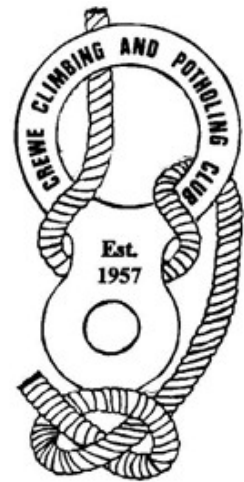




C.C.P.C. Newsletter 137. August/October 2022 (The Berger Edition)

Log on to www.ccpc.org.uk

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Farewell John Shenton

Photo: 11th January 2006 – John working at Waterbank Mine, Ecton.
Steve Knox

Some more sad news I'm afraid.

I was very sorry to hear that John Shenton passed away on 20th August, after a period of illness. John joined CCPC in the early months of 1969, and became one of our core members for many years. John was always willing to help and support newcomers to our club, and was particularly keen to introduce youngsters to caving, through his role as a teacher. He was persuaded to take on the sometimes-onerous job of Club Treasurer at the AGM held on 5th January 1970, and he fulfilled that role most efficiently, until he asked to be replaced at the AGM on 5th January 2004 - having completed a period of thirty-four years' service to CCPC !

In recent years John had moved away from caving, and has been more involved in practical projects connected with Peak District mines, but he was still attending CCPC meetings, whenever possible, and it was always a pleasure to see him and to chat about our adventures together in the distant past.

Nigel Cooper summed John up in a few words, 'He was a lovely man, and a good friend'. No-one who knew John would have any other opinion of him. Our sympathy and condolences go out to Celia, and to John's family and friends.

Steve Knox

Photo: Early 2006 – John working at King Shaft, Thorswood, Staffordshire.
Alan Brentnall

Alan Brentnall commented:
'Although I knew John as a regular attender of the monthly meetings at the Bleeding Wolf, my interactions with him in the underground sense were usually



as one of Ralph's "Coffin Dodgers", and I worked on a few of their projects where John was a key player, always willing to contribute whatever he could. I've attached a photograph of John which I took when we spent several weeks underpinning a rotting 300-year-old oaken crib, at King Shaft in the Thorswood Nature Reserve, in the Weaver Hills, Staffordshire - the crib was supporting quite a significant length (50 feet) of ginging at the top of the huge shaft, originally 600ft deep, but now backfilled to 300ft.

They were happy days, and it's sad to see these old lads go, especially after the phenomenal work they've put in over the years. With the passing of Ralph, as well as John, I fear that the days of the Coffin Dodgers as a group are probably numbered, if not gone already. At the last physical DCA meeting which I attended (some 3+ years ago now) Jenny Potts was saying that "what we need is a new set of Coffin Dodgers".

For those unfamiliar with 'The Coffin Dodgers', we were a small group of 'more mature' club members, mostly retired, but still keen to get involved in caving related activities. We installed bolts, built stiles, cemented lids, cleared collapses, and just generally got involved whenever we could, whenever we heard of something which needed doing. John was an important member of our 'gang', and, like others 'gone too soon', he will be missed by all those who had the pleasure of knowing him, and caving with him. Steve Knox

Planned Club Meets, etc., from August 2022 to October 2022:



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:

***** ** Aug. 2022	Curtain Pot, Yorkshire. Alt.: Moorfurlong Mine, Derbyshire.	A long walk over, then twelve SRT pitches! Alt.: Two pitches (13m + 4m).
***** ** Sept. 2022	CCPC Monthly Meeting. 8.30 pm. Usually also accessible to Members via Zoom.	'The Red Bull', Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent. ST7 3AJ.
***** ** Sept. 2022	Planned Yorkshire weekend, to remember, and mark the passing of our friend Des Kelly.	Saturday: Alum Pot system, and surface walk for non-cavers.
***** **.Sept. 2022	Cae Coch Sulphur Mine, North Wales.	Unlikely to go ahead as Members will be involved in the Yorkshire weekend.
***** ** Sept. 2022	Mammoth Cave – Flint Ridge National Park, Kentucky, USA.	Couldn't resist dropping that in, even though it will just be 'tourist trips'. Ed.
***** ** Sept. 2022	Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, South Wales. Permit trip – six persons.	An outstanding cave system – vast and complex with many different routes.
***** ** Oct. 2022	CCPC Monthly Meeting. 8.30 pm. Usually also accessible to Members	'The Red Bull', Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent. ST7 3AJ.

	via Zoom.	
***** ** Oct. 2022	Pegleg Pot, (Lower Easegill Cavern) Easegill area, Yorkshire.	One 21 metre SRT pitch, and several small climbs and pitches. Entrance and lowest level are flood prone.
Plenty of other trips continue to take place, especially now, as government restrictions (Covid) have been removed. Even so, some members may still be self-isolating or 'shielding' for personal reasons. Please try to support Club trips when you can. Steve Knox, Ed.		



Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation:

DCRO team members continue to be ready to assist whenever required, throughout the present period of the pandemic, and will use PPE, where appropriate. Training continues.

<https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireCaveRescue>

***** **. 2022	First Aid training. 7.30 pm. start.	Staden Lane, DCRO Base, Buxton.
***** **. 2022	'Ralph's Revenge' : full day team exercise, and Team Supper to follow.	Scenario remains 'secret' until the day !
***** **. 2022	Surface Support; Animal Rescue; Diving support. 7.30 pm start.	Staden Lane, DCRO Base, Buxton.

Follow up to: 'Mysterious P8 Sump Features / Creatures / Organisms' (N./L. no. 136)

Jenny Drake has come up with another suggestion:

'Could they be a species of freshwater mussel ? They live on the baseplate of my narrowboat in large numbers. You also see them in many lock chambers when you let the water out. Hard to tell from the pictures, but they do look very like what I've seen in the canals, though I've never heard of them being underground before. There are quite a few different species of freshwater mussel and if they are animal, rather than mineral, then it would take an expert to identify which sort.'

Jenny Drake



Caving in France: Summer 2022

The Journey:

So it was that 5 members of CCPC and 2 members of DCC departed the UK on the 23rd July for the village of Autrans high in the Vercors in south-east France, to enjoy the delights of the Gouffre Berger and several other caves in the area. The drive down to Dover on the 22nd July would prove to be an adventure in its own right. Allan Berry and Helen Perkins (DCC) arrived at my house as arranged and I began packing their gear into the camper van (Barnie) and after a quick brew we were heading out of Crewe at 12:15 to rendezvous with Mark Krause at Stafford South Services for 1 p.m. Introductions made, food and drink consumed and a chat about our adventures to come, we set off from the services. Earlier that day John Preston had texted to make me aware of the ensuing travel delays building up in and around the port of Dover due to staffing issues at Border Control and an incident in the Channel Tunnel. John would be travelling from High Wycombe meeting us in Dover later in the day, or that is what we thought. Undeterred we pressed on, making good time, getting a smooth run through Birmingham and down the M40 before joining the M25 west bound. Even this was running quite freely, and our arrival time of 5-ish on Dover

Esplanade was looking a realistic prospect. This thinking turned out to be somewhat wishful, as we would soon come to realise. Shortly after joining the M20 traffic was backing up and it wasn't long before we were crawling, eventually coming to a complete standstill, being approximately 25 miles out from Dover. We were to spend the next 3 hours, only to progress one mile. By now time was getting on and we had already missed our rendezvous time with John. It was while stuck in the traffic that we got a text from him to say he had arrived, amazingly!!!, having taken the coast road as opposed to the M20 to avoid the chaos. Good move on John's part if only.

Eventually we were on the move again only to be diverted off the motorway at junction 10 to join yet more stationary traffic further up the road; the clock was ticking. Our frustrations being interrupted by Nige (not his real name) who was in the car behind Mark. Nige, as Mark had christened him was in a state of heightened anxiety over being delayed, strutting up and down, hands on hips, gesticulating and swearing - you get the idea, poor Nige. Quite what he thought his actions would achieve was beyond us, however it kept us amused. Nige and his partner Charnel (fictional), but mostly Nige, would continue to be a source of amusement for the duration of the trip.

Our arrival at Dover Port came at 03:15 Saturday morning, 15 hours after leaving Crewe (this could be a record in itself). Having passed through security and customs, and realising we would now make the 5 am crossing we could relax. I think we all grabbed a power nap during the transit to Calais. John decided he would travel independently from Mark and I, something about frequent rest stops, which was fine. Mark and I decided to meet up at the first service station we came to on the motorway once we were clear of Calais. Unfortunately, due to some technical issues Mark was having with his sat-nav our arrangement didn't pan out, and so it was that we all made our way down to Autrans independently in the end. At least I would have Allan and Helen for company although after several hours of Allan's jokes (lol) I was beginning to think a good selection of CDs would have been the better option, like Mark and John. I drove for 3 hours then stopped at an Aire to get a couple of hours of much needed shut eye. The sun was well up by now and although the others tried to sleep, they found Bernie's penthouse (pop up roof tent) too hot, so opted for a shaded spot under a nearby tree. On and on, hour after hour, and several stops later, we finally arrived at our chosen camp site in Autrans at 19:45 that evening. The drive down wasn't that bad given the frequency of the roadside Aires and smoothness of the motorway network, with no signs of any road works. Mark had suggested, many months ago, that it would be a good idea to purchase a Toll Tag for use on the motorways which saves time and alleviates the need for payment at the kiosks (billing you later) there is even a drive through 30 kph lane, so you don't have to stop, brilliant!!!! Great tip Mark.

John was the first to arrive, although the original location of the Berger camp had been moved to another site which turned out to be a field, with no facilities apart from a makeshift wooden toilet and a water tap. Oh, and did I mention the clouds of flies due to the abundance of donkey sh..... When John rang me, the sense of disappointment in his voice was tangible and I wondered what Mark would think of it when he eventually arrived. John thankfully was able to get himself a spot at Camping les Eyems site literally across the road so all was not lost. Mark was the last to arrive but decided to wild camp that night before checking out the camp the following morning whereupon he decided to wild camp for the remainder of our time in the area, no surprise there. Camping les Eyems was full, but Mark struck a deal with the owner so that he could at least use the toilets and showers.

Orientation:

Sunday was our rest day, most welcome given the long journey we had all endured. On our pitch the gear was sorted, tents organised, electric hook-up established, and then a walk into Autrans for supplies and familiarisation. A lazy afternoon under a blue sky was spent chatting about the journey and of our adventures to come. Neil and Nicola would be flying out on Saturday, via Brussels then Lyon, where they would then pick up a hire car. They would arrive in Autrans at their booked Air B&B in the very early hours of Sunday morning.

Caving:

We decided that Monday would see us venturing into Grotte Roche and the Grotte de Bournillion, both situated within the outstanding and dramatic beauty of the Bourne Gorge. Meaudre is a short drive south of Autrans and it was here, on the public car park, where we met Mark and John. We were soon following in convoy behind Mark, as he was familiar with the area, having been out on a previous Berger camp.

Grotte Roche: Monday 25th July 2022

Travelling through the breath-taking, jaw droppingly spectacular Bourne Gorge, we arrived at the lay-by, 20 minutes after leaving Meaudre. The Roche is popular as a group venue, evident by the number of young/novice cavers and leaders about. We took the footpath from the layby, as it led down to the river, flowing calmy, and forming a couple of chest deep pools of crystal-clear water, which although chillingly cold, looked inviting. I would take the plunge after exiting the cave. Literally metres from the river's edge is the imposing cave entrance, with a view of the massive boulder slope rising 150 metres in front of you. At the top of the slope, at roof level, we kept left and traversed around a small cascade, (more prominent in wet weather). We then entered a descending rift followed by a short sandy crawl which entered the Gallery de la Perseverance, full of calcite and mud formations, with a route guarded by tape and stakes topped with golf balls, not what you expect but it works. At the end of the gallery a short climb took us around the back of an impressive column leading to a fixed ladder. From the top we entered a low crawl and kept left to avoid the Labyrinth, making our way to the 30 metre Puits de la Vire. This was rigged on para cord which didn't instil Mark, or any of us, with much confidence, so Mark got to work rigging. The pitch is quite slippery and highly polished in places, but with care is manageable. At the point where the pitch changes from steeply slopping to vertical, the rift narrows.

There are several staples from this point, and one offers a decent re- belay, but did prove a tad awkward. At the bottom of the pitch a traverse(roped) is encountered on the left wall of an impressive fault, see below:



Photo: Mark leading on our exit, me in the middle with Nicola in the foreground.

Beyond the fault we entered a sizeable phreatic passage. Neil and John checked out a small ascending side passage on the way back, which led to a well decorated chamber (Salle Hopf). Onward the passage continued, enlarging as it went, with inlets on both sides nearer the roof. Eventually the roof lowered, and the floor and sides of the passage became silted, with evidence of previous high water, before reaching the impenetrable sump. After taking on drink and fuel we made our return. When we reached the junction leading to the Labyrinth we attempted to find our way through to join the roof traverse in Perseverance instead of taking the ladder, but without success. Mark met a French caver and his son who were also trying to find the route through, and like us had to turn back. Back at the top of the boulder slope it was like walking into an oven, as the hot outside air formed a curtain to the cold air behind. We went out into glorious sunshine after a very enjoyable 4-hour trip. It was a great introduction for what was yet to come - oh and a refreshing dip in the plunge pool.

Bournillion: Monday 25th July 2022

After leaving the layby for Grotte Roche, we headed down the gorge, then made a right turn, crossing onto the opposite side of the gorge. Again, we followed Mark in convoy, reaching a left

turn which took us down a single-track road, heading towards the bottom of the gorge, and into the parking area next to an EDF energy Hydro Electric Station. We packed our caving bags and headed up the footpath opposite, thankful for the trees that shaded us from the scorching sunshine. The path rose steeply for the first few hundred feet or so, before levelling out at the scree slopes which are traversed before the path rises again. On our return across the slopes some of the group had to dodge falling rocks which had separated from the cliffs above due to the heat. Passing a gated tunnel, the path turned down, passing below an overhang with spectacular views of the towering cliff above, and at its base, the entrance to the Bournillion (the largest cave entrance in Europe). Either side of the gaping entrance the walls rose a few hundred feet, and the floor was strewn with huge cobbles and boulders, clean- washed by the torrents of water that run during the wet season. Like the Grotte Roche we climbed an even higher boulder slope before reaching the passage proper, a huge boulder breakdown passage with equally impressive stalagmites. Keeping to the right side of the passage, we passed through a narrow section where sections of the wall have peeled away creating a way forward, this then re-joined the main passage. Some of the group opted to turn back at this point, with a few of us carrying on, to reach the Salle De Centaurs (named after the two very large and tall stalagmites that stand, guarding the chamber) before making our way back. The trip itself was relatively short but none the less very impressive. Back down at the vehicles we, in typical French fashion, feasted on a selection of meats, cheeses, breads and biscuits, followed up with tea and coffee, before heading up to the Choranche Show Cave car park, to recce the entrance to the Gournier.

Saint De Glace: Tuesday 26th July 2002

This is on the road traversing the steep hill side behind Camping les Eyems, Autrans: Follow this up until you meet a sharp left bend, and park up here, adjacent to the gravel forest track. The entrance can be found by walking up the track for approx. 200 meters, then take the path leading down through the woods on your right. The entrance can be seen opposite the stream bed. – it was dry on the day of our visit.

On this day our party would be 5 instead of the usual 7, as Neil and Nicola had opted for a day of via ferrata near Grenoble. Having had a leisurely morning, Allan, Helen, and myself gathered up our gear and headed for the parking area to meet up with Mark and John. It was early afternoon, with the sun beating down, so entering the cave, with its cool wind blowing at the entrance, was a welcome relief. The cave had been pre rigged as part of the Berger 2022 camp, so no gear was required, and we only needed to fill in the entry sheet. The cave entrance is low, dropping sharply through the beds, then it widened and increased to a walking-size vadose passage quite soon after. The cave gradually descended, and was interrupted by 8 pitches, some 10 metres deep, and others shorter, and by a few easy climb downs. What the cave lacked in formations was more than made up by the changing characteristics of the passages. After about an hour or so we reached a section known as the Toboggan Run. Here the floor of the passage was lost, and we dropped into the head of the run below, which trended steeply downwards over highly polished, slippery, compacted silts and exposed limestone. There was a fixed handline which is needed. Mark led us down and after negotiating an awkward drop (more awkward on the return) he branched left of the parallel passage and continued down until he gained another hand line. He then reached a hauling bucket before turning back. The following week we would revisit Saint de Glace, (but without John or Mark as they had returned to the UK) to find another pitch beyond the bucket, which drops 40 feet into the HydroKlast. This chamber seemed out of sorts with the system that

had gone before, as it measures 100m x 30 meters and led to a sizeable phreatic passage lined with scallops, as Allan was to witness. This trip acted as Mark put it, "As an SRT shakedown", ahead of the forthcoming Berger trip the next day.

Gouffre Berger: Wednesday 27TH / Thursday 28TH July 2002

Tuesday night had been spent sorting and checking our gear in readiness for Wednesday's assault on the Berger. We met up in Autrans, opposite the Speed Luge, then headed north up the valley road, passing under several ski lift stations, before reaching the car park high up on the Sornin Plateau. It was a glorious morning with stunning views of the Vercors and the distant Alps to the northeast. I think it would be fair to say that most of us had a feeling of nervous trepidation about what was to come; indeed some, including myself, had restless sleeps the night before. Getting kitted up would prove a welcomed distraction. On leaving the car park we met a group of young SUSS members who had bottomed, taking 19 hours, and feeling knackered they had slept by the entrance for a few hours before hiking back up the hillside. What were we letting ourselves in for!!!!!!!

The walk in was spectacular, especially across the alpine pasture before the path took us down into the forest. Once again Mark was taking the lead, guiding us along the route. All was going well until Mark convinced himself we had missed the left turn (in fact it was only a few minutes' walk further on) and turned back to follow another left turn. We split up to check the area before returning to the original path. Mark and I walked on and soon afterwards we found the path we

needed. We quickly made our way back to get the others. We got our gear on and having filled in the entrance log began our adventure, entering at 11 am..

Prior to entering the Berger:

Left to Right: Steve, Mark, Nicola, Helen, John, Allan.

Neil was taking the photo.



We all dropped the entrance pitch: 15 metres, then onto Ruiz :27 metres, with the Holiday Slides to follow :15metres, split 4metres ,4 metres, 7.5 metres, leading to Puits du Cairn: 24 metres. Nerves were settling by now, and one could begin to enjoy this amazing underground environment. The deeper pitches had all been double roped, offering a straight drop and a rebelay route, as a way of avoiding bottle necks if meeting groups exiting/entering. We would encounter two small groups exiting at the Relay Pitches further in. All safely down Cairn, we took a few minutes to absorb the atmosphere and add a stone (one for Des too) on the Cairn that stands tall, reminding you of those that have been before. The Meanders came next, split into two halves, and similar in places to the narrower traverses above the Crab Walk in Giants. They were partly roped – at either end, but not in

between. The Meanders leave you feeling exposed, as a fall would probably cause significant injury or leave you jammed like the proverbial “cork in a bottle”, neither of which you would want to experience. It was at the end of the first Meanders that we would come to lose one of our group. John was not feeling his best and so decided that he would take a rest in the small alcove between the two Meanders and then return to the surface. We wished him a safe exit and pressed onwards. I had heard varying accounts of carrying bags through this section, some having no issues, while others have struggled. Personally, I didn’t have any issues with my tackle bag, however I wouldn’t like to be laden down with bags. I know Allen and Helen would regret, particularly on their return, packing so much gear. I guess you take only that which is essential.

We were making steady progress, it wasn’t a race, taking in the surroundings with Neil and Helen clicking away on the cameras as we continued our descent. Puits Garby was our next drop: 36.5 metres, followed by Puits Gontard: 24 metres. Mark was expertly leading, and now he, like the rest of us had been from the start, was in unknown territory. Previously (2021) Mark had been as far as Garby’s. The Relay Pitches quickly follow, and it was nearer to the bottom that we met a smaller second group from SUSS, making their way out. They told us that the rope on Hurricane, well beyond camp 1, had been damaged, at which point they had ended their attempt to bottom. Time was now getting on, not that it was an issue, however it would be another hour or more before we would walk into camp 1. Having negotiated the Relay pitches, Aldo’s 41 metres would be our next goal. A truly stunning shaft which seems to go on and on until finally landing opposite the passage leading to the Grande Galerie and Starless River. Mark, Nicola and I were safely at the bottom and while waiting for Helen, Allen and Neil to drop Aldo’s we could hear music in the distance, getting louder as it got nearer. For a moment I was questioning if I was hearing things, when suddenly a lone caver appeared from the direction of the Grand Galerie, his phone playing the theme music from “The Pirates of the Caribbean” - surreal!!!! He was clothed as if out for a stroll in the park. He asked if the rope on the re-belay was free and after a small delay, he prusiked up with frightening speed. We would later come to learn that he (Edourdo) aka ‘the Hurricane’ had entered the cave to replace the damaged rope on Hurricane, and was back at the Berger camp in Autrans by 6 pm that evening, having spent less than 6 hours in the cave to reach -900m and return to surface. (Oh to have the energy and fitness of youth). We met another small group here, and I recall Mark commenting on the condition of one female who looked spent. I guess they made it out eventually.

So, there we were, stunned into silence by the enormity of the Grand Galerie, roof and walls towering above, and the passage disappearing beyond the extent of our lights. Some of us took the opportunity to refill our water bottles from an inlet at the head of the passage. There were impressive stalagmites, randomly placed, yet dwarfed by the size of the passage. The character soon changed from that of a cobble-strewn riverbed to boulder breakdown, with the route snaking its way from one side to the other across undulating ground, with the route marked with reflective tape laid on top of cairns. Lake Cadoux was passed on our left; however the lake was dry, due to the lack of rain over the summer. The Grand Eboulis soon followed resembling the previous section of cave albeit in larger proportions. I now understand when people say it’s akin to hill walking through this section, broken only by the pitches of Little General: 10 metres, and Cascade Tyrolienne: 4 metres. Both pitches had water flowing, allowing us to refill our bottles. Eventually the Grand Eboulis descended steeply just where you arrive at Camp 1 and the Hall of Thirteen. On our way down we had met a young couple making their way out having spent 2 days at Camp1. Both were burdened with several bags each, and I wondered how they would cope once they got to Aldo’s.

Camp 1 was a welcome sight. The collective decision was to ready the camp first before admiring the formations (Gour Pools and Stalagmites) So we set about claiming our beds, making adjustments to the shelters and preparing stoves. It was now about 6 in the evening. We walked down the short slope, passing the toilet grotto on the left (the less said about it the better) to reach the start of the Gour Pools and the Columns beyond. The pools serve as an intricately woven moat. Most were dry, again due to very low water levels, however a pool on the right (approx. 50 metres x 15 metres) was only partly filled, but still 5 metres deep, so falling in would not have been good. Some time was spent taking in the magnificence, while standing in awe. Neil, Nic and Allen had cameras out and were clicking away.



The Hall of Thirteen

Back in camp we had dinner and hot drinks prior to getting our heads down. Allen and Helen decided they would press on a bit further and eventually reached the Canals before heading back, walking into camp at about 11 pm. We woke at midnight and prepared breakfast before breaking camp at 01:00 on Thursday morning, to surface at 7 am. Helen and Allen were to follow later that morning surfacing at around 12:30. We kept a steady pace on our way out, resting now and again, and once up Aldo's we continued to make good progress. Once out, with a sense of excitement and relief, we congratulated each other and prepared ourselves for the long slog back to the parking area. Needless to say the next day was spent recovering.



We did it: Back at the Berger Camp.

Left to right:

*Mark Krause,
Steve Pearson-Adams,
Allan Berry,
John Preston,
Helen Perkins ,
Nicola Wellings,
Neil Conde.*

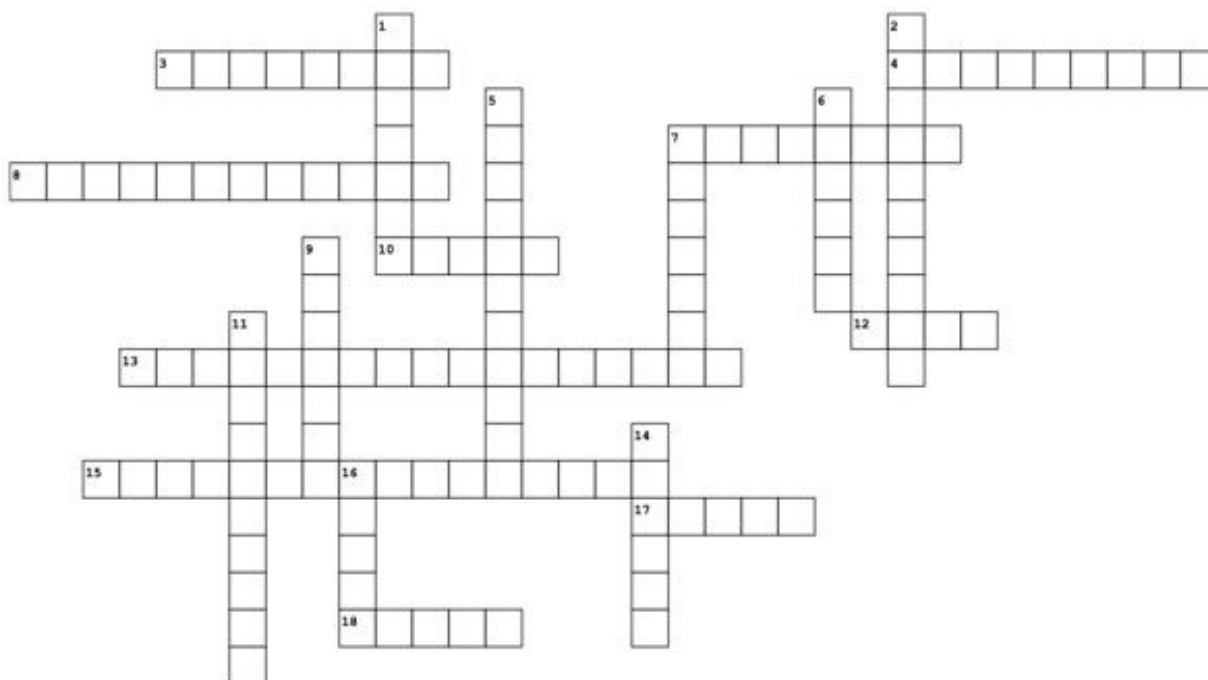
Gournier: Saturday, 30TH July 2022

John wouldn't be with us on this trip as he decided to cut short his stay in France and began his journey home. Neil and Nicola followed us from our camp site in Autrans, to the car park at the visitors centre for the Choranche Show Cave, where we met Mark. Taking our time it was about 11 o'clock by the time we had begun to cross the lake, thanks to Mark and his inflatable boat. We all negotiated the row across and climb/traverse to the upper gour pools, then Helen and Allan opted to have a photo shoot while we carried on (we would re-unite with them on our return). We had the benefit of a visit from some members of The Craven the previous night and they gave us a rundown of their trip a few days earlier. We wanted to gain the main streamway with the goal of reaching the Cascade. Once past the Gour pools we were blown away by the size of the passage and the formations that litter the passage. A block the size of a bungalow was resting in the middle of the passage with a 6-metre calcite curtain attached horizontally to the lower left corner with stalagmites about 1 metre high formed on its uppermost side. It had peeled away from the side of the passage with the stals being formed later (quite a sight). Where the floor of the passage sank, we made our way through the boulders making for the streamway below. It was quite low at this point, becoming a crawl, forcing you into the icy cold water. It was a good job we had all changed into wet suits before climbing down into the streamway, and we met a guided group coming out from the low section, looking very cold. The streamway quickly became a walking-size canyon passage. There was a super enriched calcite stream bed, creamy white and very grippy, filled with crystal clear blue tinged pools, and an active streamway. We were unanimous that this was the finest streamway we had ever experienced. We pushed onwards for approximately 45 minutes traversing deep pools and swimming a few, and climbing a couple of short cascades. The passage at one point narrowed considerably and was partially blocked by a boulder which required a flat out thrutch in the stream, but once negotiated, the passage opened up again with the stream running along a cobble strewn floor. Soon afterwards we reached a long pool with stainless steel staples on the right wall acting as a walkway. Our cows tails protected us along this traverse and preventing a complete dunking in the deep pool below. At the other end we crossed over to the opposite side, continuing the traverse, which gradually ascended, with a 7-metre cascade ahead of us. We got as far as just below the head of this cascade before deciding to make our way out. An amazing system and one which would be nice to revisit.

Steve Pearson-Adam

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And now, a topical brain-teaser – no prizes I’m afraid, just for fun.

Gouffre Berger Crossword



Across

- 3. Who the cave is named after
- 4. Pitch that takes you to -1000m
- 7. Material that forms Caves (Fr)
- 8. To truly bottom, you must take a dip here
- 10. Chamber (Fr)
- 12. Pitch named after an early explorer who's ladder broke on his ascent
- 13. Iconic photos are often taken here just below camp 1
- 15. Where the resurgence appears
- 17. Abseil (Fr)
- 18. The decade the British conquered the cave

Down

- 1. The region of France the Berger can be found
- 2. Number of pitches to reach the bottom... before diving
- 5. The name of the communication system which must be used during the trip... unless you are French
- 6. the usually dry lake
- 7. Piles of this are around the cave, used from early lighting systems but now banned
- 9. A French pothole (fr)
- 11. Deepest shaft in the system
- 14. To be applied for prior to planning a trip
- 16. the French version of bolts

Constructed and contributed by Nicola Wellings.

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My thanks, as always, to everyone who contributes to the CCPC Newsletter, with text, photos, additional comments, crosswords (!), etc., and also to those who acknowledge receipt afterwards – its good to know that each edition actually reaches the Members, and even gets read.

All errors, changes, or corrections are mine – my apologies. **Steve Knox, Editor.**