

# ICCC Winter Tour

ICCC - RCC Club of the Year



## 1 13th December

The club was its usual efficient, well-oiled machine on Friday. We were packed and ready to go as quick as we ever are. We made the wise decision to have our food delivered by Tesco to our accommodation rather than shop en route but bizarrely this had no effect on our arrival time.



## 2 14th December

### Lost Johns

- Down Centipede - Dave W, Oli followed by Dave KP, Mel, Chris, William
- Down Monastery - Tetley, Pete, Sam, Jack
- Down Dome - Rhys, Clare, Nadine, Saber followed by Andy, Toni, Eli, Tanguy followed by Dave W
- Up Centipede first Dave then no-one
- Up Monastery Rhys, Clare, Saber, William
- Up Dome everyone else and Dave W

Lost Johns, a classic winter tour trip, was the obvious choice to get everyone eager to cave. We split into three dynamic and enthusiastic teams planning a centipede/dome/monastery exchange. The monastery and dome teams rigged down without problems. Team centipede had the privilege of being the nominated speedy cavers to go ahead and rig Battleaxe and we had been confident in the ability of Oli (the rigger) to get the job done. The first thing Oli did was drop the final pitch rope down the rift. Thinking quickly, and with no regard for the sanctity of club equipment DW was dispatched to cut an unused length of rope from Centipede, he then ascended and derigged the rest of centipede, came down dome and before anyone had noticed what happened the cave was fully rigged sans one exit route. All concerned were eager to get down Battleaxe and our more experienced members certainly did not deliberate leaving without going down 'because it was going to take ages'. The most eager cavers were dispatched to the very bottom with everyone else turning back before. Tetley assigned people exit routes as they passed him in the passage before Battleaxe. I should have been very suspicious when he assigned Clare, William, Saber and I to exit monastery without a fresher contingent but I naively looked forward to a speedy exit. A lot of rain had fallen on Yorkshire prior to our trip and it seemed the majority of it has made it down the monastery streamway. The initial pitch might've been passed as a swim but we foolishly opted for the rope and one by one did the fastest prussiking we could. However we were out swiftly, if damp, and we were back at the minibus first. Everyone else turned up in ones and twos, another classic trip complete.

### 3 15th December

#### Easegill

- In Link Out Lanc Sam, Dave KP, Andy, Saber
- In County Out Wretched Rabbit Rhys, Pete, Mel, Eli
- In County Out Lanc Tetley, Jack, William, Tanguy - Team Twagiam
- In Lanc Out Wretched Rabbit Dave and the gang, (Clare, Nadine, Kate)

Now that we had all seen enough of each other we decided to spread out a bit in the Easegill system. A relatively complicated exchange was organised with 4 entrances in use. The day started inauspiciously with Tetley forgetting his helmet. Between us we had enough light less helmets and off brand head torches to cobble together something with the lighting power of a sickly firefly. I was leading the County, out Wretched Rabbit because I had claimed to remember the route. Luckily we ended up sticking with Tetley and crew until past Eureka Junction so we weren't held up by my attempt to walk past Poetic Justice. After we split, Pete, Mel, Eli and I went in search of Easter Grotto. We took a deliberate detour further into the main passage, occasionally sending Eli to recon the dodgier looking things, before we headed back and up into EG. The grotto impressed as usual, and we turned back satisfied. I decided to try the higher route back to Wretched Rabbit. The whole way out there were just enough familiar landmarks to keep me going but not enough to convince me that we were going the right way. Eventually we found the ridiculously over-engineered fixed ropes and were soon out. With only a stop to quickly derig county we headed back to the van.

Back at the NPC we had our traditional winter tour Christmas dinner, expertly cooked by the stay at homes, Oli, Saber and Toni.



## 4 16th December

### Notts 1

- In center out center Rhys, Chris, Jack, Dave
- Forgot rope so in center out center. Everyone except Clare, Sam, Saber, Nadine, Pete, Dave Kp.

Another day, another fine example of our competence. Chris, Jack, Dave and I had been sent as super keen, super fast, preriggers. We would rig the centre route to be followed by others who would rig the left route and adamson's route. Confident in Dave's ability to locate any cave in the Dales we followed blindly, even as we traipsed back and forth across the same field. Listening occasionally to Dave explaining how the Notts "couldn't possibly be over in that field, it has to be over here somewhere". Eventually we decided to check the other field on the off chance that Notts had moved since Dave has last been here and we found the entrance almost immediately.



I rigged down with few problems. Reaching the end of my rope and whilst waiting for Chris to join me I had a look around the corner, into the foaming torrent of water that occupied the passage onwards. I decided not to continue and the 3 of us piled up. Dave was missing for a few minutes but then he turned up along with Tetley. Tetley explained that the other groups had "forgotten their rope". Apparently after I had packed it for them they assumed that I'd also put it in the van when in fact I had left it hidden away right in front of the NPC fireplace. Nevermind, everyone would come and have a quick look down centre. A complicated swapping process occurred as my party attempted to escape and everyone else attempted to get down.

We do enough exchanges anyway.







## 5 17th December

A nice walk - Rhys, Jack, Eli, Kate, Nadine, Sam, William  
Tanguy, Oli, Dave W - Jingling

Recovering from the night before and with many people leaving at inconvenient times in the day, most elected to go for a walk up Ingleborough. I, surprisingly, had not been up Ingleborough before. The closest I had been was probably Gaping Gill. It turned out to be an exceptionally pleasant walk, with the sky clearing seemingly for us as we got to the top affording great views of God's own county.



## 6 18th December

### IC<sup>3</sup> Learn To Reduce The Chances That Other People Will Die In Our Presence

- Rhys, Oli, Sam, Tanguy, Saber, Kate, Dave KP

Despite our immaculate record of completely avoiding injury whilst caving we decided that our new freshers could not be trusted to continue this long standing tradition. We needed to be sure that we could drag them out of any situation. We needed rescue training. We contacted the only man qualified for the job i.e. someone who might give us a discount, Tony Seddon.

On the appointed day we rocked up to Ingleborough Hall, a big bag of disposable rope and chocolate digestives in tow. Tony turned up a short while later and carefully avoiding the orienteering children that were in abundance we gathered in a classroom. Our first lesson was rigging for rescue. To get down a pitch in a speedy and safe fashion is key when you have an inconvenienced fresher bleeding out below you. Various methods of rigging y-hangs with tapes and attaching pulleys directly to pitch ropes, discussing the relative merits of each, led to a trip to the tower.

At the tower we split off into teams of two, one to be an immobilised casualty at the bottom of a pitch, the other to be their rescuer at the top of the pitch. We were all taught a few different hauling configurations, leading up to the z-rig which we attempted using descenders, jammers, and pulleys noting that the pulleys made things considerably easier. Still it's not trivial hauling someone up even a 10 meter tower and all the 'rescuers' gained a new appreciation for why they shouldn't disable themselves in a serious vertical cave. Finally the important skill of lowering someone, mid-haul, was demonstrated and practised.

A quick trip back to the classroom to discuss the next technique, mid-rope pick off with a separate rope, and we were soon back at the tower, knives in hand, old rope rigged. Again we split off into enthusiastic knife-wielding rescuers and apprehensive casualties. We each had a few go's, gleefully dropping our terrified companions onto their cowstails.

Unfortunately we ran out of time for any more training but we were all satisfied with the amount we had learned. Particularly as over the course of the day we had picked up innumerable valuable tips, from discussing safety issues (i.e why its a bad idea to haul someone in a waterfall) to more basic ropework (Italian hitches and how to lock them off).

Overall a fun and educational day, what more could you ask for?



## 7 19th December

### Rowten

- Oli, Sam, Dave KP, Tanguy

### Van Repair

- Rhys, Saber

On the final day of winter tour caving we were all exceptionally keen to go caving. Arriving in Kingsdale we changed. Oli realised he had forgotten his helmet but very cleverly tricked me out of mine. He explained that he would rig whilst I went back to retrieve and wear his helmet thus allowing me to photograph at my leisure on the way down. This seemed agreeable so I agreed and Saber and I attempted to get the van going back to the NPC. But the van had other ideas. Due to what late turned out to be a faulty alternator the Van refused to start. It took two starts and me getting in a stranger's car but eventually it ended with Oli and co caving whilst Saber and I waited in the hut. I understand that they had a nice trip.

## 8 20th December

A lazy morning led to a quick pack up in the early afternoon. Saber, our only driver, was keen to get away due to DJing commitments. The journey back was uneventful. A pleasant change.

## 9 Accounts

### Expenditure

Item	Cost
Food	£377.74
Transport	£593.86
Accommodation	£331.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1303.10</b>

### Income

Item	Cost
Trip Fees	£1070.37
RCC Subsidy	£232.73