(44)

25m in the the guidebook, I re-rigged but neglected to take the rope bag - was sketchy to not immediately rig the next pitch so we abandoned into sunshine. Jon went for a walk/jog.





OTTER HOLE 11/05/19
Nick A. Becca M Rosa C Harvey S

Nick- 2nd time in otter hole & the muddy return through the entrance series has lived up to my memories. Took a paddle sack from the entrance to the terminal sump - I've had stronger regrets but that ranks highly. Some good pictures and 4 tired cows
A classic trip

Harvey:- 1st proper trip in nearly 3 years, & what a trip ---
A veritable feast of formations. Astonishing quantity of straws, flowstone & cal. Who knew straws could grow to lengths of maybe ~16-20 feet? I could have stayed & stared at them forever - which I nearly did _ I haven't been this knackered since my 1st novice trips in Yorkshire. So, ticks all the boxes - oodles of pretties, plenty of climbs & tricky wriggles, and satisfaction of knowing I've worn out every muscle in my body.
Thanks Nick for organizing!

Rosa - Lots of amazing formations & a huge quantity of mud. Top trip!



Rebecca - My first time to the Forest of Dean - & down Otter hole! A very early saturday start around 6.30am; left for the cave ~7am/7.30am - not my usual cave start time! I was initially following Adrian our guide & got into the cave pretty sharpish - there were some evil looking spiders! Entrance series was an energetic crawl & my introduction to the infamous Otter Hole Mud! Seeing the formations for the first time was absolutely breathtaking - and they kept getting more & more impressive around each corner! The journey to the end of the cave was pretty uneventful - save the final sump & acute little grotto. The way back felt a lot shorter - even with photography ... until we reached the mud again! It somehow managed to seem even more slippy/sticky than on the way in! By the time we reached the entrance crawls I was tired. Made it out intact successfully & absolutely COVERED in mud - something tells me I will be washing out mud for quite some time ... All in all a lovely formation-filled trip - now time for pub & SLEEP!



(43)

Mendip weekend 18th May

Upper Flood Swallet – Rosa, Rory, Becca & Andrew (leader)

Had a great trip! Very pretty cave and water conditions were pretty low. D⁻ – must do better Rory'!.

I was a little worried when we got to the MCG and the leader we were meant to meet wasn't there. We were supposed to get back by a specific time, so would we get to the Pork Pies if we set off late and went at Rosa-speed? But soon enough Andrew turned up and we got going. There was a special puzzle to get into the cave – both hands must be inserted into a small metal box and used to manipulate an awkward lock you can't see. I tried first due to small hands but Andrew ended up doing it due to knowing how the lock worked.

The cave was easier than expected, the entrance crawl was mostly stooping, we reached Midnight Chamber quite quickly, the Lavatory trap was just a short wet crawl, (not a duck or something that required a special technique), and we saw some lovely formations really not very far into the cave at all. Andrew knew all the directions even without seeing them. The Red room had some very impressively red formations. The boulder choke had a very convoluted route through. It must have been very hard to find the way during the early days of exploration.

Before long we arrived at a slope down with a bucket at the bottom. Now was the time to take off our oversuits and get them spotlessly clean. Luckily it wasn't too hard to get my wellies back on (despite everyone taking the piss of them). – Neverland was amazing some really beautiful striped curtains, then some amazing geometric crystals on the floor. They were huge and shaped like strange interlocking triangles. Then the pork pies. They were unlike anything I've ever seen before, it was incredible to

be able to see them. I've no idea how something like that would form

We got some photos and went back much more quickly. Andrew's recommendations that pretty much everything was best done head first caused some amusing situations but still, we got out of the cave by about 3pm, 5 hours after we got in. Overall it was a really enjoyable trip and I'm really glad I was lucky enough to go on it. A* Excellent work Rosa!

Upper Flood was like a slightly easier version of Otter Hole - less mud, shorter crawls + shorter overall..... but I'm sure it's just my fitness improving! ☺ Rosa led on the way in - and did a marvellous job of it! The boulder chokes had some very convoluted / twisty routes ~~the~~ which she managed really well. Andrew had some interesting notes on various areas & when they were discovered etc. We were lucky in that there wasn't 'much' water - ducks were basically crawls - (and there was a lot!) - but the way in was pretty quick. Before Neverland there were beautiful dry pools of crystals & Neverland was simply breath-taking ☺ We took some photos - more practice is needed - but some ~~were~~ came out lovely. The triangle crystals by the pork pie were incredible, props to the conservation efforts that have kept the formations so clean. I led the way back which was good navigation practice, and soon was very tired trying to climb / squeeze / crawl uphill! After ~~a~~ my gloves were peeling all but worn through, the entrance steps were in sight and I was up the ladder & into daylight. A great trip all in all, and another great workout!

Becca ☺ ♡

Nick A. Dmitry P. Frances P. Swildons Hole - Short Round

Decent trip, 2.5hrs (ish) and fun had by all. It was good to introduce Dmitry to "wet" caving, he wasn't keen on the ducks I'd sump-- Nick!

Neither was Nick! It was fun watching their faces as they submerged into the cold water, put their noses into the air gap and then thrashed wildly to get through. A good re introduction to caving after my two years off. Very dry for Swildons.

Everything above is true! Dmitry P.

45

I drank too much so decided to hand over my ticket to Charterhouse, instead planning a Bath-rods / Rods-Bath trip. Bocca is going to lead, but I'll likely rig.

Nick

trip here

Charterhouse 19/05/19

We met up with Jude to go to Charterhouse. Then we realised no-one on the trip had a car. Luckily Jude agreed to give us a lift to the cave as well as leading it. She gave Rory a ladder to carry, mostly to slow him down I think as we made pretty good progress but did not use the ladder at all.

The cave was quite small and wriggly but not as difficult or as catchy as people made it out to be. There was a lot of slithering down through boulders. But there were some fantastic formations starting from really quite near the entrance, and a tiny gate. It was a dry day and the cave was very dry but we had to lie in some puddles anyway so as to have the full Mendip experience.

The cave was very similar in character to GB, which it has been dye traced to. There were some lovely climbs with lots of footholds, impressive big chambers (the Citadel was amazing), some classic Mendip 45° rifts, and some beautiful decorated grottos. The formations were very different to in Upper Flood, they were much spikier. Both were impressive in their own way.

We had quite a short trip, perfect for Sunday, and were out by 2pm, to a carpet of beautiful bluebells. A lovely trip. Thanks to Jude for leading, and thanks to Nick for booking the permit and getting too drunk so I could have a place on the trip

British Reserve

by Dmitry P.

The briefing we got at the beginning of the rotation turned out to be true. If a Brit says the cave is "a bit wet", there is 4 ducks and 1 sump, but that was yesterday. Today the cave was "quite tight". So while everyone else was kindof percollating through the cracks, I was trying hard not to get stuck. To be fair, it was a great trip.

We decided Bothis pot after finding the entrance. I rigged a pretty awkward single hang down and took a rag as Becca and Frances came down. Becca lead on but was quickly flummoxed by the route. I took a look, but (feeling grouchy) I gave up & suggested leaving. Becca was too daring, so I took another rag at the top of the pitch. We trundled over to Rod's pot disappointed, and rescued a baby bird from just inside the entrance.
We got back to the car with 10 minutes left for our callout, I'd not kept track of the horrendous loss of hours due to my rags.
Very taffy, bit dull, poorly bolted.
Nick

(47)

Wales Weekend 22 June

Rory Rose, Thomas Griffiths, William Ivison Frances Pope, Simon Goddard, Karim, Becca Miller, Nick Adams, Amelia [redacted] Stone/Steane, [redacted] Eliza, [redacted] Dmitry P.

And Cambridge.

OFD 1 Roundtrip - Tom, Frances, Will 3.5hr

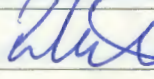
Our able leader [redacted] Will encouraged Tom to take unnecessarily complex routes and ignore ladders. Tom enjoyed the poly-poly through, not so much the Elephant's Arsehole. Ages were spent preparing the perfect photo-shoot only for the camera to die! The Bolt Traverse was dramatic and slippery and the boulder choke was an absolute maze. Almost stacked completely dry apart from a crawl at the end. There were beautiful helictite formations, cryptic crystals and shiny stuff to delight our eyes. Tom was convinced that they had reached a dead end about 10 times and was met with Will's reassuring dead silence. We made it as far as the boulder choke, which we explored (with many more cries of "This is a dead end, wait no, it's actually the way.")
On the way out we bumped into the Imperial/Pennines cavers, knocking one of them waist-deep into the gower pod. They left just before us - we rescued their hat.

Pant Mawr
by Dmitry P.

Simon gave us a map, but between the six of us, lets just say we found it. The cave is by a tree surrounded by a barb wire fence, visible from the road. It is spacious and hospitable, with a lively stream and a horizontal slab layout. Most passages allow to walk upright and generally enjoy life, which I did. Unfortunately, one of our guides, Rory from the Cambridge club, lost some gear, but to me this was a wonderful introduction to the caves of Wales.

Cwm Dwr ⇒ OFD 2 Becca & Nick 12-5ish.

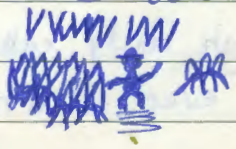
Lovely sunny day - Nick & I popped down to OFD1 in the morning to check the water level at the step - which was fine. After usual uni morning left, everyone had their trips sorted & we decided on Cwm Dwr (I hadn't been in there since my second ever trip - 1 ⇒ CD). Started off well - through the crawls in 15 mins ☺ had some navigation pointers from Nick which is always useful. Forgotten how pretty Cwm Dwr is! Made our way through the connection & noticed how the cave started to resemble OFD more & more. Waterway was fun - exhausted my arms bracing over the pots! Unfortunately when we got to Oxbow neither of us could figure out how to do the climb down safely - Nick had a bit hairy moment with his legs dangling in empty space.... So we turned around. Swam through the pots to save time as we were soaked anyway! Fun bumble back through Cwm Dwr - had a look at big shacks 2 & 2 lead out successfully & re-emerged into the glorious sun around 5pm.



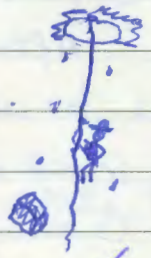
PENT MAWR ~ Eliza

My first ever caving trip was incredibly beautiful. We hiked through fields in the sunshine hunting for our cave. We put on our gear and I did my first SRT-ing - abseiling down into the cave. I saw waterfalls and bones on arrival - teeth. We climbed down, over rocks and trekked through water. I saw some beautiful structures from the ceiling and the floor. We took lots of photos with these. We shined lights behind people as they posed; with smoke coming off of their bodies.





It was very dramatic; like something out of a Sci-fi film - I found the way back the most difficult; I was exhausted and climbing up I found much harder. The most difficult thing was going up the rope (prusiking), I was very relieved when I reached daylight!
Sadly there were no bats in this cave.



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Sunday 23rd June 2019

OFD2, Prokofiev series & explore around.
* Becca, Dmitry & Nick.

Nice to be back in OFD2! Nice quick moving down to the corkscrew, then turned right to go up to ~~Arabex Timo's table~~ Poached Egg way. Lots of varied caving, some big climbs & muddy crawls. Took some pictures at Straw Gallery, had a stroll up Nant Gam. Stormed over to Timo's table & had a poke around Prokofiev before heading back to Gnome Passage & exiting via Speedy Carver / Cappochino Grotto. Good fun work out!

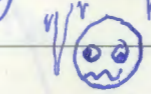
Becca :)

Escaping Reality
by Dmitry P.

I go caving to work out, meet new people and to forget for one weekend who I was. Inside the cave there is only who I am, living in the moment. And considering that in real life I fix things, accidentally breaking the van door handle was the icing on a cake. A completely successful escape from reality. Although duty calls me elsewhere, OUCC will be the first thing on my mind if I ever return to UK. Guys, thank you very much!

Saturday 22nd June 2019

It was rather A sunny day. Went down OFD. Don't remember the rest!



Sunday

OFD Top Entrances

Will, Tom, Frances and Eliza 3.5 hrs

Another wonderfully led trip by Will. He navigated by buff survey and found all the places he meant to and some more by consulting his scarf map. We saw all the classics: Corkscrew, Gnome Passage, Trident, Judge and Big Chamber by the Entrance. We did some great traversing over the streamway. We saw shells in the walls, crystals in the floor and two tiny shrimp in a clear pool.

This trip the camera battery lasted until the end, we hopefully got some great photos of us (a) in front of the Trident, (b) eating (c) exiting the cave into the warm Welsh rain. However the headlamp batteries didn't last so well and we got a bit short of light on the way out. Luckily Tom found a random bike light in his oversuit so we made it out safely.

