

YURT newsletter

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REPORTS FOR JANUARY

Saturday 6th

Dave Brook, Keith, Roger and Chesh were confronted by too good a day to go underground and went for a grand tour of the dales. We arrived at the top of a very icy Park Rash and commenced an even icier descent down the other side. Roger found a diggable rising at NGR SD 990765, where a small stream emerged from boulders at the top of a steep gully. East Stone Gill and Hazel Bank Gill, on the other side of the dale, were studied through the bino's and appeared worthy of further attention.

In the evening the first YURT Dinner was held, and proved to be entertaining.

Sunday 7th

Leaving Keith still suffering from the excesses of last night, Dave, Arthur, Roger and Chesh went to Richmond, where the station came in for some photography. By devious map-reading and snow-clad roads we eventually arrived at Reeth. After yet another stop for goodies we drove for an interminable distance until DB gave the command to stop. We got out of the van in the middle of a featureless expanse of snow. DB pointed at about a square mile of this and pronounced it to be ULSA's Roughton Keld dig. After suitable 'oohs', 'aahs' and an occasional 'ugh', we went home.

Saturday 13th

Three survey teams went down Stump Cross. DB and Roge began surveying from the Parallel Gallery, AB and Paul Everett went into Heaven and Keith and Chesh set off upstream.

The ULSA clino proved not very suitable for the Far Upper (a statement with which DB disagrees) so Keith and Chesh had a good excuse to stop surveying and go off to discover caverns so vast....

At the traverse above the stream a descent was made to where the water disappears into a bedding a few inches high. Keith remained here while Chesh went off into a series of sharp, narrow rifts, generally only a foot wide. A mud-filled section led to a rift with very deep water in. The walls disappeared about 3ft below the water surface and blackness continued down. Fortunately, it was only about 9" wide and a gentle traverse led into a dry rift which opened into a narrow stream passage. Downstream led immediately into a sump-type chamber, the water in which appeared to be very deep (i.e. above Chesh's knees), but there was a continuation with about 1ft airspace, in which no definite end could be seen. Upstream, the passage led past a couple of deep-watered rifts to an arched roofed crawl on a shingle floor. This was followed for at least 100ft, until it became slightly lower (18"), there being still no sign of an end.

Chesh returned to Keith and we set off out. Unfortunately, on the way Chesh decided to look in a small crawl on the east side of the passage. After much wriggling he got his head and shoulders through, saw that it didn't go anywhere, and found he was stuck. Keith was instructed to dig away some of the floor but unfortunately it proved to be solid. Despairing thoughts followed...until it became obvious that the only way out was to be pulled. Keith pulled wildly, Chesh wriggled even more wildly and success was achieved.

All returned to the surface at various intervals.

Sunday 14th

Keith, Dave and Chesh began surveying in a mine level while Alan and Paul went ahead to look at a fall. 1204ft in we came to the grit/limestone boundary, where a small stream was coming down a rift at the un-conformable junction. Speculation as to whether a man could get up was followed by a fierce ascent by Keith, who descended again almost immediately. A lump of calcite was pulverised and our hero ascended again. Some time and various falling rocks later he returned, having climbed an estimated 70ft, beyond which the rift could be seen to continue for at least another 30ft. Smooth calcite had stopped the ascent, but the rift was big enough to continue up, and was entirely natural and previously unentered. Roger arrived for a look round before we left.

Saturday 20th

Keith and Chesh went down the vast Stump Cross system and surveyed the Fairy Palace, a crawl off Clay Level, and Dickinson's Gallery. Although there was an excellent draught blowing towards us at the south end of the latter, it would require heavy blasting to make any progress.

Sunday 21st

A day of such festeration and decadence that the reputations of those concerned would be reduced to less than nothing were any report given.

Saturday 27th

Keith, Roger and Chesh were again surveying a lead mine. We went into a complex of workings on at least three sub-parallel veins. After being underground for six hours, and having surveyed 1200ft we reached a section so complex, both horizontally and vertically, that we decided it was a good opportunity to stop.

The workings are mainly old man, and although they had all been entered before, the YURT had not been in until Roger entered them during the previous week.

Sunday 28th

The same team made a late start to go into Eglin's Hole, but were distracted by digging the 'sheep shelter' cave behind Tom Taylor's. Roger, the well-known muscleman, barred a way into a blockfall chamber with no way out. It seems very likely that the cave between here and Low Eglin's is so close to the surface that it will all be collapsed.

Chesh had a look around in the entrance series of Eglin's and got into

