy to accommodate their trip plus our digging.

It was agreed that Dave would follow them down Hilliers (they didn't know the cave) and make sure that they had

exited safely. We wouldn't continue until we had met up with him to give the all clear. All this was further complicated by an impending major thunderstorm so a contingency was planned taking into account the possible flooding of the entrance to Hilliers....

All this came to nothing in the end when it emerged that the two cavers hadn't actually been able find the **entrance** to Hilliers (let alone go down it!). So, instead they joined the rest of us (minus Dave, who was already looking for them) at the dig for a while and helped move some rocks. Having searched all of Hilliers, Dave shouted through the duck that he couldn't find them. He was rewarded with a dry exit through Hilliers rather than back through the duck into Fairy.

Dig-wise the last session had done a good job and a satisfyingly large amount of rock needed removing. The bigger bits went up the approach passage for 'filing' by Rich whilst the 'gravel' got tipped by Mandy at the back of the rift above the dig face. A single hole was drilled, etc.

Looking along the rift ahead, the rocks mentioned last week look increasingly like the start of a rock-choked continuation or maybe boulder choke. The 'slightly-draughting' rift-ette at floor level remains to be cleared and examined properly. The floor area generally is filled with wet compact sandy mud and appears to be A-shaped (we are at the top of the 'A') - a bar pushed down at 45° on the right went in for about a foot with no obstruction.

The plan though is still to push on ahead above this widening the open rift and see what happens about 8ft ahead where the jammed rocks start, all the while bearing in mind the mud-choked passage beneath.

Work continues next week....

Clive
Date: Thu, 11 May 2006 17:29:36 +0100

North

Wednesday 10th May 2006 - Horrington Hill

Tony Jarratt (JRat), Adrian Coward (Somerset Wildlife Trust), Henry Dawson.

Adrian showed us a mineshaft that had been found on

Horrington Hill. A tractor had broken through the buried capstone of an unrecorded shaft. Shaft 1.6m by 0.9m 28m deep to soil and rock blockage. Shotholes - possibly 18th century.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Monday 15th May 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Tony Audsley, Tony Jarratt, Richard Witcombe (Visitors Pat Cronin, Henry Bennett)

A.m. Dug at the end and prized out lots of rock from the end of the passage. 13 loads hauled to the surface.

P.m. TonyA and RichW continued walling while JRat prized out more rock. The end is now essentially a mud-filled passage

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Wednesday 17th May 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Mandy Voysey, Dave King, Richard Witcombe and Clive North

The last session had been very successful and had cracked the rock well ahead along the rift. A good pile of rock was removed back up the approach passage by Dave and Rich whilst Mandy and Clive put the smaller stuff at the back of the rift near the dig.

We are now about half way along to the mysterious jammed rocks.

Another hole was applied to the business end of the rift. The large boulder which had been perched on the slope above the start of the dig was rolled down into the dig to be dealt with also.

A strong draught was very noticeable in the second squeeze along from the entrance. Presumably this is due to a connection somewhere to the quarry face as there was no air movement at all lower down.

A clearing and chiselling session is planned for next Wednesday.....

Clive
Date: Thu, 18 May 2006 10:39:14 +0100

North

Sunday 21st May 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Henry Bennett, Tony Jarratt, Tony Audsley, Richard Witcombe, (Visitors: Vern Freeman, Roger Robinson (Vicar), Barrie Wilkinson)

In the morning HenryB and JRat dug out clay and rocks from the end of the passage and got wet bums.

In the afternoon TonyA and RichW started raising the temporary scaffold shoring to allow wall building below.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Wednesday 24th May 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Rob Taviner (Tav), Mandy Voysey (plus banana!), with a brief visit from Lee Hawkeswell (MCG), who had to leave promptly as only half of Jacky Ankerman made it through the squeeze!

Very wet on surface, no sign of water in the cave.

The loose spoil was shifted and several blocks removed from further ahead. The face is fractured into large blocks which are proving awkward to move as they are still large, vertically bedded and go down a considerable distance into the floor.

Mark Lumley (Gonzo).
Date: Thu, 25 May 2006 09:09:29 +0100
X-Mailer: Apple Mail (2.733) **[Good man!]**

Friday 26th May 2006 - FAIRY CAVE [Two visits in one week !]

Dave King, Mandy Voysey, Niall Finshie(?) and Clive North (The Friday Fairies)

Dave and Clive managed to find enough unresolved chiseling to have a go at and remove a respectable

amount of rock.

The addition of a new, sharp, drill bit made all the difference to drilling progress and two full holes went into the right hand wall approach, half way in, to widen access and two short holes into the troublesome block in the floor and the vertical slab in the rift ahead. These, plus an *attack* on the crack at the top of the vertical slab should have produced some good sport for Wednesday.

Clive

North

Date: Sat, 27 May 2006 11:54:38 +0100

Monday 29th May 2006 - HORRINGTON HILL

Tony Jarratt, John Williams (Tangent),
Henry Bennett, Richard Witcombe,
Tony Audsley, Bob Smith, Hannah Bell

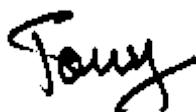
Shaft capping day. Concrete was mixed at the Belfry and taken over in two loads in the morning and afternoon. Manhole cover and steelwork cemented into position at the top of the shaft. Pleasant mid-day break at Hunters'.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Tuesday 30th May 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Tony Audsley, Richard Witcombe

A pleasant couple of hours in the early evening working on the shaft wall, followed by a debriefing session at Hunters



Tony Audsley

Wednesday 31st May 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Mark Lumley (Gonzo) and Mandy Voysey.

Cleared spoil up to the void behind.

We left an irritating fractured section for Clive and Dave to

finish because we knew they'd be upset to find nothing to do on their next 'off-Weds' trip...

Tav selflessly joined us at the pub.

Mark Lumley (Gonzo).
Date: Thu, 1 Jun 2006 11:47:14 +0100
X-Mailer: Apple Mail

Sunday afternoon 4th June 2006 - HORRINGTON HILL

Tony Jarratt (JRat) John Williams (Tangent), John Noble

John Noble arrived with ice lollies for all. 12 loads of mud hauled out to the surface by hand. Tangent opened an ongoing hole with rocks rattling away beneath him.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Monday 5th June 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Henry Bennett, Tony Jarratt (JRat) Tony Audsley, Richard Witcombe

A.m: HenryB and JRat dug at the mud and gravel choke and hauled 30 loads to the surface

P.m: TonyA and JRat continued digging at the choke and removed another 20 loads

Evening: TonyA and RichW raised the scaffolding and wiggly tin shoring again and then continued walling up the shaft.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Tuesday 6th June 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Dave King and Clive North

An enjoyable session of rock-wrestling ensued with Dave soon dispatching the jammed blocks Gonzo had kindly left

for us. During the course of the evening considerable damage was done to the right hand wall - large sections being prized loose.

ps Driving past the Oakhill Inn on the way to the dig, I noticed a blackboard outside proclaiming Wednesday Nights to be 'Senior Citizens Night'! Dave and I would like it to be known that this is not the reason we have chosen to dig on Tuesday on occasion....!

Clive

North

Date: Wed, 7 Jun 2006 12:36:38 +0100

Wednesday 7th June 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Dave King and Mandy Voysey

Well, I knew that this was not going to be an easy evening when I arrived to find that some kind of defensive mound of woodland had been placed by the others to keep me at bay.

Pressing on we ambled our way down to the dig, to find that Clive's efforts had been really quite successful and there were rocks aplenty to be moved. There was much sweating and worrying of rocks abound. There was also much debate on the issue of whether Gonzo's loose fingernail was worse than Dave's loose toe-nail.

It did appear that some of the rocks were stubbornly refusing to budge no matter how long Gonzo spent poking them, (but then his mind was not really on the job with all the anxiety of Wayne Rooney's Metatarsal) **[Who?? What??]** and he soon started the distinct wailing of "pub! pub!".

We had been working jolly hard, so it was decided that a trip to The Oakhill was absolutely imperative to replace all lost minerals. Dave then started another bout of rock bothering, undeterred Gonzo and I left him to it while we headed out.

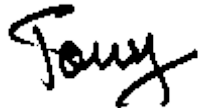
Mandy

Date: Thu, 8 Jun 2006 18:38:08 +0100

Wednesday 7th June 2006 - HORRINGTON HILL

Tony Jarratt (JRat), John Williams (Tangent), Tony Audsley

Tangent went to the bottom of the shaft and dug. JRat and TonyA were surface support and hauled using JRat's (well, actually Nigel Taylor's) Landrover. 14 bags of clay and stones to the surface. Communications need to be improved.



Tony Audsley

Friday Evening: 9th June 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Henry Bennett, Tony Jarratt, Bob Smith, Observer: Hannah Bell.

More digging in the new entrance. 33 loads hauled to the surface, there is almost a pitch at the digging face now.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Sunday Afternoon: 11th June 2006 - HORRINGTON HILL

John Williams, Tony Jarratt, Bob Smith, Observers: Richard Witcombe, Hannah Bell, Adrian Coward and his wife.

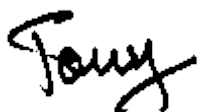
Dug out part of the choke at the bottom of the shaft. Tangent squeezed into 3m of sloping boulder floored passage. Lots of cow bones were uncovered. Much more digging is needed to enter any possible passages.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Monday Evening: 12th June 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Richard Witcombe and Tony Audsley. Visitor: Bob Smith.

2½ hours walling at the bottom of the shaft - nothing spectacular - just enough to create a thirst.



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening: 14th June 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Mandy Voysey, Matt Voysey, Mark Lumley

Digging Wed 14th

Well, there wasn't any - instead Mandy, Matt and Gonzo did a tourist/ photographic trip in Withyhill before sloping off to the pub with a rather bronchial Whitcombe who was found loitering around the quarry, muttering obscenities at the multitude of climbers...

Mark Lumley (Gonzo).
Date: Thu, 15 Jun 2006 08:12:24 +0100
X-Mailer: Apple Mail (2.733)[**Good Man!**]

Sunday: 18th June 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Paul Brock, Tony Jarratt (Jrat), John Noble, Phillip Coles, Visitor: John Williams (Tangent).

22 loads of broken rock hauled out to the surface. Bad air at the digging face stopped play.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Wednesday Evening: 21st June 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Tony Jarratt, Fiona Crozier, Ben Ogbourne, Paul Brock, Sean Howe, Alex Livingston

24 loads hauled out to the surface, including one very large rock. CO₂ cleared from the digging face with a vacuum cleaner.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Wednesday Evening: 21st June 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Mandy Voysey, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Dave King, Rob Taviner (Tav) and Clive North.

Several buckets of mud and rocks deposited in the nearby rift.

There was also still an enticing bit of 'loose solid' at the very back of the dig, left over from the last clearing session. Tav and Clive had a go with various bars trying to loosen it further. It was about a yard long, 18 inches wide and 8 inches thick hanging from the roof at the back.

In the end it took strong man Dave to convince it that it would be happier on the floor!

By the evening's end we had drilled three full length holes on the right-hand side and a short one in the aforesaid boulder - there will be plenty to clear next time!

Talking of which - next Wednesday is now an official night off for the Fairy Cave diggers - no one is available! We'll pick up where we left off the following week.

Clive

North

Date: Thu, 22 Jun 2006 11:28:37 +0100

Saturday Afternoon: 24th June 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Jane Clarke, Tony Jarratt.

8 loads and one toad taken out to the surface.

Jane Clarke.

Sunday: 25th June 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Jane Clarke - **[solo digging!]**.

4 loads out and another toad - or possibly the same one as yesterday?

Jane Clarke.

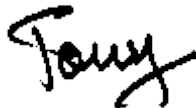
Tuesday Afternoon: 27th June 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Richard Witcombe and Tony Audsley

Three hours spent raising the shoring and scaffolding another 6 inches, in preparation for some more walling. In the process we (OK, I) managed to bend the tripod a little bit.

We need to get the next section of wall in fairly quickly to avoid a collapse.

Heard a curlew calling as it circled the dig, also a Raven - identified by Rich - they all sound the same to me.



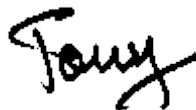
Tony Audsley

Wednesday Morning: 28th June 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Richard Witcombe and Tony Audsley.

The scaffolding and one wooden shoring panel were raised a few more inches. The resulting gap was then walled up quickly before the fill had time to realise what was going on, so it didn't collapse.

The photograph is depressingly similar to one taken on 1st May, (but we are a bit further up the shaft).



Tony Audsley

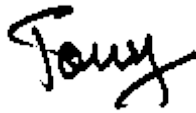
Monday, 3rd July 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Richard Witcombe, Tony Jarratt (JRat) and Tony Audsley

Morning: Tony made a rather ineffectual solo attack on the buttress blocking the way on at the bottom of the

dig. Three loads of broken rock, one of mud, one lizard and one (very small) toad hauled to the surface. The pit at the end of the dig is now about 8 ft deep.

Afternoon: Rich and Tony and Jrat raised the shoring in preparation for more walling.



Tony Audsley

Monday, 3rd July 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE CAVE

Jane Clarke and Tony Jarratt

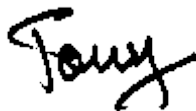
To Prancer's Pot and Halfway Dig - filled six bags

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Tuesday Afternoon, 4th July 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Richard Witcombe and Tony Audsley.

Continued walling at the bottom of the shaft. Removed yet another small toad and released this one in the Cuthbert's depression, so it shouldn't find its way back. Finished work as a thunderstorm rolled round us.



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 5th July 2006 - FAIRY CAVE

Dave King, Rob Taviner (Tav) and Clive North.

The previous session had indeed produced a fine crop of rubble plus a brand new 'monolith' of rock standing in the middle of the dig, neatly replacing the one which had disintegrated.

Many large lumps were dealt with by Tav - secreting them up the main passage above the duck.

By the end of the evening it was becoming very obvious that the dig was in fact closing down - we had reached the 'jammed rocks' we had been aiming for and it was blatantly obvious that they had not come from higher up the rift nor been the start of a choke.

They were in fact just slivers of bedding which had peeled off the sides of the rift and fallen a few inches or so. Bedrock with corresponding jagged edges to the loose rocks could be clearly seen just above. Taking into account the width of the jammed blocks, the 'open' rift visible had reduced to just an inch or so at most. It was unanimously agreed to 'call it a day' at this site and we duly removed the tools, etc. up to the alcove. They remain, along with the cable, etc. for us to remove next week.

Clive
Date: Thu, 6 Jul 2006 16:47:16 +0100

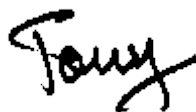
North

Tuesday Afternoon, 11th July 2006 - ROSE COTTAGE SHAFT

Richard Witcombe & Tony Audsley.

Raised the western section of wooden shoring, the wriggly tin and the scaffolding. Then completed a section of walling at the bottom. Three hours, rather slow progress because the wooden shoring was really happy where it was and took a lot of persuading before it would move.

(Digging Tools)



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 12th July 2006 - Fairy Cave

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Richard Witcombe, Mandy Voysey, Rob Taviner, Dave King and Clive North.

A good turn-out of diggers. The quarry was busy also with climbers that night and there were cars a plenty in the lane - including ours as the lock on the carpark gate had

been changed by CSCC and no one had a new key.

All of the digging gear was brought out to the surface and Tav, Mandy and Clive had a look at a prospective new dig in a steeply ascending rift/bedding-plane not far from the entrance. This ends in the underside of what could be a boulder choke - it could be worth a look and is certainly feasible from the digging and spoil removal point of view (gravity assisted!)

We tried to have a look at Tav's proposed dig at the end of Balch but found that all the lockable entrances in the quarry were, indeed, locked - with the new locks. So we contented ourselves with a wander into Aven Chamber of Balch's Cave, which is ungated. Dramatic large chambers and good formations and helictites.

Discussions continue as to where we can next apply our skills.

An informal site discussion will no doubt take place after Bob's funeral on Monday....

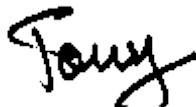
Clive
Date: Fri, 14 Jul 2006 11:56:53 +0100

North

Tuesday Afternoon, 18th July 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Richard Witcombe and Tony Audsley

Three hours in blazing hot sun. Raised the shoring and continued with the walling. Richard had the forethought (A) to bring two bottles of beer and (B) to leave them in the stream to cool off while we were digging. The lad has potential.



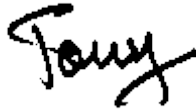
Tony Audsley

Tuesday Afternoon, 25th July 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Richard Witcombe and Tony Audsley

Three hours in blazing hot sun. Raised the shoring and continued with the walling. Richard had the forethought (A) to bring two bottles of beer and (B) to leave them in the stream to cool off while we were digging.

OK, I know it's a cut and paste from last week, but what else can I say about it?



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 26th July 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Mandy Voysey, Clive North, Rob Taviner (Tav) and Richard Witcombe.

Visited Balch Cave, entering via Erratic Passage and descending into Pool Passage and Bulrush Way - very fine phreatic tunnel with some good surviving formations. We passed through a dug out squeeze into the terminal passage. This is a walking height cross rift, blocked at one end by a stal flow and at the other end by a draughting boulder choke. The cave here is about ten feet below the quarry floor.

Commenced hand digging - no tools - almost immediately, clearing rocks from the floor at the boulder choke end and stacking them behind a retaining wall built at the foot of the stal flow. One large dagger-like slab may cause problems as we undermine it.

Equally intriguing is a 6" by 9" phreatic arch with a stal floor opposite the point of entry. This emits a very strong cold draught - CN likened it to the Kingsdale Master Cave!!

All in all, a site **not without interest**. Well done, Tav, for spotting it.

Exited via the Pool Passage entrance and adjourned for a very welcome two pints at the Oakhill.

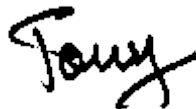
Rich
Date: Thu, 27 Jul 2006 14:39:56 +0100 (BST)

Witcombe

Monday Afternoon, 31st July 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Richard Witcombe, Tony Jarratt (JRat), Tony Audsley. Henry Bennett (acted as observer and nursed his hangover).

Another three hours, much the same as before except that we removed the wiggly tin shoring from the south side of the shaft and rescued an annoyed-looking toad from behind the shoring.



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 2nd August 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Rob Taviner (Tav), Clive North, Dave King & Richard Witcombe.

Back to the Pool Passage terminal dig with a heavy burden of tools, etc.

Both the boulder choke and the stal floored draughting hole were tackled. The latter has a layer of stal in front of it perhaps 4" to 5" thick, and resisted all attempts to break it up by hammer and chisel. CN resorted to a pattern of holes. Meanwhile Tav tackled the boulder choke. The large vertical block was jammed in place with "girt" rocks and Tav passed back small stones and debris. By the end of the evening there was a view into a loose ruckle up to the left (not worth pursuing) while the right hand wall could be seen continuing into a mud and rock choke (this should be diggable).

Enjoyed a couple of pints in the Oakhill.

Rich
Date: Thu, 3 Aug 2006 20:39:25 +0100 (BST)

Witcombe

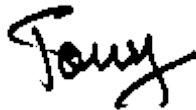
Tuesday Afternoon, 8th August 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Richard Witcombe and Tony Audsley

Our attempt on the world record for the slowest shaft construction continues and it looks like we are in with a good chance. Removed the wriggly-tin from the northern face of the shaft and continued with the walling.

Part of the problem is finding walling stone that **A:** is usable and **B:** will satisfy Richard's refined sense of aesthetics (æsthetics?)

(Condition **B:** is the **really** difficult one).



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 9th August 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

**Mandy Voysey, Richard
Witcombe, Mark Lumley
(Gonzo), Rob Tavinier (Tav), Dave
King and Clive North.**

Gonzo went underground in advance of the rest to get on with photography in peace and quiet (some of his results are attached - although his shot of the tube dig looks like a mousehole! Look for the rope on the right hand side to give it a bit of scale!)

Last weeks session had worked quite well and the stal floor was well cracked. Dave managed to lever up most of it (6in thick) quite quickly to reveal a deep layer of muddy sand and gravel underneath - excellent result. The right hand wall continued down to the right at an approximate 45° angle whilst the left hand wall is more or less vertical.

By the end of the evening a nice pit a good three feet across and a foot deep

The Mousehole

had been excavated. We want to drop it another 12-18 inches yet to provide a decent face to work into. Ahead, we can see about 4-5ft along a horizontal (and very windy!) passage about 2ft wide at present. Stal. concretions on the left wall show it was once a crystal pool - there are thin stal. 'crisps' of flat stal lying on the floor.

In the dig at the end, Tav and Rich cleared a fair amount of rock out and came to the conclusion that a vertical slab within the dig would have to go - come what may. So a couple of small holes were drilled in it, etc. This may have precipitated a major collapse unless the roof is stronger than we fear...

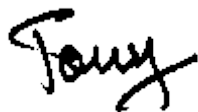
Incidentally, assuming that we are still digging in Pool Passage, I propose that the dig at the end be called Pool Passage Choke (or dig) and the tube 'Poolside'. Objections on a postcard.....

Clive North
Date: Thu, 10 Aug 2006 10:42:18
+0100

Monday, 14th August 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

**Richard Witcombe, Ray
Deasey, Tony Audsley**

Removed the remains of the temporary shoring, i.e. the wooden doors and the scaffolding and then continued slowly walling upwards.



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 16th August 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Richard Witcombe, Dave King, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Ray Deasey, Alan Gray and Clive North.

Last weeks gentle bang on the block in the boulder choke had done its 'gentle' thing and removed most of the base of the rock, leaving the remainder perched atop a shattered base. Ray took it upon himself to remove the offending object - it happily turned out not to be supporting anything (apparently).

Unfortunately, it looks like the guest diggers removed the supporting' blocks that Tav and I had positioned in the floor close to the 'megalith' block and had started attacking the others surrounding it. This has made the big block a little loose (it vibrates quite well when rocks are hammered close-by). The removed rocks have now been replaced.

The upshot is now we have now decided to concentrate on the Poolside Passage dig and, assuming we return to the boulder choke dig, we will remove the megalith completely on safety grounds, see what else comes down and hopefully stabilise the area before continuing.....

Meanwhile.....back in the Poolside dig - the floor continues down to an unknown depth in fine easy-to-dig sand! The approach was lowered to a couple of feet deep before progressing horizontally forward - the resulting spoil being shared with Richard's (now rather high) tip and also spread across the main passage floor.

By the end of play the worst of the flowstone slab had been removed from within the tube and the floor removed to two feet depth and the tube pushed in about two feet. During this process slabs of what had been the base of the crystal pool were removed - these consisted of a jumble of fine stal. 'crisps' each of which would be about 1-2mm thick and up to a few centimetres across. I take these to perhaps have been cave 'ice' - a thin stal. layer on the surface of the pool which have periodically sunk under their own weight, to the bottom of the pool.

These pieces are so fine (and delicate) that they stand no chance of survival in the dig environment so Gonzo intends to do a 'rescue' trip in and retrieve them.

We now can see for about 6-8ft along the top of a well-defined, horizontal, phreatic-style passage towards a flowstone covered 'wall' ahead. In front of this is an 18" wide block of rock which looks as though its probably fallen from the roof somewhere close by. Its freshly broken and is scarred and scratched so is probably due to the quarry blasting. Let's hope there's not too much of that stuff ahead....

The draught still beckons strongly!

Gonzo did a series of temperature readings courtesy of a digital thermometer from Brian Prewer - the results are:-

Location	Time	Temp.	Remarks
Surface	1900hrs.	no test	(raining hard)
Inside entrance	1910hrs	16°C	no discernible draught
Pool passage midway	1920hrs	14°C	no discernible draught
Arch dig	1930hrs	10°C	strong draught from arch
Boulder choke dig	1935hrs	11°C	some draught in
Pool passage midway	2200hrs	13°C	no discernible draught
Inside entrance	2205hrs	14°C	slight draught
Surface	2205hrs	14°C	

So the dig draught is the coolest - 10°C equates to 50°F which is close to the average of 52°F for caves and cellars in the UK. (Even cooler in fact which is even better!)

A return is planned for Wednesday - easy digging - just beach buckets and spades for the sand!

Clive

North

Date: Fri, 18 Aug 2006 11:09:09 +0100

Wednesday Evening, 23rd August 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mandy Voysey, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Dave King, Clive North (plus Richard-I've-got-a-bad-back-Witcombe on surface support)

After the heavy rains the quarry was well-flooded which didn't bode too well for the cave. Certainly, it was wet with deep pools and the final squeeze at the end of Pool Passage had a large shallow wallow in it.

The dig had suffered too and our previous dry, sandy, easy dig had turned into the traditional squalid mud bath we are all too used too. However, we pushed on for another yard and the spoil was spread across the floor of the main passage in front of the boulder choke.

By the end of the evening, we had got up as far as the collapsed rock which was sitting on a flowstone floor. This was finally removed and we are now faced with hammer and chisel work to remove the said flowstone plus the sand bank beneath, before reaching a right angled bend ahead. The draught continues unabated.....

Clive

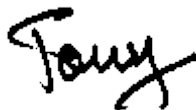
North

Date: Thu, 24 Aug 2006 11:19:24 +0100

Monday Afternoon, 28th August 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Wally Ufimzew, Tony Audsley, Richard Witcombe

Walling continues - very close inspection of the stonework would reveal that it is getting closer to the surface.



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 30th August 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

B³ (the Big Balch Breakthrough!)

[NOTE: Last week's report (23 Aug) omitted to mention that the diggers had reached an (almost) passable squeeze and could into see open passage beyond. However, Tav (who had originally suggested digging at this site), was in France and the diggers wanted to wait for his return. The complete team could then enter the virgin cave and explore passages measureless

On Mendip it is frequently more satisfying to dig in hope than to arrive ... read on ...^(T.A.)]

Rob Taviner (Tav), Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Clive North, Dave King, Richard Witcombe, Mandy Voysey, Alan Gray and Ray Deasey (with a fleeting visit by Lee Hawkswell and Jacky Ankerman).

There was much excitement in the air for this week's dig as we had previously left our hole on the point of break-through and we had all been anxiously waiting for the return of Tav before taking the plunge into the unknown.

We all sat around in a most relaxed manner while Tav pulled out the remaining spoil and made the hole big enough for us all to fit through. Having never experienced a break-through before I was chuffed as nuts to be sent through first, and quickly hopped through the hole, round the bend and through an additional squeeze to find myself in a large passage stretching off into the distance.

Hmmm...as I sat there waiting while the squeeze was being beaten into more of a Clive shape, I noticed that some of the boulders had the impression of being stacked and things just looked generally worn. We had a bit of a moot and concluded that we had probably broken into the lower section of Christmas Cave, but we should all keep an open for any obvious signs that others had been there before.

Then it all got a bit weird... Tav and I, having just concluded that a flattened bit in the mud may indeed be a knee-print, lifted our heads to find a plastic bucket laying nearby, closely followed by a hoe. Much fun was had as Rich enthusiastically exclaimed that "**nobody has been in this cave for 40 years**", only for the bucket to turned revealing a **shiny new bar code**. We found a really impressive pit, and it was as I stood at the top of this that I realised that I had been there before. Bugger!! We had broken into the section of Balch previously accessed through a very tight squeeze from Erratic Passage!

In conclusion... breaking into known passage, though not as good as making a new discovery, is quite funny and we all had a jolly outing regardless. We have succeeded in making an interesting round trip if nothing else, and Dave and I had great fun shoe-horning ourselves through the squeeze to Erratic Passage to exit through one of the upper gates.

Wednesday Evening, 6th September 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

B³ +1

[**NOTE:** *Strictly speaking, the breakthrough of 30th August did not enter Erratic Passage itself, but rather a 150ft long side-passage discovered by John Walsh of the BEC in 1999. John never named the passage, but he did note the breakthrough passage as a promising dig site ! (T.A.)*]

Mandy Voysey, Richard Witcombe, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Dave King, Alan Gray, Clive North

Rich and Clive ferried gear to the choke via Pool Passage whilst the rest enjoyed the thrutch from Erratic into 'John Walsh's Passage' as it has been dubbed (our 'breakthrough' of last week!)

Gonzo took pictures in the dramatic 40ft inclined pot whilst Alan and Rich rearranged boulders on the floor of the choke approach.

Clive drilled two full holes and four short holes in the offending boulder (carefully), etc. Next week, the idea is to take some galvanised water pipe to use as a prod for dislodging dodgy rocks in the roof. Could be an interesting evening!

Clive

North

Date: Thu, 7 Sep 2006 18:56:00 +0100

Wednesday Evening, 13th September 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mandy Voysey, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Richard Witcombe, Dave King, Alan Gray, Robin Taviner (Tav), & Clive North.

Tav instigated a surveying trip with Mandy to tie-in the existing survey with the John Walsh Passage etc.

The rest found last week's session had done a neat job of removing the monolithic boulder which had appeared to be holding up the 'roof'. A 10ft length of sycamore branch had been cut and brought down in lieu of metal prodding rods to deal with loose rocks. This was deployed by CN to great effect and some hair-raising piles of boulders duly

appeared where we had been nonchalantly lying last week.

These were all cleared and then crafted into a fine Great Balch Wall by Rich, leaving a very roomy digging area.

In the meantime, Dave had volunteered to check for a voice connection with the surface and was duly heard calling us from the base of the cliff in the quarry above. Clear communication was soon established and he was deduced to be just above the first narrowing of the passage, above the obvious jammed boulder.

Uncertainty then prevailed about where to dig next - straight on along a narrow rift under giant boulders or a probe in the floor.

This was further complicated on the surface by Tav discovering that the compass bearing for the dig appeared to be heading straight for Christmas Hole (I think that was the deduction....)

Tav will report back when he finalises the survey data....

Much discussion ensued in the pub about alternative dig sites.....

Clive

North

Date: Fri, 15 Sep 2006 22:57:12 +0100

Sunday 17th September 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Trevor Hughes, Neill Usher & Tony Jarratt (JRat).

50 loads out from the bottom of the surface shaft.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Monday 18th September 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Anne Vanderplank, Henry Bennett, Steve Milner (CEGSA), Tony Audsley, Richard Witcombe & Tony Jarratt (JRat)

36 bags of spoil out from the bottom in the morning and more walling at the top of the shaft in the afternoon.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Wednesday Evening, 20th September 2006 - Thrupe Lane Swallet - Repair Work.

Richard Witcombe, Rob Taviner (Tav), Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Mandy Voysey, Matt Voysey, Dave King, Tony Audsley, Alan Gray and Clive North.

Rich had been along in the afternoon and repaired the steps going down to the entrance. Under the cliff face, a large stream sink had appeared about 20ft from the cave entrance where water used to sink in high flood. This sink connects directly with the head of the Ferret Run and may one day open up a through route....

At the base of the shaft, most of our rockpile from previous digs had shifted down passage and piled up against the lower gate filling the passage to the roof. Even the largest rocks from the retaining wall had moved several feet. Looking along Plaster Passage revealed the first bend to the left, which had previously been a flat out crawl, was now a washed out rift about 3.5ft deep - what has happened beyond remains to be seen....

Stemples and pulley were set up at the head of the shaft and the evening spent whizzing skiploads of rocks up to the surface to be tipped in the base of the main depression. By the end of the night about ¼ of the debris had been shifted.

The plan is to use all the biggest rocks to form an inclined 'floor' running up into the updip choked rift to stabilise the area and resist further 'washouts'. This will all take a few sessions to accomplish before the cave is open again and we can return to full digging elsewhere.

Clive

Date: Thu, 21 Sep 2006 10:46:20 +0100

North

Wednesday Evening, 20th September 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft.

Sean Howe, Ann Vanderplank, Henry Bennett, Ben Ogborne & Tony Jarratt (JRat).

60 loads out from the bottom of the shaft.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Thursday, 21th September 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft.

Tony Jarratt (JRat) - Solo digging.

20 bags filled and left at the digging face.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Friday, 22nd September 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft.

Anne Vanderplank, Henry Bennett, Neil Usher & Tony Jarratt (JRat).

60 loads out to the surface.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Monday, 25th September 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft.

Anne Vanderplank, Tony Audsley, Richard Witcombe & Tony Jarratt (JRat) - Visitors: Mike Wilson & Frank, plus John Williams (Tangent) in the afternoon.

In the morning ... Anne, JRat and (briefly) TonyA dug at the bottom of the shaft and hauled 11 loads to the surface. JRat then demolished the boulder in the middle of the digging face.

In the afternoon ... Rich, TonyA, JRat, continued with the walling and Tangent passed the occasional rock with his good (left) hand. (For those that don't know, a few days ago Tangent cycled head-down into a parked 4x4 and broke his collar-bone).

*(CLICK ON IMAGES TO
ENLARGE)*

*Looking down the 5m
shaft
(Jrat at the bottom).*

¾ down the shaft.

*The digging face at the
bottom of the shaft.*

Wednesday Evening, 27th September 2006: Thrupe Lane Swallet - Repair Work(2).

**Richard Witcombe, Rob Taviner (Tav), Mark Lumley
(Gonzo), Mandy Voysey, Matt Voysey, Dave
King, Tony Audsley, Alan Gray and Clive North.**

*(Click on images to
enlarge)*

A fast and furious evenings work in the rain. By the end of which the lower gate had been completely uncovered and Gonzo had been through and reported no problems beyond in the immediate vicinity. Next week should see the last of it gone and maybe a start on jamming the big boulders across the rift to impede further 'slumps'.

Dave King in the adit.

At the end of the evening the opportunity was taken to check out Plaster Passage etc. What a sight ! What had been an 18" high gravel along the railway had been changed into a jagged banded rift up to 4ft high in places ! All the rock had been power-washed up to the roof. Below the first drop, a large boulder had been swept 10ft along the passage and the remainder all the way to Bamboo Aven was completely clear of mud - just bare rock everywhere !

*Gonzo at the bottom of
the entrance shaft.*

The low section into Bamboo Aven had surprisingly a few inches of airspace and Dave King and Clive quickly dug themselves through to find Poltergeist Passage similarly swept clean for half its height. Water had obviously backed up here and flowed on down towards Bleak Hall. Here again, the passage was blasted clean of mud and there was just jagged, banded rock everywhere. In Bleak Hall itself nothing much had changed except that 2/3rds of the dug passage below it had disappeared under spoil ! The continuation towards The Old Wells Road had taken water too and there were piles of clean rock in the floor. This is where exploration ended due to the call of the pub !

The overwhelming thought at seeing all this was how terrifying it would have been to have been trapped underground during this flash flood. I find it hard to believe that survival could have been possible anywhere along the route I have described. There may have been a few places where there would have been a chance to get above the water (Bamboo Aven for instance) but the chances of literally being swept away would have very great indeed....sobering thoughts indeed.

Clive North
Date: Thu, 28 Sep 2006 23:22:35
+0100

Wednesday Evening, 4th October 2006: Thrupe Lane Swallet - Repair Work(3).

Mandy Voysey, Richard Witcombe, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Dave King, Alan Gray and Clive North.

The last two flood events had little effect on the scene at the base of the shaft.

Rich and Clive manhandled the big boulders, which we had saved for the job, into position in the floor and jammed them securely across the rift. Mandy finished clearing up all the obviously loose material at the upper end of the rift and by the end of the evening we were happy to declare the cave 'Open' again!

Next week we shall return to John Walsh's Passage in Balch and investigate the choke at the top of the passage just beyond the head of the 40ft pot.

Clive
Date: Thu, 5 Oct 2006 11:04:22 +0100

North

Some background to the recent flood

When the cave was first dug into, water sank in the bottom of the depression and there was a bank of spoil between the depression and the old entrance

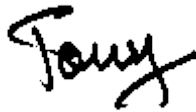
shaft. Gradually, water sinking at the base of the cliff washed this bank away and for many years the normal stream sank at various points along the base of the cliff and also in the depression. In times of flood, water also flowed over the old, backfilled entrance shaft, along the mined adit and down the "new" entrance shaft.

The latest flood has opened a route under the cliff face and has entered the Ferret Run from **behind** the boulder pile at the bottom of the entrance shaft. The boulders have been washed out and deposited at the narrow point in the Ferret Run thus blocking it effectively (but rather neatly).

Monday Afternoon, 9th October 2006: Rose Cottage Shaft.

Richard Witcombe & Tony Audsley. Visitor: Nick Gymer (BEC).

More walling - can't say much else about it, except that Nick (BEC member) made tea for Rich (WCC member), but he would prefer that no-one knows about this.



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 11th October 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mandy Voysey, Richard Witcombe, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Dave King and Clive North.

To JW passage, where Gonzo set up a short ladder attached to the end of the existing handline and starting poking about at the choke at the base of the shaft. Rich built a retaining wall in the main passage close to the pot to receive future spoil, whilst Dave forced himself into the flat out crawl cum squeeze running updip as previously suggested by Tav. This apparently was about 15ft of very low squeeze on a solid rock floor leading to what appeared to be a small chamber.

Gonzo, aided by Mandy, had a trial dig in the base of the shaft and confirmed it continues downwards at a similar angle in sandy mud. A small tube comes in on the right hand side. A continuation in the roof of the rift was also probed.

There we have it - I have spoken to John Walsh and he is quite happy for us to be digging here, so all systems are GO!

Clive

North

Date: Thu, 12 Oct 2006 16:07:31 +0100

Thursday, 12th October 2006 - Longwood Valley Sink

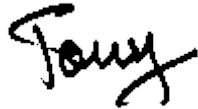
Clive North & Tony Audsley.

A visit to check the "safety" of the entrance. Longwood Valley Sink is in the Longwood Nature Reserve, administered by the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation and a recent safety audit carried out by the trust had decreed that the entrance gate was no longer effective in excluding small children and dogs and that

*Longwood valley Sink
Winch and entrance adit*

SOMETHING MUST BE DONE. The dig remains open on condition that it is effectively gated, so we will have to fix it.

A photograph of the site is included for nostalgia's sake.



Tony Audsley

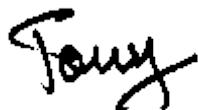
AARRGH !! Hard Disk Failure.

Sorry about the delay in updating the website, but I had a hard disk failure at the beginning of the week. In the good old days, when disks were **DISKS**, they failed with a fearsome shrieking noise. Now they just stop working, not even a whimper. That's progress.

All that is needed now are the backups Oh dear.

Can't do much else, so here is a picture of a proper hard disk to be going on with - capacity 32768 13-bit words - weighs about 100 lbs.

*DEC DF32.
(When disks were DISKS)*



Tony Audsley

Monday, 16th October 2006: Rose Cottage Shaft.

Tony Jarrat (JRat), John Noble, Tony Audsley, Richard Witcombe.

A.m. JRat and John Noble filled 15 bags of spoil and stacked them at the bottom of the shaft.

P.m. TonyA and RichW more walling.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Wednesday Evening, 18th October 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Richard Witcombe, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Dave King, Darrel Instrel and Mandy Voysey.

A general poke about in Balch Cave. We had two main objectives for this evening... the first was to have a good looksie in the tight section at the end of John Walsh/Barcode Passage for the draughting hole that we had heard about, and the second was to clear out all the sticky mud from the connection to prevent us muddying up the rest of the cave too much.

Dave and I headed in first with our mission to find the hole of draughting tightness while the others set to work clearing up the connection behind us. I was to go through the tight section first to see if I could squeeze along further that Dave had done previously, so after removing my belt and pointing out that I had been eating like trooper recently I managed to push myself into the narrow slot.

The hole was indeed located after a good deal of sweating and noise-making. It dropped down about 10ft but was too narrow for a person to fit down. There was no way on straight ahead and the foot of the rift appeared to be blocked with muddy stones. Further back from this and to the right there was also a very narrow tube of a too-tight nature that seemed to continue in the same direction.

This adventure over, we rigged the extra ladder down the 40ft pot and returned to the others where we were promptly set to work on mud removal. Then tragedy struck in the form of the careless destruction of the infamous barcode bucket by Daryl. Though still usable, its condition worsened throughout the evening until there was nothing for it but to carry out the carcass and head off to the pub.

We now have a couple of extra dig options for the future as not only have we got the tight rift that may connect with Pearl Way but Rich has also found an interesting undercut at the foot of our abandoned dig.

Mandy
Date: Thu, 19 Oct 2006 18:13:45 -0000

Voysey

Saturday, 21st October 2006 - Longwood Valley Sink

Richard Witcombe and Clive North.

We've done half the job to date - constructed a robust stone and cement wall at the path end of the entrance (with hole for water) plus a rock and cement cap for the other end. Next Saturday we plan to do the other two sides and hopefully also construct a stone capping for the gate to sit on.

We also cleared out a lot of rock, branches, scaffold poles and bits of winch wire from the entrance and checked out the cave itself which was in fine shape (clean washed and looking tantalising!).

Clive
Date: Sun, 22 Oct 2006 13:03:58 +0100

North

Sunday 22nd October 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Tony Jarrat (JRat), Paul Brock, Pete Eckford.

17 loads out and lots of bags and skips filled from the bottom dig and the ledge dig. A huge rock was hauled out of the bottom dig and broken up by star hero Paul. "Top diver" Eckford assisted with hauling.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Monday 23rd October 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

John Noble, Tony Jarrat, Richard Witcombe, Tony Audsley.

A.m. JN and JRat. Digging at both sites in the shaft and they both look good. Drilled two holes in the roof of the lower dig to make the ongoing, mud-filled tube more

accessible. Lots of bags filled.

P.m. RW, TA and Jrat. More walling.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Thursday Evening, 26th October 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Dave King and Clive North in the cave. Mandy Voysey and Matt Voysey in the pub. (Mandy had a sick note and was excused digging)

Much surprised to see the previously dry gour pool below the stal slope crawl filled to the brim with water (well over welly height) making an head first descent an interesting experience ! Equally surprising was the fact that the low squeeze before the end was bone dry !

We spent a busy evening moving buckets of 'shingle' from the main choke area and pouring them into the soup which makes up the floor of 'The Link' (as I'm calling it). This was followed by several large slabs, also from the end, plus a couple from the lower retaining wall (do I hear a deep intake of breath from Richard?) tied together with smaller rocks.

By the evening's end Dave had constructed a very fine scenic, rustic stone path - the whole width of the passage, right to the end of The Link. With luck this should keep us out of the mud and save the cave from a lot of the mud despoilation that would have otherwise occurred.

In addition, an extra bucket was taken down for the John Walsh pot dig plus the scaffold pole from Longwood to be used as the top belay for the ropeway.

Clive
Date: Fri, 27 Oct 2006 11:47:21 +0100

North

Saturday, 28th October 2006 - Longwood Valley Sink

Clive North and Richard Witcombe.

Finished cement and stone walling round the gate. Hopefully this now satisfies the Health and Safety requirements.

Monday, 29th October 2006 - Rose Cottage Cave and Shaft.

A.m. Tony Jarrat (JRat), John Forder, Miranda Forder (MNRC), Darrel Instrel.
P.m. Tony Jaratt, Tony Audsley, Richard Witcombe.

The Cave (a.m.): JRat, John and Miranda went to Aglarond 1,2 & 3, where top photographer John took some snaps. On to Prancer's Pot where some of the spoil was cleared. Had a look at Halfway Dig - looks good.

Surface Shaft Dig (a.m.): Darrel cleared out about half of the spoil and JRat later drilled one hole in the roof of the bottom dig.

Surface Shaft Dig (p.m.): RichW, TonyA and JRat. More walling.

Tony Jarratt (JRat)

Wednesday Evening, 1st November 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mandy Voysey, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Richard Witcombe, Tony Audsley & Dave King.

Tony A came out to play with shiny bits of metal and a length of steel cable. Using a couple of stemples, the cable was rigged just below the roof line of the pitch in John Walsh's passage.

A few test hauls with a bucket suspended from a pulley lead to a few adjustments, but still the pulley tends to catch on the roof of the inclined pitch.

A couple of solutions, either a lower profile pulley, or a tube with a suitable bucket and hauling line attachment points.

Then with the original piece of iron work, from which the knotted hand line and ladder was belayed to, discarded, the ladder was rigged from a higher point making a much more civilised affair (none of us are getting any younger).

Whilst the engineering work proceeded, Mandy, Rich and Dave kept themselves busy with a bit of housework in the passage between the connection and the pitch. Rocks were stacked, and mud cleared from the floor of the passage. This, along with the paved (official stamp of approval received) "Balch Pathway", should hopefully reduce the amount of mud transported through the cave.

Till next Wed,

Dave

King

Date: Sun, 5 Nov 2006 22:08:41 -0000

Wednesday Evening, 8th November 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Richard Witcombe, Rob Taviner (Tav), David King, Tony Audsley, Mandy Voysey and Clive North.

A full turnout for what promised to be a gentle evening 'tinkering with the rigging'. DaveK opted for an early bath, whilst the rest busied themselves with:-

1. Removing the old pulley from the cableway and attaching Tony's new-fangled, but highly efficient double-wheeled 'super-pulley'
2. Tightening the main cable
3. Experimenting with differing loading methods
4. Lowering and levelling the crawl to the pitch head
5. Raising and levelling the platform at the pitch head and finally:-
6. Digging sand out of the choke !

During the evening 22 skips of sand winged their way speedily to the top of the shaft - the system works well.

Another skip needed for next week so we can do an exchange and speed things up a bit, plus a couple of smaller containers for transferring sand from the dig into the skip.

The dig itself looks promising - not unlike a sand choked sump in fact....all to dig for!

More next Wednesday.

Clive North
Date: Thu, 9 Nov 2006 10:40:06 -0000

The new pulley on test.

Wednesday Evening, 15th November 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Mandy Voysey, Richard Witcombe, Rob Taviner (Tav), Dave King and Clive (plus Tony Audsley - pub support).

A gruelling photo session in the John Walsh shaft - enlivened somewhat halfway through by Gonzo discovering that he had left the lens cap on throughout all the previous shots (necessitating a reshoot), only then to discover that in fact he hadn't after all!

When the hauling team arrived, Mandy set-to in the sandpit and soon the skips were flying up the shaft. By the end of the evening approx 55 skips had been hauled up and we had used up over half the tipping space in the main passage.

There was a surprise whilst I was probing a continuation of the sand-clogged roof tube we are following, right at the back of the alcove we have uncovered. I thought at first I had uncovered a bone sticking upright about a foot below the compact sand. Further investigation revealed a short crowbar!

Obviously JW had been this far in before and the whole lot had since slumped. So we are hardly into the virgin sand yet.....

A lively 'debrief' in the pub ensued....

Clive

North

Date: Thu, 16 Nov 2006 17:15:14 -0000

Monday Afternoon, 20th November 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Richard Witcombe, Tony Jarratt (JRat), Tony Audsley.

A.m: JRat over a dozen bags and one skip filled with spoil from the inlet tube dig.

P.m. Rich, TonyA & JRat more walling and re-alignment of the spoilheap.

Tony Jarratt

Wednesday Evening, 22nd November 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Richard Witcombe, Mandy Voysey, Dave King, Clive North, Matt Voysey, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Tony Audsley - with Rob Taviner (Tav) as moral support in the pub.

We all squelched down through the rather damp cave and on Rich's insistence, each had to carry a rock from the link passage to the stacking area so that Rich could continue building spoil-retaining walls.

Once at the dig site, Matt, Gonzo and Tony went to the bottom to continue work on the pit being excavated there. For some strange reason, Gonzo insisted on calling this the "Arm Pit".

Matt in the pit, helped by Gonzo

Looking up the tube

Clive and Dave took position at the top of the tube and spent the evening hauling skips up the cable-way, while Mandy and Rich worked in the dump, hauling skips through the arch, stacking spoil, building retaining walls and crafting little clay figurines.

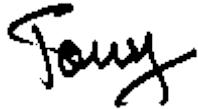
By the end of the evening, 48 loads had been excavated, hauled and stacked and the roof line in the pit was thought to be levelling out. Most likely this is "diggers optimism".

On the downside, the travelling pulley system jammed in mid-tube about halfway through the session. A pulley wheel had fractured. Dave lowered himself down the tube and managed to free it and then fit the spare. The damage was caused by the device slamming into the cable mounting at the

The fractured pulley wheel

bottom. We have no more spare wheels, so this will have to be fixed.

We were joined by Tav for a debriefing session in the Oakhill Inn and pints of "potholer".



Tony

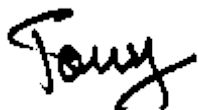
Audsley

Date: Fri, 24 Nov 2006 09:00:55 -0000

Monday Afternoon, 27th November 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft

Richard Witcombe, Tony Jarratt (JRat), Tony Audsley.

More walling - with periodic retreats to the Belfry to avoid heavy rain (wimps).



Tony Audsley

Wednesday Evening, 29th November 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Richard Witcombe, Mandy Voysey, Dave King, Clive North, Rob Taviner (Tav), Alan Gray.

My seventh digging evening with the ATLAS diggers. As they have asked me to write up the digging log for the evening, I now know I have been accepted into the team. Or is it the fact that no one else can be bothered? **[Whatever gave you that idea? (T.A.)]**

Since the pulley failed last week due to its slamming into the stop, a new pulley had to be fitted and Dave, after climbing a narrow rift at the bottom of the tube, spent half an hour working with his arms behind his head adjusting the stop. I helped by holding the screwdriver!

Mandy and Richard stacked the sand behind the dry stone wall at the top of JW Passage. Clive and Dave were hauling up the buckets, Tav was loading the buckets at the bottom of the shaft and I was digging the spoil from the end.

No progress was made investigating the very small horizontal tube and all the digging efforts were concentrated in enlarging the digging area. After 26 buckets were hauled and the spoil dumped Richard declared that the stacking space at the top of the passage was full so we retreated to the pub.

At the pub it was agreed that future digging sessions would require the spoil to be bagged at the dig face and the bags transported (using a chain of people) down JW passage, through the tight S-bend and deposited on the floor of Pool Passage.

Alan Gray
Date: Thu, 30 Nov 2006 17:52:58 +0000 (GMT)

Wednesday Evening, 6th December 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Dave King, Mandy Voysey, Rob Taviner (Tav), Clive North and Richard Witcombe (surface support in the pub).

A gentle evening lifting 14 well-filled bags, in the skip, to the top of the shaft then transferring them down JW Passage, through the Z-bend finally into Pool Passage. No problem - just need more bags - Tav is going to source some from a shop he knows.

I'm suggesting that we use the three 1-ton bags Dave has to reinforce and raise the platform at the base of the shaft. This will aid filling the skip considerably. Another 'step' can be constructed

below as well. This will all take quite a bit of spoil from the end too....

Cheers

Clive

North.

Date: Sat, 9 Dec 2006 20:29:24 -0000

Wednesday Evening, 13th December 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Alan Gray, Mandy Voysey, Matt Voysey, Dave King and Richard Witcombe.

A productive evening after an early start - the offending boulder was despatched in 10 minutes, leaving a fill of compacted sand and occasional small rocks, which may well have come down off the roof during quarry blasting.

While Gonzo enlarged the approach to the dig, cutting a trench backwards into the slope, Dave and Richard (on his first trip down the pitch) levelled a platform and installed a 1 ton aggregate bag. By the end of play about half a ton of spoil was stacked in the bag while a further 32(?) bags were ferried back to Pool Passage. John Walsh's old metal belay was then used to consolidate the lip at the bottom of the sandy slope.

We now have a more comfortable, horizontal approach to the low arch and **all to play for** next Wednesday.

Regards

Mark

Lumley

(Gonzo).

Date: Thu, 14 Dec 2006 09:34:19 +0000

Wednesday Evening, 20th December 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Mandy Voysey, Mark Lumley (Gonzo), Rob Taviner (Tav), Alan Gray, Dave King, Richard Witcombe. and Clive North.

A good session with Mandy, Alan and Clive at the sharp (sandy) end, Gonzo and Rich at the 'edge' and Tav and Dave 'in the tube'.

I think I heard that 42 sacks of sand were dragged, in two goes, down to the tip in Pool Passage.

The dig itself is still well choked but looking promising - the end has all but levelled out with a nicely waterworn roof pocket appearing which looks as though it's the top of a 'leaning' A-shaped passage. We're in about 5-6ft from the main pot. The sand in the floor is becoming more compacted and clay-like which may be good news - it may be nearing the base of the passage/pot - plus a few slightly waterworn rocks are appearing.

A pressing need is now to provide a secure base for the 1 ton 'sandbag' currently hanging from the lower stemple. The idea is to fix a bolt or two very soon to achieve this.

A final session for the year next Wednesday.....

A Merry Christmas to all our readers!

Clive

North.

Date: Thu, 21 Dec 2006 12:34:10 -0000

Wednesday Evening, 27th December 2006 - Balch Cave [Fairy Cave Quarry]

Dave King, Rob Taviner (Tav), Alan Gray, Doug Harris, Clive and TONY LITTLER!!!!

A good turn out considering the temptations of the fireside and yet more Yuletide excess.....

Tav and Doug Harris spent the evening merrily overfilling the bags while Tony, Dave Clive and Alan struggled to keep up!

In all 25 bags eventually made their way to Pool Passage. Several didn't survive the journey - Doug Harris has promised some for us (although I'm not sure if and when he's joining us again).

Drilling didn't take place due to lack of suitable drill bits. Tav is going to look out his for next week. I'm not out for the next two sessions, but Dave has my drill and the bolts and can take care of the necessary.

Happy New Year to all our readers!

Clive

North.

Date: Thu, 28 Dec 2006 16:38:14 -0000

Friday, 29th December 2006 - Rose Cottage Shaft & Cave

Trevor Hughes and Jane Clarke

[Trevor's account of making the connection between Rose Cottage Shaft and the PPP (Paul's Personal Project) area in Rose Cottage Cave, next-door]

Started off in the squalid surface dig. Joined by Jane and then both to PPP. Jane back to surface dig side and then a fence pin used to make the connection. Another hour or so of digging enabled an exchange trip to be done. Three bags on the surface side, five or so on PPP and a pile of loose debris - a clean-up needs to be done.

NO MORE DIGGING IN THIS HOLE - HOORAY !!

Trevor Hughes.

