

AGEN ALLWEDD / SOUTH WALES

A grander circle

Date: Saturday 11th February 2012

People present: Alex Ritchie, Dan Jackson, Darren Jarvis, Duncan Jones, Pete 'Brook' Dale, Rob Santus, Chris Scaife.

Weather: Icy, with icicles quite far inside the cave.

On a cold winter's morning, 7 brave souls from Black Rose set off from Whitewalls, into a tremendous winter landscape. Using the tramroad to contour the hillside to Agen Allwedd, we were blissfully unaware that in a distant Beverly Hills hotel room, pop icon Whitney Houston was taking her final bath.



Inside the entrance we were mesmerised by all the hibernating lesser horseshoe bats in the tall passage, and were soon upon the First Choke, which we slithered up as if we were snakes, then gazed in awe at the dramatic Main Passage. This was followed with gay

abandon unto a short crawl into the Main Stream Passage. Another boulder choke (imaginatively called the Second Choke) and a few little crawls and down climbs entertained us on the way to Northwest Junction, from whence we headed downstream in a glorious stream passage, slowed only by the almost complete lack of friction underfoot. Some of the water was deep enough that the less respectable caver could have micturated unnoticed, but of course there was none of that from us. Or so I am told.

At the Fourth Choke, we climbed up into Biza Passage, and then climbed down some fixed ropes – into which we do not need to clip cows' tails- back into the main stream. We then followed more of this large passage (one might almost say, 'boulevard') until we reached another fixed rope, High Traverse. At the top of this, an inflatable skeleton suspended from the ceiling marked the end of sphincter control for some cavers. We took a sandy crawl leading on and on into Priors Road, scouting out some esoteric side-passages along the way to Trafalgar Passage, which has some of the finest helictites this side of Narnia. A number of pictures were taken by our talented photographers, cleverly utilising the most handsome model the club has to offer.



Crawling back through Priory Road gave us all a chance to ponder the question of whether or not it was worth the long detour; of course we all thought it was. The sheer delights of Southern Stream Passage awaited, with all the wet crawls and boulder obstacles we could wish for. ‘Will this pleasure never end?’ we cried, and before we knew it we were back flexing our muscles in the main passage. A pleasant stroll was then all that was needed to see us back into the chiroptera-tastic entrance series, and a wiggle wiggle wiggle to the end of our lives. Or at least, our day’s caving.



Chris Scaife

The evening after the trip involved some food (some people opting to venture down to Brynmawr for a takeaway curry!) and of course a drink or two..

On the Sunday, some people had to leave early, others didn't fancy caving so it was a small group that headed to Ogof Clogwyn, a short cave but one with some impressive phreatic shelving.

Photos – Duncan Jones

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