

1991

1st January Eastwater

Martin Bishop

Late start, the party finishing around four. First of the year; swift trip to the twin verts, and out to the Hunters.

January undated (6th?) Battle of Britain series, Dan-Yr-Ogof

Nick Geh, Dig Hastilow

Went straight from Bristol; dived sump at the base of the show cave steps. Pushed by Buxton using oxygen in the 1950s, to, -9m, the O₂ limit. Dug in Gwyn Saunder's Hall; good progress over for tough hours.

January undated (12th?) Battle of Britain series, Dan-Yr-Ogof

Nick Geh Dig Hastilow

Dived through to new extensions; continued digging in Gwyn Saunders Hall; another four hours of fun. Enjoy the boys company and fun.

19th January Minera Mines

Cheg Chester Dave Gough, Nigel Burns, Darren Hines, Big John Cooper, Pete Forster

Superb trip; descended the sloping passage, spiraling around the main shaft; holes in its walls allowed a view to the shaft depths. A superb complex, so much mining methodology to study.

January undated (31st?) Wookey Hole

Nick Geh John Cooper, K Wills

Discreet evening trip; dived into Chamber four. Secured a bronze memorial plaque, cast by Bob Drake's brothers at the family's non-ferrous foundry, St. Phillips Marsh, Bristol.

2nd February Gwernor and Benallt Mines, Snowdonia

Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns

Stopped at Phil the Miner's; at the end of his garden a small cutting carries the narrow-gauge railway; quite beautiful. Gwernor; a small copper mine, with few surviving surface features.

3rd February Dorothea Quarry - Parys Mountain

Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns

Headed to Dorothea quarry; the engine house and engine is now secured. If ever a place needs conserving it's this. Though appearing a moonscape, the place and mountain sides are stuffed with industrial archaeology; so much more must exist below water level. Recent drownings of open water divers have caused perimeter fencing to be repaired, improved and strengthened.

Illegible entries.

23rd March Dan-Yr-Ogof

Nick Geh, Dig Hastilow, Andy Whitehouse

Requested by Ashford Price, (Owner), to investigate unusual flooding of the show cave before the Easter opening. AP had pumps which emptied the "sump" at the "Parting of the Ways"; the team entered a small chamber; water over five feet deep; the place full of sand. Discussion considered if the sand was the result of the dig, "Phylosan Drive". A climb in the roof of this small domed chamber has potential. Visited the dig; evidence of floods washing around the area, having backed up from the adjacent, restricted sump pool: previously dived by John Buxton, on

oxygen, halting him at -9m; toxicity limit for O² limit. AP insisted the team had a meal in the restaurant before departure.

30th March Cappleclough – Rampgill
Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns, Paul Thompson

Through trip via high level workings above Proud's sump, so many more superb artefacts and features encountered. The place is vast; likely to become too popular for its own good, should it become more widely known.

31st March Middleclough – Smallclough – Upper Cappleclough
Paul Thompson, Big John Cooper, Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns

Delightful amble around the workings, crossed the valley to examine the concrete steps that descend from the portal of Cappleclough High level, to a lower adit; another specifically built conduit within the extensive water system; this level is near Bogg Shaft in Smallclough, likely the water discharge point for the large diameter pipework to supply adjacent surface industry.

1st April Killhope Mining Museum
Paul Thompson, Big John Cooper, Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns

Another excellent walk around the many working examples of mining machinery, superb.

28th April Productus Passage, Dan-yr-Ogof
Nick Geh, Brian Murliss, Tom Chapman, Jo Hall.

NG asked for support to dive a perched sump above the Green Canal. A two metre diameter tube heads west, becoming three low passages. The north passage heads toward the Abyss. The sump, is in the middle passage of the three. NG dived on a base fed line, single kit; the roof gradually lowered to meet the floor.

4th May Magpie Mine
Nigel Burns,

A superb array of surviving buildings and features, a nice diversion on the way to Stoney edge chimney. From the chimney, "Reportedly the oldest structure of Industrial Archaeology still standing", carried on to Matlock Bath & Cromford. Then Arbor Low stone circle.

5th May Mandale Mine
Nigel

Walked Mandale Rake to locate forefield shaft. Thrashed through undergrowth, following the rake to Lathkill, not an easy task. Enjoyed various features, Mandale Sough and adjacent forlorn, substantial engine mountings. The valley footpath heaving with people.

11th May CDG AGM, Bull' int Thorn, Derbyshire.
Cracking stomp. Lots of mates, lots of fun.

22nd May Wookey Hole
K Wills

Line laying practice for KW in grim visibility. Resurgence to chamber 1, chamber 2 to 3. Instructed KW deploy silt screws, snoopy loops, sash weights and lead weights as line belays, then survey out. Exercise conducted without any sign of stress.

25th May Wookey Hole
Solo

Private trip agreed with Barney Butter; to configure new equipment prior to imminent Irish trip.

1st June Mermaids Hole, Doolin.

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

Morning:

High pressure in the north Atlantic, over the previous three days, produced a sea like a mirror. In preparation for the push, ran a line from Mermaids to Poulnamongach into Hell; this route may allow a safer, less exposed exit, if the sea turns nasty.

Afternoon:

Nick Geh

Both divers carried in MF's stage bottles. The tidal out flow, increasingly strong; using sevens, shocked to reach thirds by 300m; such was the strength of outflowing current. NG took PC's stage the remaining, short distance. Seventy-five bars used from each bottle, going in, only twenty-five bars in total to exit; the swift, a Cresta Run like exit, from the increasing outflow. After a couple of hours MF got to +900m, to low bedding. The Team surprised to achieve so much, on the very first day of expedition. The entire trip planned around pushing Mermaids, with little else in mind. Intend describe the Gort area to the team.

2nd June Mermaids

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

Following yesterday's success, NG wanted to dive as far as practicable, tides allowing, after surveying. NG exited as the swell increased to a half metre, creating issues negotiating the confines of Poulnamongach through to rift Hell. Swearing, echoing from the depths, surprising a passing family group. In the Roadside, described the finds in the Gort area and its potential; met with incredulity, that such sites still exist. Argued many such sites remain, as yet, undiscovered. The file, read with caution. Arrived early evening; stopped at Dorus Hostel, Kinvarra. Took the team on a swift tour of several sites, some close to the road; they appear more interested.

3rd June Boleynedorrish River Sinks - Poulbehan

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

With all the spare time remaining persuaded the Team to use it to visit the area west of Gort. En-route, located the "Hammer Head" sinks, both choked; near the dry river bed junction, found a small rift to deep water, three metres long by 0.4m wide; tight and committing. Guiding the Team to Poulbehan, through the scrub, across the vast, low-lying karst; none impressed. Attitudes changed encountering Poulbehan; its size and depth. PC dived first, heading for the previously noted "alcove", which was just a shadow, descended the east wall to -6m, into a rift full of dead branches and leaf debris. Surfaced. MF dived over to the south wall; at -3m passed a letter box, descending a rift. At -15m entered big passage; headed west for ninety metres, at -9m. MF reappeared; elated. Much excited talk in the bar; asked further explain the area's extent and other sites visited. Described the area, its believed extent, importance and relationship to the ocean. As with previous CDG comment, the Team doubtful of any link to the sea. Will return here after visiting alternate dive sites in Cong. The team begins to accept the excited ramblings.

4th June Mill Pond Rising – Hatchery Rising, (Rising of the Waters) - Pigeon Hole, Cong

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

Morning: Two large risings are situated in the middle of the village; either side of the bridge adjacent O'Conner's Garage. MF to Hatchery Rising, PC to Mill Rising: Marco Paganuzzi had reached -16m last week, in three metre visibility. The aim; confirm MP's findings and possibly push on down. Followed the steep boulder slope to -11m, here a large rock, like the prow of a ship, marks the entrance of the shaft. The current, issuing from an opening 2m long by 0.9m wide, too great to descend against. To the west, behind a boulder, a slot, some 1m by 0.8m gives access to an area of the shaft, by pressing self vertically against the wall a descent to -19m was achieved. Cautiously leaning out to seek a route below, the current caught the diver, unable to

hold on, was blown up the shaft. Prior to the sudden departure, a further depth of at least five metres was clearly seen. Here, a slope down to the north was noted; looking as though it was all in solid rock. Untangled line: returned to surface.

Pigeon Hole

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan Afternoon: Supported MF and NG. NG downstream for some one hundred metres into “Tippler Chamber”, some thirty metres further, another sump. MF explored for some twenty metres to where the current disappeared down this circular shaft “The Plughole”; stopped at -6m, on noticing his exhaust bubbles were descended faster than he.

5th June Poulbehan

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

West and eastern passages pushed; westward low and silty, eastward the larger.

6th June Poulbehan

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

MF and NG pursued westward, reaching two hundred and twenty metres from base. Took compass bearing and walked the surface; confirmed Pollaloughabo as pretty much in line, though about a kilometre distant.

7th June Skelpnahooley (Scailp) – Pollaloughabo Western route

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

Skelpnahooley; previous investigations found the site to be a large diameter, significant feature. The openings partially back filled over time to protect cattle. Located east of Pollaloughabo, may perhaps offer a forward dive base. A low crawl is possible for, at most, five metres; a metre wide and 0.5m high: a mid-term dig. The site is known locally as “The Scailp”.

Pollaloughabo, Western route;

MF dived west, one hundred and sixty metres at -13m.

8th June Pollaloughabo West

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

Morning; NG dived to where he was shocked to experience the flow reverse, at 315m.

Afternoon; MF pushed to 460m westward, and a further 50m eastward; water confirmed as very salty. This site is over two miles from the coast; confirming original observations noted diving Quinn’s Cave, (1980s). Delighted now have independent vindication of theory.

9th June Pollaloughabo

Martyn Farr, Nick Geh, Tony Donovan

Need depart; conducted two dives to obtain further information.

Downstream: NG found MF’s air bell absent due to higher tide level; to 357m. Reversal of flow again noted. Noted time of high tide in Galway Port, the Offset needs careful calculation. To establish correct dive timings where future, protracted exploration is not compromised by strong tidal currents.

Upstream: found route through a bedding to an widening vertical rift, descended, initially, in six metre visibility, emerged among boulders, at -10m. Eastward, lay vast silt banks. Deployed silt screws to little avail, silt too deep and too soft to hold screws securely. Using a fifty-metre reel; found nothing to secure to, among the expanse of deep soft silt; recovered line. Returning, near the point of ascent to surface, near the boulder pile, felt the tug of a westward current, passing through the immense boulder pile. Returning, the Team voiced admiration at the breadth of field research conducted these many years by a single individual: embarrassed by the praise.

12th June Swildons Hole

Shinji Sakuri

This Japanese student, studying English in Bristol, knocked on the front door Looking for an introduction to cave diving. Slow and steady trip to sump II. Then took SS to the Hunters, filled him with drink, to loosen him up; unfortunately SS violently sick all the way back to Bristol.

14th June Wookey Hole

Shinji Sakuri, Kato Yuri

SS's wife, KY, requested "Western Style" dive training. Yuri is an exceptional student. Not fazed by any tasks. A really nice person. Have been invited to visit Japan to train Japanese open water divers to cave dive. Seemingly they have lost a number who have entered some of the large resurgences. Will suggest the opportunity to the Team.

15th June Brookman's Quarry Stone Mine, Tormartin, Bath

Nigel Burns

An extensive mine, set among farmland, being a little remote, it remains in superb condition, likely from its obscure location in the small wooded area, surrounded by fields.

16th June Wookey Hole

Shinji Sakuri, Kayo Yuri, Janet Woodward, Malcolm Stewart

SS contacted PC who arranged a training dive for him and his wife KY. KY is a gifted diver. MS and KY, resurgence to 3, to 9:1, then 9:2.

17th June Wookey Hole

Shinji Sakuri, Kayo Yuri

Afternoon trip: SS to chamber 3, KY with PC; conducted various exercises in the resurgence with KY. She is an able, cautious student. A swiftly learner; adept. Had KY lay line from resurgence to chamber 1, then on to chamber 3. Stopped for tea and sandwich. Changed bottles. SS recovered lines, deploying them between chamber 3 and 9:1. KY and PC to 20; climbed out to explore the chamber; KY delighted. Kitting up; KY pursues a methodical process; she's good, very good. Visibility poor, directed KY to return to 9:2 by the shallow route, Coases Loop Extension, to chamber 3 without surfacing. Checked KY's bottle contents; impressed at remaining gas volume.

18th June Wookey Hole

Shinji Sakuri, Kayo Yuri

Last opportunity to instruct either diver; KY departs for Japan tomorrow. Kitted up in 9:2 for dive to 22. Directed each to fend for themselves, kitting up, watched both closely. After a final check; PC left first, followed by KY after three minutes, then SS after another three minutes. Waiting in 20, both arrived together; SS must have ran to catch KY; he was out of breath. All good, carried on to 22. Visibility poor. Arrived in 22, showed them 23. Uneventful return to 9:2.

22nd June Meander Cave, Gower

Nigel Burns

Cave originally found by Nigel Burns, using logic.

Aim: further exploration of both sumps.

Downstream sump: originally 4.5m deep, now 1.5m to soft silt; the way on elusive. Upstream: the stream issues from a narrow vertical rift behind a rib of rock on the left of the streamway. A body size tube descends for 4m to where a silt bank all but blocks the passage. The source of this silt may be from building work in the Ogof Bishopston area. Thanks, to NB for the carry.

26th June Brookman's Quarry Stone Mine, Tormartin, Bath
Nigel Burns

Another exploratory trip into this extensive quarry, with associated photography; many surface features. A secreted spot hidden within a small woodland.

30th June Long Ash, Lead Mine- Llangaw Lead Mine, Llanrhidian common, Gower
Nigel Burns

Further digging and exploring the area, few obvious, surface features exist.

7th July Wookey Hole
K Wills

Evening training for K Wills, in shite visibility; Coases Loop and CL extension; tough enough conditions.

19th July Wookey Hole
K Wills, Dave Pike

Line laying and surveying from resurgence to 9:1.

July undated (27th?) East Germany
Nigel Burns

Boarded NB's Triumph and sped away, for ten days of fun; the Berlin Wall gone, the fear of nuclear war ebbing. Lightweight kit; space and weight an issue. The idea to visit various archaeological and mining sites. Baumannshöhle, Hermannshöhle, Rammelsburg and Samson Mine. En-route, encountered a rear wheel blow out at 70mph, NB managed to steer the slewing bike, between cars, onto the hard shoulder before losing it. Minor damage to bike, NB scraped five millimetres of flesh off his knee. Feds, arrived. Attempting to give a bollocking, told them they disgraced their uniform; rather than bollock they should assist injured visitors to their country. Embarrassed, they arranged a recovery wagon, which dropped the team and bike at a service station, some three miles along the autobahn. For which the guy demanded one hundred deutschmarks. Explained, he could fuck off; gave him twenty; as it was we who loaded and unloaded the bike. In the service station an expensively leathered group of Sunday BMW bikers watched, but offered no help, as the wheel was stripped down: the inner tube shredded. An old man watching, leaning against a Mercedes estate, approached. Offering to take the wheel away, get the shop owner to open and get him to fit a new inner tube. Three hours later, he returned with wheel intact, and no bill. Fitted same: spoke at length to Gunter. He told how, as a prisoner of war, he was sent to Midsomer Norton. Treated well by farmer and locals alike; a kindness he never forgot. Continued the trip; NB quietly experiencing excruciating pain, making no murmur. Limited selves to short excursions to various, desired sites. Goslar town, in the Hartz mountains, the area on which Agricola based De Re Metallica. Germany holds miners in high regard, far more apparent than other nations. On the final day visited Rammelsburg Mine, the architecture displaying several centuries of the mine's presence. Up the road, noted a tourist entrance, The Roeder Stollen, once a service adit. Joined a Dutch group to wonder at the numerous items of underground machinery; huge water wheels etc. each still in pristine condition; all of pitch pine. Exiting, thanked the guide, realizing the team's avid interest, offered an invite for a private trip tomorrow. Disappointment; need to depart early to catch the ferry. A fine trip, under the circumstances; NB in constant agony, the damage to the knee exacerbated by each minor flex, stretching mending flesh. Returned the E1, via Holland and Harwich.

10th August Mandale Mine - Lathkill Dale Mine

Nigel Burns

Cracking trip to the forefield shaft, then Batemans Shaft and a short level adjacent the house. NB walking reasonably well; the knee mending slowly.

11th August Whet Level, Birches Level, Ecton Hill

Nigel Burns

Ecton Hill to locate adits for future trips; short distance into Whey and Birches Levels.

16th August Watergrove Mine - Crank Hole Mine – Hollandtwine Mine – Oxlow Rake

Nigel Burns

Examined the surface features of Watergrove. Could not locate the entrance to Crank Hole. The NGR shows it at the end of a rake; no entrance found. Cleared two other mines; only short trials. Afternoon; walked to Hollandtwine, found 150ft of shaft, with unstable collar. Came back down the Dirlow Rake to Oxlow Rake.

17th August Dale Mine, Ecton Hill

Nigel Burns

A superb area; found ore bins in good condition, adit about a hundred metres long to a choke.

23-26th August Frongoch / Wemyss, Blaencennant, Goginan, Cwmerfin

Nigel Burns

Cracking weekend examining each of these extensive sites; many surface features. Frongoch engine house, its wooden lintels continue to deteriorate. Located Wemyss Level, judged it practicable to open, with just the single spade. Much work later, as the place unwatered, surprised as a small, yellow plastic duck exited the portal, carried along by the released torrent; hysterical laughter. Entered deep water, in dry gear, reached a flooded shaft over and around which is a mass of rotten, collapsed timberwork. This adit should allow access to the extensive Frongoch Mine workings. The way on needs the water lowering still further. Examined the "Coffin Level" in Blaencennant; quite superb in shape and formation. Goginan; nothing to see other than the flooded incline, its big dimensions fascinating. Cwmerfin; nice angle bob adjacent the shaft, timbering all but gone, the iron work in good fettle.

31st August Ringing Rake Sough

K Wills, Cheg Chester, Dave Gough

In through the playground entrance, to the mid area workings, lots to see, the garland around the shaft, particularly superb; a simple answer to a serious water issue. This adit unwaters all one thousand-foot of hillside; potentially accessing all mineral wealth.

11th September Springhead Rising, Rodney Stoke

K Wills,

KW obtained permission from employers, Bristol Water. Dived to inspect the sump pool, the most direct route constricted by boulders. To the left a narrow section continues. It is not certain this meets with the small cleft to the left of the main rising. Progress will be made by digging; found permission for such a project will not be forthcoming from present management.

14th September Lathkill Dale

K Wills

Beautifully constructed shaft beneath Batemans House, which drops into Lathkill sough. Upstream followed to 150/200 foot, to a wall/dam with a lot of water behind it. Downstream followed for 600 feet to junction. Intend to survey, hopefully before the "wet season".

21st September Ringing Rake Sough
Cheg Chester, "Smack" + 1

A three-hour trip into Gentlewomen's Pipe for CC's work pals; another superb trip. Cracking bar crawl around Nottingham; many casualties.

4th October Wookey Hole
Martin Bishop, K Wills

To twenty, so MB could explore a climb to what he fancied was passage.

5th October BEC dinner Webbington Country Club, Weston-Super-Mare

12th October CDG Central Committee meeting. - Knotlow Mine
K Wills, Nigel Burns

CDG meeting conducted swiftly. Fortunately, without too much loss of playtime. Pleasant trip with associated photography of the surface features surrounding Knotlow.

21st October Boulder Pot, Ireland
Solo

Returned to dig; little evidence of previous efforts. Reflected on the effort expended. Chose, again, the southwest corner; seems more gaps between the boulders are visible than previously; maybe some silts have been washed away? Dug for four hours with little to show for it. Later, wandering the surface, noted an adjacent depression where much domestic rubbish had also been dumped. Superb evening in O'Connor's. Stopped at the O'Connor's. Cracking session.

22nd October Pollapooka, Ireland
Solo

Retrieved rope and ladder stowed with Martin Droney; took along a three-foot, spike. Used it as a backup belay, to a spit on the entrance pitch. Abseiled, noting, this time, the ladder actually reached the floor. Probed about the area previously dug by the L.A.D.S. (1980s). Other than a shallow hollow, there is little sign of the once, three metre deep funnel. Could not assess the draught as the cascade created a fierce one of its own. It needs a committed, focused team.

23rd October Coolagh River Cave
Solo

Told of little rain this month. Carried in 1 x two litre and 1 x four litre bottle. Surprized, canal required swimming. Swiftly lost visibility from abundant silt. Fumbled south along a west wall, deployed occasional lead weight to secure line in place, when changing direction; ran into a soft debris bank, could feel stone beneath the arm depth silt. Moved right, (east?), into roomier area, managed glimpse compass, turned south, moved forward some three metres to another debris bank. No sign or sense of flow in this area. Retraced route to last belay; moved further east some five metres, found a wall. Moved south for some three metres, felt boulders. Secured line to a lead weight, exited. Left kit in Polldonough North passage. Filled bottles at the Admiral's Rest; the recently repaired compressor working, but only just.

24th October Coolagh River Cave
Solo

Lighter load, so swiftly to the sump. Tried to explore the easterly area; yesterday's limit. Within metres met a debris bank; retraced route around existing line. Picked up reel and began to probe the boulder area; water flow felt near the roof in some places, not in others. Issues weighting the line among the boulders, dropped weights down some very deep holes. Depleted the four litre to 30bars; swapped over to the two litre. Spent a while feeling around the roof above this area of

boulders; found no gap larger than a hand span. Outward visibility zero; left remaining lead weights in Polldonough North passage, on a ledge, at head height. Cracking party at Noel Walsh's, watched entranced, as an eight-year-old played the Uilleann pipes; stunning.

10th November Connolly Mine

Nigel Burns

A superb mine, in the capable hands of the Northern Mines lads; the surface features, extensive, superb and conserved. A cracking night with Barry and Ceily Sudell in The Pendle Inn, Barley.

13th November Wookey Hole

Dave Pike, K Wills

Training for DP and KW: to 20 via deep rote exit via shallow route.

27th November Wookey Hole

Dig Hastilow

Examined DH for his CDG Part II test. DH is well known to the examiner; a good friend, in fact. In order to apply appropriate rigors to the test, rather than what has happened recently, where some have qualified without. Put DH through all manner of obscure and technical tasks, far more than remotely required in a normal test. Unlike so many, DH is observant, noting subtle alterations of belays, during surveying. Searching questions concerning his own equipment, it's arrangement, choice and servicing were answered unhesitatingly; fluently. What should have been an hour's test, took three, to accomplish the excessive number of tasks applied. Unilaterally applied a significant amount of first aid content to the test and written exam. DH passed with a score of 92%. This examination was to demonstrate no favouritism whatsoever; DH's skills are what accomplished his qualification; its validity is therefore unquestionable. Those watching commented the test was far in excess of that required, that DH was being treated unfairly. That the Examiner was abusing his position. Replied to this whinging audience. Note, and note well, you have witnessed this diver's performance of skills, which by far exceeds the competence level required to pass the basic Part One CDG test.

30th November Cabin Shaft, Minera

Cheg Chester, Pete Forster, Nigel Burns, Big John Cooper, Darren Hines, Dave Gough

In through this particular entrance, quite superb remains; the place does not, as yet, attract too much interest. As it contains a great deal of remains and artefacts, this may likely change. To its detriment. DH over did the "White Lightning" early on; carried from bar; parked in his tent.

1st December Boundary Shaft, Minera

Cheg Chester, Pete Forster, Nigel Burns, Big John Cooper, Darren Hines, Dave Gough

This particular entrance demonstrates the extent of the workings; vast and deep. Cracking trip through huge worked veins.

21st December Glynn Mine, North Wales

Nigel Burns

Arrived late. Camped nearby; returned to this cracking mine; an excellent trip, very wet and extensive. Quick meal then drove to Dalton-in-Furness, stopped with Terry and Barbara Wright; fine local beer, only a short stagger away.

22nd December Hodbarrow Mine, Cumberland

Nigel Burns

En-route to Nenthead visited Hodbarrow Iron Mine; a vast surface area, far too large to fully comprehend. Much is lost, being worked far below sea level, but infrastructure all around; a

cracking area. The breakwater for the harbour, huge. Reached Overwater; found Cheg in the Cottage, straight into the Crown, next door, to catch up and plan tomorrow's maypoling project.

23rd December Vic's Rise, Rampgill, Nenthead

Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns

The plan, carry in scaffold poles, clips and sundry kit to maypole a rise. This shaft may offer access up into Carr's Level; carefully theorized by CC. Eighty odd foot of scaffold pole and bags of clips were assembled. Plan; with Dave Gough, to carry all the kit in, in one trip. Weighing up the situation the trio decided to steal a march and begin the carry tomorrow morning, as DG arrives tomorrow afternoon. Vastly overladen, the trio struggled with the weight and irregular shaped loads. Difficulty experienced through the deep-water, section previously opened by CC, carrying three scaffold tubes on one shoulder and bags of scaffold clips over the other, much gasping and struggling for air. Finally, arrived at the rise; neatly arrayed materials ready for deployment. An uneventful exit; drink almost dulled the aches and pains.

24th December Vic's Rise, Rampgill, Nenthead

Dave Gough, Cheg Chester, Nigel Burns,

DG arrived, surprised, and impressed, most of the kit in place, leaving him fresh to do the scaling. With the remaining, lighter loads, the team arrived swifter and fresher. DG and CC entered the shaft set into the left, (inbye), of the passage up through which NB and PC passed the poles. At seventy feet it was clear there were not enough poles to reach the top, where a passage was seen. So, lateral braces were robbed, to extend the height, leaving a single, unstable vertical pole. DG reached the level, which is not Carr's, alas, but a narrow vein; a small, blocked shaft ascends from here. After stripping down the kit, managed carry out all equipment, stealing yet another march. This superb achievement will be painful tomorrow. Enjoyed a superb pissup involving food and many games of pool. A very fine project; two days saved, more time left for much more fun. CC named the shaft "Vic's Rise", as there was an annoying drip present....?

25th December Perry's Dam, Nenthead

Cheg Chester, Dave Gough, Nigel Burns

Tea, breakfast, more Tea, presents, more Tea. Tore selves away from the roaring fire to walk to Perry's Dam. A brilliant, sunny day; bitter cold with a deep fall of snow. Returned to enjoy the delights of the Crown's midday hospitality; Keith and Hazel, as ever consummate hosts.

26th December Smallclough, Overwater

Cheg Chester, Dave Gough, Nigel Burns

Belly busting breakfast. Another superb wander around this complex, during which deployed a ladder down Proud's Sump, the far end of Cappleclough, for tomorrow's trip. Wonderful to be shown these obscure areas by CC, who knows the place intimately, having explored and dug here for decades. Some superb places reached by simply moving aside boards left by the old man. Ascended a high rise into vast, extensive workings, entered through a timber trapdoor between the tram rails. Quite the most superb, forgotten place. A dam fine trip: the normal cool water shower, did not dampen the team's delight. Warmed up in the bar by fine pints, food and pool.

27th December Cappleclough – Rampgill, Overwater

Cheg Chester, Dave Gough, Nigel Burns

Entrance to each adit is directly opposite the other, either side the stream. In Cappleclough, up the incline and eventually to the laddered ore bin. Up, and another wander through vast tracts worked for the Lead. Reached a shaft, Proud's Sump, descended to Rampgill passing through Carr's Level horizon. From the base of this shaft, exited Rampgill passing by Brewery Shaft. Some hundred or so metres to surface. Yet another brilliant night in the bar.



Dave Gough less than half way up "Vic's Rise".

Photo Nigel Burns.

29th December Swinhope Mine, Horse Level
 Cheg Chester, Dave Gough, Nigel Burns

Many items surviving in situ, one of which is a superb air receiver in excellent condition and a very nice tram. Cracking night.

30th December Pegasus Hut
 Nigel Burns

Midday, said goodbyes to the Team; decided break the Bristol journey with a curry in Stockport, drinks in the Stags and a night at the hut.

31st December Hunters Lodge

Left the Pegasus Hut late morning. Dropped NB off, Bristol, late afternoon. Straight to Mac's place, Priddy, for a meal and shower. Rang Pauline, in Dublin; she's returning 2nd Jan. Walked into a packed bar. Accosted by Tim Large and Phil Romford, demanding yet another design and costing to install a heating system in the Belfry; this their third such request, in as many months. Told both to wait, whilst drink was bought; delighted to meet Bob, Doug and other SVCC in the off licence; much to catch up with, after all this time. The chuckle brothers returned, insisting on urgent costing and design of their latest ideas, as the committee was to meet soon. Pointed out, again, interpreting changing specifications took both time and effort. They'd already had two of their designs prepared and worked out, what was wrong with either? Both specifications being vastly different. Authoritative opinions, how heating systems should be designed, began to tire this weary plumber. Earlier suggestions of low temperature underfloor heating was dismissed, out of hand. Increasingly miffed, being told how to design a heating system. Neither could take the hint and give it a rest tonight, forced to tell both to fuck off and stop bothering a weary sod.