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President’s Foreword

As another year closes with a dreary summer and the prospect of unemployment and financial hardship to be looked forward to by our lovely graduates, we look back at what we did to make the last year a more enjoyable experience than the real world to come.

This year saw the club keep, and extend, a solid member base of active cavers, with more people at the AGM than for many a year (possibly ever). We also went on a summer trip to France, sailed down the river in a Regatta to Double Locks, and had amazing Summer and Christmas meals. Oh, and a bit of caving happened at some point as well.

I would like to personally congratulate the committee for all their brilliant work in running the trips, the so-cials, and keeping the club going and taking it from strength to strength. It was their work and dedication that allowed us to try so many new things, and have such a fun experience. I would also like to thank all the members for their enthusiasm, dedication, randomness, and weird minds. Without them, there would be no club, and there would definitely not be the memories that will be stored, and talked about, for years to come.

I will now leave it to the people who helped shape this year to tell you about the good, the bad, and the ugly times that were experienced in this fast paced year.

- Andrew Jenkins, EUSS President 2012-2013
General Information

As much as we love to have a lot of fun, there are also a few rules to good caving etiquette to ensure that everyone can have a good time.

- Cave Formations – Don’t touch them!

Seriously, keep an eye out, be careful, mind where you put your body parts.

- Caving Kit – Keep it safe!

Unfortunately, caving kit is very, very expensive and it’s there for your safety. It’s your responsibility to keep track of it. If you have trouble remembering which bin bag is yours, I highly suggest getting hold of a sturdy bag-for-life type thing from a supermarket and carving your name into it with a permanent marker. No one else is going to know where it is, please look after it!

- Caving Hut – Keep it tidy!

No one minds a little bit of a mess every so often, but it does sometimes get a bit out of hand. Please just try to tidy up after yourself a little bit, and please do take your fair share of responsibility for the washing up after we’ve most lovingly fed you breakfast/dinner. Everyone also needs to chip in with cleaning the hut before the club leaves – we can’t go getting into anyone’s bad books!

What To Bring:

For Caving:
- 4 x AA Batteries for the Helmets (8 if they’re a bit rubbish)
- Many socks!
- Your own wellies if you have them
- Warm, thick, long sleeved clothes (two pairs if you want to start off dry both days. not jeans!)
- Rubber gloves if you want.
- Hair bands for long hair.
- From the tackle shed you’ll need - oversuit, belt and helmet (with battery pack).

For the rest of the weekend
- Sleeping bag! (There are bunk beds, and maybe a few pillows around, but that’s as far as it goes for bedding. It will probably be cold.)
- Snacks. We’ll give you breakfast on Saturday and Sunday, and one or two evening meals (depending what time we arrive there.)
- Towel
- Money, just in case and for the pub of course.
- Your own changes of clothes and underwear.
- And toothbrush, hairbrush, blah blah. You get it, I’m not your mother.
Caving in Devon

Pridhamsleigh Cavern
Bakers Pit and the Plymouth Extentions
Afton Red Rift - Trip Report

Freshers’ impressions of Prid

Pridhamsleigh Cavern is the usual first trip for our newbies of the year. Here are some extracts of the write ups in the red book by our best loved new kids - their thoughts on caving after their very first trip - awww! :)

I had an amazing time at Prid. It was my first ever caving experience and I had a great time and loads of fun. It is very muddy there and we all came out coated - that’s spelunking for you! I hope to have equally fun time over my year of caving with the society. There were a few nerve-racking parts such as the squeezes which seem impossibly to get through. But in the end you manage it with your dignity left at the entrance. The lake was absolutely freezing but very fun nonetheless.
- Paul

What a really great trip! Wasn't feeling very positive - I had to fit through a very small tunnel, but after overcoming that, everything else was very enjoyable. I am going to be very proud of all my bruises :)
- Angelique

Never caved before, but turns out I’m some kind of veritable cave monkey. Prid was awe-some, if muddy. Will forced me to do the One Legged Prostitute, and a squeeze where I got my arse stuck (obvs need to go on an arse diet).
- Charlie.

This was my first caving trip ever and it was brilliant - scary but very good. Will and Ellen were very reassuring in their own special way. I can't wait to go again.
- Flos <3’s Penis.

Awesome first trip!! Love that I can proudly tell people that I’ve done a one legged prostitute! However, I have decided that I hate Tim [as in Tim’s tunnel]. All things considered, glad I joined EUSS and can’t wait for the next trip.
- Cameron
Baker’s Pit

In the middle of a sheep field, opposite the burnt-out church in Buckfastleigh, stands a concrete tube - sticking out like a sore thumb. This interesting sight greets cavers as they approach the entrance to Baker’s Pit. Baker’s Pit is the most extensive of the caves in Devon and one of the more impressively decorated of the regularly visited caves. This cave is one of the most enjoyable caves to take a trip down in Devon, as it provides a huge variety of caving for all abilities. At slightly over 3.5 kilometres, Baker’s is a great cave to explore without having to travel to Mendip or further.

Baker’s is a complex cave with four distinct sections, each of which are worth a day’s visit. The entrance shaft brings you into Bolder Hall which acts as the heart of the cave, with the four series travelling away from this chamber. Crystal corridor provides the easiest and shortest trip. Judge Chamber and the Southern Stream-way series is perhaps the best trip for a first time in Bakers, as it leads to the Glorious Devon series (entered just after Dutch oven and before the pot, or over the bold step above the pot) and the extremely large Plymouth extensions.

Bakers has been a real favourite of the club this year and we have explored much of it, found some awesome sights and had some interesting encounters. Some of my favourite stories from Baker’s involved Lucy getting into a terrible mess by exploring and getting stuck. Lucy has previously become stuck above the pot and in the ceiling to Judge Chamber. Now, while the first of these occurrences was not particularly funny (well for Lucy anyway), the second did provide some amusement. Lucy found herself in a downwards tube some 6 foot above the floor with no foot or handholds available. I was asked and kindly agree to catch our beloved tackle mistress, however I quickly realised that on a muddy slope over a hole I was not in the best position to catch a falling Lucy. Sadly, I realised this as Lucy fell and shouted ‘catch me!’ I was unable to do this and Lucy fell onto the muddy floor and her feet disappeared from underneath me. As Lucy fell she may have ‘inadvertently’ punched me in the face. This was not a gentle punch but in fact came from a great height with much velocity. So take this as a note to you all, never agree to catch Lucy. She is violent. Insult was added to injury as she managed to break my light and give me a fat lip, so on the journey out I occasionally had to lisp “Guyth, can you wait for me, I can’t thee”.

On another occasion, me, Paul and Ellen decided to explore some of the smaller tubes off the Crystal Corridor and inadvertently found the rifts and crawls series. This section is as it sounds: crawls followed by rifts and then more crawls. However, this ends with a small body sized chamber full of bat poo, with a squeeze entry. As I went first I found that once fully inside, it was near impossible to return feet first through the squeeze. There followed a five minute 360 degree turn with my face and body in a significant amount of bat excretion. I emerged some time later, after an impressive ten point turn with significant swearing, coated in black slime.

- William Reed
The Second Annual Inflatable Regatta

The Second Annual Caving Regatta had us hoisting flags and exhausting lungs to get our inflatable armada down the river. This saw a flotilla that included the hard to steer rubber ring of Paul ‘Paddling in Circles’ Brown, the luxury of Emma ‘Brings Her Seat to the Pub’ Finlinson’s inflatable chair, and the HMS Pikey, poorly repaired and sailed by yours truly, Andy ‘Cheats By Running Downstream’ Jenkins (Jenks).

The weather was all we could have asked for, and after waiting for half an hour for Angelique ‘Came Up From Torquay’ McBride we set off to the complaints of “we have somewhere to be soon!” from the Archaeological couple of Sam and Jemma.

Techniques varied as we floated down, the most effective (aside from Lydia ‘Taking the Easy Option’ Brooker’s sea kayak) of which was Charlie “Forget the oars, I’m just going to pretend I’m swimming” O’Mahoney’s style, which saw him speeding past even the most efficient of rowing couples. However, after a few hours of struggle, we made it to the Double Locks, where a host of wonderful food was enjoyed before Emma was presented with the coveted Golden Seaman award, and we wandered back at a much faster pace to prepare for the Summer Meal later that evening.

- Andrew ‘Zin Zan’ Jenkins

Facts About Your New President

- He was nearly named Zin Zan.
- He is incapable of successfully navigating a trip around a cave.
- If he calls you about something important, he’ll spend half an hour saying the same thing ten times.
- He is really easy to manipulate if you annoy him enough.
- He really likes sugar.
- He argues constantly.
- If you want to please him, hide a snake in his bed.
- His beard is rubbish.
- He argues even more when he is drunk. Here is the proof, taken from the red book in France: Ellen: “Jenks is arguing. Again”. Will: “Hello I am writing this during an argument where Jenks is wrong!! So wrong. Basically he is silly and everyone thinks he is a penis-bean” Angelique: “Jenks is still arguing! About EVERYTHING! We can’t make him stop, please stop. Still going...For fuck’s sake” (and that was just one night...).
- He cannot hold his liquor, as demonstrated by the fact that he once vomited onto a table in Firehouse during dinner. He then scooped it into his hand and shuffled away.
- In a desperate attempt to get more people to go caving, he wants to start a Quiddich society. Or he just fancies a Harry Potter fan.
- He cannot drive, and holds a grudge against all car wing-mirrors.
- He frequently forgets his insulin, and therefore almost dies on a regular basis.
- He is a big fan of a game called ‘Pinch Jenks’. Wait until Jenks is over a large drop in a cave, with no hands free, and pinch him on the bottom. He loves it.
- He doesn’t like getting his balls wet.
- We still don’t know if he’s getting it on with Ange or not.
Afton Red Rift

In the village of Afton lies one of the more challenging and sporting of the caves found within Devon. Afton is certainly one of the hidden gems of UK caving, with opportunity to explore away from the traditional round trip into some smaller upper series.

Trip Report

Group: William Reed, Andrew Jenkins, Florence Crowther-Smith.

Having started caving in October the previous year, I was finally persuaded this August (2012) that it was time for me to try Afton Red Rift cave in Devon. There were three things that had been putting me off until that point:

1) It’s further away than Bakers Pit.
2) There are supposed to be many large spiders in the entrance.
3) I’d heard it was an absolute bitch.

But, accompanied by the homo-erotic duo of Will and Jenks (our esteemed president), we set off. They told me lots of cheering and reassuring things on the way, such as “Don’t worry about falling, its not very high…well actually it’s a really long way down, don’t fall.”

The name Afton Red Rift doesn’t really leave anything out. It’s in Afton, it’s very red, and it’s a rift. The whole thing, minus a few squeezes and smallish chambers is a rift. In order to get to the entrance of Afton, you first pull yourself up a rope on a steep slope. The actual entrance is concealed in a narrow crack about 6 ft up the rock face, about 3 ft into which lies the gate. The first challenge, as I have mentioned, is the spiders. But I summoned all my courage, climbed through the gate and only screamed at a spider once.

After that, you are straight into the main rift. It’s one leg on either wall traversing for most of the rift in Afton - not one foot on each wall, as in Salubrious, but one knee/thigh. There are very few handholds and nowhere to quickly rig a belay or a sling. Although a large amount of the rift below you looks narrow enough that you could not easily fall into it, there are sections where it widens slightly and you can see straight down the not-inconsiderable fall below you - the rift is between 16.5 and 32 ft deep, according to UK Caving Wikipedia! I did get cramp in my shoulders from bracing, and had to stop to shake them out.
However, the worst bits of the rift are the corners. Main Rift zigzags three or four times and the outside wall bells out each time. This means that you have to place your back against the inside of the turn and carefully walk your feet round the outside - over a hole big enough to slip down without even touching the sides. Although surprisingly easy to do without slipping, this is very scary. It was a relief to get to the Flower Pot, a downwards slide / squeeze into Flower Chamber. Will got stuck here, and hung from his belt for five or so minutes which provided some light relief.

The next chamber that you pass through on the way is Cascade Chamber. It contains an impressive red flowstone formation, and also Infinite Wisdom. This is a very deep, tight tube that leads nowhere, so called because once you have been down to the bottom and struggled back out, you will have gained the wisdom needed to never attempt anything like that again. Needless to say, I gave it a miss.

After that, there are a few easier rift passages, one awkward climb with the world’s most ridiculously small foothold and then Wilson’s Squeeze (I think this is the right name!). This squeeze, through a letterbox and steeply up a slope, is best attempted on your back. So naturally, I attempted it on my front. The indignation that came from having to stand on Jenks to get up the slope on my front was only made worse by then watching him slither through like a cave snake on his back. Note to anyone new who caves with Jenks next year: he’s really annoyingly good at everything (except route finding).

The final leg of the round trip brought us to the very bottom of Main Rift, the first section we traversed over. 32 ft down the bottom of a rift that, from above, had looked too narrow to fall down, and the only way out is to climb up. Those who know me know that I’m a mild, polite and generally well-spoken kind of person. However, this climb did incite a great deal of swearing, quite out of my usual character. 20 minutes later, and many offers to be floor from Jenks (all of which I’m proud to say I declined), we emerged back into the top of Main Rift. 10 minutes traversing back towards the main entrance and I was greeting my old friends, the gigantic cave spiders, again.

Afton was an amazing trip, and I’m very glad that I did it without any mishaps or breakdowns. But, never again (or at least not for a really long time).

- Florence Crowther-Smith
Incest Chart 2011-2012
France
EUSS in France

The annual summer trip for the EUSS was to the idyllic village of Prades in the Gorge du Tarn. The journey from Exeter to Prades by car was a daunting task, which took us all 3 days to do. By bus, car, train and ferry we made it to Calais and what an underwhelming welcome to France it was (pretty much the equivalent to Dover). Our first day in France was to find our way to Orleans (the camping site), about a 500km drive. Our car, which included Will, Flos, Paul and I, arrived much later than the other car. When we did eventually arrive I, along with Paul and Jack, was to sleep in the tent that was broken, the tent had to be tied to a tree, so the ground we slept on was very bumpy and on a slight slope (not a great nights sleep!)

The next leg was another 500km journey to Prades in the Gorge du Tarn. On our travels, we were kept company by NRJ, the local radio station. This radio station had, literally 20 songs that were played over and over and over again. We all became very familiar to French and a few Spanish songs. Arriving at the breathtakingly beautiful village of Prades, we saw the house we would be staying in for the week. It was so typically French, with its window shutters and stone-bricked walls, a very cute beautiful house! Prades is situated in the canyon of the Tarn river, a stunning deep cut V-shaped valley that provides an astonishing vista. In the exciting run around of the house, we discovered a nice patio/BBQ area overlooking the Tarn valley, this was going to be an incredible week!

There were caves all over the area, as well as a cave just walking distance from the house! This cave was called Grotte de Prades, and was a nice little cave (only took an hour) to ease ourselves into caving in France.

I could have carried on with all the amazing memories and experiences I got with a wonderful group of people. I am so glad I came on this trip and that I joined caving, really the best thing I have ever done! I cannot wait for next year’s summer trip!

Angelique McBride

Castlebouc no.4

I’m hoping that you’re already aware of EUSS’ trip to the south of France this year so I thought I’d give you a firsthand account of a cave that we decided to explore. The weather started off as good as it had done for the majority of the holiday. Angelique, Lydia, Jack, Jenkins and myself decided to go to a cave that Angelique, Ellen, Flos and Will had found a couple of days earlier but hadn’t managed to get very far. After the usual pre-cave faffing of extreme proportions that we as a soci
ety are famed for we jumped in the car and headed towards the small village of Castelbouc, where we descended into the valley, across the river and found a place to park and kit up.

After a short stroll through the village and surrounding greenery we came to the cave entrance. It looked pretty cave entrancey as far as caves go, so we turned on our lights and began our decent not knowing how successful we would be. Angélique led us as far as their previous trip had gone after which we would be relying on the survey found online. After some rather unpleasant crawling we all congregated just before a low crawl into the next passage where the usual “go on (insert name here), you can go first” followed with the cheeky grin practice was carried out. Ultimately I found myself being the first to venture into the further unpleasant stone chipping layered passage. A short while later I came across the squeezezy section mentioned in the information found on the internet (not that I knew it at the time). After surveying it for a minute or so I decided someone small and agile would enjoy this exploration much more than me... “Jenkins!” I called and waited as he clambered in and joined me. (I thought I’d let him go first as I didn’t really fancy a squeeze that could ultimately turn out to be futile). Jenkins manoeuvred his way through with relative ease where he said the passage continued with high ceilings. I called back to the others and then followed suit, though making it look twice as difficult. This squeeze was made awkward mainly due to the fact it was over a crevice and that there was a (pain in the backside) column in the centre of the passage that you had to squeeze between. Eventually we all got past and we continued on our journey. The passage got larger thankfully and we continued happily for a few minutes walking “like Egyptian” for some of the way. At the end of the high passage we were given the option of a few different paths. The one I happened to go down ended instantly in a dead end and smelt distinctly of urine (how delightful) so I made my way out as quickly as possible not wanting to hang around. Someone else had found the successful route during my urine “hole” escapade. This route wasn’t so bad but still not overly appreciated, we started to gain height and after a short climb we were out.

What we came out into was stunning and completely unexpected - a vast cavern in which our measly headlamps could not penetrate the darkness with an added echo for a bit of fun. Gradually we made our way through the cavern towards the other end where previous trips had rigged a rope to aid the climb which we were met with. At the top once again we found ourselves looking into darkness however the mud beneath us was now red. Continuing on we descended a slippery muddy bit using another permanent rope set up to make the climb/descent easier and ended up in an even larger chamber, aptly named “midnight chamber” in which we found a sandcastle built, presumably, by a trip of scouts that had been down a few days previously. This eventually narrowed down to a large passage accompanied by a pool of water. We continued on until finally we came to the sump that signalled the end of our trip. The water here was pristine. It had a slight tinge of greeney blue and the surface was smooth. We sat here for a while before eventually heading back the way we came.

All in all it was a nice relatively easy cave with some unexpected and fantastic surprises.

-Paul Brown
Daren Cilau

In February 2012, EUSS organised a ‘serious caving’ trip to Whitewalls in South Wales. With hindsight, dubbing this weekend a ‘hard caving weekend for serious cavers’ (and ‘not a drinking weekend!’) might have been a slight jinx, given the almost-disaster that occurred. The trip cost us not only a barrel of beer for cave rescue, but our already dubious club reputation took quite a blow.

Read on for a first-hand account of how the weekend went for Cam, Lucy and Moo.

Jesus shitting Christ!

Three words to sum up Daren. When one normally gets lost in a cave, one spends 20 minutes being a little frustrated and upset, before satisfaction and relief when the correct route is discovered. Yeah, this wasn't the standard trip. Frazzled is how we were. The entrance alone was tiring as shit. 600m of crawling through water and pointy-ass rocks makes most judgments thereafter somewhat unreliable. After a few hours of getting lost trying to find the “Time Machine”, we decided to try and exit through a passage which none of us had any briefing on. NOBODY on the trip had ANY clue what the exit actually looked like or had any information on it. Research, it seems, is paramount.

NOBODY IS TO BLAME. This is something everyone is telling me and something it seems important to stress. Morale was tested, as was the patience of all three intrepid spelunkers. Oh my god, nobody wants to take the blame. So...we decided to leave the cave and do a pleasant through trip, see the sights (the “White company” was truly the most gorgeous, the most phantasmagorical set of formations I have ever seen), which lead us to the very bitter end of the cave far away from the actual exit.

We had a spot of bother with some boulders at one point (two of our company almost got crushed and died terrible, albeit heroic-as-fuck, deaths) and some ladder related hassle, but after giving up and heading for the horrendous slog back to the beginning we heard a heavenly whistling coming from behind. Behold! An angel (a slightly drunk angel) by the name of Adrian came bearing tasty caramel delights. Salvation had come, Buddha had answered our prayers. Fifteen hours. I personally wouldn’t take it back.

- ‘Moo’ Hussein
Caving Games

Squeeze machine
The ‘squeeze machine’ is a contraption that has a hole for competitors to attempt to fit through. The hole can be made smaller or larger - simply see how small you can go before you’re stuck!

The Broom Game.
This is game of flexibility as demonstrated by Paul below.
1) Start with broom in both hands in front of you.
2) Put both feet over the broom so that it is behind you
3) Now find a way to step over the broom and end up with it behind your back, without either letting go of it or cheating and dislocating a shoulder. There is one particular method to achieving this.

Table traversing
Simply start on the top of a suitably sturdy table and climb down under the table and back onto the top without touching the floor. Definitely harder than it sounds.

Pan and sling.
A real favourite of the club. Find a saucepan you can stand on (it must be just smaller than a pair of feet. One person is the base and stands on the pan while their partner stands on their feet. The object of the game is to bring the sling, which is on the floor around the base, over the pair and returned to the floor away from the saucepan without either competitor touching the floor. Each time the sling is made smaller!

Box Game
Another game for the more flexible caver. Simply place a smallish cardboard box on the floor and each competitor must pick up the box with their teeth without touching the floor with anything other than their feet. After each round, tear off a layer of the box to make it closer to the floor.

Sling game
It’s complicated. Ask Jenks to demonstrate.

Possums: This was a game that Jenks told us about from his time in Australia. As yet no one has been brave or stupid enough to initiate this game. However, here are the rules:
1) Climb a tree
2) Drink
3) Last one left in the tree wins!
Simple, but be safe - use a smallish tree. For added fun, tie yourself to the tree branch for a fun swing after falling off!
Everyone knows, cavers are awesome. And this year, there was a fair number of us! So we liked to spend lots of time with everyone.

Our weekly Tuesday so-
cials were nice this year. We had the Christmas and Summer Meals, as always. Christmas was at Exeter Sausage and Grill, and Summer was at Al Farid, the Moroccan place by the Cathedral. They both involved a little too much money and alcohol, I'm sure, but were great fun.

The one “clubbing” social we had was the Zombie Night! This was the day after Halloween, so most people just thought we were a bit late. There were only 10ish of us, and Arena was pretty much empty, but we had a good amount of drunkenness, plenty of silly dancing, and too much snap-happiness on Ellen’s part. So it was memorable! Oh, and there was that other thing we remember, after meeting Emma properly for the first time... Cough.

We had one trip to the Vaults, which is the local gay bar. What do I remember from this? Oh, more silly dancing, mainly on Josh’s part. Cocktails, interesting people and Paul’s coat getting stolen, which lead to him being angry, the mood chart, and him saying some things he might regret. Oh and Cam and Lydia’s romance, d’awww..!

Most of the year consisted of pub-dwelling. The Ram, Impy, and Firehouse are the usual hideaways, of course! As well as Richmond Road, where we had a few house parties and nearly as many noise complaints from the grumpy neighbours.

The red book got a LOT of love this year, to the point where it’s falling apart, and the Incest Chart is spectacularly up to date, thanks to some eventual confessions from Kat!

So yes, it was a good year.

- Ellen Cooper
CHECC stands for the Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs. Every year in November they host an annual meeting which all university caving clubs are welcome to join. We always do! Technically it’s supposed to be a formal committee discussion with representatives from all across the country. In reality it’s a massive get-together of partying drunken people of similar minds, with an excuse to maybe do some caving you ordinarily wouldn’t go.

In 2011 it was hosted in Yorkshire. We don’t usually head that far north, but we make an exception for CHECC. It’s a long drive, but worth it. We arrived on the Friday night, signed in, collected our wristbands and a piece of paper. This had a list of tasks clubs were intended to complete, with photographic evidence, including “make a human pyramid”; “all members do the Macarena”; “a male member must tongue-kiss Zap Brannigan”; and “lick Hairy Will’s bum cheek”. We found our room and alumni members and start to settle in.

Friday night is the first but more subdued night of partying, as everyone turns up from long journeys and settles in. All clubs have to chose a theme to dress up as. We failed being creative and went as bats. We didn’t win. The club that won, quite rightly, was dressed up as Futurama characters, including a very realistic Bender and the aforementioned Zap Brannigan (who months later turned out to be Mike who babysat us in Darbyshire!). It was that night I licked the bum of a hairy man dressed as a nun. And I think Will threw up some pasta. Interesting!

Saturday morning comes around. Cue standing in line for breakfast waving back at people you don’t remember talking to the night before, and some half-hearted discussions about maybe going caving. Will and some others took the rental car to the cave he went to before, and I went back to bed. Some hours later I got a phone call that went something like this: “Ellen, we’re in the car but we’ve lost the keys!” “What? That’s stupid.” “Come and help us.” “What on earth am I supposed to do?” I stayed in bed, the AA turned up and someone found the keys in the boot.
SATURDAY NIGHT is when things happen! This includes games and competitions, and the infamous “Stomp”. The night starts with BEER PONG! Until this year we haven’t had much luck with this. All the best intentions, and love of the game, but no luck. Even if you’ve never been interested in competitive sports before though, you will end up chanting like a football hooligan, squished next to a table jeering at the supporters of the opposing team and trying to remember the traditional EUSS shouts. Unbelievably, in a moment that still brings a tear to my eye, our team Will and Fenna actually won! Yes, the whole thing! I’m still amazed.

Other competitions include all the traditional caving games - saucepan and sling, squeeze machine and body traversing. We gave a good attempt at the squeeze machine, but someone trounced us by fitting through a space thae size of a coke can (?!). Body traversing almost didn’t happen, but we begged and begged and begged and they finally gave in to us. We entered several teams and did pretty well, I think...

Honestly I’m afraid I can’t really remember. I spent most of my time dancing topless. There was a reason, I promise! The Stomp is the Saturday night dance: basically a huge school disco, but with drunkards, and topless. Yes, topless. No, it’s not optional. I spent a lot of time dancing with a bunch of Northerners and taking waaaayyy too many photos of the drunkards (which obviously didn’t include me...!)

Somebody’s set up tent got brought in, and had as many people put into it as possible. Pretty impressive. Then someone picked up in it... And it broke.

Sunday eventually crawls in, and it’s back into the main room for breakfast, and the announcements. Results of the competitions were called out, and we submitted our sheet of tasks ticked off. We got prizes! 20 free beds for 2 nights in the Peak District for winning Beer Pong, as well as beds in SWCC and the Belfry. Hatty and Ben did a super-quick body traverse because the officials couldn’t remember who won the night before. Turns out there was only one other club that attempted the task list, who we were drawing with. However, because we’d won everything else and for some reason everyone hates us, we got booed and the other club won the overall prize. Humph.

But, we went for a walk around some waterfalls, and food in the local caving cafe place. EUSS was done proud, and it is not a weekend I’m going to forget!

- Ellen Cooper
The quaint village of Castleford and the beautiful scenery of the area was a special experience for me, as I've always wanted to visit the Peak District. We arrived late into the village, the pubs lit up; teasing us with what we know is inside. After getting ourselves sorted we all headed straight for the pub, with exciting matches of both chess and checkers being played. Someone, thankfully, suggested sock wrestling. Back to the hut we went; two harnesses were set up and players were suspended above the ground. The objective of the game was to remove a sock off your opponent's foot in order to win. Great fun!

Right caves... the caves that I explored over the weekend were both challenging and enjoyable. The first cave, Giant's Hole, which included me, Cameron and Mike, is a particular favourite of mine because of the long (very long) winding crab walk and the challenging navigation of a very scary rift! The big controversy of this trip was us taking the ladder. The other group (Ben, Jenks, Lydia and Fenna), unbeknownst to us, was still in the cave... oops! Luckily they were able to get out thanks to another caver. Ben and Jenks then spent a large chunk of the evening devising a make shift SRT with whatever they had with them in the cave, which they were surprisingly successful with!

The second cave was Peak Cavern to Moss chamber (named after a caver who died in there, ominous!) This cave boasts the largest cave entrance in the UK, so a lot of tourists. Once past all the tourists proper caving begins. This particular route was very wet and muddy, with an amazing mud slide on the way out, not too easy on the way in! The cave did consist of a few squeezes and really hard climbs; well I found them hard others noticeably didn't. Moss chamber was impressive, a rather large chamber with a lot of flow stone and a few stalagmites and stalactites. The walk back to, trough the lines of tourists provided a moment of hilarity for us. The look of shock on their faces, perhaps thinking “that’s not on the brochure”! My high point came when a few of us decided to take a walk around the village. We stumbled upon bric-a-brac store, which was owned by a very eccentric old man. This eccentric old man gave Flos and Ellen a sailor hat, a ship's steering wheel and a blow up doll, while playing 'My Heart Will Go On'. Surreal! Anyway while browsing the hundreds of stuff I found a cute, quarter sized guitar and immediately fell in love. Now I have a beautiful souvenir of a wonderful caving weekend!

A n d  C h a r l i e  g o t  b o u g h t  a  t a n k a r d  w i t h  a  t r a i n  o n  i t .

- Angelique McBride
DCRO — Devon Cave Rescue

DCRO are, funnily enough, the local cave rescue organisation. They have been running for years and are a collection of local cavers ready on call to help anyone who may get in trouble in our neck of the woods. Several of our members have signed up, attend training evenings, and are on the call list ready for if they are ever needed.

The organisation offers training evenings once a month, in a wide variety of skills and resources. Here is a description of some we have attended.

**Bakers Pit Practice**

This was a simple evening designed to train everyone’s survey reading abilities. We arrived at Baker’s pit, got split into pairs or groups with people we didn’t know so well, and given a survey and pens. The aim was to find our way to certain parts of the cave and write down the letter that was hidden there. It was also a test of communication with new people.

Few teams found all the letters in the designated time, but apparently they spelled BAKERS PIT! Creative...

It was a good way to spend an evening, and interesting to look at how a survey compares with a cave you know quite well.

**Dog Hole Practise Rescue**

This was a good one! It was a full on practice rescue, start to finish. The DCRO’s leader’s son was in a certain part of the cave pretending to have a broken leg. The aim was for everyone to cooperate to get him out as well as possible.

People were split up into groups - medics, communications, riggers, etc. It was very interesting to see how everything worked. The communication systems got set up, and I got to relay information from the depths of the cave to the surface. “Surface, surface, this is Cave 1... The casualty is secured in the stretcher. Over.”

It was very organised with its set rules, and everything ran very smoothly. The main part was getting everyone in the right place, and being bodies in gaps to help get the stretcher out of the cave through some tricky bits.

**SRT Practice**

SRT practice happened at Chudleigh rocks, about 20 minutes out of Exeter. There were plenty of very experienced members happy to help out, and various routes set up for members of all competency. Some did fancy routes with diversions, rebelays etc. I did the simple option down a slope, which turned out to be more difficult than with nothing to stand on!

And as all caver know, a trip to the pub ends any evening.

*Ellen Cooper*
The Purple Helmet Award

The Purple helmet award  is given to reward the member who each year makes a fool of his or herself during their time with the Club. The helmet itself has had a number of pervious winners each of whom have has their name and how they won it attached to the helmet. The oldest read-able sticker on the helmet currently dates from 1999 and we are committed to ensuring that the helmet will remain a treasured award for many years to come.

This years members had numerous attempts to claim this age old award. Unsurprisingly many of these attempts were helped with varying quantities of alcohol. Here are just some of the best nominations for this award.

Alistair ‘Foxy’ Begley began the year as president and actually caved for the initial few weeks before he lost interest and took up the traditional role of ‘Vacant President’. ‘Foxy’ for the majority of this year was an elusive beast, but on the first weekend of the year made his valiant attempt to secure the purple helmet. To do this he set about firstly by breaking every glass he touched and followed this up with an attempt to turn the MGC kitchen floor into an artificial lake while attempting to start a water fight primarily with himself. And then passing out drooling in Ellen’s lap, while people attempted to put glitter in his hair.

William Reed was, at this point, the defender and current holder of the purple helmet for various problems of an organizational nature in the previous year. Unfortunately he had not learnt his lesson and a number of valiant attempts to retain the Purple Helmet were made throughout the year. Impressive examples include; packing his caving kit in the foot-well of the car on the way to South Wales, proceeding to be unable to find it and have to borrow kit from the locals all weekend, only to find it once again in exactly the same position on return to the tackle shed.

However, his most awe-inspiring attempt came on the weekend of CHECC. On a caving trip to Valley Entrance, Will managed to misplace the keys somewhere in the car, following the trip, with the other members in the car, after being specifically told not to lose any keys. This would have been a pain in normal circumstances, however, in a storm on a remote hilltop valley with a rapidly flooding river flowing over the top of its bridges flowing past, it was a monumental cock-up.

Two hours spent with each person in the car running into the freezing rain to frantically search the boot in various states of dress until they could take the cold no longer resulted in the car being a mess and still no keys. In fact the keys did not turn up until the storm had passed and the AA van had come to tow them down the hill. During the hunt for the tow bar, a set of keys emerged from under a seat.

Lydia Booker holds the honour of being the current purple helmet award, which she valiantly won on a trip to South Wales. On arriving on the Friday night, Lidls was sleepy. So she went for a bit of a nap and asked to be got up a couple of hours later. Sounding pretty docile so far...

Those few hours later, she got up and rejoined the party...

Fast forward a bit. 9:30am the next morning, she was spotted, pint of cider in hand, glaring at Plym 2 (a caver from Plymouth) shouting at the top of her voice that she was winning the honour for EUSS. Oh dear. Pretty entertaining for a while! Ridiculous, but funny. Until everyone started talking about going actual caving. Who wanted to come? Lidls did! Who thought it was a good idea? Just Lidls did! She was eventually told enough times that no one would take her caving, and no, she would not be allowed to go caving by herself. Her new plan of action was a nice, relaxing, innocent walk.

7pm, everyone is back from caving, cooking dinner. It’s getting dark, and Lydia is nowhere in sight. There were worried phone calls, discussions with old members of SWCC, and whispers of calling mountain rescue on a caving weekend. As the worriment reached its peak, we thankfully spot a bedraggled, but otherwise unharmed Lydia strolling across the Welsh countryside! Hallelu-jah!

- William Reed
I feel I couldn't shove stuff in there ...” (whilst pointing at Ellen's crotch)

“Put it between my legs, I can't turn around to take it!”

Paul

Lydia

“Cam had some sense knocked into him!”
“By a door”
“That was NOT slammed by Paul”
“I'm Innocent I tell you! Fabricated lies! I wouldn't ever harm another ... Honest”

Group Weirdness

“I sneezed in a squeeze once...it really hurt”

“Screw other people, I screw myself!”

Will

Kat

“Screw other people, I screw myself!”

Flos

“Cam left his clothes at the entrance to Swildon's Hole and a little girl stole them so he had to chase her bicycle whilst dressed as a gimp!”

“I'm Innocent I tell you! Fabricated lies! I wouldn't ever harm another ... Honest”

Flos

Kat

Paul

Lydia

“By a door”
“That was NOT slammed by Paul”

Group Weirdness

“I sneezed in a squeeze once...it really hurt”

“Screw other people, I screw myself!”

Will

Kat

“Cam left his clothes at the entrance to Swildon's Hole and a little girl stole them so he had to chase her bicycle whilst dressed as a gimp!”

Cam left his clothes at the entrance to Swildon’s Hole and a little girl stole them so he had to chase her bicycle whilst dressed as a gimp!
Charlie’s Ramblings - A Year of Caving

The problem with deciding to move in with friends of a friend purely on the basis they had a very cheap room in their house, is that you might end up being persuaded to pursue some of the leisure pursuits that they do. As I’m writing this in the annual caving journal, I should probably point out it was quite fortunate that I was moving in with several members of EUSS, rather than a few members of the Teetotallers and Anti-Mushmallow Society (which sounds like a pretty rubbish society tbh). Having arrived with all my worldly goods on a balmy September afternoon, I was promptly told by Will and Ellen that, as a condition of living in the house, I was going to try caving, whether I liked it or not.

So, having blown the cobwebs out of my wallet and parted company with £25 for EUSS membership, one afternoon not long after my 21st birthday (I am, obviously, well old) I bundled into the back of Ellen’s trusty (but now deceased) automobile and headed off to Prid. For this trip I had purchased a tiger onesie, the choice of design being based on the fact that Welsh Nick who I lived with in first year spent half his time in a tiger onesie.

Prid itself was entered as part of a sixsome; leading the motley band of novices was Twirling Snowflake Reed, followed by Flos, myself, Sandy T and Amy, with Ellen bringing up the rear. Having entered the cave we discovered there was not a huge epic chamber of space underground; before going underground I had decided I was probably a bit claustrophobic and definitely wouldn’t like any really squeezing bits. I was actually fine but poor Amy was a little terrified; the ever encouraging Mr Reed did however manage to motivate her to go all the way to the lake and back. As an old man my memory is obviously fading, so I will now tell you what little else I can remember about the trip. Most of the way round I had a relatively close view of Flos’ arse (and what a very fine bottom it is too, he says quickly before Flos takes that as an insult) [Ed’s note: It is a fine bottom indeed]. One legged prostitute was attempted on the basis it would make for an amusing comment about doing aforementioned lady of the night, setting the tone for a year of (low quality) sexual innuendo. Junction squeeze was also attempted rather slowly, especially at the point where I got slightly stuck and had to gradually wiggle through. My balls now crushed into oblivion by the squeeze (no children for me then) [Ed’s note: You’re assuming that was ever an option, Charlie…], we made it to the lake and then out via mudslide (which was fun).

Having decided over a steak and pint in the Impy that, actually, caving was rather fun, my name was scribbled down for a trip to South Wales. Ystradfellte (or, as most people called it, ‘unpronounceable Welsh place’) was our destination for a few days of caving and drinking. The weekend introduced me to OFD II, which proved to be my kind of cave – it is big, not amazingly squeeze, and is just like taking a casual walk underground, which is perfect for those mornings where you have a minor hangover or for those of us who are naturally very lazy (or, in my case, both reasons). The weekend also introduced me, cave wise, to the entrance of Little Neath. Little Neath’s entrance is very wet. It is wetter than a cat that’s been out in a major rain shower whilst under a waterfall. On this occasion we decided it was a little too wet, and consequently fed mars bars to some friendly and hairy pigs before heading to the pub. The Ystradfellte weekend was also home to an elaborate marriage proposal of sorts to Kat, which involved wearing a tiger onesie, presenting her with a chocolate ring doughnut, and promptly singing ‘Sit on my Face’ to her. I have never felt so overtly romantic.

The problem with my caving weekends, as the year progressed, was that I tend to be a devout one-day caver (it’s like a devout Methodist, but you’re allowed to drink lots). One-day caving does give you a second day where you can either explore the countryside around the caving hut or recover from a hangover (or both). And let’s be honest guys, we do actually go to some rather nice areas of the country only to spend most of the daylight hours under the ground. One-day caving is also a method highly recommended by a previous EUSS president – and as a president, he should surely
know what's best? The one-day caving mentality did, however, rather come to a head on one South Wales weekend where I did manage to not go underground at all. In my defence, it happened to be a weekend when both days were extraordinarily sunny; Wales is renowned for its liquid sunshine, so when two consecutive days of the dry warm variety of sun come along, you need to take advantage of it. Two picnics were held to take supreme advantage of the weather and, to be frank, one picnic was the fault of a rather unorganised leader who forgot the cave key and call out and was the subject of a call out for doing the same cave the next day (he shall remain nameless to spare his blushes, but his name rhymes with tents. If you're writing a crap song for someone like One Direction that is, where rhymes only have to vaguely rhyme. Frankly, I just couldn't think of an actual word that ends in enks.) I should also point out at this point that, of the many caving weekends I have been on, half of them have actually been two-day cave weekends.

After Easter I suddenly found myself the owner of a new car. A car can, obviously, be used to go caving, and four days after picking up the car I found Will (with a dissertation due the next morning that he hadn’t finished), Flos, Lidls and Paul crammed into my car for a trip to Dog Hole and Prid. Unfortunately in my eagerness to return to the pub, I discovered a particularly pointy bit of kerb. Having had a bit of a tête-à-tête between car and kerb, Paul opened the door and pointed out the rather obvious hissing sound as air came flooding out of the tyre. Car 0 Pointy kerb 1. At this point Will, ever the action man, began throwing kit out of the boot in gay abandon, desperately trying to get to the spare tyre. Unfortunately, it appears new cars do not come with spare tyres. Consequently, some hours later, the man with the breakdown truck came to the rescue; although they have no spare tyres, new cars do have free breakdown recovery (is it really cheaper than a spare tyre?). The free breakdown is provided by the AA, which did give a slight problem in that my brother was working for the AA at the time as a breakdown man, and, let’s be honest, I would never live it down if he picked me up with a flat tyre. The man who did come to rescue us, despite Lidl’s asking to be introduced to my brother, was most definitely not my brother. He did, however, return us to Exeter. I have also now acquired a spare tyre, though have chickened out of the rematch between pointy kerb and car by turning right to get back from Prid.

Having actually ventured underground on the odd occasion in the year, somehow I managed to get myself elected as treasurer. Ultimately I thought treasurer was a good position to have as it sounds good, but all you’d have to do is sign the odd cheque, which didn’t seem like much work. I was proved completely wrong with a baptism of fire in June, when we ran out of money. I had to do boring things on a sunny afternoon like ploughing through our cheque book, paying in book and receipts to work out where the money had gone (and who still owed us money – Will you still owe us £30 even now). There was a very good reason for us running out of money; the AU owed us the best part of a grand.

Finally, I should probably address the issue of the number of ‘attempted’ lines I racked up on the incest chart during the year (though I am writing this with no knowledge of exactly how many Will has drawn on the chart). As a wise man in a poncho once said to me, “You are obviously a great womaniser”. I would like to believe that the words of this poncho clad guru were indeed correct, but, however, the truth is probably a little nearer a word beginning with d, ending with e, and with esperat in the middle. [Ed’s note: we removed the list of girls Charlie needs to apologise to, on account of running out of space in the journal]. In my defence I would like to say that I did at least manage a good snog on one weekend (both nights running) in the Mendips, playing an epic amount of Connect Four in a pub is quite fun even if you keep being epically thrashed by the girl you’ve made an awful attempt at chatting up, and ultimately my actions after drinking a significant amount of whisky in a short space of time are unpredictable and should really be prefaced with a disclaimer that I accept no responsibility for my actions. As a result of my activities, one of the EUSS ladies has set my text alert on her phone to ‘Charlie bit me’. Maybe the biting was where I was going wrong all year.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank the Gypsy Kings, Sara Bareilles, Shaggy, the Spice Girls, Lou Bega, The Feeling and Carly Rae Jepson for their inspiration to get me through this essay.

- Charlie O’Mahoney
Organising Trips: Useful Information

**Mendip:**

**Belfry: (Bristol Exploration Club)**
Website: [http://www.bec-cave.org.uk/](http://www.bec-cave.org.uk/)
Address: The Belfry, Wells Road, Priddy, Somerset, BA5 3AU
Phone: 01749 672 126

**Cost:**
£2.50 per night for members
£5.00 per night for guests.

**Call-out procedure:** Write trip information on Blackboard in Living Room. Cave Rescue will be called when a group is late.

**Mendip Caving Group (MCG)**
Website: [http://www.mendipcavinggroup.org.uk/index.html](http://www.mendipcavinggroup.org.uk/index.html)
Address: Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse on Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol, BS40 7XW
Phone: 01761462797
Space for up to 30 people

**Cost:**
£2.50 per night for members
£5.00 per night for guests.

**Call-out procedure:** Trip written on ticket and placed on board in living room. Cave Rescue will be called when a group is late.

**Wessex Cave Club (WCC)**
Website: [http://www.wessex-cave-club.org/index.htm](http://www.wessex-cave-club.org/index.htm)
Address: Wessex Cave Club, Upper Pitts, Eastwater Lane, Priddy, Somerset, BA5 3AX
Phone: 01749 870278

**Cost:**
**Special Rates For University Caving Clubs and under 25s!**
£3.50 / night (university student)
Special Rates for Larger Groups - One person stays free for every ten people booked in.

**Normal Rates**
£2.50 / night (members)
£5.00 / night (guests)

**Call-out procedure:** Write trip information on blackboard in living room. Cave Rescue will be called when a group is late.

**Wales:**

**South Wales Caving Club (SWCC)**
Website: [http://www.swcc.org.uk/](http://www.swcc.org.uk/)
Address: 1-10 Powell St, Penwyllt, Pen-y-Cae, Swansea SA9 1GQ
Phone: 01639 730 613

**Cost:**
£5.00 guests.

**Call out procedure:** Fill out ticket with full names of all members of trip to get key, then place second ticket on call out board.

**Croydon Hut**
Website: [http://croydoncavingclub.wordpress.com/](http://croydoncavingclub.wordpress.com/)
Address: The Hut is situated in the village of Ystradfellte between Abadare and Brecon.
Phone: 020-8995-3219 (Evenings)

**Cost:**
£4.00 Guests

**Contributors:** Paul Brown, Ellen Cooper, Florence Crowther-Smith, Moo Hussin, Andrew Jenkins, Angelique McBride, Charlie O'Mahoney, William Reed, and everyone who wrote in the red book!