

# 1990

1<sup>st</sup> January Coolagh River Cave  
Solo

Late start after an all-night late session; breakfast with Noel Walsh. Pat Redmond opted out the chance of a trip to wash away the cobwebs: sunny, but cold. PR off to solo Mirror Wall. Pouldonough South; in the field entrance. Found handline on pitch, rigged own. Down Main Drain; water level required swimming the canal; foam a metre up the walls. Scrambling down the boulder pile, near the sump, encountered a Dublin party of six: nice to meet others underground. Invited to join their trip; passing the climb told handline was not theirs; recovered own. Joined them to exit Polldonough; a nice bunch. Checked the other entrances for cars; none found. Spoke with Willie Scales; cavers seen about on Stephens Day. Arranged to meet in McGann's; a cracking session.

2<sup>nd</sup> January Cullaun V

Mihal Murphy, John Reynolds, Christine Dineen

Obliged some of the group with a trip to the Red-Carpet Series. Crawling through the wet beddings did not appeal so much as when spoke of in the bar last night. No problem; they enjoyed the rest of the place and now know where the entrance is.

3<sup>rd</sup> January Ballyhickey Lead Mine

Solo

Jack Garrihy spoke of a lead mine, near Quin. Passed through the area en-route to the ferry; nothing obvious. A postman, near Quin Abbey, gave directions. Delighted to see a chimney and engine house emerge from the tree line; wandered the overgrown area. Found a large pool: a possible flooded opencast? Victorian in appearance; pressed for time, sped for the ferry: need to find who owns the land?

10<sup>th</sup> January Yorkhouse Cave, Brockley Combe

Solo

Working in Backwell; revisited the place; disappointed it's used as a squat.

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

Solo

Steady trip to IV by way of the Mud Sump. Climbed up to the old dig; no attention since it's abandonment. Through to V, line continuous; exiting IV, collected a mass of small, red worms in the suit; removed and washed them out, exited main streamway.

14<sup>th</sup> January Wookey Hole

Phil G Churches

Training request from PGC. Found another inquisitive eel ten metres from 9:2 en-route to 20. PGC is competent, an observant individual, who unfortunately listens far too much to fanciful epics and negative opinions of others. Many of whom have far less experience than he. PGC hasn't grasped, individuals who regular experience desperate, epic escapes, clearly demonstrates they are not actually developing basic cave diving skills. Explained, such unreliable individuals need avoidance.

18<sup>th</sup> January

Lost Veronique Le Guen

20<sup>th</sup> Jan Boreham Cave

Dig Hastilow, Phil G Churches

All through sump I. DH dived II first; the plan; meet at the air bell. Prior to following DH PGC announced, he was having issues. Discovered his confidence undermined having listened to fanciful difficulties passing The Slot, from two “experienced” Somerset CDG members. So, PGC wanted “test” the slot before following DH. PGC easily passed back and forth said slot, three times. Eventually remarking it was nowhere near desperate as described. Even though recognizing the bullshit PGC deferred his dive. A lot of time lost encouraging him: left PGC to catch up DH; hurrying through the slot, on turning around to the right, face inadvertently forced down along the gravel bank, activating the purge, causing a free flow. Changed valves, to clear out the grit, but not before losing twenty odd bars. By now well pissed off, with all the phaffing about; not at all in the mood; returned through slot to II to await a pissed off, likely cold, DH. PGC explained the circumstances to DH; all agreed it a total ball’s.

28<sup>th</sup> January Llanharry Iron Mine, Cardiff.

Nigel Burns

Day trip; curious that little vandalism has taken place to this recently closed mine, being so close to habitation. No underground access. Extensive array of industrial buildings.

2<sup>nd</sup> February Boreham Cave

Martin Bishop

Had related to MB the sorry tale of the previous trip; MB rang, (28<sup>th</sup> Jan); he’d arranged permission. Warning: bad parking remained Metcalfe’s principal complaint. Suggested go up the Thursday, to enjoy a long weekend. Water crystal clear and cold; an uneventful dive. Geoff Yeadon had suggested wearing boots, for the climb. MB ascended swiftly; the consummate climber. Entirely unprepared for the place; photos do not convey the beauty of China Shop; just stunning. Stayed on the edge of the pool avoiding damage; the place just superb. Back to main stream, wandered on, through the choke, along main passage: uneventful exit. Into Ingleton for a pint: bumped into various bodies. Met Jim Eyre, who invite all to a party; cracking session. Entertained JE, relating the Yugoslavian trip; once again thanked him for the important introductions. Invited him come play in Co. Clare.

3<sup>rd</sup> February Langstroth Pot – Cave

Martin Bishop, Geoff Pickering, John Compton

Suggested they do the through trip; done a decade or so previous. Asked accompany them; as the only one who had free dived the sumps. Explained of CO<sub>2</sub> issues in the air bells; suggested dive to check their status. Took a four litre; though air good, emptied the bottle, elevating O<sub>2</sub> content. Re-joined the others; scampered up hill. Had forgotten the tight pitch; its still a sod. GP and JC unhappy free diving, but coped really well.

February, undated (10<sup>th</sup>?) Castel Coch

Nigel Burns, Steve Emery, Neil Scallon

Investigated appearance of a collapse on hillside above Castell Coch; some twenty metres diameter and fifteen deep. An Iron Mine shaft? Quite a surprize to the farmer. Traversed the steep unstable perimeter; high potential for further collapse. Farmer asked no more visitors. NB found a pile of discarded carbide lamps in a nearby building. The collapse remains active; the owner describing how a large, obvious boulder has disappeared from its position near the base the slope.

17<sup>th</sup> February Hawkswood Mine, East Caradon Mine, Dartmoor

Nigel Burns, Steve Emery, Neil Scallon

Heavy rainfall. Attempted link the mine with known adit; ran out of airspace in deep water. Attempted lower water level along Caradon adit, hope to return in, say June.

18<sup>th</sup> February Wheal Jenkin

Nigel Burns, Steve Emery, Neil Scallon

The area is proposed for conservation; a landscape of superb, surviving examples of mining features; well worth preserving.

March undated (10<sup>th</sup>?) Joint Hole

Martin Bishop

Chatting with Jonny Shaw, decided visit Sopwith Chamber. Suggested the idea to MB. MB delighted at the chance to test his second-hand dry suit; having spent so much effort repairing it. Each had two, well pumped 10s, as much of the place quite shallow; superb underwater caving. Exploration here could not have been straight forward to push; offset beds and boulder chokes, required careful probing. Arrived Sopwith Chamber; ascending the slope MB slipped, tearing a hole in the lower, left leg of his drysuit. No wound, but an injured calf muscle? Got MB back to the sump and kitted him up. Tried sealing the four-inch tear with gaffer tape. Gave MB a ten-minute head start. Soon caught him in sump five, moving painfully slowly, using his right leg to fin. Took up station at his side, pulling on his right shoulder strap; ineffective, causing frustrating collisions. Secured the five-metre waist length to his harness; swam on ahead, towing him like a tug. Finning quite difficult, if line not taught, fins often caught on the slack. Surfaced, knackered; quickly stripped off MB's kit, helped him up to the road; four trips recovered all the kit. Checked the leg, massaging the muscle with cooking oil. A little frustrated; had reached Sopwith, but had incurred an injury doing so. MB in real agony; to Inglesport, to grab a meal, hot drink and scrounge some pain killers; left 5:30pm. MB lying flat in the back of the van. Radstock by 10pm. Rested, MB suggested a pint in the Railway, prior to dropping him home. Suspect a torn muscle. Well shagged out, crashed at his place after the drink.

Business manic

8<sup>th</sup> April Wookey Hole

Dave Pike

Training request by DP; wanting visit the Slot, starting in Chamber 3, slow and steady. Pointed out DP has nothing to prove to anyone; fuck the gallows humour commentators.

16<sup>th</sup> April Garth Iron Mine – Glyn Pits, South Wales

Nigel Burns

Visited more of this vast mine; NB took photos; passage size presenting its own lighting problems. Glyn Pits; encountered a complete steam engine; in situ: pure delight seeing its entirety. Cannot believe it's almost perfect condition; engine house is also in superb condition, minor, superficial damage. A unique time capsule: wonderful place.

19<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> April Van Dieman's mine, Ballinafunshogue Mine, Glenmalure mine, Dublin

Nigel Burns Cheg Chester

Van Dieman's mine

Both levels found, collapsed. Shaft found, also collapsed; superb wheel pit, all at +2000 feet. Adits diggable.

Glendalough Main.

At +1700ft found two adits leading to deep stopes; no floor; traversing problematic.

Glendalough No.1, Horse level.

Dug through glacial scree, exposed unstable timbering, massive glacial erratics hanging in the adit roof. Small timbered access way all but crushed; main way blocked just ahead. Minor head issue from falling timberwork.

Glenmalure

Level found at +1200 feet; shaft also found with passage at -15m both worth clearing.

8<sup>th</sup> May Box Stone Mines

Neil Scallon, Nigel Burns

Photographic trip; in through Back Door, out Jack's Workings; though parked a good distance away, still attracted negative comments from the restless, unpleasant natives.

May undated (13<sup>th</sup>?) Ogof Capel

K Wills, Rob Wallington, Phil G Churches

A cracking trip, KW taking more excellent photos of this stunning place.

May undated (26<sup>th</sup>?) Corbel's Chamber, Great North Road, Dan-y-Ogof

Mike McDonald, Nick Geh + others

Marco Paganuzzi had recently tried this sump: today met a team attempting siphon it. Passing by, invited to solve issue; had siphon working in less than five minutes, to the delight and relief of those present, who were fast approaching the well pissed off phase. Continued the trip. Returning, found the sump wide open and passable, also sump II. The snugness of the sumps and accuracy of Farr's survey left all impressed at his skill.

1<sup>st</sup> June

Lost Bob Drake

1<sup>st</sup> June Waterlip Quarry, CDG training

Evening: CDG training: along with one other, deeply disappointed to overhear three mediocre divers discussing dividing the various offices of the Somerset section between them. And BD not even cold.

9<sup>th</sup> June Garth Iron Mine - Llanharry Iron Mine, South Wales

Dave Gough, Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns

Day trip from Bristol; second trip to this recently closed mine, a lot of surface remains; recovered winding engine signal sign from a debris pile. Garth adit door still unlocked, after the underground trip, enjoyed examining the surface remains and features. Superb session in The Swan with Two Necks, Bristol.

15<sup>th</sup> June Boreham Cave

Martin Bishop

MB had permission, once again, during this difficult time. MB maintains Sump I should be the British Standard for all sumps. Since the previous trip MB spoke of taking photos of the China Shop. Surfacing found his prized Konica housing full of water; result misery. Once again looked upon the beauty of the China shop, as may never pass this way again; simply superb. Met a cheerful Metcalfe! Delighted had parked so very far down the lane.

16<sup>th</sup> June Hurtle Pot toward Midge  
Martin Bishop

MB fancied the route to Midge; needed top up the tens, so took along the sevens too. Dived five minutes apart, met up in Giant Haddock Hall; uneventful exit. Had contacted Barry Sudell, Northern section, who very kindly filled the bottles, also providing detailed information on Joint Hole; BS, a really nice bloke: intend dive to Sopwith tomorrow.

17<sup>th</sup> June Joint Hole  
Martin Bishop

Excellent visibility; followed MB after five-minute head start. Arrived Sopwith Chamber, this time without incident, MB delighted. Surfaced to explore, assess and confer; exited in cracking visibility: MB delighted the dry suit working so well.

30<sup>th</sup> June Golden Dagger Mine, Vitifer Mine, Dartmoor  
Nigel Burns

A superb wander around these extensive workings: once a huge enterprize. A cracking night in the Warren Inn.

1<sup>st</sup> July Bushdown Mine & Gobbet Mine, Dartmoor  
Nigel Burns

Short adit, many surface features, all well worth conserving.

7<sup>th</sup> July Winford Ochre Mines  
Nigel Burns

NB wanted photograph these extensive workings; a pleasant time assisting him.

8<sup>th</sup> July Wookey Hole  
Sump Rescue Equipment Training

Further to problems experienced by several Somerset diver's mis-handling the sump rescue kit, asked to instruct them in the correct deployment of the Kirby Morgan. Most present received instruction in a constructive attitude; agreeing practise needed. Becoming obvious, though some Somerset can multi-task; not all have that level of skill, or are comfortable doing so. Suggested those who regularly dive together, could train together, handling the rescue kit together. Or, be honest and leave it to others.

July undated (14<sup>th</sup>?) Hurtle to Midge  
Martin Bishop

Well pumped eighties promised a leisurely through trip; visibility could have been better. Had plenty of gas; turned just before Midge, reversed the entire trip; excellent. In a 4mm wetsuit with 2mm vest, felt the cold; decent gloves would have helped. MB had a minor issue with buoyancy of the drysuit. Believe it migrating air volume, on changing attitude, when negotiating passages. Snoopy loops at intervals, around the upper legs would slow gas migration from torso to feet, such migration had regularly pinned MB to the roof.

18<sup>th</sup> July Winford Ochre Mines  
Nigel Burns, Jim Smart

Surprized at the extent of the workings, found a few artefacts, each left in situ. Long-forgotten, a seemingly overlooked place. JS collated the data.

19<sup>th</sup> July Wookey Hole

Dave Pike

Training for DP; shallow route to Chamber 20, returned via the Deep route; a steady pace. No issues, DP happy; composed, far from the inactive gallows humour brigade.

21<sup>st</sup> July Hurtle Pot; Somerset Section CDG, Dive Training Camp.

Phil Churches, plus many others.

To the Hindenburg Wall summit and out; testing accuracy of second computer. Those present, a balance of new and experienced; useful, reducing pressure on self.

22<sup>nd</sup> July Hurtle Pot, Somerset Section CDG, Dive Training Camp.

James Cobbett

After others finished, assembled kit for a swift dive, low on reserves. So, swiftly to Giant Haddock Hall and back.

23<sup>rd</sup> July Joint Hole

Rob Wallington, K Wills

10:00: through to Red Baron; training exercise, supported RW.

23<sup>rd</sup> July Meregill Skit

Solo

15:00. Used remaining contents of sevens, descended to the bedding; today being -14m. Short climb down to water level. Visibility good; reached thirds all too quickly.

25<sup>th</sup> August Gothic Sump OFD

Phil G Churches, Mick Wilkins

Training; PGC and MW; uneventful dive; MW need focus, pay more attention to detail.

26<sup>th</sup> August Dan-yr-Ogof

10:00. Pete Brooks, Mick Wilkins, Phil Churches, Edward Turner-Smith

Aim: accommodate trainees request to dive the lakes from the resurgence. Following the existing line, the group moved off in two-minute intervals. On reaching Lake Seven, checked all present. ETS noticeably unhappy; a situation not helped by one diver loudly exclaiming "*That's a really long dive*". Attempted calm a now, visibly shaking ETS; firmly directing he dive out. Assuring PC would be closely following him. Dived away, after a while, in the murk had a head on collision; ETS was crawling over PC, heading back in, having lost his nerve; taking the route he thought the shortest to known air and safety. Turned and grabbed him, dragging him up into the treading water air bell. ETS fast approaching a lost cause; panic stricken. Forced an ultimatum; stay here and die or follow and live. Emphasising "*it's up to you*". Submerged, paused at the junction directly below, to check ETS was following. Led off at a slightly faster than normal speed to base. Several times PC felt ETS collide up behind him; finally surfaced. Sat ETS down, spoke softly, calming him. After several minutes of silence, ETS stood, announcing retirement and left the cave. Waiting for the last diver, NG appeared, asking for support to climb a rift. Offering the chance of new cave to all present, amazed no takers, other than Pete Brooke: NG specifically asked PC for support.

14:00 Nick Geh, Pete Brooke

In the treading water sump pool held on to NG's dive kit as he ascended. On reaching the top, NG confirmed it went, Big. As nowhere to store the kit, tied it together, hanging the line on the smallest of rock projections, also managing push it into a gap. At this point

PB arrived. All up, wandered along big river passage; NG thrilled. Suggested NG call it "The Battle of Britain Series"; being all but the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that event.

#### Battle of Britain series, detail.

At the base of the treading water aven, was heard the sound of water. From the top, a stooping passage, thirty metres long, led to a free climbable, three metre pitch, back down to the main river level and big passage. From here the passage split, north to a sandy chamber with a passage off it, partly choked with sand, going toward a blank area of the Mountain. West from the pitch a large streamway requires swimming most of its length. Upon reaching waist deep water the river veers left, along a rift, after twenty-five metres, becoming a narrow sump. At this point a small rift to the right, had some chert nodules removed, accessing a series containing a beautiful grotto extending some twenty odd metres. Within are helictites etc. a crawl below this gives access to various sump pools in the bottom of rifts. All these must connect via the vast sponge work of dissolved limestone routes underwater. A passage to the right leads to a final pool with a large passage at high level off to the right. This route is an overflow from the main river; a circular route off the upstream end of the river. Assessing water levels, estimated it was about a metre lower than normal; this being the case, the duck through into "Gwyn Saunders Hall" would normally be submerged and invisible. This point is fifty metres from where the stream turned south. The duck into Gwyn Saunders Hall is short and enters beneath the fifteen-metre waterfall issuing from a small passage. Gwyn Saunders Hall is twenty metres high, eighteen metres wide by twenty metres long; being mostly lake. A twelve-metre dive connects to the next chamber. Here a flooded chamber has been dived for sixty-five metres to -9metres; line tied off. Above this chamber via a short sand thrutch is a final rift chamber with a pure white cascade, six metres high and a half metre wide. Total length, conservatively estimated, is four hundred metres, plus a further 110 metres of passage after syphoning two sumps. This superb find made entirely by NG's research, logic and reasoning.

27<sup>th</sup> August Somerset Section Dive Camp, Dan-yr-Ogof

Nick Geh, Pete Brooks, Mick Wilkins, Phil G Churches, Rob Franklin

Aim: explore and survey NG's discovery. The place is big; estimated a quarter of a mile. NG and PC surveying; PB diving Lake Zero: RF and PGC photography, MW tourist. As NG and PC surveyed, a distressed PGC appeared stating that though told otherwise, MW had stood on, collapsing, the wafer-thin rock arch, from which was hung all the dive kit. MW then swiftly left. PC repeatedly free dived, recovering the scattered equipment from a depth of four metres. Handing kit to RF, PGC and near apoplectic NG; dressed in the pool and dived out. Meanwhile, outside, MW told none of the predicament in which he'd left the others. Near the ticket office encountered other CDG who had no idea of the situation. Incredulous, informed MW was drinking tea in the café. Found and berated him, to the surprise of those present. MW justified stepping on the arch because "*kitting up in the water is difficult*". Even though expressly warned of its fragility. The smirk of MW sent NG to a rage. Raised voices attracting the attention of Ashford Price. As PC explained the incident PGC and RF arrived; confirming the incident. On seeing MW's indifference, PGC also raged. With supreme indifference, MW again justified his actions. Finally snapped at this Fuck You attitude; grabbed MW's collar, dragged him from his chair, across the floor and outside. Smacked him in the nose, dropping him to the deck. Suggested he fuck off smartish and don't come back. Team opinion; MW is, a fucking moron and dangerous. As MW left, Ashford announced MW would enjoy a lifetime ban.

3<sup>rd</sup> September Dan-Yr-Ogof

Nick Geh, Martyn Farr, Rob Franklin

Dived resurgence to the Battle of Britain. Installed two bolts for washing line to suspend dive kit from. Continued with the survey. Dug the passage off sand chamber; NG and MF dived Lake Zero to -9m at 40m.

15<sup>th</sup> September Dan-yr-Ogof

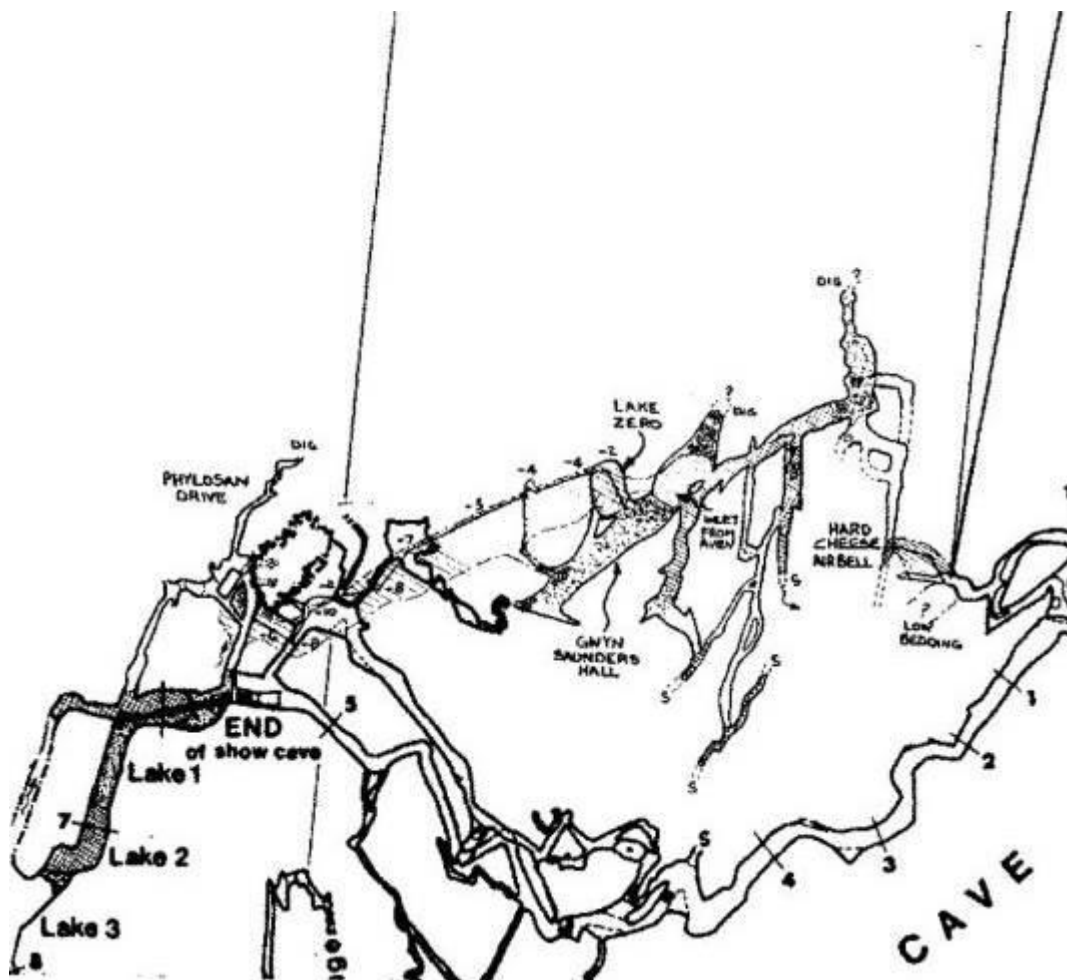
Nick Geh, Neil Harman

Aim: dived from show cave to locate line from new series, (Battle of Britain). Line found: sump 110m, max, -11m. Passage warrants searching for branch passages. NH brought in digging kit via the resurgence; NG and PC dived through Lake I, to the new bits. Dug sand choked passage, trending north; surveyed the new stuff; over 500m! Nice one Nick!

23<sup>rd</sup> September Dan-yr-Ogof

Nick Geh, Dig Hastilow

More digging in the potential bypass above the sump pool near the show cave steps



Battle of Britain Series, Dan-yr-Ogof



7<sup>th</sup> October CDH Central Committee Meeting, Pegasus Hut, Peak Forest  
Barry Sudell, Julian Griffiths, Clive Westlake, Paul Whybro, Kevin Wills

9<sup>th</sup> October Wookey Hole  
K Wills

Management ask KW assist German TV making a documentary; they needed a model: pressed them for a £50 donation: cheque made payable to the M.R.O.

14<sup>th</sup> October Dan-Yr-Ogof  
Dig Hastilow, Nick Geh, Rob Wallington  
Pressed on with dig, "Phylosan Drive", the soft sand allowing swift progress; four metres of passage today! A junction has appeared; opted for the right-hand branch.

28<sup>th</sup> October Dan-Yr-Ogof  
Rob Wallington, Dig Hastilow, Nick Geh, Andy Whitehouse  
After only ten feet the right-hand passage is trending down, team discussed options. Began excavating the left passage at the junction; progress is swift: the almost level roof, is subtly rising; hopefully will continue. Locked in; exited the resurgence.

3<sup>rd</sup> November Wookey Hole  
Oliver Wells Pete Brooke  
Arranged a dive for OW; 3 and 9. OW delighted at the modern cave diving equipment. John Buxton appeared, unannounced, demanding dive with his old pal OW, today. Robustly insisting, in front of Wookey management and staff, to be allowed dive, for numerous reasons. PC patiently explained circumstances prohibited diving here, until JB resumed membership of the CDG, or was granted a dispensation. Disgruntled, JB left. explained Buxton's CDG background to BB, who gave permission for JB to dive on PC's licence. Dispensation for JB to dive, arranged for 17<sup>th</sup> November. Received a phone call from BB, regarding JB's behaviour in the office; congratulated and thanked for policing the rules of diving at Wookey.

3<sup>rd</sup> November John Buxton  
Wrote letter to JB informing him of dispensation to dive at Wookey Hole, suggesting he re-join the CDG.

5<sup>th</sup> November Wookey Hole  
Oliver Wells Pete Brookes  
Repeated training for OW; he's delighted with himself.

8<sup>th</sup> November John Buxton  
Letter from JB apologizing for his behaviour, thanking the effort taken to ensure he could dive Wookey. Appreciating difficulties facing with an old diver suddenly appearing, demanding access. Rang JB, explained litigation issues within the modern world.

10<sup>th</sup> November Ogof Capel  
K Wills  
Photographic trip, to support KW.

17<sup>th</sup> November Ogof Capel  
K Wills, Martin Bishop  
Another photographic, with some exploration trip; MB delighted at the place.

12<sup>th</sup> December Redcliff Caves, Bristol

Nigel Burns, Jim Smart

Entered by way of a new route, quietly told to JS: nice and private; no access issues.

22<sup>nd</sup> December Smallclough Mine and area Complexes, Nenthead, Cumbria

Dave Gough, Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns

The most cracking of weeks; four chums digging numerous collapses, in three separate areas of these vast workings. Bogg Shaft a particularly interesting area; an enormous amount of unsupported, large diameter, (2ft), piping is exposed. Once distributing the precious water supply, collected in Perry's Dam, among the numerous areas both under and overground. Of particular note is the underground, brick-built Baron's engine house: quite superb; the quality and size of construction project overwhelming.

Other sites and places visited; Dowgang Hush, Rampgill, the Norpex dig (Rampgill) and Longclough. The area, just delightful, an extensive industrial, socio-economic landscape containing the history of the philanthropic London Lead Company; enthralling. Six trips, averaging seven hours apiece; long, tough but delightful. The Crown, next to the cottage, serving cracking food, stunning beer, maintaining a fine pool table. Deep Joy. Keith and Heather, the perfect hosts. Overwhelmingly an excellent trip.