

UPPER FLOOD SWALLET

Was indeed awesome!!

Date : 24th March 2013

Present : Chris Sharman, Daniel Jackson, Alex Ritchie, Chris Scaife

Weather : frozen death.

Group size is normally limited to 3 + leader but we agreed to help carry some scaffold bars to a dig so they let us have an extra bod. I have to agree that a leader is pretty essential in this place.

The entrance is a pleasant 15min walk from the MCG hut. The innocuous entrance lies in a shallow shake hole near the path. A short descent down a concrete tube is followed by 10min of crawling and stooping along blasted passage (blasted in the 60's!) before a larger well decorated chamber is reached. This is followed by a duck and a mixture of crawling, squeezes and stooping before the Golden Chamber (I think that's the name) is reached. Shortly after a long, low wet section called the canal is passed followed by another squeeze before reaching the Red Room (with some red formations!). A duck called the Lavatory is then passed (it has been drained so apparently not as bad as it used to be) before more crawling brings you to a massive boulder choke in which 13 squeezes must be negotiated. None of the squeezes are particularly tight but a few are awkward (especially on the way out!). Apparently much of the choke needed digging out. It's easy to see why this cave didn't give up the good for so long!

Exiting the boulder, choke the cave changes character completely. A large and very well decorated stream passage is followed for a few hundred meters until the stream enters a too low bedding plane. The cave continues along some dry passage to the left until a T-junction is reached. We went left (ed: I thought it was right?) which takes you into more beautiful passage and to the original entrance to Neverland. This is still off-limits due to the low ceiling and thus hard to avoid formations. We passed the entrance to where a bypass has been dug that goes straight to the end of Neverland. Before we went in we continued to the end of a long muddy passage to collect the scaffold bars that were to be used in a dig near the T-Junction. On the way back we went through the excavated squeeze into Neverland where we removed our oversuits and gloves. What follows is some of the best decorated (possibly the best) passage in the UK. Glistening and translucent white stals, curtains and flowstone formations line the walls. A little further on Wellies too are removed as some of these formations must then be walked over...it's hard not to feel bad about it! Walking up a beautiful slope of the white, crystalline flow stone, which is also all over the walls, you eventually reach the 'Pork Pies'. Some very unusual formations in a pool of water. From here you can go no further. I regret to say I didn't have my camera with me as we were (thanks to me needing to be home before silly o'clock!) on a pretty strict time limit for the trip. Alex got a few snaps which I hope come out well or there are good photos on the MCG website.

We exited Neverland and dragged the scaffold poles back to the T-junction before the long and fairly arduous exit crawl and squeezes.

The cave is highly recommended though definitely not for novices. Much respect must be given to the scores of Mendip cavers who've dug for the best part of 60 years to make this trip possible.

The two chaps (Tim & Pete) from MCG who led us round were great. They both played a large part in the digs and breakthroughs so were very knowledgeable.

Daniel Jackson

[A Black Rose Caving Club trip report.](#)