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Volume 153



# Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club



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Cover photo Courtesy of Ian Healey	

## FROM YOUR EDITOR

Hullo!

Well doesn't time fly? Summer has been and gone, the windfall fruit needs pressing so it is suitably fermented in time for the long dark nights of winter. And what do people do on those long dark nights with a cider in their hand – perhaps tell tall tales of the measureless passages that have been discovered, those meandering streamways filled with strange delights, tramways that lead to who-knows-where. Well don't save it for the pub. Write it down and share it with your club!

Articles can be sent to [speleotourist@googlemail.com](mailto:speleotourist@googlemail.com) or you want to follow me via twitter it is

RFDC@rfdccnews and what do you know, RFDC now has a facebook page

I hope you enjoy this edition of your newsletter, a lot of text this time with few pictures, and my heartfelt thanks to all the contributors.

## 2015 MEETS LIST – JON HOLDEN

Date	Location	Information	Time	Contact	Tel no
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Forest of Dean – Miss Grace’s Lane	Lots of interesting routes in this lovely Forest Gem of a cave	1000		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	Rising Sun – Mosely Green	RFDCC Social	2000		
12 – 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Yorkshire	A few days dangling down those pots up North, previous SRT experience required.	TBC	Jon Holden	07794 030024
Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	Xmas party and Old Ham retro trip	Superb cave with plenty of trips to suit the experienced and novice alike	TBC		
Sun 27 <sup>th</sup> Dec	OFD	Lots of splashy splashy fun in this wonderful cave system, numerous trips to be had!		Jon Holden	07794 030024
Fri 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan		New Year Day’s Walk	TBC		

Royal Forest of Dean Caving  
Club welcomes these new  
members:

Raif Evans,

E Dyer,

R Hardy,

L Murphy.

[See you down there.](#)



## MINUTES – YOUR SECRETARY

RFDCC Committee Meeting 1 July 2015

In attendance:

J Karvik  
D Sandford  
N Bayley  
C Stott  
J Holden  
A Thorpe  
A Clark  
G Cheshire

The last meeting was purely about the arrangements for the 50th Celebrations which is now passed, so there were no minutes presented from that meeting.

1. Otter Hole: Following concerns raised by some members of FODCAGG over our rights of access Jan spoke to the current owner who has given verbal permission for cavers to carry on accessing the entrance over her land on the current basis. This will be communicated to FODCAGG.
2. New members: Proposed and accepted, E Dyer, R Hardy, L Murphy.
3. New batteries for drills are required; the cost would be £250. This was approved. It was agreed that their availability should be publicised in the newsletter.
4. There being no other business the meeting closed, the date for the next meeting will be agreed at a later date, but will be at least a couple of weeks before the AGM.

## TINGLE'S DIG UPDATE - ROGER BAILEY

At long last we are starting to move downwards again on the Tingle's Shaft excavation and there is now a third concrete reinforcing ring cast in position.

This has bought us against the solid rock face of the steep dip found here and this does mean that there is probably a reducing amount of concreting required the deeper we go, the next digging session should show us. However it is a small diameter ventilation shaft and providing the lining or natural rock is secure we do make good progress.

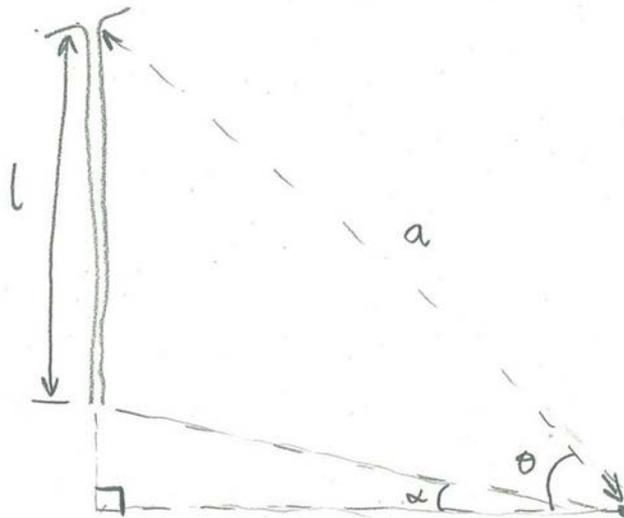
Some extra "muscle" would be appreciated as it is getting to be quite a pull to get the spoil up and away. We don't go digging there every week as this gets to be boring for those on the surface but go elsewhere to other holes in the Forest.

## MEASURING STRAWS IN OTTER HOLE – BY RHYS WILLIAMS

I've been leading groups in to Otter Hole for nearly a decade now. When entering the so-called "Long Straw Chamber", the topic of conversation within the groups almost always comes around to "So, how long are those straws, then?". After much sucking of teeth, imagining a 2 metre tall person standing next to them, and guessing, I've usually settled on about 5 or 6m. Of course it wouldn't be possible to measure them as they, and the floor beneath them, are too fragile. A few years back someone (possibly Paul Taylor) mentioned the idea of measuring the long straws using a Disto. These devices have become almost a standard tool for cave surveyors these days and there's plenty of them knocking around. In case you don't know, a Disto is a device which uses a laser to measure distances. It has an advantage over a tape measure in so far as you only need a human being to be able to access one end of the distance being measured rather than both ends. Cavers have also cunningly modified these devices to produce the DistoX (pronounced disto-ex) to incorporate electronic compass and clinometer measurements within the same device. With all this technology at our fingertips, surely the age-old straw length question could be put to bed...

Well, I've been doing a bit of cave surveying over the last few years and have a Disto, so I made a mental note to take the kit along next time I was doing an overtime trip to Otter Hole. For one reason or another – high tides, rain etc - two or three years passed before I found myself in Long Straw Chamber with my surveying kit on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2015. I sent my group from Oxford University off to explore a bit further in to the cave while I took some measurements...

The length could still not be measured directly as I could not approach the straws without crossing the tape. Some trigonometry would be required: measuring some distances and inclinations so as to indirectly calculate the straw length.



By my reckoning, assuming that the straw is vertical, the length  $l$  of the straw is found by the following equation:

$$l = a \sin\theta - a \cos\theta \tan\alpha$$

where:

$a$  is the distance from a fixed point to the top of the straw

$\theta$  is the inclination from the fixed point to the top of the straw

$\alpha$  is the inclination from the fixed point to the bottom of the straw.

For the Disto to work, a reasonable sized target is required in order to aim the laser and for the beam to be reflected. For that reason, it is not possible to take Disto readings on the bottom end or tip of the straw, it's just too small a target. The roof around the top of the straw does give enough of a target though. Inclination measurements to the bottom of the straw would need to be done with a conventional sighting clinometer.

I selected and marked a large rock in the chamber for my fixed point and selected what looked like the three longest straws. In the end it turned out to be quite challenging accurately identifying where my chosen straws actually started and finished – it made my eyes go wonky. The light, shadows and multiple straws play funny tricks. However, I persevered, walking up and down the chamber and focussing my spare light beam where I was trying to measure. I took each reading several times until I felt I had a reasonable and stable figure.

Back at home with the numbers crunched I came up with:

Straw 1: 3.7m

Straw 2: 4.5m

Straw 3: 4.5m

I've rounded to the nearest 10cm as I felt that would be a reasonable level of precision given the technique and tools used. I was somewhat disappointed with straw 1, it looked much longer than that (though clearly shorter than 2 and 3), and my gut feeling is that I made a blunder somewhere so I'm not too confident of the figure. Straws 2 and 3 seem much better. To the eye they look very similar in length, and although measured shorter than my earlier estimates, it seems reasonable – so I'm happy to conclude that the longest straws are at least 4.5m !

I reckon it's well worth returning to verify my results and the technique could be improved. Having a helper to spot/agree the straw ends for me and highlight them with a laser pointer would assist when taking clinometers readings. Also, a DistoX could be used to measure both distance and inclination to the top of the straw, which might help. If anyone else fancies a go that would be great. I intended to identify or mark in a photo which straws I picked, but it's proved very difficult. Clearly spotting them on existing photos is tricky and I'm not an underground photographer myself so found it impossible to get good identifying shots on the day. Taking compass bearings to them from a fixed point might be an option. I'll point them out in person on site if anyone wants to come along!



Long Straw Chamber. Image Courtesy of Stuart Gardiner

#### **SAD NEWS**

Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club founder member Ray Wright sadly passed away in August.

Our thoughts and sympathies are extended to the Wright family for their loss.

A short video is available (link below), courtesy of Paul Taylor, of Ray at Clearwell Caves which you may like to view. It forms part of a longer film that Paul is working on about Rays Life. It was recorded with the help of Ian Standing early in 2014.

Should you have pictures, stories and thoughts of Ray that you would like to share, Paul would be interested to hear from you as he would like to add them to the film.

Paul can be contacted via all the normal routes.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChwC\\_hKwuStE9q9Id0Q5JMw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChwC_hKwuStE9q9Id0Q5JMw)

## DONATION TO GCRG

Paul Taylor has been a member of the GCRG since the very early 1970's having joined the group soon after joining Gloucester Speleological Society in 1969; so certainly in excess of 40 years of service. During that time he has almost continuously served on the committee as Newsletter Editor, Equipment Officer, Secretary and for the last 15 years as its Chairman along with being one of the groups Rescue Wardens. His wife Rose although not an active caver has also been very much part of the group and is a regular source of the provision of food for social and fundraising events.

On the morning of Tuesday May 19th 2014 Paul was rushed into hospital by ambulance having suffered a heart attack. When the details were established he had in fact had the attack in the early hours of the previous Friday morning. Completed a days work on the Friday, driven four fellow rescue team members to the May MREW Meeting in Preston, returned home to Gloucester, then on the Sunday spent the day driving a recovery vehicle for of all things the British Heart Foundation Cotswold Bike Ride and then on the Monday complete some further work for two Paramedics and then finished the day off by going caving. It was only on the Tuesday having loaded his car for a days work in Cardiff that he finally relented and contacted his wife to say he thought he needed to see the doctor. Rushing home from work it was not long before two ambulances were positioned outside of their house and Paul was whisked off first to Gloucester and then following an examination a further 'Blue Light Transfer' to Cheltenham where an emergency heart operation was performed. The surgeon later confirmed that Paul had been very, very lucky. Had he driven to Cardiff that morning the outcome could have been so very different.

Prior to this event Paul & Rose had decided that they would leave a sum of money in their wills to the GCRG and had in fact originally planned to make this a donation where the providers identity would not be revealed. However, with the events that had taken place they decided that rather than wait till they both died, they would make the donation while they were alive. Be able to see the group benefit for themselves and still make the donation without anybody knowing. When the secretary of GCRG got to hear about it and also the size of the donation he was having none of it and persuaded Paul & Rose to come clean, so to speak. It was decided that the ideal time would be at the forthcoming BCRC Conference and at the party on the Saturday evening. Only a few people had any knowledge that this was going to happen. The master of ceremonies for the evening Dany Bradshaw (Vice Chair of the BCRC) got every bodies attention and requested the GCRG Secretary Pete Turier, Treasurer Liz Maisey & Equipment Officer Nicky Bailey to join him in front of the band for the presentation. What they all did not know was the true size of the donation. Paul and Rose had already transferred a sum of money to the GCRG so as to enable the group to place an order for some specialised "Through the Rock Text Messaging Communications Equipment" called Cave Link however when the cheque was revealed they realised that this amount had been added to making the donation in total £5000.00 leaving the secretary Pete Turier almost lost for words. This was an unprecedented event and sum of money and sincere thanks were extended to Paul & Rose for their generosity. The balance of the donation is to be split equally with half to go into the building fund for the new Equipment Washing and Drying Room that will also double up as an extension to the groups onsite training facility and the other half is to be used by the Equipment Officer who said she did not know exactly what she would spend it on but would certainly make good use of it!

Paul Taylor

## OTTER HOLE FILM PROJECT – PAUL TAYLOR

I first became involved with filming in Otter Hole when Sid Perou decided to make a film in the cave in the early 1980's. This was after John Elliott took him into the cave for his first trip.

This initial film was, in no uncertain terms, a disaster for many reasons but fortunately did not put Sid Off and he came back a couple of years later with a much more secure financial backing and we again got involved and the Realm of Darkness Film Otter Hole was produced.

Fast forward to 2005 and I commissioned Nicky Bayley from the RFDC to produce a film for the opening ceremony of the 2005 Forest Caving Symposium. I had seen quite a bit of Nicky's work and was very impressed. I wrote for want of a better word the Screen Play and the script and between us we filmed it and Nicky put it together.

Two years later and Rose and myself were booked on a cruise, not your normal 2000 passengers calling at twenty different locations in 2 weeks; this was 10 Passengers in 6 Star accommodation on the working ship Trinity House Patricia. Best not to ask how much it cost for the week but you could buy a very nice second hand car with it. Prior to departure I decided to buy a Video Camera and record the trip. This was my first venture into filming. We had a great time and produced quite a reasonable film out of it, as well as learning a lot about filming, film production and editing.

When I bought the camera I said "This will not be going caving" however the temptation was too great and it was not long before underground filming was taking place. I also bought a Head Cam. Again best not to ask how much that cost but 3 Gopros would just about cover it.

Then in 2009 a long standing caving friend of mine Dave "Sparky" Parker of Otter Hole fame out of the blue asked me "How about a trip into Otter Hole for me" To be honest you could have knocked me over with a feather, I was completely taken aback as Dave had made it quite clear in the past that he would never go back into Otter Hole. I did not dare question him as to why he had changed his mind but just said "YES". It is worth pointing out that Dave was the very first caver to go underground at Otter Hole in 1970 and he was also now 72 years old.

Fast Forward again to May 22nd 2010 and with Nicky Bayley & myself running two cameras and a team of 6 other supporters Dave now aged 73 made a 12.5hr trip back into Otter Hole and visited for the first time the Upper Series and saw some of the formations it contains including the Hall of Thirty.

Out of this trip came the Film "Otter Hole Cave 40 Years 1970 - 2010" two showings of the film at the Palace Cinema in Cinderford, Trips in Stretch Limos and raising £1000.00 for charity. Along with third prize for the film in the Napoli Film Festival.

Making that film and thinking back to Sid's film made me realise that Otter Hole had so much to offer. There were so many things about the cave that most people did not see or know. It was also a very challenging place to film with all of the mud.

The seeds for a second film or fourth if you count the others was sown and the new Otter Film Project was underway. I was however well aware that this was something that I could not undertake on my own and I made contact with Gary Cullen who had in fact been in the cave in 2010 when we were filming and supplied some footage for my film.

## **OTTER HOLE FILM PROJECT (CONT)**

I asked him if he would be interested in helping out. It did not take him long to say YES and he in turn suggested that we invite Footleg (Paul Fretwell) to get involved. So he was approached and like Gary was very quick to say yes please. With these two onboard I started to mull over what I wanted to achieve and film and I hope you will not mind if I do not divulge all of the details as we wish it to be a surprise.

However, the main thing that we had seen in the years that had followed on from 2010 was the greater use if not total use of Digital Filming and so this started to have an impact on the cameras we were going to use. Digital SLR cameras with very high quality video functions have become part of the kit, alongside more advanced Digital Video Cameras and of course Gopro Cameras.

So now I have a Cannon SLR Camera, a small Panasonic Video Camera and two Hero 3 Plus Cameras complete with LCD Backs. We have also started to look at ways of reaching places in the cave that are not normally possible so "Selfie Sticks" have been looked at but with a 3m range. Also taking the Gimbal Technology from the Drone that I have. We now have a Gopro Camera that is fitted to a frame that has a Gimbal Mounted on it plus full Radio Remote Control of the Tilt and Yaw and then add FPV Video so we can place a camera in the middle of a chamber and move it and control it as well as being able to see what it is filming.

If we add the cameras that the others are operating then these include further Digital SLR's, conventional Digital Video Cameras and further Gopro Cameras. With the latest addition being a very compact and quite expensive Panasonic Digital Camera and a new Carriage that has employed 3D Printer Technology to produce pulley wheels.

Lighting is also changing from Heavy Duty Lead Acid Batteries powering large Halogen lights that you could only run for a few minutes to now LED Flood Lights that we can run for many hours on much smaller Lipo or similar batteries.

Our sound recording equipment has also been vastly improved using small radio Microphones and a very Compact and efficient Digital Recorder that I purchased having completed some work on Merlin and filling my time chatting to the sound engineer.

Of course all of this has lead to requiring a much larger team of sherpas to move the equipment in and out of the cave. Some trips we are as many as twelve and with 11 - 12 hr trips each time they are long hard and at times very cold. However the rewards all though not financial as I could not pay even £2 / hr for those involved have been more than money could buy. For them seeing the Hall of Thirty lit up with over 1500 Watts of light for almost 3 hours leaves you completely speechless and with views and memories that very few people will have or will ever see.

This project has brought together a great team of people to all of which I am very grateful as I could not even produce 1 % of it on my own. We are all learning so much from it all and we are doing things with cameras that very few around the world have done. We are seeing things in the cave that NO BODY has ever seen before.

So when, you may ask, will you be able to see the results.

## **OTTER HOLE FILM PROJECT (CONT)**

I hope to have the film finished for a World Premier in June next year and then to take it to the European Congress in 2016 in Yorkshire. Yes it would have been nice to have had it finished this year but in 2014 the slight technical problem of me having a Heart Attack put us back a bit and also recent events have shown us that we can produce even better footage so why rush. This is very big project which we all want to get right.

So how can you help?

If you have a trip booked into Otter Hole please be tolerant with us. We have a lot of filming equipment in the cave and in some cases it might spoil your photo. It will all be removed later.

If you visit the cave when filming is taking place you may be asked to keep quiet for a few minutes but for this you will be rewarded by seeing that part of the cave lit up like you will have never seen it before.

All who are involved in the project are investing a very large amount of time energy and money into it and all of the equipment. New cameras alone have cost a fortune and although we are not asking for a contribution towards the cost of these. You can help by if you have not already bought a copy of the 2010 version of the Otter Hole film then please buy a copy. The cost is £12 + £1.50 p&p and it can be ordered by sending an email to [redhouseproductions@redhousefod.co.uk](mailto:redhouseproductions@redhousefod.co.uk) along with your address details. All of the proceeds from the sales of the DVD are used to provide for the welfare of all of those taking part in the filming trips.

Also I have produced a variety of other films which are available on DVD's which I will list separately. Purchasing anyone of these all helps raise a little money to go directly back into the project.

If I was to list all who are involved with this project then it would take another page. They all know who they are. However I would like to give special thanks to Judi Durber, Footleg and Gary Cullen for all of their support. Especially in May 2014 when I thought my time had come or at a minimum the project was going to stumble and fail. Without their encouragement we would not be where we are today.

Special thanks to Rose who not only has to put up with all of the filming equipment around the house and the loss of me for many hours in my office editing but also who produces fantastic curries for everybody after the filming trips. These are as rewarding as the filming itself. Thanks also to GCRG for allowing the use of the GCRG Depot as a filming base.

This is a very brief overview of the project. I have offered to give a presentation at a GSS Social of our filming & editing techniques if people would like to see

Watch this space.

## YOUR CLUB – ED.

Below is a synopsis of the various groups / affiliations / friends who choose to share their activities at the club social back in the spring.

### **Westbury Brook Diggers (or Ladi's Old Farts)**

With a combined age of over 200, Rog, Dave, Kev, Leon, Graham, Alan and others have been active in exploring and regaining access to mine levels not only in Westbury Brook, but Bixlade with a side project in Buckshaft. They have made finds of archaeological significance such as trucks and a tool store still containing galvanised tools. You don't have to be in your dotage if you want to visit. Just get in touch with Ladi.

### **Dropper Gang (or Andy Clarke and Friends)**

Work in the Dropper has now been abandoned because of CabSav pushing right under them! Recent activities have included exploring the culvert near Canop and reopening Seymore Swallet to safe guard the entrance. Due to their advancing age they are now re-exploring things that they have already forgotten, but when the weather is more suited to above ground activity they can be found canoeing, biking and hiking. They are 'diggers for hire' where extra muscle is needed and can usually be located in the pub nearest to that evening's site of interest. Contact Andy Clark for more detail

### **Mole (Mine Exploration)**

Passionate that people should learn to explore when underground and not just 'follow the arse' of the person in front. Regularly takes groups on introductory trips in the mines of the FOD, but (by his own admission) prefers small groups and the quiet that can be found below ground. Also with over 40 years experience of these mines you will find no one with greater knowledge. Nenthead with its five and a half mile complicated through-trip is also a regular excursion for John.

### **Phil Checketts and Paul Hartwright**

Paul shared a short film about his exceedingly promising dig site above Remembrance Passage in Agen Allwedd. Using chemical persuasion a 10m shaft was dug. In 2010 they found a chamber and then in the August of that year a 17m aven. They are now progressing horizontally (down dip) removing boulders. They have the landowner's permission to work this site so any requests to visit should go to the diggers.

### **Les Twissel and Chris Bowen**

Active in Wigpool. At the time trips were planned to the Upper Workings, but with water levels rising opportunities could be limited. They are happy for club members to join them.

### **Jann Padley**

Having started caving in 2014 after being a climber for many years Jann with various GSS members has been rapidly bagging every mine in the Forest and the stone mine of the Cotswolds. Primarily going out on a Thursday evening, these tend to be beginner/intermediate trips, so contact Jann for more details.

### **Paul Taylor (redhouse Diggers)**

Having actively dug Hawthorns Wood, Big sink and Hole in the Hedge (and having failed to link the last of these to Pirate Passage in Slaughter Stream Cave) attention has more recently turned to Green Moss Pot. They have a small passage with a draft where they can see on about 2m, but blasting is required. Paul also shared some video footage taken with his Quadcopter. Don't expect to see this on any underground filming trips just yet.....

## **YOUR CLUB (CONT).**

### **Jan Karvick (Chepstow Diggers)**

Cowhill Cave at Hewelsfield is the project which the team dig almost religiously on Wednesday evenings. The site has been dug and engineered from nothing more than a tiny sink hole, making the farmers pond water drain away, to its current length of a shade under 200m. A description and survey can be found in RFDCC newsletter 152, since when a few more metres of streamway and a tight rift have been gained. All members are welcome to come along, contact Jan for details.

### **TUFFER'S BRINCHCOMBE LIMESTONE LEVEL DEBACLE – DAVE TUFFLEY**

Late last year a group of us from RFDCC decided to do our yearly visit to the Brinchcombe Limestone Level, near Soudley, by descending via the upper original entrance on the opposite bank to where we park our cars. It seemed like a good idea at the time to go down the old way as past experience has showed that coming back up was like trying to ascend a very steep and narrow passage whilst coated with Vaseline. What could possibly go wrong?????

Myself and my son Kevin, were the first to enter and had to pull out large bits of branch that forestry contractors had let fall down inside the entrance whilst tidying up the firebreak outside. The way down was still very slippery but easy to slide down without much effort. Just as we got to the bottom we discovered that the break-out point into the first level was blocked by a collapsed roof. We shouted back up to the others to stop and not to come down. We now had to make our way back up that awful route back out. Some may call it "sporting", others like me call it a real bugger!

We both fought our way back up by the four steps forward and three steps back principle. All this exertion was quickly dragging my Type 1 diabetic blood sugars down to the danger level and in no time at all I had no strength left and felt totally exhausted. Things became so bad that Ladi Broadman went back to his car for a rope to help pull me out.

With the aid of this and a couple heaving and pulling, I was finally able to break out of the final entrance constriction and fall into a heap on the floor when outside. A slow, steady walk back down to the cars and after getting all the muddy kit off, I had a long sit down in my car whilst I recovered after eating loads of glucose sweets that I forgot I had in my overalls.

I have learned a big lesson here by not having any fast acting insulin whilst caving, and will never attempt to gain access via this horrible route again.

The others, not being put off by my recent effort, went in via the bottom entrance and had a good bibble about.

## STEVE TOMALIN CELEBRATION DAY – PAUL TAYLOR

Steve Tomalin was an extremely large part of the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group, the local Forest of Dean Caving Scene and the much wider caving world both in the UK & abroad. As most of you will know Steve lost his battle with Liver Cancer on the 20th July 2014 and many people came together on the 4th August for his funeral.

In his will he left instructions that all of his Equipment and Clothing from all of the activities that filled his life were to be passed to the GCRG and sold to raise funds for the group.

I was given the task of carrying out this request and felt that not only would it be a great thing to do but also that whenever it took place it needed to be an event that would be a celebration of his life. I also felt that this was something that did not need to be rushed as the family and others needed time to adjust to Steve not being around before undertaking the massive task of sorting everything out.

In the early part of 2015, with Tony Marden and his van, we visited Steve's old house to collect a vast collection of equipment and books and took these to the GCRG Depot to be sorted. The decision was taken that the vast proportion of the Caving & Climbing books and associated material would be given to the Gloucester Speleological Society library and the unrelated material given away to charity. Collating all of this was quite a task!

Soon afterwards we took delivery of two significant quantities of equipment brought by Sharron (Steve's Girlfriend) from her mother's garage where Steve had been storing it. His garage at home had overflowed. With the help of Jo Clarke, Gareth Jones and John Cliffe we continued the cataloguing and were absolutely amazed by how much equipment Steve had amassed over the years.

Thoughts then turned to how and when we would deal with the disposal of everything.

As Steve also had very strong links to the Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation I consulted with Emma Porter & Mike Clayton and the decision was taken that the proceeds from the sale would be split 50/50 with the MCRO.

Many within GCRG & MCRO were very much involved with the BCRC Conference that was to take place in Mid-June and it was felt that it would be better to hold the event after this and having consulted again with Emma & Mike we came up with Saturday July 4th.

As Steve undertook many activities in his life it was felt that it would be nice to have a number of these taking place on the day and as Barbeques were another of his passions we would have one as well.

Liz Maisey (GCRG Treasurer) was able to arrange, via her work, for a professional auctioneer to run proceedings on the day.

Advertisement went out and various people were enlisted to help with running a Caving Trip into Old Ham, Canoeing down the River Wye, Mountain Bike riding around one of the Forest Cycle Trails, a Surface Walk with some Geocaching, and also Climbing and Crate Stacking at the Dean Field Studies Centre at Parkend. A site where Steve had worked over the years.

As many of you will know over the last few years the GCRG Headquarters has been the subject of a major refurbishment and although not completely finished the transformation that has taken place has made it somewhere that we now don't mind going to.

## **STEVE TOMALIN CELEBRATION DAY (CONT)**

As Steve played a significant part in this work and also spent many hours working there on the SRT Training it was felt that this would be the perfect venue. The only problem was that the area outside the front of the building needed to be sorted out beforehand.

Gareth Jones and Paul Taylor set about getting this completed, building a new wall and breaking up all of the old concrete ready for a new slab to be laid. To say that this was taken to the wire is a bit of an understatement as the new concrete slab was only laid on the Tuesday prior to the event on the Saturday. Fortunately it was all set in time.

On the day over 120 people from both locally and further afield turned up and went off to take part in the various activities and all returned with stories and pictures of a very enjoyable time. What was particularly nice was to see so many young children taking part as Steve had spent so much time working with young people over the years.

By the time people returned to the GCRG Depot the bar was up and running with a barrel of Freeminers Ale very kindly donated by Carl Powell who had been rescued from Old Ham a few weeks earlier by members of the GCRG having miss placed the route from Old Bow.

It was great to see so many people enjoying themselves but there was also the serious side of the day of raising some money.

All the Lots for the auction had been laid out on tables in the large meeting room in a logical order and a big sign put up to say "Please DO NOT Move the Lots Around" well that did not quite work as people wanted to see what they would be bidding for. In a separate room all of the hardware had been laid out. This had been supplemented by a separate donation via Liz Forster from her employer and as such the volume was too much to auction so all these items were open to donations. Some of the items were brand new and created a lot of interest and there was certainly not much left at the end of the day.

Slightly later than planned at 15.00 hrs Paul got everybody to take their seats and reminded them that to bid in the auction they would need to be registered and be issued with a numbered Paddle. This produced a rush of people and then it was down to business with the Auctioneer Joe taking over proceedings.

The new Concrete Base provided the ideal location to work from and as each lot was brought out in the right order following frantic work by Jo Clarke , Nicky Bailey & Gareth Jones sorting through the now almost random pile. They were displayed by Charlotte Maisey & Saffron Herbert with Joe the auctioneer doing his bit and Liz Maisey working hard to keep up with the sales and recording all of the various amounts.

To say it was hot is a bit of an understatement and it was noticeable to see a lot of the chairs and people slowly moving into the shade as the sun went round. However for those up on the front there was no respite and partway through a "Beer Brake" was taken and then it was back into the auction. In total almost 200 lots went through with some real bargains to be had as well as some great prices paid and a fantastic time had by all.

3 hours later the Hammer came down for the final time and only one lot had failed to be sold.

## **STEVE TOMALIN CELEBRATION DAY (CONT)**

When the figures were totalled up this gave a sum in excess of £4500 having been raised which was a fantastic figure and thanks were extended to everybody for the part they had played

Then it was time to relax and enjoy a fantastic BBQ put on by Rose Taylor and her team. Liz did her job of collecting up all of the money, more "Back Room Sales" and a great time just having a chat and enjoying the event.

What a day it had been and one that everybody who took part in will remember for a very long time. It would have been a day that Steve would have been very proud of.

Thanks go to everybody who came and supported the event as without you it would not have happened.

Special thanks to:

Len and Lisa Tomalin who were not able to join in but sent their best wishes.

Jo Clarke, Gareth Jones, Nicky Bailey & John Cliffe for all the work in sorting all the items out both before and on the day.

Liz Maisey for her fantastic work on the computer keeping a record of all the transactions.

Joe Trinder for doing an absolutely fantastic job selling all of the lots even if at times we did confuse him by not having them available.

Charlotte Maisey & Saffron Herbert for displaying and delivering all of the lots.

John Hine, Greg Jones, Carl Powell, Andy Clarke, John Cliffe & Dave Appleing for running all of the activities.

Ian Healey for allowing the use of the DFSC

Carl for the Beer

Those people who were not able to attend but made donations

& finally,

Rose and her team for the BBQ

When the expenses for running the event were taken into account along with the payment of a donation to the S & MWCRT who Steve also had links to this left both the MCRO and GCRG with the sum of £2165.00 each.

I understand that the MCRO are going to use some of the money to purchase a new Cave Rescue Stretcher and within GCRG it is proposed to use our share to go towards the materials to provide an extension to the Training Wall at the GCRG Depot but also incorporate within this the construction of an Equipment Washing and Drying Room. This was something that was discussed with Steve prior to his death and will be a very fitting memorial to his memory.

Paul Taylor Chairman GCRG