

# 2001

## “The Year of the Sun”

Once again the usual, eclectic team of odd-ball characters and warped personalities (that are bound together, like cheese-filled smash burgers, by a sense of trust, friendship and common purpose) reunited for another expedition on Mig. As we discovered in 2000, when it rains on Migovec, it really does rain! Fortunately, 2001 proved to be a drier expedition, though that isn't to say that there weren't storms, patches of violent weather and a foreboding sense of dread that the weather could turn ever fouler. The equipment was transported in Martin's trusty old Land Rover and a creaky old trailer belonging to a defunct club that was acquired with a set of bolt cutters from outside Southside. While the Landy lumbered across Europe, most of the team flew out to take their place round the bivvy's stained, uneven rock-table that has become home.

When we weren't involved with dye-tracing and were able to drag ourselves away from frying food and playing with our new, mean petrol drill (named “El Chorro” after a scary traverse in Spain), the storming lead down the bottom of Gardeners' World received most of the attention this year. The cave went and ICCC and JSPDT went with it...

James Hooper

## First night up top, First Storm of the Year

As we headed up the mountain we could see the storms clouds rolling in. Most of the group raced on ahead unencumbered by a load of caving kit and a tent. I slogged up the last zigzag to fading daylight, purple hammerhead clouds burning orange on the underside, occasional lightning dancing off the distance peak of Krn and thunder echoing round the Polog valley. At the top I was greeted by shouts from the rest of the team as they drank vodka while watching Thor's hammers flash across the sky. I pushed across the last obstacle of the so called 'plateau' - with its 300m diameter shakeholes it is anything but flat.

That night I shared a tent with Ben and Clewin, it was too late to pitch my own. Their ancient mountaineering tent was now being held together by duck tape in good ol' Blue Peter fashion. As the weather closed in over dinner we could see we were in for a rough night. Throughout the following hours of darkness, the tent rattled, shook and flapped around as if the only thing holding it to the ground was the ballast of three cavers and their gear. The front of the tent popped in and out of shape. Suddenly, in the middle of this battering, I heard a desperate voice crying in the wilderness outside. I gingerly stuck my head out into the gale, noticed a large rip in the front of the tent, and heard Adrian asking if there was any room in the tent.



“Is this an emergency?” I asked. A stunned Adi kneeled on the ground, head poking through the porch. “Sorry we have no room” was our response, especially as our tent seemed destined to fall apart some time in the night.

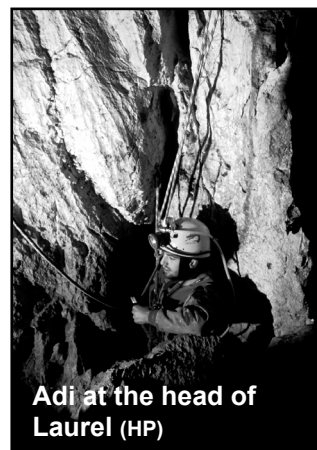
So Adi disappeared into the night, while we patched the rip in the porch with gaffer tape and battened down the hatches. The next morning, I pitched my tent on the only flat piece of ground left, unfortunately it was also the highest spot around; well lightning can't strike twice. Meanwhile poor Adi surveyed the collapsed, shredded remnants of his own tent. He therefore moved his gear into my tent - and so began the climbing double act of the expedition...

Martin M<sup>c</sup>Gowan

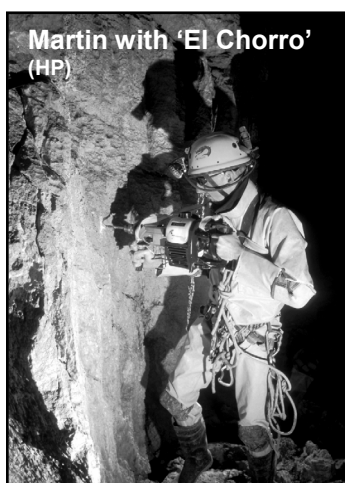
## High Hopes: Climbs off Jelly Chamber

Jelly chamber, the chamber at the bottom of Laurel that was found in 2000, was always colder and draughtier than the rest of the cave. Leading off the chamber, we found two series of climbs going up, Judge Dredd series and the Hunger Series - named after the fact that was Adi's stomach was rumbling at the time. To get up these climbs we needed the petrol drill, but first there were one or two obstacles to overcome. The most important of these being a bottleneck of boulders at the top of Laurel - even the slim members of the team found it tight. A hit squad was sent in to remove the boulders...

Hugh, Ed, 'El Chorro' (the drill) and I gathered at the top of the pitch, while Adi, the smallest and fastest, was sent down to bring up the rope. For several minutes we struggled with slings, hammers and a crowbar to no avail. Then we thought of winching the boulders out. We had soon drilled two anchor points in one of the boulders and set up a Z-rig. Instantly it popped out. This released the genie from the bottle and the coffee-table sized boulders tumbled and rumbled down the 60m pitch. The memory that sticks most in my mind is the thought of being attached by my cow tails to the bolts, hanging over the enlarged pitch head and waving a hammer to hit the final wedged boulder, while Hugh took photographs. This was pure, insane destruction. When I re-rigged the rope, all I could find was a pile of fist size rocks - all that remained of several tons of boulders. Now the way was free to bring the drill on down.



Adi at the head of Laurel (HP)



Martin with 'El Chorro' (HP)

The Judge Dredd Series got the most attention. The main problem we had initially encountered was that the rock was so hard that the spit had lost most of its teeth by the time we were half way through placing the bolt. Hence the petrol drill. The first climb had a bolt placed about half way up to protect the lead climber. A bit of wide bridging then gained an old roof tube. This was shuffled along until you could squirm onto the ledge at the top of the pitch. From here, we followed the ledge over a scramble of boulders into the Hall of Justice - a chamber with two large projections in the roof, which looked like the scales of justice. A scramble over a convenient triangular shaped boulder gave us access to a rift heading towards the roof. This was the way on we needed, but there was one more obstacle. We had run out of spits at the bivvy. So we headed down to Ravne to fetch some through bolts, and enjoyed the pleasures of a trip into Tolmin.

Adrian and I had never used through bolts before, so we were a wee bit apprehensive about using these 8mm bits of metal (especially the shorter ones) and opted for the longest ones we could find. Finally we set off, overloaded with gear: drill, static rope, dynamic rope, bolting hammer, runners, extenders, camera, plates, search light, survey kit and of course a flask of hot chocolate. We jingled and jangled our way down the mountainside and into the cave. I lead climbed the traverse in the roof, bridging the gap to a wedged boulder, before placing a second bolt. Traversing over the gap that followed, I wedged myself in to place the third bolt and continued out to a ledge. Another bolt later, and it was possible to scramble onto the scales of justice, 15m above the floor. At this point I was getting a bit light headed, either from the exposure to the height or the petrol fumes, so I let Adi take over the lead. He chimneyed up onto a ledge and placed two bolts into the roof. The next step was a bold reach across to the rock but at this point the drill failed. So it was time for a few quick pictures and some hot chocolate, before leaving it all for another year as Adi was heading home the next day.

## The GW story continues: A Fistful of Tolars



It took slightly longer than anticipated to re-rig the known cave. Seven or eight trips were needed to remove some of the unique 'expedition style' methods used the previous year: Y-hangs unriggable by Man, extreme deviations and rigging directly through avoidable squeezes. Finally it was time for the pushing game to start again. The cave was rigged as far as the bottom of Alchemy and Clewin and I had a fairly uneventful trip down, save for a few of the normal pitch head problems. Below Alchemy, was Zlatorog Rift, named after the mythical Slovene goat. A cut-out from a Laško beer can, bearing the Zlatorog slogan, was carefully placed on a rock to mark the location. While I sorted out kit, Clewin ate some sweets that he found on a rock - best not to ask questions - they were just there! To the sound of his munching in the background, I then rigged the short 12m Zlatorog Rift, landing near the take off into the unknown. Clewin popped down after me and we were ready for the real caving.

I had a brief look over the edge. Although I thought I could clearly see the bottom about 10m down, there was the matter of a long stone fall that I didn't like the sound of. This was clearly a pitch for Clewin. As I shivered on a tackle bag, the first bolt went in. The rope from Zlatorog was attached to this and Clewin set off - after all, this was "a mere 10m" deep. Clewin came back up when he reached the bottom of the rope with no sight of the bottom of the pitch. My comfortable rope bag seat was no more. The next rope was tied on and off Clewin went again...

"It's a long way down" .....

"There's nowhere to put a bolt in" .....

Eventually I heard the cry "R o p e F r e e" and off I went.

The pitch was just off vertical. A vague deviation at the top helped slightly, but by the time I could see the bottom I had passed many rubpoints. A few metres further down I experienced what has become known as "The Gravity Anomaly". The rope had appeared to be hanging vertically, but then I suddenly swung to the right, into a more spacious and scary area. This pitch can smell fear! I was reassured later that it happened to everyone. After 45m, my feet touched the floor. The bouncy 9mm rope immediately took me back up another metre or so, then down again.

We had discovered 'A Fistful of Tolars,' and immediately nicknamed it 'Fist Full of Rubpoints'. The pitch landed in a large space. In one direction, the passage continued high and wide over a large pile of boulders. To the side was a small hole - far more alluring. We left the huge ongoing passage for a future trip (this became the start of the Pink series). I looked into the small hole in the floor and was reassured that this time the bottom was clearly visible about 10m down. We also, incorrectly as it turned out, assumed that it would connect up with the larger passage. We discussed what would be down there, and Clewin hopefully concluded that it would contain a nice streamway with Mars bar trees and beer lakes. A boulder back up and single bolt worked wonders and I was soon on my way down. About half way down, I shouted up that it looked like it was closing down.

A brief explore at the bottom of the rope soon revealed nothing less than a small streamway running off down a winding passage. The streamway was named Banzai Streamway; combining a topical TV programme with part of Ogof Daren Cilau. It was reminiscent of Top Sink in Easegill and was quite unusual with respect to the cave so far. It continued for a short distance and, beyond a tight squeeze, we found a short pitch. Knowing that we had to survey out, this was left undescended for another trip. We ditched the 200m of 9mm rope that we had carried down and headed on out, happy that we had added another 55m of depth and that there was plenty left for further exploration.

Ben Ogborne

## "Chateau Plateau 2001 - Appellation Controlee"

Take one 1-week wine kit, 20kg of snow, two 10 litre water bags, 10kg of sugar, a bit of plastic tubing and a spare furry. Mix together according to basic instructions and leave for a week...

2001 was the year chosen for the first production of 'Chateau Plateau'. It was a good year, the sun shone favourably on the grape extract and a brisk northerly wind kept the pests off (or still in their tents at least). After some persuasion, the production run began with a morning of snow hauling from M10. This was necessary due to the unusually dry weather at the time - obviously it rained that evening!

Help me  
I don't want  
2 go caving  
Ben aged 23½

The snow (with sugar and grape extract added) was carefully melted in two 10kg batches and poured into the water bags. A bit of impromptu pipe work completed the bubble trap arrangement and the yeast was added to begin the fermentation. The two bags hung side by side in the bivvy like some obscenely large blood transfusion. Once the yeast had begun its work, they were snugly wrapped in a furry and left to their own devices. The cold and rapidly fluctuating temperatures subdued the yeasts however and fermentation proceeded slower than planned. It took a good three weeks until bottling day finally arrived.



Bottling day was a jolly affair - many 2 litre plastic containers had been collected ready for filling and it was soon the moment for the first tasting. I sampled a mug full of the cloudy blood colour liquid - finest claret it wasn't - in fact it wasn't really worst plonk. Some adjustment was necessary. To combat the dryness it was found that a teaspoon of sugar in a 2 litre bottle solved the problem wonderfully. The residual fizziness was more of a problem however, but after a bit of trial and error, the bubbles were driven away by a mass bottle-shaking session. The sound of "shake, shake, fizz" filled the shake hole. Following these adjustments, Chateau Plateau was ready to drink and 'savour'.

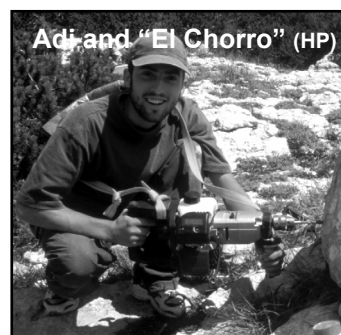
One side effect of the shaking and sweetening process was that it was necessary to test each bottle several times for correct taste. So, by 11:30am, I was fast asleep on my back on the bivvy floor. Moments of disturbed, wine-fuelled sleep later, I awoke to a cracking hangover, but in a show of pure dedication I continued to bottle until the whole batch was safely contained. A couple of bottles were put away in the bivvy for future years and the remaining ones were taken down the hill to be 'enjoyed' at the party.

As for official tasting notes, Oz Clark was unavailable, but his stand in, the farmer at Ravne, simply commented "Prima!"

Ben Ogborne

*"Excellent trip to Piston. On the way out Tetley found a bypass round the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch and Oh-so-fag-arse! Called it 'The Odd One Out.' Everyone was very happy (especially Hugh!)."*

Adrian Hooper (Logbook 2001)



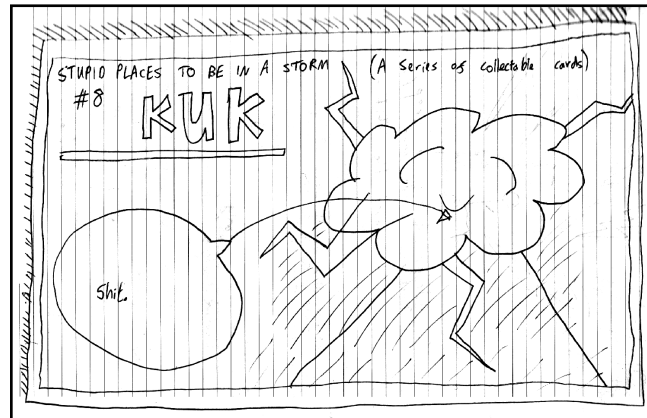
## In thunder, lightening and in rain...

### The North Face

As Andy and I ran for the bivvy, lightening danced all around. The way back was a stroboscopic run in blue white light. At the bivvy, Pete was doing a mean impression of Clint Eastwood with a gristled beard and poncho while Dave whistled up some food. The rain pounded on the tarpaulins and overflowed into the barrels. The rest of the team had retreated to the tents. That night I realised why North Face tents are worth their weight in gold, as it stood up against the battering of gusts coming over the ridge...

Martin M<sup>c</sup>Gowan

### Cooked on Kuk



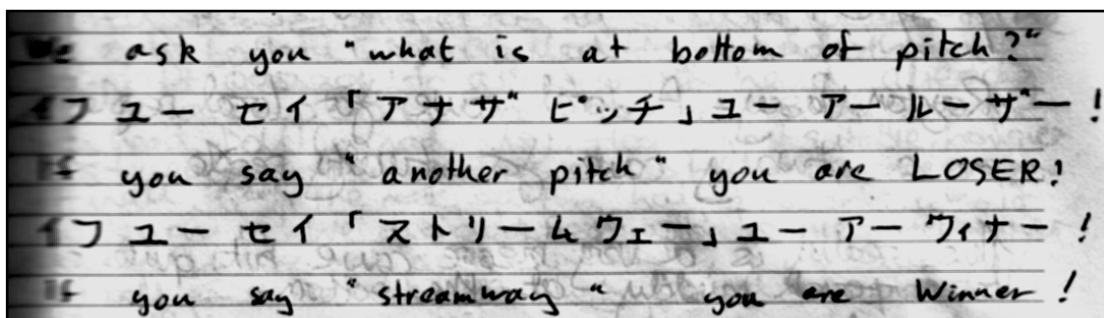
### The Force 10 and the Four-Four...

On the day of the storm, we sat at the sunset spot watching lightning over Krn, but the weather seemed fine on Mig. Later, as we gathered round the fire in the bivvy, it started to rain so we retreated to our tents. I was sharing Hugh's Vango Force 10 which we had moved onto a small ridge the day before to prevent the grass dying underneath. In the wind and the rain it was quite noisy but I wasn't too concerned - just slightly worried about the tent's metal poles. I have never been scared of thunder and lightning but began to get nervous as loud bangs and crashes seemed to come closer. Then there was an enormous bang that felt like an explosion in my head. Both Hugh and I screamed. All my hair was standing on end and Hugh felt a shock through his chest. We were too scared to do anything but quiver and hope that thermarests are insulating...

The storm seemed to be moving away but then another near miss sent us running for lower ground. Taking shelter in the Four-Four with Clewin and Ben was an interesting experience - the zips on the doors had given up the ghost so it was very windy inside! Luckily my down sleeping bag kept me nice and cosy but no-one got much sleep. The next morning we found loads of melted dwarf pine due to the lightning strikes, including one no more than five metres from our tent. I have been healthily scared of storms ever since.

Helen Jones

### Wise words from Clewin...



## Pink, Skynet, Zimmer: Slowly, slowly, it goes, it goes...

The sun rose, a day drifted by... collecting wood, mending overalls, making chocolate cake on the MSR stove etc ... the sun set. A thermos flask of rum and herbal tea was passed round the fire. Conversation moved from politics to claptrap. All was as it should be. Underground, too, things were going well. Gardeners' World was rigged, new survey data had been gathered and two new leads were waiting to be pushed in the morning. The thermos flask was naturally refilled...



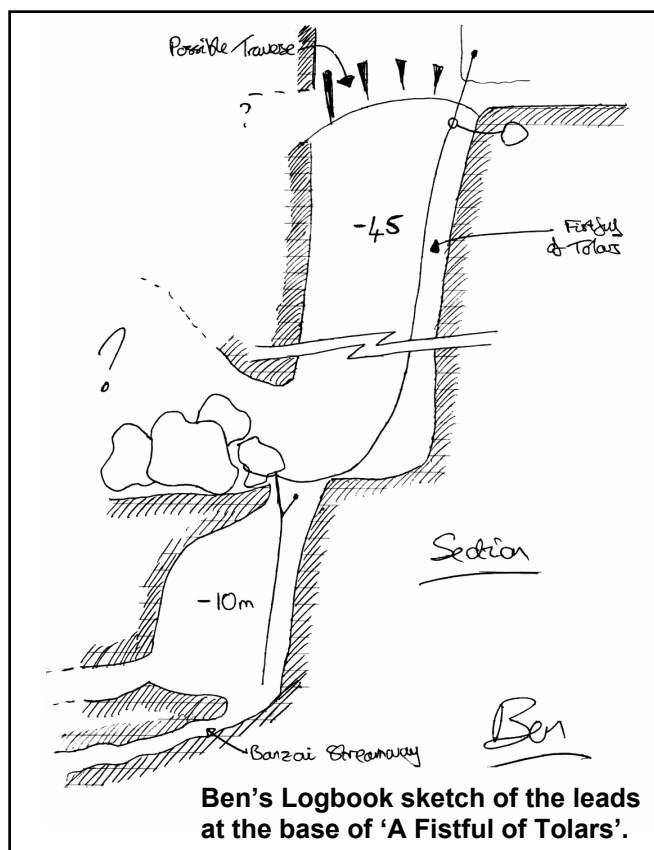
**Dave heading off to Gardeners' World (HP)**

The following morning, groups of people, in various stages of recovery, staggered out of their tents, queued for the pit and then headed down to the bivvy in search of food. Burgers, reconstituted from Sos-mix and the previous night's curry, were fried. And somehow, amongst all this, it had been decided that Dave and I were to be the next team to probe the cave's hidden depths. Eventually, we wandered off across the plateau, enjoying the fact that there was already loads of rope at the pushing front so we had little to carry.

Carbides were coaxed into action and we headed on down. Like most caves pushed on expedition, movement through Gardeners' World became easier and more enjoyable on each successive trip. This time, I slipped effortlessly through the entrance series enjoying the familiarity of the cave. Rock and memories felt intrinsically intertwined, a feeling that seemed particularly strong when passing bolts that I'd placed in the past. The pitches seemed to flow by and, after a spurt of hammering in a few additional bolts and tidying up some rigging, we were ready to push forward into the future.

Ben and Clewin had left the cave with two possible ways on. At the bottom of A Fistful of Tolars, a large black space beckoned to the right. The other lead was a small drop down into a rift, rigged with about 10m of rope. We descended this hole and followed the thin, interesting Banzai streamway to a tight pitch head, the limit of exploration.

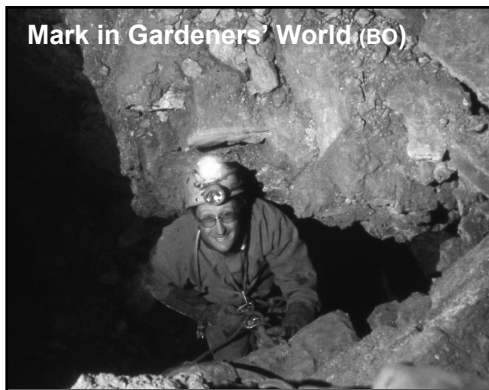
Well, here was a small gap into an uninspiring cavity and ten minutes previously we had been staring into a large, unexplored black void that seemed to go off horizontally, possibly the start of a wide open passage? Here we were following water, admittedly, but the Banzai streamway seemed pretty immature and there was little draught. After looking, without success, for leads higher up in the Banzai rift, we decided to return to the base of A Fistful of Tolars and investigate the large black void.



**Ben's Logbook sketch of the leads at the base of 'A Fistful of Tolars'.**

We headed off into the blackness, along a 5m wide passage lined with unstable boulders, going slowly, savouring the joy of discovery, taking turns to lead the way. It didn't last very long though, as we were soon stopped by a pitch. But more space could be seen on the other side. Using a combination of naturals and bolts, this small drop was quickly rigged and we abseiled on down, landing on a pile of white and pink boulders. Yes, they were definitely pink - believed to be the result of the strain of the fault plane. Scrambling up the other side, the passage continued, smaller than before, and we followed it to another drop. Time had been marching on, and we now realised that it was getting quite late. We decided, therefore, to survey our finds and head on out. Cheers, Dave, for a grand days caving....

I returned several days later, this time with Andy. In the meantime, Clewin and Dave had pushed a succession of small pitches and Andy and I did the same, taking Gardeners' World below 500m. I was becoming less enamoured with this section of cave, however. The pitches and passages in between were becoming more and more awkward, irritating, 'thrutchy', 'twatty' etc. Perhaps it was because it was new, but it seemed to take more effort to get from -450m to -500m than it did to get to -450m in the first place. Yes it was exciting, but it wasn't the large, awe-inspiring type of exciting that we'd got used to higher up in the cave. The draught seemed to be increasing though, and after a slight squeeze, the floor in the small passage suddenly gave way. We dropped stones and they whizzed down for several seconds. We shouted out and were rewarded with the resonance of a big cavity. Cramped in a small space, just large enough for two people with tacklebags, we knew we were above something large, a big chamber with the sound of water. Naming our finds Skynet, we left the bags and headed out to sleep, content with what we had found.



Fresh out on expedition and eager to go caving, Jim, Mark and Iain formed the next team. In true Migovec fashion, they didn't leave the bivvy until mid afternoon and so it was late by the time they got down to Skynet. Two bolts were placed at the top of the pitch to form a Y-hang and Iain descended to a ledge half-way down the pitch. Leaving the tacklebags there, team Zimmer (frame), as they called both themselves and the pitch, then headed out to report that there was indeed, a big chamber waiting for its first footprints....

James Hooper

### "Why, why, why go Caving?"

(To the tune of Delilah....)



Why, why, why go caving?  
We could die, die, die, while caving...

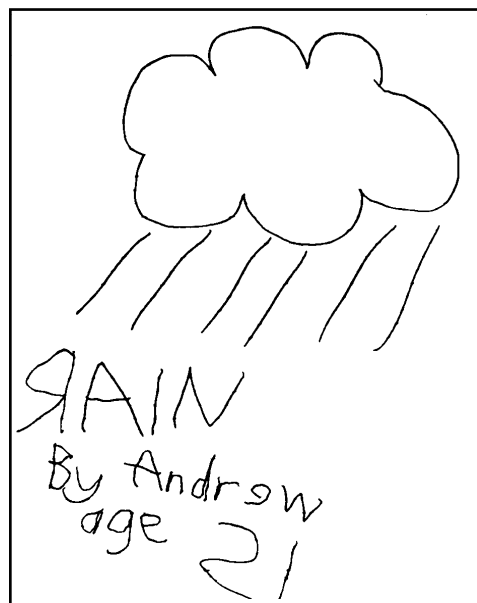
During the night my tent came down in a storm,  
I want to stay in the bivvy and keep myself warm.

Why, why, why go caving?  
We could die, die, die, while caving...

Went down a pitch, nearly got hit by a boulder,  
We sat at the bottom getting colder and colder.

etc.

(Logbook 2001)

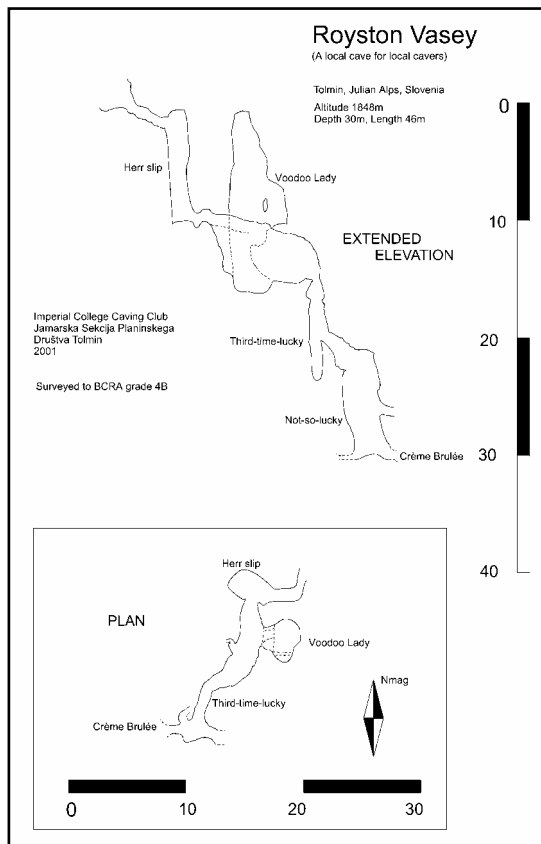


## Small Caves: Sometime in the afternoon...

### Royston Vasey - A local cave for local cavers (a.k.a. A twatty cave for twatty cavers)

Periodically, a fever grips the expedition, speculation becomes rife and a large part of the team becomes gripped with a fascination for a particular lead. The rush of enthusiasm for Royston Vasey illustrates this perfectly...

One afternoon, a small entrance was found in a notably round, 8m deep shakehole. This depression is almost adjacent to the bivvy and is next to the shakehole used for 'Ben's death slide of certain doom and probable destruction' that only Jan and its creator ever enjoyed. A sharp rift climb near to the eastern edge dropped into a small chamber. From here, a draughting hole in the corner was noticed. An echo and drop could also be heard beyond the too tight opening.



**Drawn survey of Royston Vasey  
Location: 540489/512379**

After relating this news in the evening, great interest was aroused. Probably because it was only about 25 metres from the bivvy! The cave was named Royston Vasey - "A local cave for local cavers." It didn't take long for someone to mention that as the bivvy is situated roughly above Titanic pitch in the main system, this latest lead clearly had the potential to drop straight into Level 2. "Remember the enthusiasm for Torn-T? This could be another 'Ben's Crap Lead'" There's nothing like booze and a fire to kindle a fervent desire to know more...

The attraction proved too much for Dave, and after waking up at 5am the following morning, he took a hammer for a walk and was at a pitch head by about 7am. The pitch turned out to drop into a complicated series of small climbs winding up at a narrow rift. After a concerted effort by Pete and others, a further set of intricately connected passageways and tunnels were found. Unfortunately all of these quickly choked. Further trips to push the limits resulted in a small amount of extra passage and some draughting gravel, but no easy way on. The draught is encouraging and compensates for the abundance of mud.

Combined with its proximity to the bivvy, this cave could be an interesting dig that may yet yield to the ways of the crowbar and reveal further cave. It's certainly well worth another visit. The cave was surveyed and due to an excess of available names, every last rock was christened. Hopefully these names can be re-assigned to the future extensions or held in reserve for the next exciting project that fires the imagination.

Ben Osborne and James Hooper



*This really is a very bizarre cave but quite nice. It's a touch muddy at the bottom. Me and Ed went down. Cave twists about loads and arrives at the top of 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch. Really nasty pitch head. Finally we thrutched down to the bottom. There are shed loads of very small possible leads. Some draughting. We dug around a bit and then came out covered in mud. We finished off the surveying on the way out.*

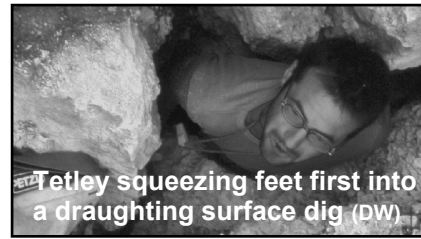
Ben Osborne (from logbook)



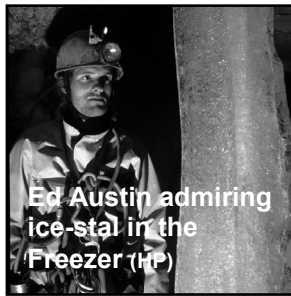
### The East Pole Area

The strongly draughting entrances in the valley between the plateau and Škrbina continued to receive considerable interest. The entrances here are at roughly the same altitude as Hotline in the main system and are thought to have great potential. It's just a matter of making a breakthrough...

James Hooper

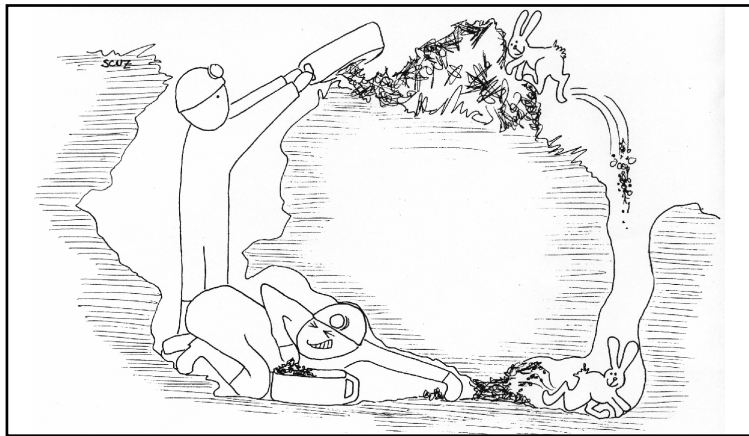


### The Freezer - Location: 5404512/512402, Height 1780



The Freezer was found about 100m North-East up the valley from the Gardeners' World entrance (though its altitude is 14m lower). An exciting climb down in a shakehole (or alternatively a bedding plane crawl) leads to a snow slope that descends down for about 15m, requiring a rope that can be anchored around an obvious natural thread. This led to a very cold and draughty chamber, decorated with a large ice-stalagmite. A dodgy boulder choke at the end of the chamber was left unpushed.

Ben Ogborne and James Hooper



### Logbook Extracts 2001

*"I am sitting in a Landy, Martin is in a lesbo show in Nova Gorica. Finally a good stone throwing hippy pishup had arrived. Ja, Ben ist totally pissed aber ein guten celebration für mehen birthday hast arrived, nein?! Slovenia is the wettest place in the world by definition. Dave ist ein gute bloke für Landrover zu driven wahn sehr renning."* - Ben O.

*"Toss me over A Suitable Boy,"* - Tetley (asking for his book by Vikram Seth to be passed to him).

*"Arse. Generator in stove has decided to develop a leak and is pissing petrol all over me. Have to leave it cooking because my cake will be ruined otherwise."* Andy J

*"You can go back to Irish politics but don't go back to fructose!!!"* - Martin M

*"There's something big out there."* - Martin after coming out of the Hall of Justice

## The Gallery of Anglo-Slovene Friendship

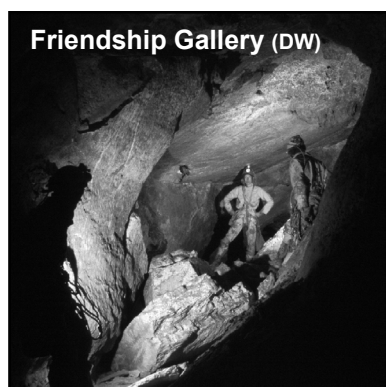
To cool ourselves down, we ordered ice creams to go with our beers in the Bar Paradiso. At some point we then ambled along to the Soča, trying to cram in the weeks of sun bathing that's normally associated with a summer in Europe into a hot, lazy afternoon. I was clean, stuffed full of pizza and could feel the warmth of the sun beat down on my body. Indeed, life was good; the contrast with the preceding days on Migovec made me really appreciate this blissful interlude as I stretched out and settled down for a siesta.

My head felt heavy as I turned around to see Tomaž arrive on his bike. The combination of heat and beer had made me feel drowsy. We exchanged news with our Slovene friend and urged him to come and join us at the bivvy for some decent caving. After hearing our tales of a large undescended pitch down Gardeners' World, he became enthusiastic and we arranged to meet the following morning. We eventually dragged ourselves away from the Soča's serene banks and headed back to Ravne for the slog up the hill.

The following morning, the sun was shining on Mig. An auspicious beginning. By the time I'd dragged myself out of my tent and made smash burgers for breakfast, Tomaž had walked up from Ravne. The two of us changed into caving gear, packed a tacklebag and followed the trusty string to the entrance of Gardeners' World. The lethargy of the day before had vanished. This was a trip with a mission - I was sure a large pitch series awaited us. We were underground well before midday. Two hours later we were at Concorde and things were looking good. "Rope free," I hollered. "OK" came the reply. We were caving together but at our own pace, "Rope Free", "Ok." On and on, down and down...

We were soon at the head of Zimmer, the place where Andy and I had turned round several days earlier. Clipping in to the newly added Y-hang, I abseiled down to a ledge to find three tacklebags and the end of the rope. Fifteen metres below, I could see the floor of a chamber. Surely another pitch would lead on, I thought. "Rope free," I shouted. Once Tomaž joined me on the ledge, I hammered in a quick bolt (keen as ever to show the Slovenes the advantages of hand drilling) and headed down.

I landed on a stable pile of boulders and looked round, shedding the first light on the chamber walls, searching for a way on. To the right, two metres up from the chamber floor, a black hole beckoned. "Rope free." While I waited for Tomaž, I walked round the rest of the chamber. A boulder slope headed down, under a drip. A rift on the wall opposite the pitch seemed to lead off. But it was the black alcove that gripped my imagination.



Friendship Gallery (DW)

Climbing into it, we soon realised it was, in fact, a horizontal passage. We grinned at each other, shook hands and headed off to explore. It was covered in dry mud and draughting. We took turns going first, swapping every ten metres or so. Then, after about 70 metres, it seemed to close down. Damn, I thought. Looking round behind me, however, Tomaž had climbed over a boulder and was heading off into the unknown. The passage doubled back on itself and kept going. I took out my compass and discovered we were heading South East, into a totally blank area of the mountain. The gallery, kept going on and on, and I went with, overdosing on the pleasure of discovery, following a single track of footsteps.

The warm glow of Tomaž' carbide illuminated the passage, and I slowed down, enjoying the dancing shadows on the pristine walls. He had stopped and waited for me at a T-junction, which we named Prima Junction. The draught and horizontal passage continued to the right. To the left there was a climb down. Again we shook hands and grinned inanely. We decided to survey our finds and then head off to explore some more.

"10.53 metres," "20.16 metres", "15.33 metres" etc. It took a while before the full realisation of our finds began to sink in. And we hadn't finished yet!

We munched some food, left our SRT kits and then set off for more. Rubbing my hands together, almost quaking with excitement, we stormed on and on down cave. Normally exploration either happens so quickly that you hardly have time to think before you hit the next obstacle, or, so slowly that the romantic notion of being the first team to explore a shaft is lost while you shiver for ages under a survival bag. Now, as we pressed on, we were rewarded round every corner. How long had the passage been here, unseen and unknown? How long had water flowed along the floor? In places, it looked as though a stream had cut down. Perhaps we were standing somewhere above an active river???



Friendship Gallery (DW)

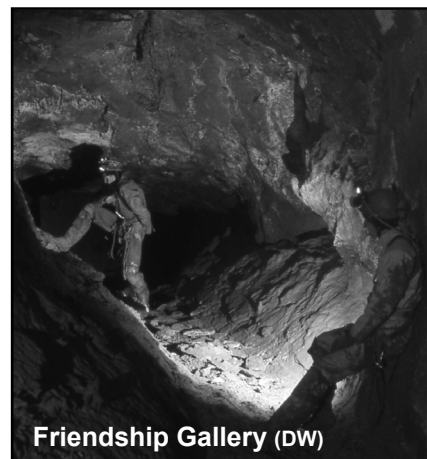


The Jurd Brothers in Friendship Gallery (DW)

Eventually, the passage came to an end; a boulder choke blocked further progress. Surely, it couldn't just end? I poked around, but then realised we'd lost the draught. Heading back the way we came, we then spotted hole on the right. The draught was back and once more we'd found a continuation. A slippery climb led down to further passage, smaller, windier and going. We shouted profusely, in English and Slovene, and moved off once yet again. The passage narrowed to a tube, by now the draught was so strong it kept blowing our carbides out. A pitch head lay ahead. And the sound of water. Throwing stones, we decided the pitch was probably about forty metres deep, and all the ingredients were there for more major finds, depth potential, draught, stream, dry fossil passage...

Surveying was a pleasure - four hundred or so metres in forty or so legs, including Zimmer. We decided to name the passage, 'The Gallery of Anglo-Slovene Friendship,' further cementing years of joint JSPDT/IC<sup>3</sup> caving on Migovec.

We left Zimmer at about midnight and headed off up the pitches. I think we were both still full of adrenaline because, by about 3am we were at the top of Pico. We sat down and decided to wait for a while; I wanted to get out for dawn as it's much nicer than getting out in the dark. When we reached the entrance, the sky was beginning to turn pink. Breathing the sweet air of the surface, we sat and watched a glorious start to a new day. Still on an unbelievable high, we then left for the bivvy, keen to relate our discoveries to the rest of the team. Yet again, we all had something to celebrate. I could feel another day of drinking beer and sunning by the Soča coming on.



Friendship Gallery (DW)

James Hooper

*Pivo... to pa je začasna rešitev*  
*Beer... now there's a temporary solution*

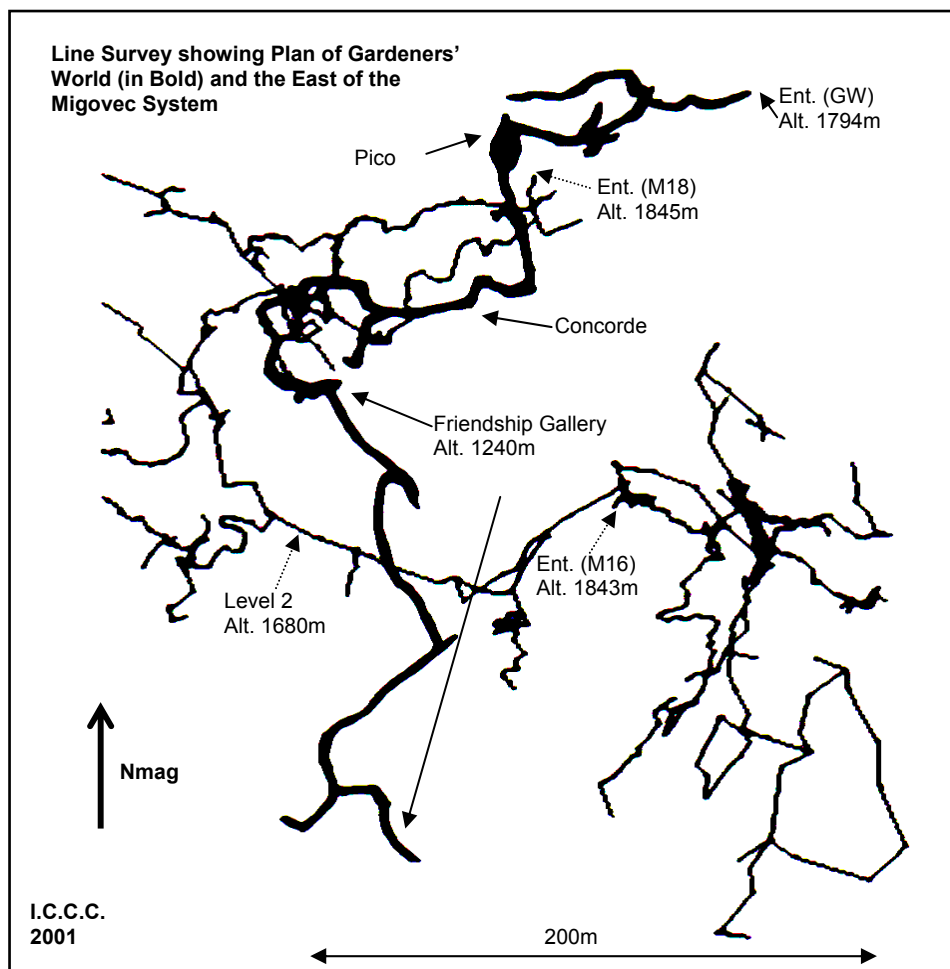
(Logbook 2001)

## The Hotel and Back

The day started in the usual fashion, on the Komna Plain, with Hugh trying to avoid caving under the pretence of 'Dye Tracing'. After some deep fried stuff at one of the Doms (Refugios) and a brisk jog for 4 hours over Kuk, we were in time for our second breakfast at the bivvy. It was then that Tetley suggested that I join him dumping some dye in the streamway near Hotel Tolminka. The endorphins were pumping and before I had time to think it through, there I was, at Bikini Carwash, as far as I'd ever been in the system. Bloody Hell, I hate pushing, sitting around getting cold, putting shit bolts in, getting more cold, watching others put even shitter bolts in, and finally getting a bit chilly. Then it's usually only about 8 hours out (if, that is, you rudely skip the 'getting-cold-while-surveying' part of the experience).

This trip was good though, no titting around, just straight down, down, down (and a bit of up and across at Mig-Country and so on). Only a few 50m pitches on 6+ year old rope to go, oh and Sajeta, my 80m nemesis. I suffer a bit of the old vertigo, but my fear threshold has increased by about 20m for each year I've been caving. By this, my third expedition, I'd just about mastered Pico-Pot (60m), but I'd been dreading Sajeta. To be honest, I don't remember much on either the way up or down, I just remembered the cunningly placed chocolate wrapper at the top saying, 'Crime Fighter's first Rule: Stay Cool!'. Tetley was reassuring anyway (and went first!). The Hotel is actually a bit scabby, with mould everywhere. We didn't hang about - just dumped the dye and turned round. Tetley provided an interesting history of the route, and pointed things out. I feel he became a touch nostalgic every time he looked at the details of each PSS. I hit 'The Wall' about 100m from the surface, about 11 hours into the non-stop bounce trip to -600; I really shouldn't have done that carry in the morning... At least I didn't have a tackle bag.

Andy Jurd



## “The Size of the Cave” by the Wonder Cavers

(to the tune of ‘The Size of a Cow’  
by the Wonderstuff)

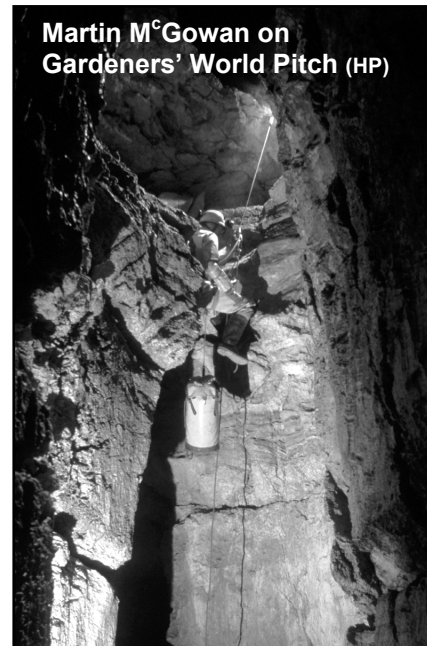


Don't you think it's funny  
That's nothing what it seems  
When you're down at the bivvy,  
We all like to think that life is a drink  
And were hoping that it tastes like rum-ski,

CHORUS:

You know that we've been drunk  
A thousand times  
But these will be the best caves of our life,  
Life, it's not what we thought it was,  
Bang, blast, will our carbide last,  
We're running out of rope really, really fast,  
We said, oh wow, we're so brave,  
We're building up our hopes on the size of the cave,  
Oh - oh - ohh - oh - oh,  
The size of the cave.

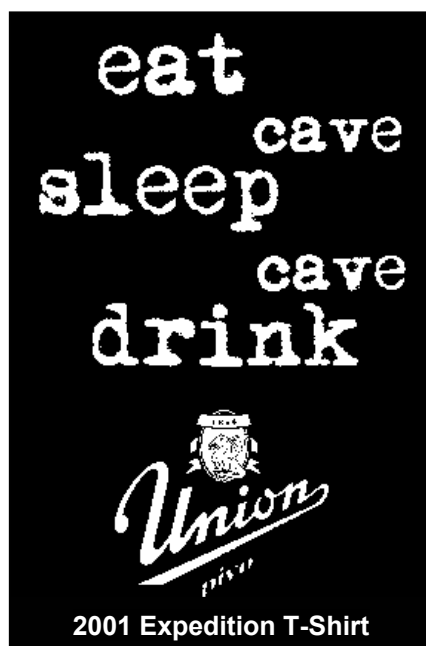
(Logbook 2001)



## Further Logbook Extracts 2001

*“Each lemming can only have one action. Semtex destroys 9 squares around lemming. For each lemming, test square and change action appropriately” - Andy J*

*“Bit of a nostalgic trip for Tetley - following PSSs from M16 to the Hotel (to place optical brightener in stream). Apparently either Tetley or Jim have surveyed the vast majority of way. 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Exhibition Road survey trip for Tetley. What were you doing 5 years ago? (Went across Gladiator's to scare myself shitless to put myself in the mood for Sajeta).” - Andy J*

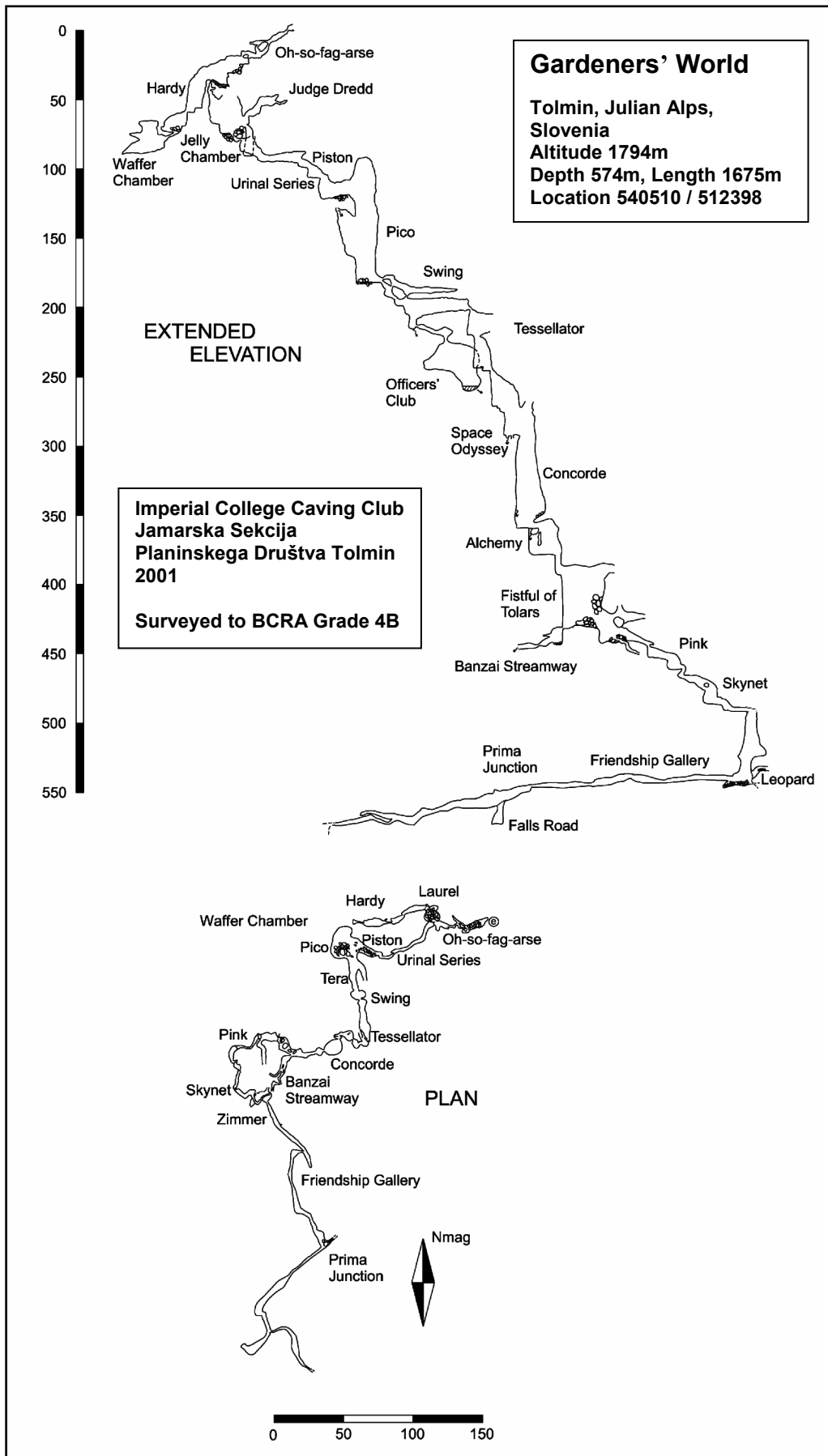


### Ben and the Art of Speleogenesis: A ten year plan

*“Within 10 years of continued expedition, the Migovec system will be the longest in Slovenia at 20Km. It may have reached slightly more than 1km deep but nothing that significant. Gardeners World will be linked in via Northern Line. Expedition Road will continue, M17 will join link with the west of NCB. Primadona will remain separate however. Several other entrances will be linked in too. Some of the world's hardest through trips will be in the system. A secret elf mars bar factory will be found at -990m. The Evans family will receive knighthoods for starting the expedition in the first place!”*

Ben Ogborne

### Gardeners' World Survey 2001



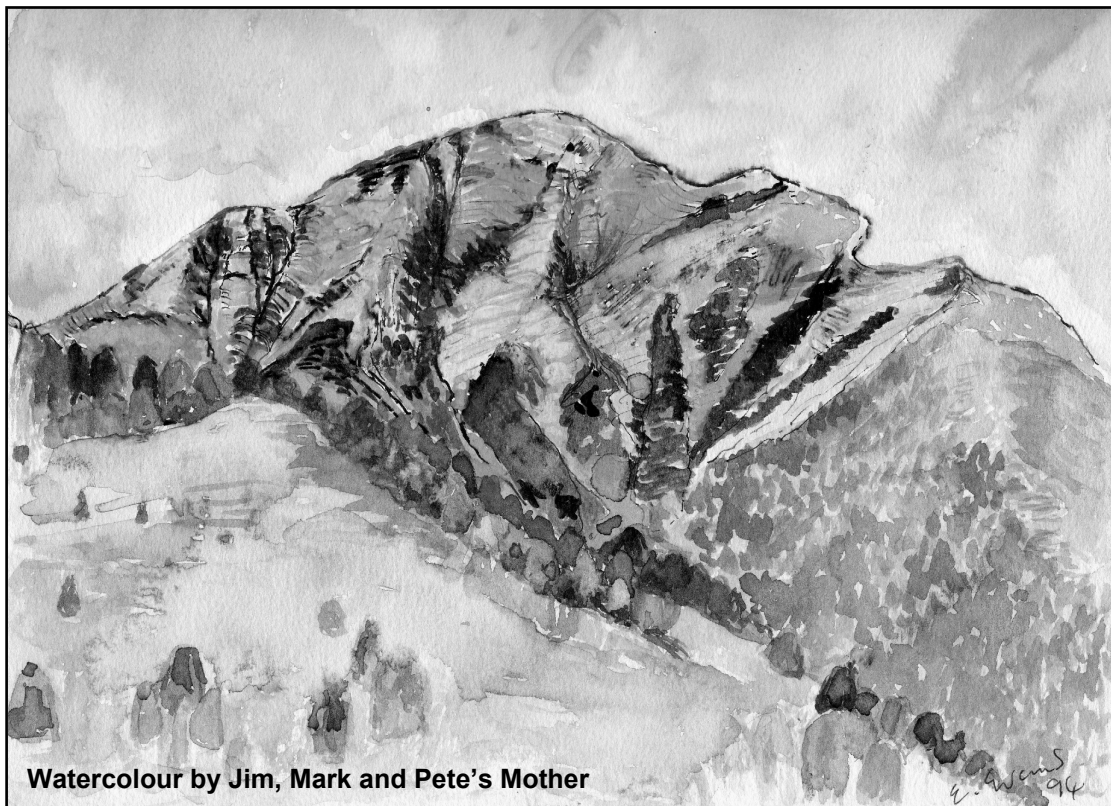
# 2002

## No expedition - but Migovec remains

**“Again, he felt a crude ecstasy. He could not have given the reason, but the mountain tormented him, beckoned him, held an answer to something he wanted. It was so pure, so austere.” Norman Mailer**

In 2002, for various reasons, many ICCC cavers were unable to commit themselves to another summer on Migovec. By default, therefore, there was no expedition. The mountain and its caves, of course, remained.

James Hooper



Watercolour by Jim, Mark and Pete's Mother

## An e-mail from Tolmin

Hello!

What a pity? that your ICCC did not come to Migovec this year. I beg you and all the other cavers do me this service that next year you will come to Migovec. Your work on Migovec mean to me a lot. I can not describe.

In Primadona we have two or three actions through this summer. For the end I am asking you for next year please try to come on Migovec.

Tomaž (24-09-2002)