Plymouth Caving Group

Newsletter and Journal
September 2017



Agen Allwedd

Issue Number 165

Editorial

Getting articles for your Newsletter is like pulling teeth. No one seems willing to contribute or provide articles so, I'm afraid the chances of the Newsletter continuing are remote and I shall be saying so at the next Committee meeting.

A few of you have made contributions. A while ago a few PCG members spent a weekend in the Chelsea Hut, Whitewalls just above the Llangattock Escarpment providing us with wonderful views and, for some, a couple of good underground trips. Richard has written up a trip to Agen Allwedd while Tara has provided some photographs. Bernard has written up a trip to the caves of Paignton Zoo which are not always easy to get to. Plus there are some pictures, largely from Dave Warne, of a visit we made to the old Kitley Show Cave. So thanks to all those contributors for keeping the Newsletter going.

There is also news of the forthcoming PCG Christmas meal.

Trips continue, sometimes with just two or three of you going and sometimes more. Some members of the club are about to go on our annual pilgrimage to North Wales. All these are opportunities to provide articles so find your keyboard and get tapping.

Anyway, do continue to enjoy your trips underground.

David Jean

Contents

Editorial		2
Agen Allwedd	Richard Vooght	3
Kitley Show Cave	Dave Warne/Dave Jean	5
Paignton Zoo Caves	Bernard Page	7
Club Information		9

Agen Allwedd

The day to Agen Allwedd (Aggy) started with the usual dawn chorus of snoring from the bedroom of the Chelsea Speleological Society (CSS) at Whitewalls, resulting in one of us not getting a lot of sleep. Throughout the morning one by one everyone was up and more or less ready to go. We decided the night before to go to the Northwest Junction within Aggy; this was to prepare us ready for the future of completing a trip to the 'Outer Circle.'


Whitewalls

On the trip, there was Tara, Alex H and myself with the two Daves in moral support walking with us the majority of the way to Aggy. If you've never walked to Aggy, it's a one and quarter mile walk along the tram road from Whitewalls, with the result that only one of our moral supporters made it to the cave entrance with us (Dave Warne), and the other falling beside the tram road from the heat and lack of sleep. When the four of us got to the entrance, we got the cave unlocked and relaxed with the fresh breeze coming out of the cave and got ready for our trip.



So we left Dave at the entrance and headed into the entrance series of Aggy. Consisting of crawling through meandering passageways reaching the compulsory sign-in book about twenty metres from the entrance. From here the passage onwards is a mixture of crawling and walking through tight meandering dry stream way entering the first boulder choke. The main route through the first boulder choke is a well polished and defined way with sobering signs of caution when entering the choke on the left. With a 10 min squeeze, we eventually make it to Baron's Chamber. This is the beginning of the impressive 1200m long 'Main passage' which contains a comfortable walking passage over dried mud floor.



The mainstream passage is located to the right on the second left-hand corner of the Main Passage from entering Baron's Chamber. When entering into the stream way steady going is needed along with route finding to reach the Second Boulder Choke. Again the warning signs were there again before going into the choke, but it seemed easier than the first.



After exiting the choke again, a sizable passage was found heading towards the keyhole chamber which consists of a traverse to the right-hand side of the chamber then afterward a climb down with the aid of a fixed rope back again in the main stream passage. After this, the passage becomes taller, and flow of water becomes more, and the route becomes slippery. Nearing the end of the stream passage an ingress of ochre which made the trip more homely. Around the corner of the ochre inlet, is the Northwest Junction, this is where the main stream passage confluence with the Turkey Streamway is situated.



The Northwest Junction was our turn around point, and we reverse the previous route all the way back to the Main passage where we followed it along to where there were some nice mud formations.

After this, we started heading out of the cave first getting to Baron's Chamber, then through the first choke and eventually reaching the entrance. When the gate was open was like walking into a furnace with the heat of the day instantly drying off the caving kit, also startling a young couple when we exited. Then it was the long walk back to the hut which seemed to go on for ever. When we got to the hut, we met up with the Daves who were having a cuppa outside of the hut when we got there. Overall it was an excellent trip, and everyone enjoyed it.

Richard Vooght

Kitley Show Cave

Some of us got permission to visit the old Kitley Show Cave. This cave has an intriguing history from being a Second World War air raid shelter, through a time as a show cave to being the centre of palaeontological digs carried out by John Wright in many nearby caves which yielded fossils of warm climate animals such as straight tusked elephant, hyaena and hippopotamus similar to those found at Joint Mitnor

Cave at the Pengelly Centre, Buckfastleigh. These bones are now preserved at the City Museum, Plymouth.



Rimstone pools





This is the only part of the cave which floods

Paignton Zoo Caves

Clennon Valley Caves - Paignton Zoo

Present
Bernard Page, Helen Calver, Neil Shillabeer, Claire Jones

Trip Report
This trip took place at the earlier time of 4pm to fit in with zoo opening hours. We visited the two main caves accompanied by the zoo's Conservation Officer Dave Ellicot. Dave visits the caves on a monthly basis to record temperatures and bat activity. This was one of his regular trips. The zoo restricts access to two accompanied by Dave to ensure human activity does not alter the cave environment.

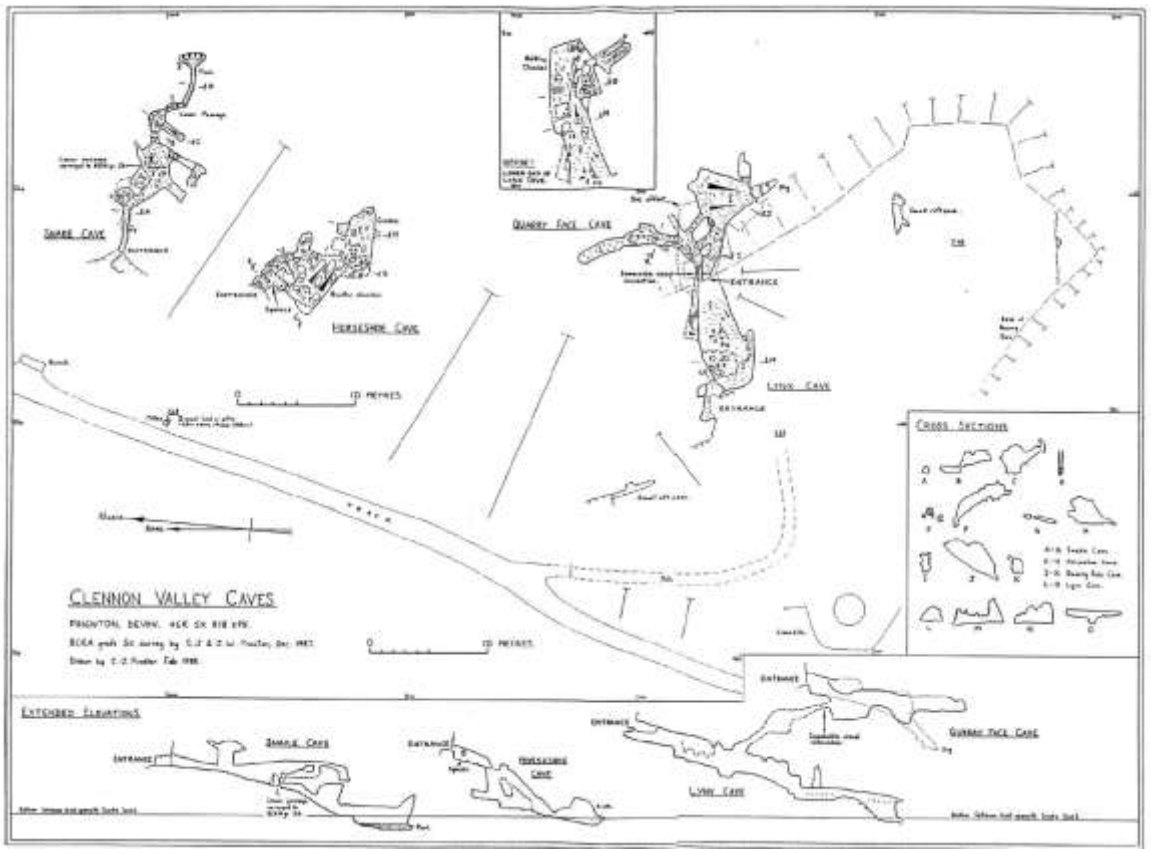
Although there are other caves in the zoo grounds only two are currently accessible.

Lynx Cave (Also known as Neal's Cave) only about 29m in length with a vertical range of 9m. This cave consists of a roomy chamber about 1.5m wide for most of its length with an aven in the roof which connects with Quarry Face Cave. The cave is so named because of lynx remains which were found there.

Quarry Face Cave is smaller, only about 24m long with a vertical range 6m but it divides into two short passageways with some good formations.
The other caves in the grounds have been lost over time as footpath routes have been changed. The survey below undertaken by Chris Proctor in 1997 shows all of the caves on the site.

This was Claire's first trip underground following illness.

It would be good if we could make a further visit to find the other cave, especially Snake Cave, the longest of the zoo caves.





Club Information

Christmas Meal

This year our Christmas Meal will, as usual, be on the Saturday before Christmas, 23rd December. The venue will be the Abbey Inn, Buckfastleigh which has the added advantage that after a few pints we can easily walk to the Pengelly Centre which has been booked for that evening.

The menu is being finalised and when it becomes available I will email it out to members. In the meantime just keep the date free as, if past events are anything to go by, a good evening will be had by all.

Trips

Bernard is putting out a survey to find out the sort of places that members would like to visit. In the meantime the following list takes us to the end of October. These Tuesday night trips will be confirmed by an email and the meeting time is, as usual, 19.30.

September 26	Radford Cave, Devon & Courtenay
October 3	tbc
October 10	Virtuous Lady Mine
October 17	Wheal Fanny
October 24	Afton Red Rift
October 31	Devon United – this will be a special Halloween evening

In addition we have longer weekends away. One coming up has been organised by Alex Heath visiting the mines of North Wales. This is from September 27th until October 3rd. You can come for any period between those dates and there is still room if you are interested. Contact Alex.

In addition Alex Noot is arranging weekends in Mendip in January and Derbyshire in spring so look out for them. Tother Alex will be arranging the 2018 visit to North Wales next autumn. In between Tara is going to organise a long weekend trip to the Burren in Western Ireland in June. Lots to look forward to.

BCRA Hidden Earth Conference 2017

This year the event will return to Mendip and will, as usual when it is held here, will be based at Churchill School. Hidden Earth will take place between September 28th and October 1st and will consist of the usual lectures, workshops as well as caving trips in the area.