0th week

NORTH WALES 06/10/23-08/10/23

Rosa Clements, Mabe Soos, Brandon Tong, Frances Pope, Fiona Zhang, Rocky Yu

Craesor Rhosydd Through Trip. (Rocky)

An extremely fresher-unfriendly trip.

We set off for the mine following an obvious hiking track, but we chose ~~an~~ a wrong way around a hill. The barely-working signal helped us figure out that the right way was directly up the mountain. Thus, we went off-track with great determination and arrived at the correct track (as a miracle).

The entrance was inconspicuous, and we entered the cave at around 1 pm. The cave features loose rock, as it's a slate mine. We descended two pitches, and started to follow the minecart tracks. Frequently we encountered pounds (ponds), which was blue ~~in~~ in color. The minecart tracks brought us through the tunnels which connected chambers that ~~were~~ were really similar in appearence.

We soon arrived at the main spectacle of the mine: successive blue ~~lakes~~ lakes that we went past via different means. ~~If I recall correctly, the order is~~ I cannot remember ~~all~~ all of them in order. but there were: metal ladder extending across the lake, "single traverse line technique", "double traverse line technique", rowing underground, ---.

People seemed to become overly excited at throwing

rocks into the "blue diamond" lakes, and some rocks sounded like people falling into the lakes.

After passing through the main destination, we started the search for the exit. On the way out, we passed a long track that went a long way up. We spotted a platform resembling a station and a steam-punk styled machine. This is off-route, but as we are "long-standing" cavers, we still managed to exit promptly.

The search for the exit was went smoothly, and we found some holes to the outside world that would lead to the middle of nowhere. We went past it, and were deep underground again. After some climbing, we finally spotted a distant light spot on the other side of a tunnel.

Following the stream through the "tunnel towards freedom", we exitted the cave at around 6 pm. (Btw, it was a long tunnel).

The long lasting north wales round trip idea is finally realized, and we returned earlier than I expected.

Tips on finding Croesor:
- Follow the main path to the right of the waterfalls until Rhosydd Quarry
- At Rhosydd Quarry, follow the little yellow signs about the 'State Trail' even when they leave the main path, not the big obvious sign to Croesor that goes downhill (this did lead us to a cute little frog, but not to the entrance)
- Mobile signal is terrible, if bringing a phone, try to look at maps on it beforehand.

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MENDIPS 10/11/23 - 12/11/23

Rosa Clements, Haeun Park, Toby Mann, Rocky Yu. Hazel Fu.
Lintei Gan Andrada Tomoni, Máté Szás
Swildon's Hole - Upper Series.

This was my first caving trip, we explored the Upper Series, first taking the long "dry" (supposedley, it was in fact rather wet) way towards Eight Foot Drop. My chocolate fell out of my pocket, but after I had picked it up it had become quite soggy. At Eight Foot Drop, the water had become more intense. We were all quite wet at this point; unaware we were about to get a lot wetter. Rosa and Rocky rigged a rope (after some delay establishing communications between 5 people in a line) and we made our way down. I screamed (twice...) as I lost my footing; Hazel and Haeun were far more graceful in their descent, despite also being on their first trip. Once down, I tried not to think about getting back up...

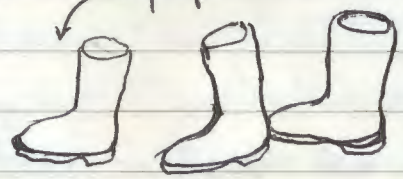
We traversed further to the Twenty Foot Pot, where the other group had rigged a ladder. I was certainly grateful that Rosa decided to turn back here, correctly deciding that we (or I) were not ~~skilled~~ sufficiently skilled.* (even if we were the other group might have derigged the ladder whilst we were down)

If going down Eight Foot Drop had been challenging, going ~~up~~ ~~down~~ up would be approaching impossible. Of course, it was not (as I am here writing

this), but it was more difficult. Hazel was ~~then~~ had the misfortune of losing both of her wellies, which had to be recovered by Rosa on her ascent. ~~Hope~~ Surely mine will stay on though...

On the return we took the short dry way, which was short... ~~there~~ and only short... This concluded with Jacob's Ladder, a "relatively easy" climb completing the shortcut. I enjoyed this climb, and did surprisingly well compared to earlier in the trip. The final exit involved a climb with water running down over the rocks, in which I caught my foot, ~~and~~ between two rocks. The only option I was left with was to abandon my boot to free ~~my~~ my foot. The boot was fortunately recovered by a group from Southampton we had met at the top of Jacob's ~~the~~ Ladder.

— Toby Mann



* Not really because anyone was insufficiently skilled. More because a) We'd already decided not to do the ladder and hadn't brought our own. b) It was a very wet day and I didn't think anyone ~~on~~ would feel their trip was enhanced by doing a ladder for the first time while being blasted by a massive waterfall.

Agreed!

We tricked the freshers to do Dolphin Pot lol ~~also~~ we already spent 3.5 hours ~~@~~ caving from entrance to DP and our callout is ~~@ 2:30pm~~. in 5 hours. Sounds like enough time so why not. @ We just did it haha, it went well. 5.5

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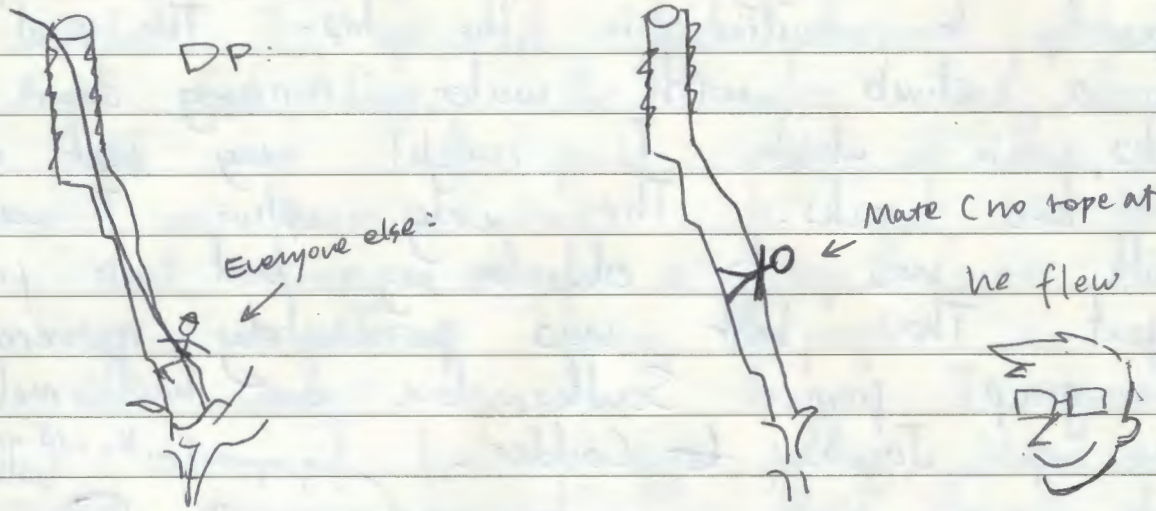
Mate said freshers can do DP without a rope. ~~I know where~~ I ~~don't~~ ~~didn't~~ know where his confidente comes from. (actually I do, but still. I ~~do~~ did not hold the same confidence he had)

we spent one hour going down, then realized we are ~~a~~ not as good as we thought so we ~~to~~ started climbing up immediately after my feet hit the ground. After a lot of struggle, we made it.
Ooo yeah. hahahahahahahahaha



The most adventure I've had in a while!

On an absolutely perfect November Saturday, with sun shining down, no cloud in sight and warm temperature, we decided there was no better way to celebrate than head down a very wet Eastwater entrance. Things started out good immediately, as right before we went in, we helped Tiara adjust her gloves and in doing so, Jesse lost hers down the waterfall at the entrance. I spent a good 10> looking for it in the puddle right below as I got a thorough soaking, only to find it 1 min later in a much drier part of the cave.

Things were more or less manageable until we reached the traverse, where I suddenly realized that was very much acting out my worst (literal & recurring) nightmare - being squeezed between two walls with a huge drop below! Was quite surprised I held myself together long enough to make it to a wide chamber and have some chocolate.

Another manageable bit followed, until I found myself at the front of the group with an excited Fiona right behind me, telling me a small but harmless corridor ahead was Dolphin's Pot. Turns out, Dolphin's pot was right at the end of it - and rather less straightforward! How on earth Máté managed without any rope or lifeline, I will never know, that's definitely a goal for the future.

After belonging down a rope to reach the bottom (with considerable difficulty towards the smooth, grip-less end), we decided there was not enough time to press on and we'd be better off turning around. As Lin Fei attempted to get up, she got herself stuck, to the point we had to remove her foot from her boot and readjust. The boot was fully jammed, and I'm afraid it broke as I tried to wedge it out - sorry OUCC!

I was rather frightened going back up as I'd never done this on just a rope (and only ever climbed with a harness once before, 15 years ago). I did slip at one point and "just" about managed to hold on, but was very thankful Máté was at the other end.

The way back was narrow and uncomfortable at times, but rather stereotypical of what one would expect of a cave; although, note to self, if I trim some weight off my lips, it would make these trips a lot easier!

The final traverse was tricky due to the mental element - being so close to the entrance but also wet, cold and tired added to the challenge. I was thankful for Jesse's encouragement, and later for hers and Máté's body heat (I realise this sounds akin to an innuendo, but really we just put on our best penguin impressions and huddle up for warmth). One final soaking at the end for good measure saw us heading back an hour before call-out time.

Definitely one for the adventure books. Top tip - if you fix a pouch with a Nalgene bottle to your belt, you can carry quite a few snacks with you, and keep them fairly intact. Just don't let it hinder your climbing...

Andrada

*ETA: As Lin Fei made her way up, Jesse, Fiona and I devised a foolproof routine to keep warm, starting with our best attempt to imitate an wind-inflatable doll, to doing the cha-cha slide and last but not least, the macarena. Ask one of us for details.

EEEEEEEH MACAREMA AYYY!

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The most eventful ~~week~~ weekend I've ever had in Oxford and the longest 8 hours I've ever experienced.

I got my feet wet before entering the cave — when ~~I was~~ I was waddling through muddy grassland. Everyone else seems normal, so I ~~didn't~~ didn't want to make a big deal out of it, just carrying ~~on~~ on — until later, ~~when, we~~ Máté shouted at me: "you have a hole on your wellies!" To be fair, it wasn't so bad, water can freely flow out of my welly just like they flowed in, which ~~was~~ was particularly useful when everyone's ~~my~~ shoes were soaked with water. ~~I~~ I remained the driest :)

The supposedly "dry cave" has got a great name, with waterfalls right at the entrance. The showering was a warm welcome for us ~~freshers to caves~~!

Climbing, descending, passing through crevasses... it seemed to ~~be~~ drag on forever (although we did spend ~~so~~ forever in the cave). I got my oversized wellies ~~stuck~~ a few times, The worst time was at dolphin's pot, when I ~~had~~ forced to give up my right shoe to get free. Thanks for my mates, Jesse, Andrada, Fiona and Máté, I would ~~be~~ have to hop on one foot if it wasn't for them :(To be honest, if it wasn't for them, ~~it~~ I would be staying on the entrance, wet and miserable, waiting for rescue for 8 hours. They really helped me a lot.

I can't get my ~~word~~ mind straight right now, so that's it! zzz...

Linfei



Sludge Pit: Rosa, Rocky, Toby

The pit is 10 min walk from the hut. We set off relatively early before 11 am, with Rocky forgot to take his helmet. After he returned, we entered the cave.

It wasn't long before we encounter a pitch, which we descended with a ladder. It was Rocky's first time belaying, he liked it.

The cave felt so much like the "dog hole" a few pages before: a lot of squeeze, awkward climbings, and mud. The passages form a maze, and we usually find ourselves somewhere familiar after crawling out of a passage.

After few hours of cave-climbing trainings we headed out and up the ladder quickly. The cave was quite plain, but it was always fun to navigate through the maze.

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WALES weekend 18/11/23 - 19/11/23

Rosa Clements, JEROME 'THE GREAT' OSWALD-JONES, Rocky Yu.
Anya Sochacka Julia Granato Muchen Zhou
Dom Nugent Frances Pope, Pace Hartfield, Máté Soós
Alana Henerlaus, QUYEN TRAN, CALVIN YIXIANG CHENG
Fiona Zhang, Nicole Hill, Clarafane Gregory,
Nicole Hirt

18th Nov 10:00 Leave Oxford. 13:00 Arrive at Godre Pentre 13:30 Lunch at SWCC.

An Adventure with Máté and Jerome

Two eccentric people lead an expedition with four people who have never been caving before. What could go wrong? Actually, not a lot. We all, except one, had to stand on poor Jerome's shoulder to shimmy down a tricky spot. The first traversal was frightful. Nothing is worse than spreading one's body over a pitch-black hole. Ah, and my wellies got flooded. Unrelated, but as I'm the one writing, I deserve to complain about it.

But it wasn't all stalactites and rainbows. Jerome and Pace, insane lads they are, went off in a tunnel on their own. The others and I stayed behind. Máté stripped and Clara and I sang in the darkness (like 'fucking angels' according to Jerome). Pace got himself lost! Jerome had left him behind! And then, in the distance, a shout.

Not to worry. He was recovered.

Signed, an American
(Nicole Hill)

Rory Rose
Amelia Steane
Katerina Sandoval
+ Dom
+ Anou

Headed in from upper entrance, through Edward's shortcut and into Northern Lights. Had a bit of a crawl Some had to get in water to get there. and an airy chimney step close to a rope. On the back we saw the gudge and the trident, as well as a big chamber next to the entrace.

Fiona	
Frances	stream way
+ Calvin	Group.
+ Quyen	.

Sat Nov 18. [1-5 star]

Difficulty ★★★★★
Leadership ★★★★★
~~Pleasur~~ Fun ★★★★★★★★★★ ..... $\times 10^{100000}$
Time 5.5 hrs
Call out No needed
Waterlevel ★★★★★ [flooded].
Skills ★★★★★ traverse line x2
rolly rolly x1
crawl x a lot [dry, pod, wet]
(soft) ladder climbing x 1
shoulder + Belay climbing x twice.
squeeze x a lot
Walk in the stream x 2-3 times
stream speed -> can't stand confidently
& stream height -> to the butt

We had a short but nice trip both days. Top Entrance - Corkscrew on Saturday and OFD1 to the Step on Sunday. The water at the Step was as high as I'd ever seen it! Rocky brought a camera and the beginners had fun taking photos.

General Comment: No one went to the stream, but we did. Challenge accepted [while did not finish]
Quite an amazing novice caving experience & Other best part = sitting in the completely darkness for a while, disconnected from the civilization, only peaceful & nature. And great teammates. Bravo. Thanks Nouis very much
— Calvin