

Trip Reports

JF398 Boulder Jenga

10 May 2014

Andreas Klocker

Cavers: David Bardi, Andreas Klocker, Dickon 'boulder choke expert' Morris, Liz Rogers & Sandy Varin.

It turns out that some mainland photographers are much slower at writing trip reports than taking photos so I decided to get the rust out of my brain and remember the details of this memorable trip and write it up myself. The first thing which comes to mind, for any trip in Boulder Jenga, is WATER! This trip wasn't any different ... If anyone who has read the last *Spiel* still does not understand that Boulder Jenga and water are linked as closely as Tony Abbott and a narrow mind, then you might as well jump off a bridge ... because you're hopeless!

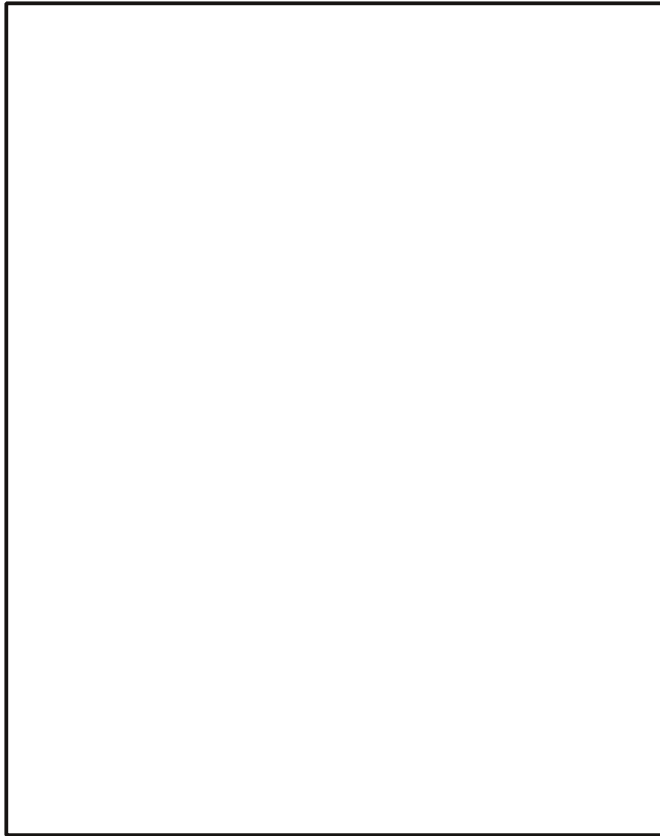
This weekend was also going to be Sandy and David's first 'dry' (aka non-diving, even though the limits between dry caving and cave diving were a bit fuzzy here) caving trip to the JF. Both of them have done some dry caving before, but we all know that caving on the mainland is a bit different! We went on Saturday morning – the plan was to continue the survey from where Dickon and myself stopped the last time (AD60 in the 'wet route' just before the Rock Garden) and continue it to the sump, with Liz taking some photos on the way. In addition to this we also brought a single 3 L dive tank to find out if the final sump is just an extreme

roof sniff or a proper sump.

Things went smoothly to the bottom of the big pitch. We followed the 'dry route' to the Rock Garden and started surveying. Dickon played with the DistoX and I did the bookwork, David and Sandy helped Liz with some photography. Once we arrived at the roof sniff everyone looked a bit cold but since we had a dive tank with us, and nobody wanted to carry a full dive tank out of a cave, we went for it (first David and Sandy thought about staying behind and waiting ... but luckily peer pressure works well!).

Liz had said she'd give the sump a go. Once we got there Liz' heating vest failed and I knew that the honour of jumping into this frickin' cold muddy horrible wet thing was mine. I geared up into my very rudimentary cave diving gear (a single tank attached to a SRT kit, no fins, a static climbing rope tied to me, and a 3 mm short-sleeved wetsuit in 8°C water – the absolute nightmare of most CDAA or GUE divers). Obviously the sump didn't do what we hoped, which would have been a short duck-under but it went straight down for a couple of meters. At the bottom it felt like it did a U-turn with lots of silt accumulated on the bottom. Since breathing in this inadequate wetsuit was far from optimal (have you ever see a steel tank bend inwards when taking a breath?!), we decided to come back to the sump with proper gear sometime in summer [*Gluttons for punishment!* – Ed.].

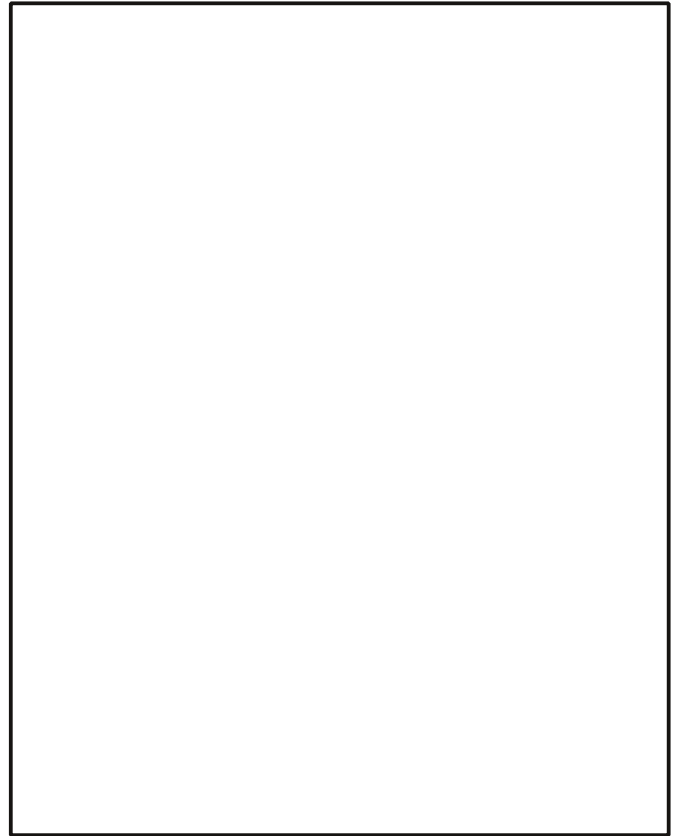
We were all frozen by this point so we started heading for home, which went well until the big pitch ... First



JF398 Boulder Jenga, Sandy having lots of fun (I don't think there is another picture which describes Boulder Jenga as well!!)

Liz and David went up OK but when Sandy started off and arrived at the redirect things went a bit pear-shaped. The rope above the redirect was caught underneath a flake, and due to the sharp angle of the rope Sandy couldn't pass the redirect. After some screaming between Sandy, Dickon and myself (the waterfall makes this chamber really noisy) we found out that Sandy wasn't so sure about change-overs. Dickon climbed up to Sandy, explained to her how to down-prusik, then both of them climbed down. Dickon went back up and fixed the rope on the way. Then Sandy (with a slightly changed facial expression) went back up the rope and I followed. Obviously this all took a while, and the cave wasn't getting any warmer.

I got to the top of the pitch but Liz and David had



JF398 Boulder Jenga, The Kaiser.

already left for the surface. Dickon was worried that they would get lost in the boulder pile so he raced up to check on them, which left the big bag and dive tank with Sandy and myself. Luckily Sandy proved to be much tougher than most mainland cavers, especially after her epic on the big pitch, and helped me with great effort to get this bag through the boulder pile. Further through the boulder pile we then bumped into Dickon who came back to help, and soon after we exited. After a tiring walk through the forest (I think Sandy was ready to give up at that point) we made it back to the car where the other two were waiting.

The biggest surprise then came on Monday, just two days after the trip, when Sandy and David asked when they can come back for more JF adventures!! I thought I had broken them ... Maybe soon we'll have more people who are great cave divers AND are actually capable of getting themselves to the sump!

Eight Road fix up and some Settlement caves

20 July 2014

Alan Jackson

Cavers: Stephen Bunton, Milos Dvorak, Alan Jackson, Anna Jackson, Chris Sharples, Patrick (Buddy) Smejkal, Petr Smejkal & John Webb.

John had organised for a load of road gravel to be dumped (gratis) on the Eight Road near the ever-expanding bog hole. He then assembled a small chain gang to relocate the gravel from the pile to said bog hole. First we gathered any larger rocks from the shoulders of the road to make a firmer base then we shovelled on the gravel. It came up pretty well but might need some maintenance in the near future once it's settled.

There was a bit of time left in the day so we continued down the Florentine Road to the Settlement to investigate some of John's Norske Skog holes. We started with a small hole 10 m off the road which required a bit of spade work to get into (luckily we had

more spades, shovels and rakes between us than an episode of Backyard Blitz). Milos was trogged up and looked keen so he squirmed in to check it out. Bunty then went in head first to place a tag – JF631 – on the right wall a metre in. He had to be pulled out by his legs. Milos was calling out to us and Petr stepped in as interpreter. A 10 m drop, not free-climbable, with water at the bottom was the verdict. Petr and Chris both took turns at verifying this and all were in agreement. Tag, GPS and photo done, we jumped back in the car and moved back along the road to another random spot.

John led us up onto a flat-topped ridge to another new hole. John said he'd only been in a bit and that beyond the entrance chamber was a tricky climb with passage corkscrewing back under the climb. By the time we'd got to the cave it was being referred to as Corkscrew Cave. We had a quick look, negotiated the climb and checked the low clay-floored continuations. It was large enough to warrant a proper survey, so we retreated, tagged the entrance (JF632) on the right wall a couple of metres beyond the drip line, GPS it, photographed the tag and headed for home.