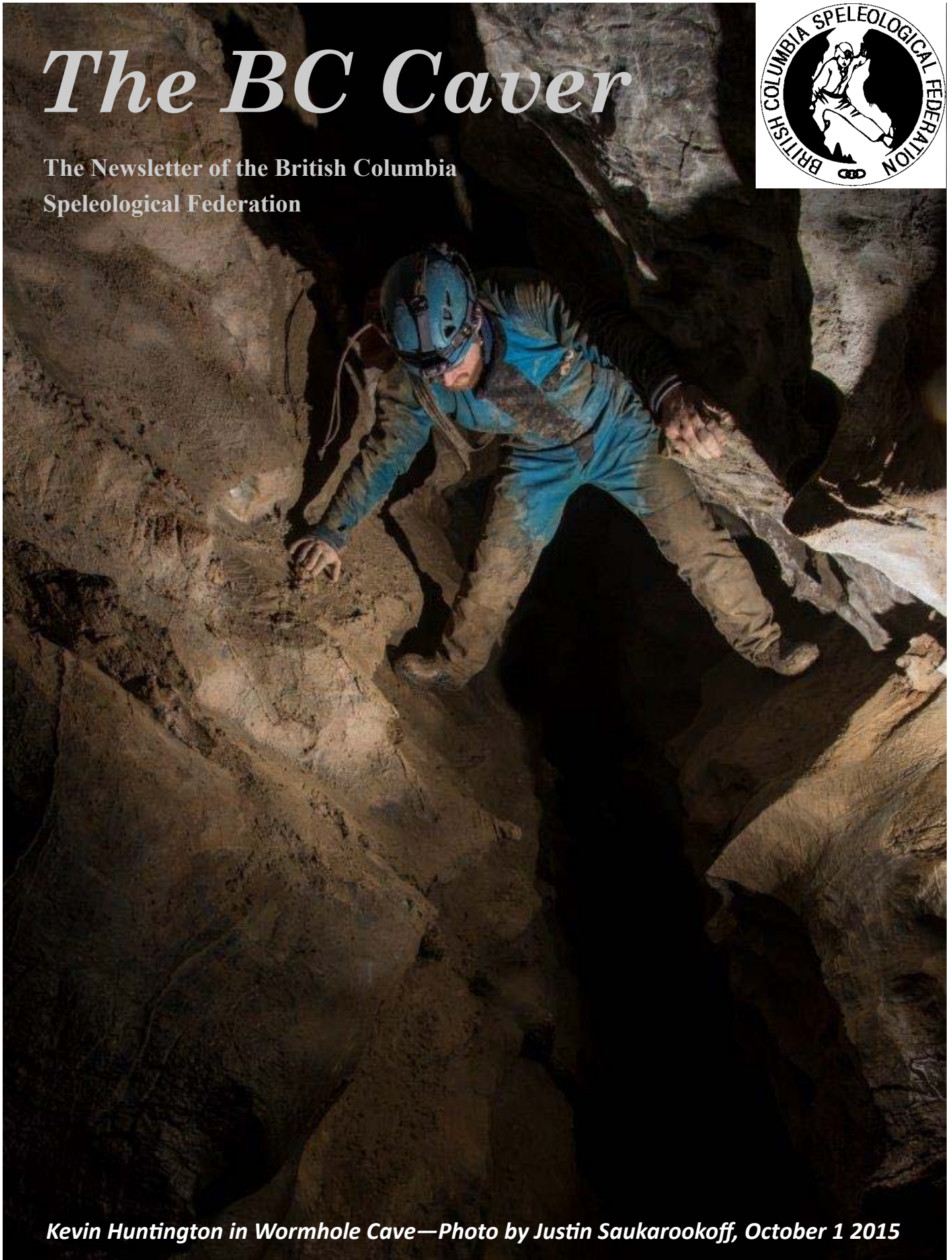


The BC Caver

The Newsletter of the British Columbia
Speleological Federation



Kevin Huntington in Wormhole Cave—Photo by Justin Saukarookoff, October 1 2015

Published by . . .

The British Columbia Speleological Federation. The BCSF is the central organization for caving in British Columbia, coordinating the efforts of many in the fields of conservation, safety, rescue, education and technical expertise.

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Note 1: It is BCSF policy that an inventory form be completed for cave surveys published in the BC Caver. Forms are available online at <http://cancaver.ca/bcsf/bcsfcommitt.htm>, and should be forwarded when complete to Gerry Fowler at gerryf@shaw.ca.

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Deadlines for Future Editions:

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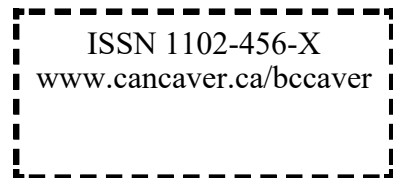
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Note From the Editor

This edition of the BC Caver begins on a couple of solemn notes. We lost Kevin Huntington a few months ago to a fall while climbing King's Peak with a friend. For those of us who knew Kevin and had caved with him or even just had the chance to chat with him you were left knowing that this was a guy who was different from the rest.

It is not easy to say good bye to someone who was so young and full of energy and spirit. But, rest assured, we will not forget Kevin and his spirit will always live on. While devastating for Sarah MacKenzie, Kevin's partner and best friend, I know we will all give her the support she needs in this difficult time.

The BC caving community also lost another cave member this past summer, Wesa Gleave. After reading Kirk Safford's submission detailing Wesa's caving exploits it undoubtedly left me wanting to know more about this veteran caver.

It is with Kevin and Wesa that we begin this 2016 Summer Edition of the BC Caver.



Kevin Huntington eating cake on the Island of Pag, Croatia, July 2015—*Photo by Sarah MacKenzie*

Fare You Well

Kevin Huntington— A Letter to BCSF Members, From Sarah MacKenzie

Good evening, friends.

Kevin Huntington, an active member of VICEG, lover of caves, died on August 13th,

2016 at the age of 27. I am not a fan of euphemisms; sorry for the blunt use of language. Kevin leaves behind many people who mourn his absence, including me (his fiancée), parents Mary and Jeff, sister Lindsey, brother-in-law Dave, niece Mary Mae, and countless family members and friends.

Early in the morning on Saturday, August 13th, Kevin

awoke, eager to hike with his friend and co-worker, Aaron. They intended to hike up Kings Peak via the Northwest Ridge Route. Kev and I did the hiker's route last year; if ever Kev could avoid doing the exact same thing twice, he would. Adventure and exploration were paramount in his life.

The pair departed in time to arrive at the trailhead by 8 AM. They ensured that they would phone me from the summit that day. I proceeded to get ready for work--the reason that I wasn't out with Kevin this time.

I worked until 5 PM, and assumed that I would receive their call before leaving for the day. I didn't. I had a 5 PM phone call scheduled with our financial advisor, as Kev and I were in the process of purchasing a home. I kept thinking I'd have a call from Kev come in at the same time. I didn't.

That evening, I was over at a friend's place. She and I were planning to have a relaxing girls' night....but there was a block in my brain, and I couldn't wind down. I was beginning to voice my concern. It wasn't like Kev to promise something and not find a way to make it happen. We knew that there was cell reception from the summit, and they had at least one cell phone along.

At around 7 PM (I think), I briefly logged in to Facebook. A Vancouver Island Climbing

and Mountaineering post near the top of my Newsfeed gnawed at my gut. A hiker on Queens stated that he had been yelling back and forth to someone on the Northwest face of Kings who was in distress. The hiker on Queens Butte stated that he had made a call out for help. He also included in his post that the individual's hiking partner "may or may not be dead".

That post was made sometime between 2 and 3 PM, which is right around when I expected Kev and Aaron to summit. And the fact that the individual on Kings was communicating with someone on Queens informed me that there was no one else on Kings. Everything made sense, but I didn't want to believe that it did.

I called SAR every hour until about midnight. Each time, the only thing that they could tell me was that they were on scene. My friend called the Campbell River Hospital hourly to find out whether either of the men had been admitted. Nothing.

About half an hour after we finally decided to shut out the lights (midnight?) and attempt to sleep, I received the phone call. The RCMP needed to know my whereabouts so that they could speak with me. The 30 minutes between that call and the officer's arrival were torturous. I was unfamiliar with the RCMP's duties...are house visits only necessary when there is death involved?

The officer arrived. When he spoke, I learned minimal information:

- Kevin is dead.
- His death was due to a fall while hiking on Kings Peak.
- Aaron is alive and well, albeit shaken.

With those morsels of information, I began to notify our family and friends--some in the middle of the night, and some the following day.

Over the next week, I gathered pieces of the puzzle which together form the story of August 13th's happenings. Most of the details were provided by Aaron, while some information came from the coroner. I am so grateful for Aaron's strength and his willingness to share Kev's final day with me, and that I can in turn extend the information to others. Keep in mind that Aaron's experience was horrendous, and it's been tough for details to be recalled accurately.

They were having a wonderful hike. Lovely weather, good conversation, and they were making good time. Once they branched off of the main route in pursuit of the Northwest Ridge, route finding became a little tricky. But Kev was confident. At one point, close to the summit, Aaron waited on a ledge while Kevin left his pack by Aaron and went up ahead to check out the path. He made his way back to Aaron (and the packs) with exuberance, saying that they were almost there

and that the route looked manageable. As he came down to reach for his pack, his hand hold gave way, causing him to fall backwards. He had a look of surprise on his face, but no sound escaped his mouth as he fell.

And down he went, a total of approximately 600 feet (190 metres). Partway down, he hit a ledge, which is likely when he sustained the majority of his injuries, and when he died. At the bottom, he landed face-down on the snow. All of his limbs were broken and his torso was in rough shape. An x-ray was not done, as the cause of death was not in question. The coroner said "blunt force trauma".

As many of you know, Kev was knowledgeable about safety in the outdoors. He was adamant about never taking risks in the backcountry or underground. This event was not a result of lack of knowledge or experience or safety. It was an accident, pure and simple. He went out doing something he loved, and he had a phenomenal view for a closing scene.

I am confident that Kevin had nothing negative in his mind as he accepted the fact that death was imminent. Nothing can really prepare a young person for a premature death, but I do know that Kevin was happy. Every facet of his life was positive. Everything pointed to a bright and fulfilling future.

Kevin's passion and drive were unparalleled. He had so many goals and plans. In relation to caving, he hoped to follow in the footsteps of those who are still exploring new passage in their 50s and 60s. He hoped to become the custodian of Candlestick. He wanted to one day be VICEG President, and the two of us desired to take on production and editing of the BC Caver somewhere down the line. He hoped to hike all of the "Island Nine Qualifiers". He wanted to see more of the world. He was setting out to finally settle on this beautiful island. He had permanent employment, and an employer who was happy to accommodate the time off that he requested for the sake of adventure and travels. He was deeply in love, and so excited to celebrate our partnership with a wedding next August.

Although he already accomplished much in his 27 years, it is nothing short of heart-breaking that his time on this planet has been severed, cut short.

However, if there's one thing that I know about Kevin, it's this: he wouldn't want us to be stagnant in our mourning. He wouldn't want to be the root cause of our debilitation. Rather, he would want us to continue on our journeys, together as a community of like-minded people. Separately as people who understood his essence and as people who he under-

stood. He loved to pull out the term "Onward!" in the toughest of times. He always saw a way on and he always eagerly went for it--even in his final moments. We must honour him by doing the same.

Thank you, caving community, for your endless support: words of love and encouragement, messages in their various forms, flowers. Thank you to those who made it to Kev's service. It was beautiful. And thank you to those who contributed to my new set of vertical gear. I am blown away. Caving will be one of the toughest and most remedial things for me, and probably many others, as we are faced with his absence in his favourite places. I expect tears. I will miss his loving support when I venture underground.

Kevin has been cremated, and I have been distributing his ashes to some memorable places. Of course, caves are up there on the list. If anyone has caving plans that I can be a part of for that purpose, please get in touch. He definitely needs to get to Resonance and Vanishing Point.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the VICEG event that Kev had been planning for this upcoming weekend. Let's celebrate life--his and ours.

Much love,

Sarah MacKenzie



Kevin Huntington and Sarah MacKenzie caving in Norway, July 2015—*Photo credit unknown*

PS, regarding the September Rift Creek event in Kevin's honour:

Thanks to everyone who came out to Kevin's VICEG event at Rift Creek. It was so wonderful to spend the weekend with the caving community.

I was certainly apprehensive to venture underground. I began to doubt my ability as a caver. I wondered if I only loved it because it was something that Kevin and I participated in together. Over the weekend, that notion was proven wrong. I love caving,

and I want and need it to be a major part of my life. I feel privileged to be a part of the caving community. I am grateful that Kevin saw the caver in me when we first met, and that he actively brought it out. Although I had some heavy moments while caving at Rift Creek, I felt strong and independent and I revelled in the beauty of the underground.

My favourite non-caving moment that weekend was when the giant chocolate cake with the message "Shine on!" boldly iced across it was passed around the bonfire. One com-

munal fork. Kevin style. And we managed to gobble up the entire thing.

I don't know what I think about death; I think it's easy to speculate and make assumptions, or base ideas on our human inability to let go. But if Kevin somehow maintains the ability to oversee things that are happening beyond his death, I know that he would've loved that the event was such a success. He would've loved that I faced my apprehension and journeyed underground. He would've loved the passing around of the cake. And most

of all, he would be comforted by the fact that I have the caving community to support me and adventure with me in his absence.

**BCSF Letter by Trevor
Moelaert to the
Huntington Family
August 24th, 2016**

Dear Mr and Mrs Huntington,

My name is Trevor Moelaert, I am the President of the B.C. Speleological Federation. I am writing you on behalf of the caving community of B.C.

First I would like to express our heartfelt condolences to your family. We **all** wish you peace, strength and courage as you struggle with the loss of Kevin. There may be no greater pain in the human experience than to lose a child. We share your pain and tears, but we also share the joy of knowing Kevin. Kevin will remain in our memories, hearts and indeed our history.

Though I am speaking for the wonderful folks that make up our close-knit community, I would like to share a little of what Kevin meant to us all from my personal experiences with him. I did not spend as much time with Kevin as some others, but I still got to know him very well.

I first met Kevin at a cave rescue course I was coordinating in Tahsis in July of 2008. I be-

lieve he had just turned 19. I remember this young fellow, just beginning his journey. One could tell Kevin was in search of discovering who he was. Not uncommon for a young man of his age. After a week of very intensive training, I wasn't sure if Kevin had found a piece of what he was looking for. Many of the people that attend these training sessions are never seen again. Too much for them. Not Kevin, he continued to show up at these regularly. He became what we jokingly referred to as a "repeat offender"!

It was then that I realized Kevin had found a part of what he would become; a member of our caving family. Over the next few years Kevin expanded his caving activities from just the rescue side of things to exploration of new discoveries. He found a place with a few veterans of our club that took him under their wings and taught him the ropes so to speak. Soon he was organizing and leading trips. He found a special role by engaging the young members with all things caving. Particularly with the University of Victoria Club. Preaching conservation to all while sharing his enthusiasm.

Kevin continued to grow and expand his knowledge and abilities. He began "surveying caves" and actually drawing the maps. Not many cavers can do this. It was especially rewarding for me to see, as

cave surveying is my passion. I enjoyed seeing him accomplish this. One of the rewards of discovering and surveying a cave, is you get to name it. Kevin once again got to etch his name in the history books.

One evening about 3 years ago, I received a phone call from Horne Lake Park requesting assistance from B.C. Cave Rescue. They had a person trapped behind a sump (pool of water). Indeed it was our Kevin! Having been trapped by water in a cave, I had great empathy for what Kevin was experiencing. Despite a long night and a lot of effort from several people, it was Kevin who got himself out of what he got himself into! I understand there was a saying at Kevin's Celebration of Life... "Kevin was Kevin!" This incident really brought that home to me.

An experience like that can often be a "caving career" ender, but nope, not Kevin. He became even more involved with cave rescue and the caving club. He became one of the key "go to guys" when something needed to be done. He was the first to arrive on site (other than the initial response team) during our most recent rescue call last December. He volunteered to take over the job of event coordinator for the club when the previous person had a devastating house fire in January. Kevin was also organizing and leading club events. He was becoming a "volunteer maniac", we like

that! As recently as August 8th he volunteered to become the new custodian (caretaker) of one of our most treasured caves, Candlestick.

It was a wonderful experience to see a young man grow so much in eight short years. That makes his passing that much more tragic... we will never know just how much more Kevin would blossom. Yes indeed, Kevin will live on through our community in our hearts, memories and beyond. His exploits and contributions to the caving community are well documented in our publications, which by the way are housed in the National Library in Ottawa. He may have his own shelf!

Thanks so much for the opportunity to have shared Kevin, we are all better people for that! Yes, Kevin was Kevin... we wouldn't have it any other way. Though I have spoken of my experience, I can assure you the entire caving community shares my warm feelings for your son.

Unfortunately I was away (caving) and did not have the opportunity to speak to you in person at Kevin's Celebration of Life. Particularly regrettable, as I live on Miracle Beach Drive and Kevin has spent a few fun nights here over the years. I am happy it was well attended.

Mr. and Mrs. Huntington, may your fond memories of Kevin dull the pain in time. I hope knowing that there are a lot of Kevin fans out there, comforts you during this process.

With gratitude and respect,

Trevor J. Moelaert
President ~ British Columbia
Speleological Federation

Wayson "Wesa" Paul Gleave
November 22, 1964—July
15, 2016

Kirk Safford (r)

When I met Wesa in 1990, he was in the thick of virtually every major exploration trip on

Below: Wesa Gleave in Nova Scotia, December 2015—*Photo by Nadine Hetrick*



Vancouver Island. I found him to be the open, engaging sort with a great passion for adventure and he quickly became a great mentor and friend to me. It was early in '91 while I was still getting my caving legs that he and Art Peters took me into Pillar Pit and the Meandering Corridor in Thanksgiving. It was remote, intimidating, and a great adventure that set the hooks of underground exploration in me for all these years.

Wesa began caving soon after arriving on the island in the mid-80's and quickly became one of the top notch cavers from UVICCC, pushing the limits of known caves and making new discoveries across the island. It was a period where island caving was on the rise; the rise of the BC Caver publication; frequent trips up island filled with debaucherous nights, liver cleansing trips underground, followed by celebratory debaucherous nights. It was a tight knit group and Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings at the Thanksgiving cabin were a tradition. These were the days of the White and Blue vans (complete with shag carpet), metal beasts of burden sacrificed to the logging roads of Vancouver Island. There were great discoveries of major caving areas that are still giving new passage today. Wesa and Nadine were on most of the trips those days heading up island from Victoria: Thanksgiving Cave (Ruby the Dyke's palace; Suicide Pas-

sage; Final Option; Inside out...); Glory 'ole/Arch/Treasure; Devil's Bath and Vanishing River. There were new areas such as Clayoquot Plateau, Zeballos, Tahsis (Con Cave, Bottom's Up), and later Skull Lake (Trepanning Cave), Rift Creek (Right Stuff, Other Stuff), Megin River, and Green and Weymer Creek. There were expeditions further afield, to Bastille in the Rockies (Photo 1), and Mexspeleo in 89-90.

Cavers today crawl and walk through many passages that are known due in no small manner to Wesa's subsurface efforts. It was during the 1988 speleofest that Wesa, Dale Chase and Greg Allen broke through the dig at Treasure and charged into virgin passage to the rope drop at the Booming Tomb Room. Later he was on the team to complete the first Arch/Treasure through trip. When Weymer Creek came on the scene, Wesa was among the first to explore this area, and was on the team to first drop Sky Pot and find a route down to the stream level; similarly he was on the first trip into Ursa Major. He was one of the discovering boobs in Four Boobs in the Endless Tubes in Slot Canyon, passage that led to several kilometres of survey. On the 1992 speleofest he was on the team that pushed upstream in Sky Pot, worked up through tight loose breakdown and found Par 3, a massive chamber that eventually was connected to Deer Drop. He would later

lend his voice to getting the Weymer area protected.

Wesa was on the big trips to Clayoquot Plateau (Photo 2), on the discovery of the Garburator and was key to demonstrating that a human could actually pass through this cave if compressed enough, but not without some harm. During the infamous 1991 hurricane speleofest, Wesa, Art Peters and I would push through the most grinding parts of the Garburator and find reasonable passage below, much to Wesa's disgust as was later (sarcastically) written in the BC Caver (BC Caver 05-04). We ecstatically charged through walking passage, false floors, and traversed mud slick edges of pits following a draft that led to another entrance. It was on this trip that Wesa and Nadine's tent, so expertly placed on the flattest rock, with the best view overlooking the local pond, was picked up by the wind and unceremoniously dumped into said pond. At this point the pond was more lake-ish and it took all hands on deck to drag the sodden remains of the cozy abode out of the drink.

Since Wesa had an impressive array of underground accomplishments, one might assume he was immaculate in his caving practise and incapable of error. Nothing could be further from the truth. While in El Chorreadero in Mexico he jumped down a 3 metre drop thinking it ended in a deep pool of water. It did not, and he broke his foot in the pro-

cess. Knowing that rescue from the outside was not an option, he extracted himself faster than the slowest members of his group. Years later I looked over the same drop and asked myself why he would jump here, into what was clearly an inch of water. He also had the tenacity to push through difficult passage often with great reward, but he pushed up, down or into things he sometimes had difficulty doing the reverse of. And rumour has it he rapelled off his fanny pack strap in Castleguard,"Shit!" "What happened?" Pause Um,... ahhhh,...Nothing, let's go!". The horror as much about donning a garment at least a decade out of fashion as the implications to life and limb.

Wesa was fully aware of the hazards caving and remote adventure posed, and he witnessed the consequences first hand. He was part of the sub-surface team that brought Rick Blak's remains out of Arctomys Cave in Mt Robson in 1991. When Evan Rollin disappeared on Clayoquot Plateau, Wesa and Ron Kozsan bushwhacked through coastal krummholtz, forest, and down steep cliffs all in uncharted territory, to find help. Wesa was on the trip when Mark Crapelle fell in the upper reaches of Sky Pot and broke ribs. While all ended well when Mark wheezed his way out under his own steam, the tenuous line cavers walk was clear. With these sobering events in mind, caving's glow



Above: Wesa Gleave taking a break from trail building to Clayoquot Plateau—
Photo by Kirk Safford

began to wear thin for Wesa. In his 10 year caving career, Wesa participated in more than 35 trips, most were in a 5 year period. Of course these were only the trips that were reported in the BC Caver, undoubtedly there were many more. By the mid '90's the charm had faded on the island caving scene and Wesa moved to the mainland and into new outdoor pursuits: rock climbing, ice climbing, snow boarding, rafting, hiking, and just *being* in wild places of western Canada and abroad.

It was 10 years later in the mid-2000's in Fort St John that I saw Wesa again with some regularity. We picked up where we left off with ease, drinking, remembering places visited and places to visit, decrying an unjust world, but mostly just laughing our asses off. He took me on my first and only ice climbs, and explained

the 'screaming barfies' once the blood returned painfully to my hands (Photo 3). We once polished off a bottle of cask strength Aberlour A'bunadh exploring his illogical leap of faith in El Chorreadero, and the subsequent extraction and drama of the Mexican medical system. That night required days to recover from.

Wesa was a traveller, adventurer, 'an enthusiast' as Dale Chase describes. So excited was he to learn that he was going to Mexico to cave in '89/90, that he danced madly around the kitchen. Being drunk, and therefore naked, he knocked a frying pan of hot butter off the stove and onto his stomach. The burns were substantial, but he still left the next day. He tackled any activity with great vigour and effort, whether it be caving, or making breakfast. He had a

strong work ethic for the important things: eating, caving, and a good blowout, among a few other unmentionable things. There was no pretension or visions of grandeur. He did it for the pleasure of it, the adventure, and the company it came with. Horticulture, gardening, and the science of plants were his less famous interests... his interest in fungus perhaps a little better known. At one point in the early '90's a respectable career threatened: a job with Agriculture Canada, and a Masters degree at UVIC. But the trapings of industrialized concern

about making square trees and such did not hold his interest, and he escaped mostly unscathed. He was good with his hands, and they were always working, either in the earth, or cooking, building, and fixing things. Over the years he worked in many areas, but more often than not it was something that involved trees, growing things and soil. A jack of all trades, at times he was a tree planter, arborist, and even a restorer of mines in the oil patch.

While it would appear he would always roam, he did in

fact have a strong desire to set roots. Living off the land, independent, growing food, were passions he carried through his life and one which became his focus in the later years. Fed up with the sporadic employment in his sporadic field of expertise, he trained and became an instrumentation technician. Before the first decade of the new millennia had ended, Wesa found love again and he moved to Nova Scotia to fulfill a new dream. A chunk of land to work, a new love, a home, and gainful employment. In 2010 Solomon was born.

Below: The crew at Bastille. From left to right with some degree of certainty is Pierre ?, John ?, Olivia Whitwell, Wesa Gleave, Steve Grundy, Bill MacDonald, Jim Jacek, Art Peters, Tom Miller, Chas Yonge, Mark Crapelle—*Photo by Olivia Whitwell*



It was in the midst of this new and brighter future that brain cancer made its presence known, hardly a year after Solomon was born. Surgery and medication kept the cancer at bay for several years, and he was able to focus his time on being a father. I spoke to him several times, and he even visited us once; his energy subdued, but he was still Wesa, living in the moment despite the shadow, and tackling projects with his tenacious work ethic (Photo 4). In the spring of 2015 the cancer came back with a vengeance and the dream came to an end this summer. Wesa passed away July 15, 2016.



Above: Looking in to Pitch Pot—Photo by Larry Henson

I remember his expertly rolled cigarettes (it was rare to see a tailor made in his hand), eyes squinting in smoke, and wheezy contagious laugh. From the day I met him, I could blurt out almost anything in comedic form and he would laugh, and if it was a good one, his whole body would commit to the effort. As anyone who met him could attest, he was perceptive, always up for adventure, and a hell of a lot of fun.

You are missed hombre.

Writer's Notes: Thanks to Lorna Duncan for her archiving efforts and searching through BC Caver records for Wesa's presence. No small task with over 30 entries. Her patience is appreciated as more than once I asked for a missing report, only to find she had already

sent it.

Thanks to: Nadine Hetrick for recounting past adventures, squaring up the timelines and for providing photos. Dale Chase for recounting memorable trips with Wesa. Steve Grundy and Olivia Whitwell for providing photos. Angus Shand for ferrying photos and recounting, and relaying, memorable events.

Trip Reports



2016 Pitch Pot Update— Upper Adam River Area August 16, 2016

Party: Joan Auer and Larry Henson (r)

We rigged to a hemlock on the low side of the rim. The surface diameter of the pit is about 7-8m. Joan rappelled down, saying it is mostly in a free-hang below the lip but still close to the wall, and the hole is about 10-12m deep. She made a circuit around the bottom finding no perimeter passage onward. There is a further drop at the south edge of about 2m which led to a too tight passage.

Pitch Pot is a nice looking pit, a mini Sky Pot, but nothing more than a nice rappel that is located about 15m from an active logging road. There is a small spring down the hill which is likely the PP resurgence. On April 10, 2003, Bill West-Sells, Chris Fernandes,



Above: Looking out of Pitch Pot—*Photo by Joan Auer*

Joan, and I tried to open the spring up. After a lot of brush clearing, we could see the spring water comes up out of the rock at an igneous dike. A lot of rock will have to be moved (broken) to maybe get some air space, and then maybe 30m of wet cave.

August 16, 2016: Afternoon, we hiked the karst downslope from the mainline to the river. There we found limestone cliffs 20-30m high that drop directly into the river, and extend for about one kilometre northward along the river. All of the wa-

ter entering the upper edge of the limestone on this side of the river will drain from these cliffs. The river was wade-able upstream of the cliffs, but water pools along the cliffs, so a wet suit is needed to look at the cliffs for any riverside openings.



**North Island VICEG event -
Treasure and Resonance
Caves
July 30 – 31 2016**

Party: Darrell Roy, Don Kulak, Natasha Dickinson, Elmar Nabbe, Lynda Fyfe, Rob Countess, Hannah Murray, Peter Curtis (r)

Camping at Square Corner Creek was a bit damp, but we did manage to find some dry ground. Treasure Cave was first on the agenda, so a few of us went in to rig the Booming Tomb Room while the others followed a bit later. We were trying to avoid the usual bottleneck, and we almost succeeded. Hannah was having a

bit of trouble on the ropes, but she was quite inexperienced, so we took it easy on her.

When we got to the junction at The Gold Rush, she and Natasha took off on a horizontal tourist trip, while the rest of us continued down to the bottom of "Night and Day Way" to derig our ropes left from last year. A bit beyond that, our dig-dug tube from last year was completely plugged with that beautiful clean gravel, the kind you pay the big bucks for at your local gravel pit. No go today, so the rigged 5m up climb a bit beyond that just may stay rigged for a long, long time! We met the others on the way out, and also replaced the short up climb rope near the entrance.

The next day (Sunday) Don and Hannah left, and Rob and Natasha hiked down and then up Square Corner Cr. looking for features. They found a nice limestone canyon just below camp. The rest of us went caving as far as the Main Chamber in Resonance, and had a look at the dig, which was back to its former glory of mud soup. Digging would have been futile....like trying to blow out a light bulb. It might be years before we get through there and into "The Far Side" again. There is still going cave to survey, and the 150m of rope plus rigging left in there will be a recovery rather than a rescue by now. Just like last year!

Somehow, we seem to get sucked in to leaving the cave rigged for just ONE more trip before the rain comes....but it

always comes before that last trip. That damn Murphy is always hanging around.



8 Summer 2016 Trips In To Vanishing Point Cave

April 24 – Party: Natasha Dickinson, Peter Curtis (r)

A few weeks back, Peter had found a drafting entrance in the dry gully "downstream" from the Vanishing River. A few rocks jammed into the entrance hold up production, so Peter, taking orders from Natasha, breaks them up into smaller pieces, pushes them into a slot in the floor, and Bob's your uncle, we're in. Squeezing into the darkness and down a small climb, a walking passage angles down steeply ahead of us. A hand line is rigged to get down a climb to a chamber which seems to have no way on. Bummer. A big pile of peat moss plugs a possible route, and breakdown and rocks plug everything else. Peter wriggles through a tight spot beneath the breakdown, but gets to a bedrock squeeze that's just too damn small to get through.

There is a honking draft here.

May 1 – Party: Natasha Dickinson, Peter Curtis (r)

With a shovel and a hoe, we start digging into the peat pile. Natasha decides to check out where Peter crawled into the

drafting breakdown last week-end, and finds he missed the small passage where the main draft comes from. There's a bit of grunting and swearing as she modifies the squeeze, and peering through she says it opens up and goes to what looks like a rope drop. The squeeze is a bit hairy, but just beyond is a clean, dry, bedrock hole about 7m deep in the floor of a standing chamber. We now have a going cave, but with only our digging gear, the push will have to wait.

May 15 – Party: Martin Davis, N. Dickinson, Peter Curtis (r)

Today, Martin Davis joins us along with his Disto which puts the surveying into high gear. Natasha's squeeze is pretty intimidating, and will definitely filter out cavers who might feel vulnerable squeezing through the overhanging boulder which threatens to dislodge and block the passage if disturbed. One of Nature's ruthless traps. We pray for a "no earthquake" trip. After a 91m survey, which goes to 51m of depth including a couple of rope drops, we head out. So far, it's a clean, dry cave, and getting bigger as we descend.

May 21 – Party: Sarah MacKenzie, Kevin Huntington, Peter Curtis (r)

We're back at it and survey 276m more in a 9 hour trip. Two more rope drops gets us down into some very large horizontal passage which Kevin names, "The Desert Highway."

Another higher section of cave is a labyrinth with tubes branching in all directions, some leading down to sumps, others angling up. It gets confusing as hell, especially with all the four-five way junctions. What's this? There's even a nine way junction!

May 28 – Party: Martin Davis, Kevin Huntington, Sarah MacKenzie, Natasha Dickin-son, Peter Curtis (r)

Three of us survey around the lower levels while Natasha

and Martin push up a bedding plane passage a couple of hundred meters which practically goes up to entrance elevation. It's still drafting where they turn back, but getting difficult. It's a lead worth pushing sometime, and so far is the only passage heading north away from the sumps and towards the Reappearing River.

The labyrinth, aka the "Phrolicking Phreatics," is next on the agenda, and we survey there for an hour or so before routing. Nine hours in

the dark.

June 4 – Party: Kevin Huntington, Sarah MacKenzie, Ali-sa Vanderberg, Peter Curtis (r)

Surveying the "Phrolicking Phreatics" helps to clarify the confusion...sort of. We survey to three black sumps which look bottomless. Be careful, Kevin, that water is deep! To-day's 7 hour trip puts the cave at 1008m long and 99m deep.

Wood lodged in the ceiling at

Below: Martin Davis in Vanishing Point Cave—*Photo by Peter Curtis*





Above: Natasha Dickinson and Rob Countess in Vanishing Point Cave—*Photo by Peter Curtis*

the entrance tells us that this cave sometimes floods from the bottom all the way up the 99m to the entrance, as there is no sign of a surface stream entering the cave at the entrance. This is believable because water levels in the Vanishing River swallet cave, a few hundred meters away, and upstream, also fluctuate dramatically from season to season. Incredible.

June 18 – Party: Martin Davis, Natasha Dickinson, Peter

Curtis (r)

We push up from the labyrinth into an up-trending walking tube which opens up into some roomy steeply ascending climbs. We try one for size, but back off partly because of unstable rock, but mostly because of fear. Getting a stretcher out of this cave through the two squeezes would prove difficult, so broken bones aren't on the agenda today. There is lots of roomy cave here, most of it towering above us out of reach.

September 3 – Party: Rob Countess, Natasha Dickinson, Peter Curtis (r)

With Rob Countess joining us, we show him some of the sights in the lower cave, take a few photos, then head up higher to survey more of that incredible three dimensional maze that will take until the end of time to complete. Multiple passage junctions are common here, making us point fingers as to who is going to draw

this thing up. Derigging our way out, the top three ropes have to be left in place until later, as someone forgot the wrench. We increase the TSL to 1380m. The depth is unchanged at 99m.

A survey will most likely be available...sometime soon.



CHICKEN II July 4 2016

Party: Michael Paulgaard, Joshua P, Emil Silvestru, Bill West-Sells (r)

The weather was perfect, cool and dry. Emil was taking pictures and measurements while we worked on the dig. I had a new rope to pull the cart with, so I crawled into the passage and graded the pathway for the cart to roll down better. Michael and Josh cut away the teetering sand while I was filling the kart, and then I would call for them to pull up and dump the cart. It seemed to take them a long time, and the rope was elastic enough to be a problem. On the 6th load the rope broke. The cart was some 6 feet up the hill, good thing not further! Cheap junk rope, should have bought marine quality.

Exit digging. Josh crawled in to see what I had been doing, and what the very end looked like. Michael followed Emil,



Above: Natasha Dickinson in Vanishing Point Cave—Photo by Peter Curtis

and Josh and I took a peek at the side passage. Then we all went out and took a look at the fallen Sgt. Randally Cypress tree.

CHICKEN II August 7 2016

Party: Luc & Kim Courmier (Kitchener, Ontario), Bennett C, Kayla C, and Tyler, Mary-Ann Holowachuk, Bill West-Sells (r)

We met on Sunday at 1:00, at the Big Tree rest stop, for lunch. We met no trucks en route to Chicken II. I gave a lecture on interesting facts buried in the cave, and what they might mean. The Courmiers took a good look at my dig, but didn't get dirty. We moved on to Scallop Falls Cave.

It was a return trip for all but Bennett and I, who used the

Toilet Bowl. I mean we went to the, uh, other side of it. And out. All had a great day!

MYRAMS AT MEMEKAY August 26 2016

Party: Megan, Myram, Shawn and Jessica, family friends from Alberta, Al and Helen Colwell. Bill West-Sells (r)

It was another caving introduction on a hot summer day, what better thing to do? We looked at Chicken II and Scallop Falls, with all but Helen coming through either the Toilet Bowl or the crawlway. We decided to look at Upper Scallop.

Water is low and some waded around the corner to the ladder while Shawn and I climbed over the top. We went up the ladder and into the notorious tight passages. Seen here is

the very passage where one got stuck, some years ago! Three years ago these children were into Big Upper Elk Cave, but now Jessica is a teenager.

Our “40 minute” trip had become nearly two hours!

Pacific Torah Institute Memekay Caving

Party: Visitors from Pacific Torah Institute (about 16, ages 9-40 something), Bill West-Sells (r)

Scallop Falls Cave was first. I led the group to the falls, where they stopped to sing and get wet. A little horseplay followed, I was relieved when they stopped! Then a few braved the Toilet Bowl. The rest went through the muddy crawl. We drove up to the outhouse, one needed to use it. Then we went on to the trail to Emilia Creek Cave.

How we were going to get the nine year old down the drop and across the pool was a little disconcerting to me. One of the strong young fellows packed him down the hand line pitch on his back. Then at the pushup pool one walked through the water with him on his shoulders. When we got to the second falls I hate to tell you how he got down there! Then I was holding the bottom of the hand line to pull the climbers over to my side, in case they lost balance. But two of them put the rope between their legs. One of them lost his



*Above: Where Bill West-Sells was stuck years ago in Upper Scallop Cave—
Photo by Bill West-Sells*

*Below: Courmier family caving with Bill West-Sells in Chicken II Cave—
Photo credit unknown*



balance near the bottom, and we both were dragged into the pool. It could have been worse!

On the ledge above we regrouped, and I could see the little fellow had had enough.

So I encouraged them to head back, with me taking the more adventurous ones down to the big drop. Four of them went with me. To my surprise, by the time we had gotten back up to the entrance, the cave

was all clear of people.

We four had an interesting conversation on the way home, but in retrospect I should have lectured them to pass on advice about safe caving. Next year, I guess!



RESONANCE CAVE July 2 2016

Party: Emil Silvestru,
Mary-Ann Holowachuk,
Bill West-Sells (r)

We left Sayward at 9:00, arriving to the caving area about 10:30. After sorting out the roads, because there are some new ones, we found the overgrown old trail and bumped along to the cave.

Mary-Ann began by playing the violin in the entrance. Then we hauled our equipment down to the first climb. Past the second climb I sunk a not so good bolt, and could not use the already existing ones 'cause they're 8mm, and mine was 5/16 NC. So we turned back, and Mary-Ann hauled out most of the equipment.

She really enjoyed this trip. It was the 2nd anniversary to the day of her operation on a broken back. The doctor thought she might never walk again, let alone go caving.



*Top: Pacific Torah Institute group photo.
Middle: The Toilet Bowl, Chicken Fall Cave.
Bottom: Emilia Creek Main Cave—Photos by
Bill West-Sells*

On our way out we stopped to cut up a few willow trees. They were ready to fall and block the road.

Right: Mary-Ann Holowachuk plays her violin in Resonance Cave—Photo by Emil Silvestru.

Middle-left: Bill West-Sells gives a lecture on cave formations in Chicken II Cave—Photo by Mary-Ann Holowachuk.

Middle-right: The lectured—Photo by Mary-Ann Holowachuk



Left: Bill West-Sells and Emil Silvestru in Resonance Cave—Photo by Bill West-Sells



THANKSGIVING 'PREP' TRIP July 2016

Party: Matt Forbes, Martin Davis,
Bill West-Sells (r)

My neighbour Matt agreed to come and help. It was the tail end of July and I was to bring up a load of plywood for Martin's new Outhouse project, a sorely needed item. It amazes me that there are people who will



Top: A view of the scenery from Sayward to Gold River.

Right: Wood pile at Thanksgiving Cabin.
Bottom-left: The new out house at Thanksgiving Cabin.

Bottom-right: Matt Forbes on clean up duties at the old Thanksgiving Cabin—Photos by Bill West-Sells



come to work on the new cabin, with such poor facilities. My lot and Martin's seems to be like oiling the machinery.

So, I opted to take the "Shortcut" from Sayward through White River Main and Gold Rivers' East Main. Quite the scenery out there, and it was sunny and hot. Too bad the U Vic engineers went at night. How come it took you so long? The trip was less than 3 hours, and we were at the cabin.

First things first, unload the stuff. While I was sorting things out, Matt agreed to sweep out the old cabin, and then he removed the old stove. I got him to make rails to hold the white gas stove in place, and clean out the lower cupboard. It contained years of mouse poo.

I lit up the water heater and

by evening the tank was all hot. Enough for more than two showers.

I turned the Pelton Wheel up to full. But the voltage didn't get much above 10 VDC that evening. Next day, a look at the 8D spare battery proved it to be useless. The twin battery set was up to "12.lessthansix." In other words, all our batteries are no good. But we get by. I cleaned up the parking lot. Would be better if people piled firewood on the bank where it takes up none of the roadway. There was other junk there on the turnaround space that's been there for years! And I tried to bust up the Limestone boulders, but the mosquitoes and the heat got the better of me. Next time it will be with my SDS drill and a sledge hammer, in cooler weather when the bugs are gone. Summer time's for caving, but we didn't do any on this trip.

This was Thursday July 28th, and Martin purchased lumber and things for the Outhouse job. By the time he was packed to go it was evening. So he arrived Friday morning.

Matt and I sorted out the new building, and I adjusted the exhaust valve in the China generator. Now it starts with 2 pulls. But the starter assembly pulled apart again, so I took it home, and left Martin the rope and handle. We tried to start Martin's generator, it had no spark. We tried to start the old Tom West generator, no spark. What luck!

Down below the new outhouse is the new Pelton Wheel pad. Kudos, U Viccers. Lower than the present site, more power!

Here's the new proverbial "Brick S---house". Martin is building it with natural light-

Bottom-left: Inside the new out house at Thanksgiving cabin. Bottom-right: The new Thanksgiving cabin under construction—Photos by Bill West-Sells



ing and a sink.

I finished up by cutting a plywood piece to reset the usefulness of the top bunkbed. We left for home, stopping at Gold River for a quick visit with my radio collector friend Larry Fehr. In the middle of his radio room, he had a pile of radios for repair, marked "Sayward".

Delivery Job - Thanksgiving Cabin

Party: Matt Forbes, Martin Davis, Bill West-Sells (r)
It's a nice backroads drive from my place in Sayward. Took 3 hours yesterday, 2 ½ today. Nice view of Victoria and Warden Peaks. I borrowed my brother's Chevy, it has an 8' box and a diesel engine. Took over half of the flooring, a door, two propane tanks, some tools and a battery. We hauled out the dead batteries and some garbage, leaving behind a tinkered Pelton wheel system that's working. There were bad corroded wires at the loop terminals of the charge controller. I've left the Pelton wheel running to charge the batteries up. Now with good batteries and a charge controller in the circuit, we need not to worry about overcharging.

Matt, my young helper and neighbour, was trying to bash up one of the rocks that were in the road. A "Eureka moment" came, when he rolled the thing over and found it had a flat bottom. Only then was

he able to split it. We rolled the two pieces over to the outhouse trail, and Matt rolled the others out of the way.

Martin has built us a classy outhouse. It's almost finished. If I can, next trip, I'll bring up siding so he can finish the job.

Today we hauled up the balance of the flooring, the generator, and a fold up bed frame. We went home via Campbell River to get my Toyota back.

Things are building for the Thanksgiving weekend. See you guys then!



Holely Mountain Chapter Twenty: The Big Bang Theory

August 16th to 25th, 2015

Party: Aurelle "**Anti Matter**" Law, Bruce "**Dark Matter**" Turner, Peer "**Doesn't Matter**" Winter, Nancy "**Space Race**" Moelaert, George "**Tele**" Porter, Trevor "**Holely Smoke II**" Moelaert (r)

Lift-off:

What started out as a project for John Lay, ended up as "Chapter Twenty" for the Under Achievers. Though all of us Under Achievers will always want to return to Holely, we had no plans to. John was looking for something other than Thanksgiving to feed his

exploratory hunger. At the VICEG AGM (November 2014) I suggested to John that Holely (along with some other locations) had some great possibilities for "virgin" exploration.

In particular, Titanic and Wind to the West caves were "going" and may even join (Dale Chase is a believer!). The potential is major. Titanic, which is already surveyed over 200 metres deep could exceed 300 metres and likely multi kms in length. John was interested. I let the Under Achievers know that John was making plans to go to Holely. I thought if we piggy-backed chopper flights we could go to Holely at a reasonable cost. We would fly out first to the east side of Holely and then John's team would fly out ten days later to the west side. We would fly back in what would otherwise be an empty helicopter.

By the end of March John had to withdraw from the plan as he was unable to get a team together that were willing to spend the big money to get to Holely. Having a new pilot, a different chopper and an hourly rate 50% higher than in 2012, I was having a hard time justifying the costs. Were we getting "bang for our buck?" We had other lesser expensive locations to explore. Also, we didn't have gear stashed on the mountain any more, which would result in an extra flight out. Though there are many

projects left on the mountain, I was only interested in 13th Avenue. I wanted one more shot at joining Jingle Pot Road to 13th. The crappy part was the 1000 foot drop to 13th from east camp each day; actually it was the climb back up that sucked! With this in mind we would try to camp at X & O Swallet, which is much closer to 13th than East Camp. We “slung” gear down to X & O in 2006 and then “jumped” from the hovering chopper.

Slinging the gear would increase the cost as well. Perhaps as much as \$300.00 more per person. That could bring each person’s share to \$1400.00 or more. A whopping \$8400.00 in total! In April, I sent out an email to the group asking one last time if they were willing to accept the costs, whatever they would be, because we just didn’t know. Peer pointed out that 2015 was turning out to be a record dry year and we may never get a better chance to join the caves. I already knew that the Under Achievers had more money than common sense... and they don’t have a lot of money. I emailed back, “Hey everybody, we’re going to Holely!”

Sunday 16th: Time, Space and Money

I had the opportunity to fly in the chopper (a 5 seat, A-Star) and meet our pilot, Fred, on a trip July 30th to the Jacklah. It was comforting to get a better idea of the size (capacity) of the A-Star and find out a little

more of what our pilot was like. More to the point, would he be the “kind of guy” to consider landing at X & O. I seem to remember Morris, our pilot in 2006, saying don’t do this again! Well, we wouldn’t sling our “stuff” in this time, we would actually try to land (hover) to unload. After all, we had cleared the site and built a primitive helipad back in 2006. Also gravel/rock had since filled up X & O, making it much more level. That was what I told Fred anyway. Fred said he would give it his best shot, but not having a death-wish, he wouldn’t commit until he looked it over.

The six of us arrived in Gold River on time, as usual. No chopper or pilot were found there. A few minutes later, Morris, our former (retired) pilot drove up. Though retired, he is still keeping his “toys” in the hanger. He told us the chopper was on route from Campbell River and would be arriving shortly. Unfortunately Fred was called away to the Fraser Canyon to fight a forest fire. So much for the preplanning, we didn’t even have an hourly rate on record, no flight time estimate; nothing.

Our “pilot du jour” turned out to be a fine back-up. Bruce and I left in the first flight out, loaded heavy. Once we got to Holely we unloaded the chopper at east camp. Bruce stayed with the gear and I jumped back into the chopper to have a look at X & O. As expected

there was no snow. None! We had never been on the mountain when no snow could be found. X & O looked very tiny from the air, nestled deep in a limestone canyon on the side of a very steep mountain.

I was *almost* embarrassed to ask him to consider landing there. When I pointed it out to him, he said “let’s have a look”. I am not a fan of the A-Star, but it is powerful and having a 3 blade rotor, they are shorter. He was comfortable with the clearance to the sides... yes! Our old helipad was covered by vegetation, only the large boulders which it is built on are visible. He was not prepared to land on a rickety helipad that he could not see. Made sense! He had room to land in front of the boulders, but was afraid the tail rotor may hit them. It was over... no X & O camp. I was dropped off at east camp where Bruce was eagerly awaiting the news.

Bruce and I chatted, while the chopper left to pick up the next two and more gear. I told Bruce there was no way to pull off an X & O camp. However, when the next two (Nancy and George) arrived, they came with a sling (net) and a long-line. Their plan was to sling the gear down and for us hike down. With the chopper’s roar, it was difficult to communicate. I was okay to walk down, but our gear wasn’t packed for the rigors of slinging. In the seconds I had, I called off the “new plan”, we would stay at



Above: Trevor Moelaert drawing the Malahat in 13th Avenue—Photo by Peer Winter

east camp. I loaded up the sling and long-line and the chopper left to get Aurelle and Peer.

Well, with all six of us on Holely under the bright sun, things didn't look that bad. It was the first time in five years we had **all** been on Holely. There was a rare 2015 rain storm a few days before arriving, which provided a top-off of our shallow pond. A friend of mine from the island alpine club had hiked across Holely only 12 days earlier. He reported and took pictures of the very low water levels. As mentioned, there was absolutely no

snow, not even in the deepest pits. We had never seen this on the previous 19 trips. One of the things we had done in preparation was to buy two Styrofoam coolers for extra ice. The idea was to burn the coolers at the end of the trip to save space on the way back. It was important to get back in just two flights.

Monday 17th: Launch Delay
The joy of being on Holely now gone, caught under the reality weight of having to haul all our crap down to Jingle Pot and 13th, followed by the long slog back up... and repeat as often as necessary!

It was a nice sunny day, I saw no reason to wait to get lazy... I would start right away. A little burnt out from the stresses of the previous day, I was fine to work on camp and get better organized for the undertaking. It was Bruce's Birthday, I needed to rest for it; I guess.

The other five were not so lazy. They would haul their gear and group gear down to X & O in preparation, but were willing to wait for me for the actual caving part.

Tuesday 18th: Mission Control

Another sunny day and we are all ready for our mission. Our mission; to rig 13th and Jingle Pot (Road) Caves, so a connection attempt could be made on Thursday. I knew from our survey work in 2010 that 13th and Jingle were as close as 13 metres (apart), possibly less. With little to no elevation difference. We had dye traced Jingle that year as well, turning a very small stream in a tube near the Weeping Wall in 13th Avenue green. Unfortunately, the tube pinched off, becoming just a small crack just a few metres in. I had since become aware that there was another passage above the “green tube”, but it would require bolting to get up there.

When we returned in 2012, I had George and Dale bolt (one bolt) and lasso a horn to get up to the passage above the green tube. The rest of us were mapping another part of the cave while they worked on that. Back at camp, I asked George what he found, as he was the only one that went up. He said it got tight after a few metres and he couldn't get past the restriction. The rest of us had found some big virgin passage (Cotter Heights), so we all got wrapped up surveying that and never went back to the passage above the green tube.

It wasn't until months later when writing the trip report that I asked George for more detail. I had made the mistake of telling George and Dale not to bother surveying the pas-

sage if it didn't “go.” However, George gave me a pretty good account of length he travelled as well as the directional bends. He also mentioned that he had thrown a rock through the restriction, which rolled a few metres landing in a pool of water. I didn't recall this information coming forth at the time. I will have to be more thorough (burning cigarettes on the eyelid, waterboarding, bamboo under the fingernails) with my interrogations in the future! When pressured (now I'm getting it) Geo admitted he or a smaller person may be able to get through. The floor of the passage may be able to be “excavated.”

Based on George's expanded info, I plotted it onto the master map. Though realizing it is just from memory, George's memory, I was still certain that he had thrown the rock into Jingle Pot Road! There was a sump at the end of Jingle Pot (Sump13) that had gone green according to Aurelle back in 2010. I believe that may be the pool of water Geo had tossed the rock into. Of course the problem we were facing, was neither Aurelle from the Jingle side or Geo from the 13th side saw a way on. Is there a room with a pool in between the two points? Did they miss the connecting route? Could the passage be made bigger? I needed to know!

Most of our gear was already down near the caves thanks to

the efforts of my crew on Monday. The rope and rigging requirements were all sorted out weeks ago. The plan was for Nancy, Aurelle and Peer to rig Jingle Pot Road. That would be five pitches, including a 21 metre entrance drop and a 30+ metre final drop to Sump 13. George, Bruce and I would rig the upper tube in the Weeping Wall Room of 13th Avenue and do some surveying there as well. We had the easy day!

As luck would have it, we heard the others coming out of Jingle while we were getting water at X & O Swallet. Mission accomplished for the day, all was rigged. We all returned to camp about the same time.

Wednesday 19th: The Count Down

We had put a lot of effort, time and money into making this connection a possibility. We were going to be prepared. We were going to be armed with all that we would need. We had a detailed plan, a back-up plan, we were convinced we would succeed, after all; we are the Under Achievers! But first; a day of rest and final preparations.

We synchronized our watches... sipped on cold beverages in the glorious sunshine, after all; we are the Under Achievers!

Thursday 20th: All Systems Go!

This would be the day... the *inverted* pinnacle of my caving

career; I hoped. The sun was shining, the water levels very low, everyone was pumped; all systems go.

The six of us reached X & O Swallet. Before separating to our two starting points, we all reviewed the plan. The Jingle Pot Road team (Nancy, Aurelle and Peer) would light incense when they reached the top of the last pitch. The hope was the draft would carry the smell into 13th and we could trace the route. While the incense wafted, they would rappel down to the final sump (Sump 13). We would then try voice contact at 1:30, simply by yelling. If that failed we would try our radios. The Jingle team also had dye, but that really wouldn't provide us with any new info. If all else failed, the Jingle team would fire off a bear-banger. This would all be going on while Bruce, George and I surveyed in 13th, in the passage above the tube that had turned green in 2010. We checked our watches once again, then went our separate ways.

Not wanting to sit around getting cold in 13th, the three of us went at a leisurely pace to our destination. About 1:15 I had just completed the free-climb down the "Back-Scratcher" and Bruce was just beginning with Geo waiting his turn. Our destination just a few metres beyond...

Without warning we heard a monstrous boom! None of us

had ever heard anything like it before. It sounded like a boxcar-size rock had just fallen somewhere in the cave; somewhere pretty close. I yelled back to the other two, "what the hell was that?" Just then we all shouted out, "bear-banger!"

I scrambled to get my radio out of my side bag. By the time I fumbled it out, Bruce had caught up to me. "What are you doing?" he asked. When I told him I was going to try to contact the Jingle team, he looked at me like I was from some other freakin' planet! I transmitted, "Jingle, this is 13th, do you copy?" A second later, this is Jingle, 13th. Nancy's voice crystal clear. It was then that I really believed we were going to join the two caves.

Being a curious guy, I asked Nancy what the hell happened to our plan! She told me that they thought they heard us and decided to release the bear banger to get our attention... that worked! The three of them were still at the top of the pitch from where Peer fired the banger down to Sump 13.

A couple of minutes had passed when I realized we really had no idea from which direction the sound had come from. It seemed like it came from all directions. I rushed down and climbed into the "green tube" to find out if I could see smoke or smell anything. Geo and Bruce started

kitting up to climb into the top passage. By the time I had crawled to the back of the tube, smoke started to flow through the crack where the green water had come from in 2010. I excitedly yelled back to the other two, "I see smoke!" Seconds after that I couldn't see anything, but smoke. I was actually having a hard time breathing, to the point it was scary. I flopped out of the tube into the sizeable "Weeping Wall Room" where it was starting to become smoky as well. The three of us retreated up the passage to get away from it.

I radioed the Jingle crew to let them know we were smoked out and do NOT fire another one. They seemed pleased!

Nancy radioed back that Sump 13 was all but dried up, new passage could be seen. Aurelle remained at the top of the pitch, Peer joined Nancy at the former Sump 13. Peer would look for other routes while Nancy would push the newly exposed passage...crawl.

Meanwhile back in 13th, Bruce and George were surveying their way into the passage above green tube in the hope of meeting up with Nancy. There really wasn't room for me, so I stayed back and wrote down the numbers and manned the radio. I couldn't help but notice it was a very muddy passage; and I was very clean...

Communication became very



*Above: Connector passage between 13th Avenue and Jingle Pot Road
—Photo by George Porter*

difficult between the teams and the individuals. About twenty minutes later I heard from Geo that Bruce was talking to Nancy without radios. Very exciting news, we were getting close to achieving our dream.

Geo then informed me that Bruce needed him to proceed and he would not be able to talk to me for a while. It was clear the passage Bruce and Geo were in was directly above the Green Tube as rocks would tumble down into the lower Green Tube through small holes. It appeared to be the high bypass we were seeking, but how did Geo not see it in 2012? The answer was simply he wasn't as motivated then,

but with Nancy in voice range, the push was on.

Now I wasn't able to view the final push, but I did get to hear vivid details later at camp. The long and short of it was Bruce was wearing Geo around his neck and shoulders like a lampshade at some point. Both feared they would not be able to get back up the hole they had dropped into. Bruce pushed forward through the very small passage to the point he could see Nancy's light. He would not be able to go any further without significant work to widen (dig lower) the shrinking crawl. It would be up to Nancy now.

Nancy was only a few metres

from Bruce, but could not see him, just his light. She faced a horizontal bend and an up slope followed by a down slope to where Bruce was. She bravely pushed herself to where she could pass the tape to Bruce for the connection shot. Nancy was not comfortable (to say the least) with going head down to where Bruce was, fearing she would get stuck and no one could reach her. So it was decided that the survey tape would be the only thing through those two metres. Nancy later said she felt it was doable, but without knowing she wasn't willing to risk it. On Holely that is always the right choice!

We completed the survey and

the two teams began to derig their respective caves on the way out. Peer pulled a slab of rock onto his shoulder in the process, something that would bother him for the rest of the trip.

****note: Peer would surprisingly nominate me for the Holely Cow Award (for the bear banger incident) at the VICEG AGM later in November (which I won!). Now just a few of things to clarify: I wasn't the one that fired the bear banger, it was Peer! I was just the victim... If they had stuck to the plan it may not have needed to be fired. There are no bats known to inhabit 13th and in August they wouldn't be hibernating even if there were. Also no bears were spotted in the cave after the bear banger blast, so they work too. Remember kids... leave the bear bangers at the entrance.*

Friday 21st: Low Orbit

It was a perfect, sunny day for tired cavers to celebrate George's Birthday. Nancy and Aurelle climbed the Pyramid to do yoga. The rest of us were left to feel shame, but that went away quickly with a couple of beverages!

Saturday 22nd: Spaced Out

Cloudy, spitting rain... that was no way to treat tired, hungover cavers. Well Peer wasn't hungover, the rest of us felt shame, then we had a couple of beverages and poof; shame gone! Bad cavers...

Sunday 23rd: Re-Entry

The six of us hiked down to 13th for the last time. The plan was to do a little surveying, clean up a couple of areas on the survey and complete a couple of loop closures. We also had to haul the rest of our rope and gear back to camp.

Nancy, Aurelle and George worked on some passage in the Chocolate Drop area. Bruce, Peer and I "detailed" the Malahat section of the survey, complete with several splay shots for accuracy. These shots were not used in the total metre count.



Top-right: Nancy walking down the previously snow plugged White Russian Cave—Photo by Bruce Turner. Bottom-Right: Trevor Walking down to the snowless White Russian Cave —Photo by George Porter

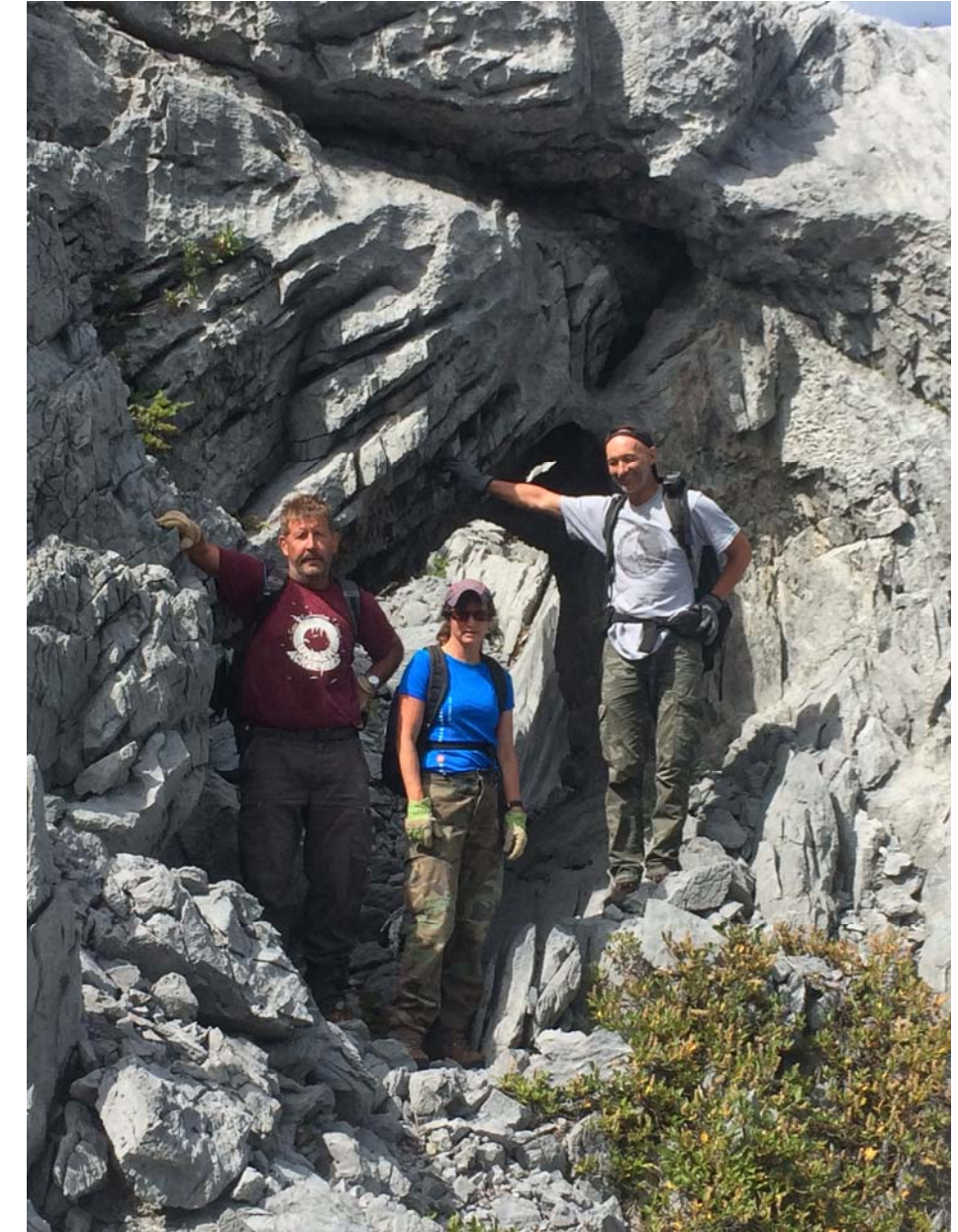
That evening back at camp we inducted Peer as the most recent and likely last official Under Achiever. Peer seemed pleased, but he probably should have felt shame joining the Under Achievers. Peer had participated and contributed in a big way since his first Holely trip in 2010. He had been on most every expedition since 2010, we felt we had to do something for him... so we had a few beverages for him, 'cause Peer doesn't drink. By that point no one was feeling much of anything, never mind shame.

Monday 24th: Apollo Jize
Sunshine. No apologies necessary, we stayed in camp again.

Tuesday 25th: Splash Down
Our last full day on Holely. There were a few clouds, but it was hot. We decided we would do one last tour circling the plateau. We stopped at several of the caves along the way, among them The Other Thing, Titanic and Big Money.

When we reached West Camp, some went for a swim in the awesome pool. We hadn't camped there since 2003 and had only been back a few times while doing overland surveying.

The main objective for the day was to check out White Russian Cave. It was the first cave (on Holely) we found back in 1997. It had always been filled with snow of varying depths over the years we visited, but



*Above: George, Aurelle and Peer at an unnamed feature
—Photo by Bruce Turner*

this year no snow was to be found. As suspected, there was going passage where the snow-chute had lived. Geo, Peer and Bruce explored it as far as they safely could (40? more metres) without gear. The cave gloriously continues... It needs to be pushed by the next generation!

We stopped by Little Money

and Spare Change on the way back to (East) camp. I also tried to relocate the Shotgun Table Tubes to GPS their location, but was unable to find them. The vertical tubes had lots of potential. They were a rarity, pits that weren't filled with frost shattered rock. The walls were smooth and stable.

Wednesday 26th: Escape Hatch

A sunny day to fly out. That hasn't always been the case. Holely seemed happy to allow us to escape, likely our last time to do so. Nineteen years, twenty trips later, two very full chopper trips brought our Holely Mountain adventures to a close. Thank-you and Good Night...

The Challenges of a 13 Year Monster Survey

Very, very few have had the opportunity to survey (an entire) cave nearing 4 kilometres in length and 300 metres in depth. Drawing that by itself is a challenge, but 13th was made more difficult by its complexity and multiple overlapping layers. Made worse that it

was done over a 13 year period. I usually input a lot of my "memory" when drawing using the in-cave drawing as a guide and a reminder. I had seen a lot of other cave passage during those years, so memory wasn't as useful. I had done a year by year updated rough drawing of the plan view, but really not much for profile. In addition, the changing magnetic declination over the years had to be managed. 13th was also the first cave where we had multiple survey teams, so I wasn't using my own drawing for nearly half of the cave. I did get to see almost all of the cave in person by the time we were done however. I should say most of the surveyed parts of the cave... there is lots left I'm sure!

I struggled with how I was going to "present" the cave. I was tempted to do a series of insets showing the individual layers (and passages), but the complexity would be lost and that was one of the coolest elements. In the end I decided to show all the passage at one view, but did the layers/passages in different colours to assist the clarity. Once it was completed, I was very happy with the end result. I did omit some minor passages where they obscured more important ones. I hope you like it!

Cheers,

The Mad Mapper

Below: Karstscape by Little Money and Spare Change—Photo by George Porter





13TH AVENUE

MOLELY MOUNTAIN, B.C.

T.S.L. 3698 METRES
T.S.D. 275 METRES
B.C.R.A. Grade 5b

PITCHES REQUIRING ROPE

- A. JINGLE POT DROP - 17M
- B. JINGLE PLOP DROP - 5M
- C. JINGLE JANGLE DANGLE - 5M
- D. CONTINENTAL DIVIDE CLIMB - 10M
- E. JINGLE TINGLE PITCH - 25M
- F. MALAHAT HOLE - 18M
- G. X & O SERIES - 40M TOTAL
- H. THE D.K. CONNECTOR PITCH - 22M
- I. MOLEY DOME DROP - 20M
- J. CHOCOLATE DROP - 9M
- K. CHOCOLATE POT - 11M
- L. HILL STREET SERIES - 40M TOTAL
- M. HAMM-BACON STRIP - UNKNOWN
- N. MOLEY SHIT PIT - 36M Marine
- O. MOLEY SHIT PIT - 32M Hill Street

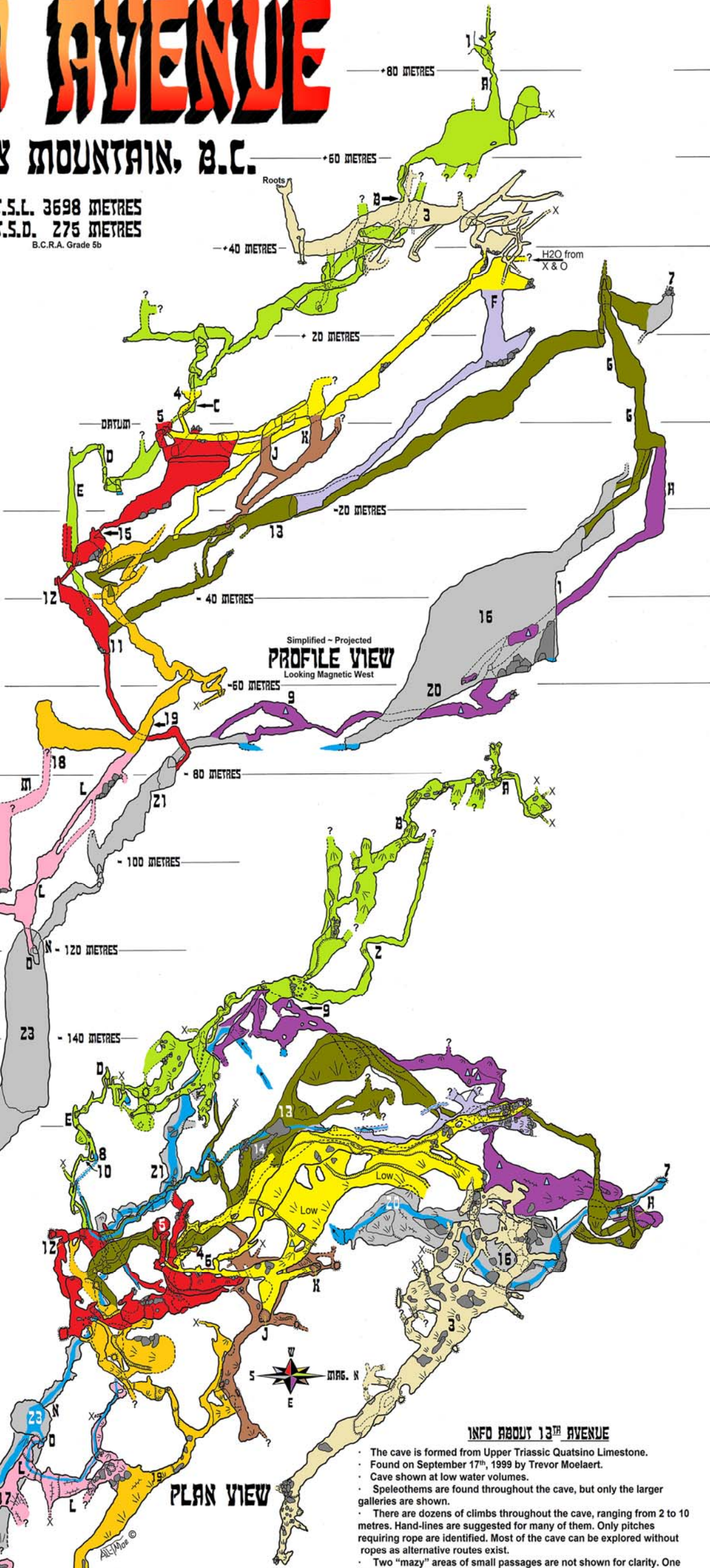
- 1. JINGLE POT ROAD ENTRANCE
- 2. EASY STREET
- 3. THE COTTER CHAMBER
- 4. MALAHAT ENTRANCE
- 5. 13TH AVENUE ENTRANCE
- 6. LEDGE OF DEATH
- 7. WATER FROM X & O SWALLET
- 8. SUMP 13
- 9. CALCITE BUG ROOM
- 10. JINGLE 13 RESTRICTION
- 11. WEEPING WALL
- 12. BACK SCRATCHER CLIMB
- 13. THE AQUARIUM
- 14. CROC ROCK
- 15. THE OFF RAMP
- 16. THE MOLEY DOME
- 17. BACON STREET
- 18. HAMM HOLE ROAD
- 19. WASH MACHINE
- 20. UPPER MARINE DRIVE
- 21. MIDDLE MARINE DRIVE
- 22. LOWER MARINE DRIVE
- 23. MOLEY SHIT PIT

- X = TOO SMALL/BLOCKED
- ? = UNEXPLORED
- Δ = SPELEOTHEM GALLERIES

MAIN ROUTES

- JINGLE POT ROAD
- COTTER HEIGHTS
- THE MALAHAT
- 13TH AVENUE
- BIG MONEY BYPASS
- CHOCOLATE PARKWAY
- UNDER ACHIEVERS BOULEVARD
- HIGHWAY 19A
- MARINE DRIVE
- THE (OKANAGAN) CONNECTOR
- HILL STREET

Drawn by:
TREVOR "Mad Mapper" MOELAERT
For "Mole Art" Productions © 2015



INFO ABOUT 13TH AVENUE

- The cave is formed from Upper Triassic Quatsino Limestone.
- Found on September 17th, 1999 by Trevor Moelaert.
- Cave shown at low water volumes.
- Speleothems are found throughout the cave, but only the larger galleries are shown.
- There are dozens of climbs throughout the cave, ranging from 2 to 10 metres. Hand-lines are suggested for many of them. Only pitches requiring rope are identified. Most of the cave can be explored without ropes as alternative routes exist.
- Two "mazy" areas of small passages are not shown for clarity. One goes above and below the "Off Ramp" area, the other near the start of "Cotter Heights".

- The B.C.S.F. classification code is C4Y, management category 3. There are several areas of significant speleothems of most types, many in areas of "traffic". Potential flooding exists in many parts of the cave. There is little loose rock, but many pitches up to 40 metres, some in waterfalls. A stretcher would not "work" in many sections of the cave. The cave is complex and extensive, offering everything the recreational caver is looking for. It is one of Canada's best! Survey data is stored in the BCSF database.
- At the time of publication, 13th Avenue is the 6th longest and deepest cave on Vancouver Island, 16th/15th in Canada. There is potential for lots more passage (uphill) by connecting to the other known caves or the "unknown". 520 metres of depth and a system of more than 10 Km is a possibility.
- At "Jingle 13 Restriction" only a tape measure was passed through a 2.5 metre section. A small person could get through with some minor cave "modification". We chose not to do so.
- 13th Avenue's lowest sump is estimated to be only 40 metres from daylight (13th's resurgence), less than 25 metres to the sump in the resurgence.
- The main water source is from Mount Cotter's snow that feeds Triskaidekaphobia Cave, then Y2Cave, before reappearing at Y2 Resurgence, then sinking through the gravel at X & O Swallet into 13th Avenue.

History Lessons

Horne's Lake - The First Trail Survey of 1856 by David Huer 23 September 2016

I've been researching for caves by combining historical reports, mining claims and maps with overlays onto Google Earth. One project (4 years and counting) is to map Horne Lake Trail.

Now, some success! I've found the first trail survey, circa 1856. This is Surveyor Joseph Pemberton's sketch map that accompanied the report of his transit across Horne's Lake. Pemberton's transit used the First Nations trail across the pass from Qualicum village to the Alberni (Canal) Inlet, and thence continued on to Barclay Sound and the Broken Group of Islands. His report went to HBC Factor James Douglas. In these early days, "The heavily forested terrain made it necessary to construct survey stations in tree-tops" (See: "Beyond Nootka").

British Columbians have always known about the report but believed it went to Douglas the Governor, not Douglas the HBC Factor (Regional Manager). The map went missing. The location - the HBC Archives - suggests that the report was created for HBC first, and the Crown second.

Let's go back to the earliest

days of British entry into what is now British Columbia. When America and Britain concluded the Oregon Treaty (1846), HBC, the crown leaseholder, had to vacate Fort Vancouver, now in Oregon, and moved the Pacific headquarters to Vancouver Island.

On 13 January 1849, the Colonial Office gave HBC a 10-year lease on the condition that it establish a colony. HBC established a colony and the Colonial Office designated the first Governor (Blanshard), but the arrangement failed because nearly every person was an HBC employee. Despite misgivings because of the risk of conflict of interest, London ultimately designated HBC's Chief Factor James Douglas to be Governor when Blanshard resigned. The arrangement failed because of conflicts of interest. The Colony of British Columbia (CBC) and the Colony of Vancouver Island (officially: The Colony of the Island of Vancouver and its Dependencies, CIVD) were combined in 1866 and administration was taken over with officials reporting to the Colonial Office on 3 April 1867. Four years later, BC joined Confederation.

Douglas' conflict of interest put his employees in an unfortunate position. In 1859, Joseph Pemberton assumed the role of Colonial Surveyor of CIVD when the HBC lease ended, and in 1861 by royal warrant he was named Surveyor Gen-

eral for the renamed Colony of Vancouver Island. But before 1859, he wore two hats: he was paid as Surveyor & Engineer for HBC and also appointed Colonial Surveyor for CIVD, which was a creation of HBC on instructions of the Colonial Office. He navigated the challenge as well as anyone, answering to a single powerful superior wearing two often conflicting hats. After leaving government service, he established Pemberton Real Estate which continues to this day as the real estate and insurance company Pemberton Holmes: <http://www.pembertonholmes.com/history>

Finding the map:

HBC's Archives are at the Archives of Manitoba. Many records are digitized and it was when searching through the University of Victoria's archives that I noticed the clues that led me to the map.

This could produce interesting avenues of research:

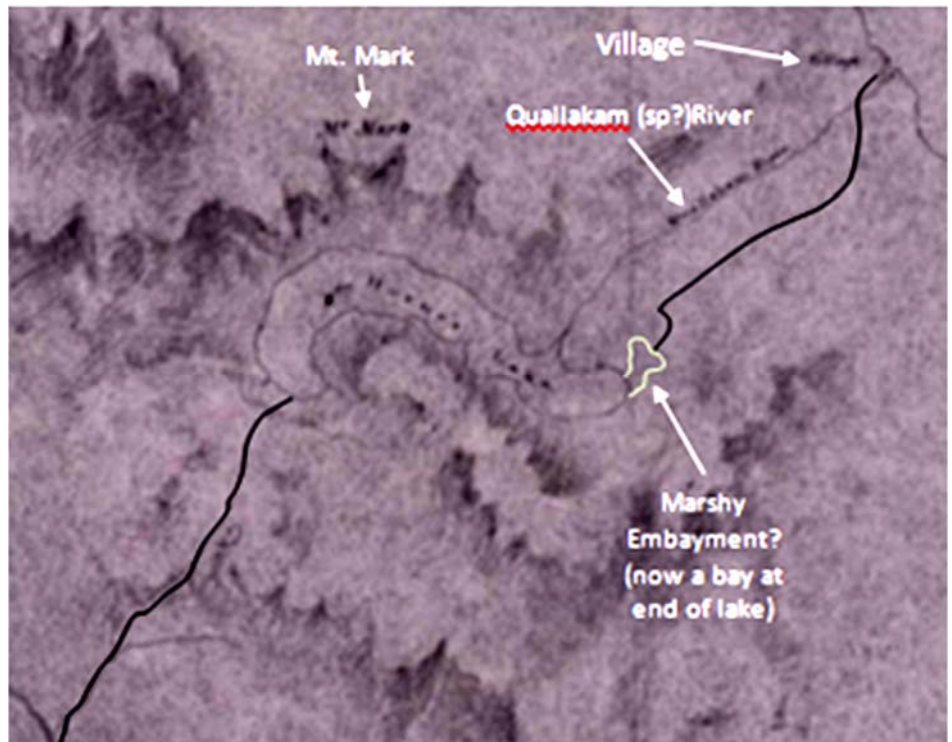
- 1-Did logging change the water table, lowering the depth of the lake?
- 2-Were the lands where the park campsites are located originally submerged, since the camp is sandy soil?
- 3-Or, did the lands of the camp slump into the lake?
- 4-And if so, is the track of the later trail and wagon road along the northern shore snug against higher ground?

5-Were the bays on the eastern shore and northern shores marshlands dug out when Railway Magnate Dunsmuir made the lake the centrepiece of his hunting and fishing lodge?

One last note for now:

"Our" Horne's Lake Trail got replaced by the Nanaimo-Alberni trail (later Trunk Road) along Cameron Lake in the 1870s. But BC had more than one "Horne's Lake Trail". The Trout Lake Trail in West Kootenay District formerly had the name Horne's Lake Trail, too - noted during re-clearing of that trail in 1902. (Report of the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works of the Province of British Columbia for the Year. British Columbia. Legislative Assembly 1902-12-31, p.639: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcsessional/items/1.0064281#p118z-3r0f:horne%27s>).

Also, thanks to the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba.



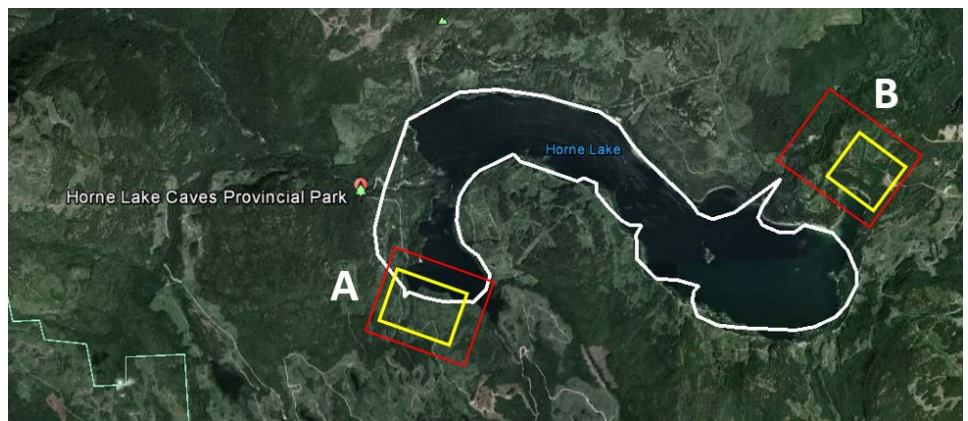
Above: The survey shows the village at the mouth of the Qualicum River, Horne's Lake, and a "trail" which is 'by land and by water' (route trail traced in black. Note: I have made assumptions about route tracing where the trail, approaching from the East, meets an area that appears to be marked off as separate from the lake, but not land either. I have termed this a "marshy embayment").



Right: The map shows three or four Tseshah villages (two inland of the head of the Alberni Canal and two along the west shore of the Canal).

Top-right: The shoreline of the lake is markedly different.

Bottom-right: Are there historical/ archaeological-dig sites-in-waiting? Consider the red (general) and yellow (primary) squares in the image at right. "Site A/Yellow" because there is exposed beach near a freshwater stream. Can we model the wind patterns on the lake as if it had old-growth forest cover, and might this influence where canoeists hugged the shore?



References:

- 1-HBC Archives reference: http://pam.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/6176/1/5/785220?RECORD&DATABASE=LISTINGS_WEB_INT - "Tracing of map of Vancouver Island from Nanaimo and Qualicum across to Barclay Sound and Port San Juan, with profile sketch of coast at Port San Juan", Creator: J.D. Pemberton, 1856. Fonds/Series Title: Governor and Committee inward correspondence from posts. Geographic location: Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Scale: 1 inch = 3 1/2 miles. Medium: tracing paper; black ink; grey wash.
- 2-UVIC digital copy of HBC Archives map: <http://contentdm.library.uvic.ca/cdm/singleitem/collection/collection19/id/24/rec/92>. This map originally accompanied correspondence found in "Governor and Committee inward correspondence from posts -- correspondence from Victoria (A.11/76)". Note: The correspondence may be on microfilm and these are on request through interlibrary loan. I am also checking to see whether a "tracing" means that there is an original map to find.
- 3-http://pam.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/510/1/6/731?RECORD&DATABASE=DESCRIPTION_WEB_INT
- 4-http://pam.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/510/1/4/714?RECRD&DATABASE=DESCRIPTION_WEB_INT
- 5-<http://search-bcarhives.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/land-sale-vouchers>
- 6-<http://www.beyondnootka.com/biographies/pemberton.html>
- 7-<http://royalengineers.ca/PembertonJD.html>

International News by Lorna Duncan

Rescues, Accidents & Fatalities

U.S.A.:

An experienced cave diver drowned in The Blue Hole in New Mexico. He had been part of an exploration group systematically surveying the system. He was diving with a friend when they entered a chamber beyond a squeeze, but on exiting, silt obscured the visibility and both divers became wedged in the passage. While the friend swam downwards to find the way on, the other diver swam upwards and took a wrong turn into a blind passage where his body was later found.

U.S.A.:

A group of four cavers exploring Ape Cave in Oregon came upon a small girl deep inside the cave. The girl, dressed only in shorts and a T-shirt, with plastic clogs on her feet, had apparently crawled through the tight passages with no lights and no helmet. The little girl apparently spoke no English. While the cavers were trying to reassure the girl and get her to come with them out of the cave, she started to cry. However, at that moment, her parents were heard in the distance calling her name. She then agreed to go with the cavers in order to rejoin her parents. Luckily, she managed to explore the cave in the dark

without being injured.

Romania:

11 people had to be rescued after being trapped by a flash flood in Huda lui Papara Cave, in western Romania. The group had entered the cave to shelter from torrential rain, only to become trapped by the flood. The group included two experienced speleologists. The rest of the group were aged 15 – 17 years old. The group was rescued after a seven hour operation that involved specialized teams from three countries.

Archeology

Spain:

Another cave rich in Paleolithic engravings has been discovered in northern Spain. The cave at Atxurra has so far revealed seventy drawings on ledges around 300m from the entrance. The cave was found in 1929, but has only now been studied and the art work revealed.

Exploration

U.S.A.:

A group of students have designed and built a set of ROV's – submersible, remotely controlled vehicles – equipped with cameras and the means of sending signals back to the surface. Each is about 30cm long and run at the end of 140m of wire, being piloted over the internet. The ROV's are being tested in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, mapping the

underwater cave floor, diving into areas that the national park believes have never been investigated before. They have so far discovered a sunken boat thought to date back to the 1800's (boats were once used for tourist trips on the underground Echo River).

From the Archives by Lorna Duncan

Tooth Decave, McGregor Range

Tooth Decave was explored in 1985 by Ian McKenzie, Greg Rumpel and Don Rumpel. For the past three summers, the three cavers had often passed by its small entrance at the base of the cliff west of the middle entrance to Fang Cave. While the Rumpels surveyed the accessible part of the cave, Ian shifted a large boulder blocking the way on just enough for him to get past and discovered several very small crawls, one of which was draughting. The team also checked out a hole high on the cliff around to the west [later named Window on the West]. This entrance may connect with Tooth Decave...The two are close together in the same bedding plane and the draughts are complimentary. However, this cave was also choked, but quickly began to draught after moving a few boulders. "With none of us feeling like moving a mountain of boulders, it was decided to leave this lead for others."

In 1993, the cave entrance was re-discovered by Ben van Noort and the University of Northern BC Caving Club (now the Northern BC Caving Club) began exploring Tooth Decave. On a trip in October of that year, Ben reported finding several hundred feet of new passage and a howling draft through the tunnel. This draft was new. Perhaps significantly, the Side Window of Window of the West had been recently dug open, possibly allowing the passage of air into Tooth Decave. The hope of joining Window of the West, Tooth Decave and Fang Cave into one system was thus given a tremendous boost. If all three caves were connected, this would extend Fang by at least a kilometre, making it over five kilometres in length, the fifth longest in Canada at the time.

Through 1993 and 1994, the UNBCCC'ers [aka Cubers] made several trips to the cave, digging through rubble and shifting large rocks, following two possible ways on from The Super Highway. Clive Keen, Toby Keen and Bob Rutherford, in particular, made significant progress in removing large rocks and rubble through the blocked passages. Early in 1994, Bob and Clive reached a location where they could hear the sound of an echoing waterfall, a surprise as up to that point, Tooth Decave appeared to be a fossil cave.

Early in 1994, one of the pas-

sages being dug open was leading directly to the Window on the West. A dig was also being undertaken in a small tube off the main passage of that cave and the hope of joining those two caves with Fang remained very much alive.

In June of 1994, Ben van Noort instituted the "Slot Tax", whereby all club members that entered the cave had to remove a tray or two of dirt from the Filthy Slot, the passage through which it appeared Tooth Decave would join with Fang Cave. Surface surveying had revealed that The Slot is 25 m from a passage in Fang. However, it was reckoned to be a long term dig that needed to be tackled a little at a time.

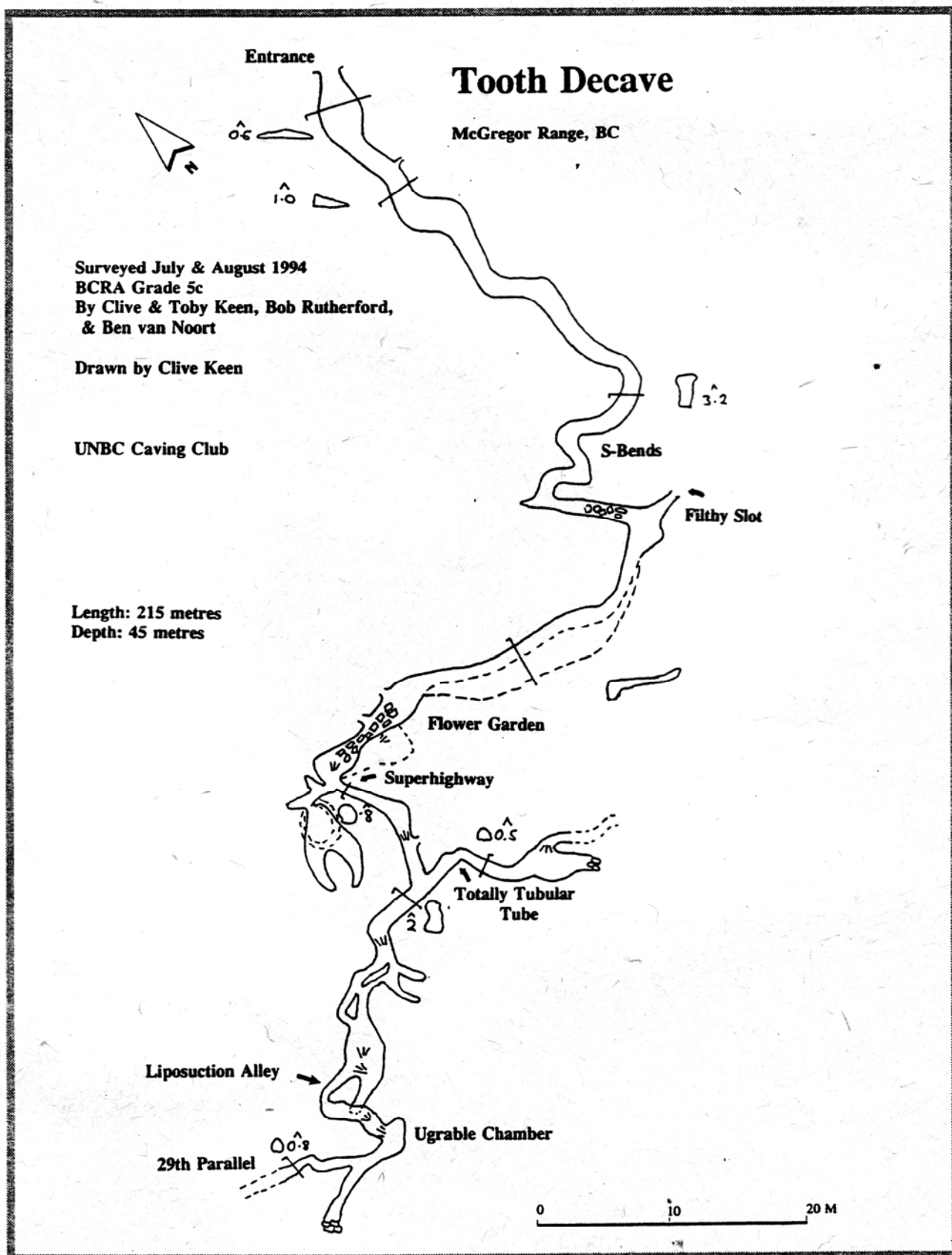
Digging continued with a number of trips to the cave in June of 1994. Large rocks and tight passages with even tighter, awkward bends were frequent impediments to progress. As one barrier was overcome allowing passage to the next chamber, another barrier was encountered. Eventually, however, the Cubers managed to open the way into *Totally Tubular Tube* and beyond; Toby (The Thin Squad) having to remove his caving suit in order to reduce his size a bit to wiggle through the intervening passage. Two ways on were found beyond *Totally Tubular Tube*: one that was about 7 feet wide and another that definitely went, although both were still very tight.

The team was also digging at Ugrable Chamber, at the far end of the cave. There were also two ways on from this chamber, more or less parallel to each other. Steve Smith tackled the digging in one of these passages on his 29th birthday, so the passage was dubbed the *29th Parallel*. He dug until thoroughly exhausted and yet another large rock was encountered. Clive Keen pronounced it "highly promising". Continuation looked like an easy dig. Clive also stated that "*Totally Tubular Tube* could be a more promising lead in some respects, but it is highly intimidating, even to Thin Squad members."

In March, 1995, *The President's Report* from the NBCCC AGM Minutes stated that "All of Tooth Decave known to date was surveyed, including 140 meters of hitherto unknown or unmapped sections. The survey was expected to extend beyond the 29th Parallel in the Spring....A good digging break through led to the opening of about 35 metres of passage past Liposuction Alley, with plenty of prospects. The 29th Parallel continues to resist forward progress. Extensive digging in the Filthy Slot has brought Tooth Decave about eighteen inches closer to Fang. Ten years of intensive work by Ben van Noort might see the connection made."

There were a couple of trips in

(Continued on page 40)



(Continued from page 38)

May, 1995, and digging continued, having successfully passed a number of obstructions in the 29th Parallel and gaining a view through the rubble to a chamber about five feet high, twenty feet long and comfortably wide, the largest passage in the cave since the *Flower Garden*. In addition, digging was being undertaken from Fang Cave, digging a passage near Bastard Crawl. According to the trip report, huge amounts of rock and spoil had been removed from the passage, opening up fourteen feet of passage with a clear sight of 20 more feet of continuing passage. According to the trip report, "once that is cleared – perhaps three hours' work – Tooth Decave and Fang should be no more than 30 feet apart with a connection likely somewhere between the Filthy Slot and Totally Tubular Tube."

In September 1995, a horde of Cubers and friends descended on the area around Fang and Tooth Decave. Activities included digging at the Filthy Slot. The cold draught blowing through Tooth Decave proved to be problematic for those not actually digging. Clive Keen reported, "Progress, as usual, was made, but a breakthrough before 2010 AD still seems unlikely."

Two long spates of digging in early October in the Bastard Crawl area of Fang Cave added nine feet of new passage to the hoped-for connection with

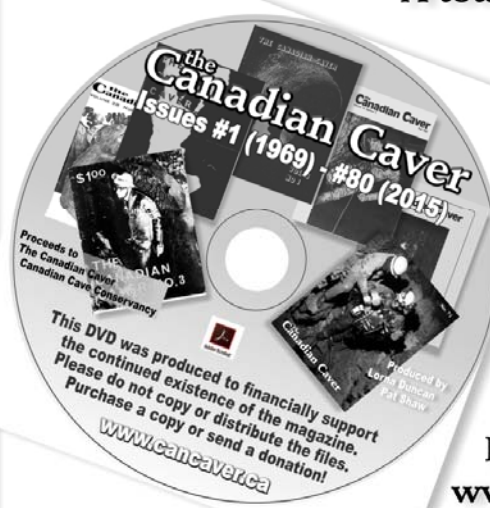
Tooth Decave. According to the trip report, "There is every prospect that the next trip will see us entering the nether regions of Tooth Decave through this route. It is unlikely that the join-up will be that easy – more digging is almost inevitable on the Tooth Decave side – but fame and glory certainly don't seem too distant in this dig, the easiest undertaken by Cubers to date." The next dig, later that month opened up a chamber with two promising ways on. However, one eventually proved to be filled with lots of rocks that would need to be removed while the other would require either the Thin Squad or hammers and chisels to remove an obstructing rock shelf. Rough calculations had placed the end of this passage at about 15 metres from Totally Tubular Tube in Tooth Decave. Clive reported, "It is

possible that the conjunction might require the determined efforts of the thin squad, but the join-up definitely appears, now, to be a strong possibility."

A note in BC Caver, Nov-Dec 1995, reported that, "The surveyed length of Fang is now well beyond 3 kilometres, and is expected to be extended a lot further next year when Fang and Tooth Decave are finally joined." In addition, the Minutes of the NBCCC AGM on January 17, 1996, reported that "Bastard Crawl in Fang Cave has been opened and extended to within 10m of Tooth Decave."

In September, 1996, Clive Keen and Nick Manko, with a couple of guests, took another look at the blockage just beyond Liposuction Alley in Tooth Decave to see if it was

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possible to remove the blockage with “a cunning array of levers and pulleys.” Their conclusion was that the final blocking boulder and the blockage of rubble beyond would almost certainly yield to some gentle persuasion. The trip report concluded with the statement, “That is now high on the list for the near future. Watch this space for reports of yomping new passage.”

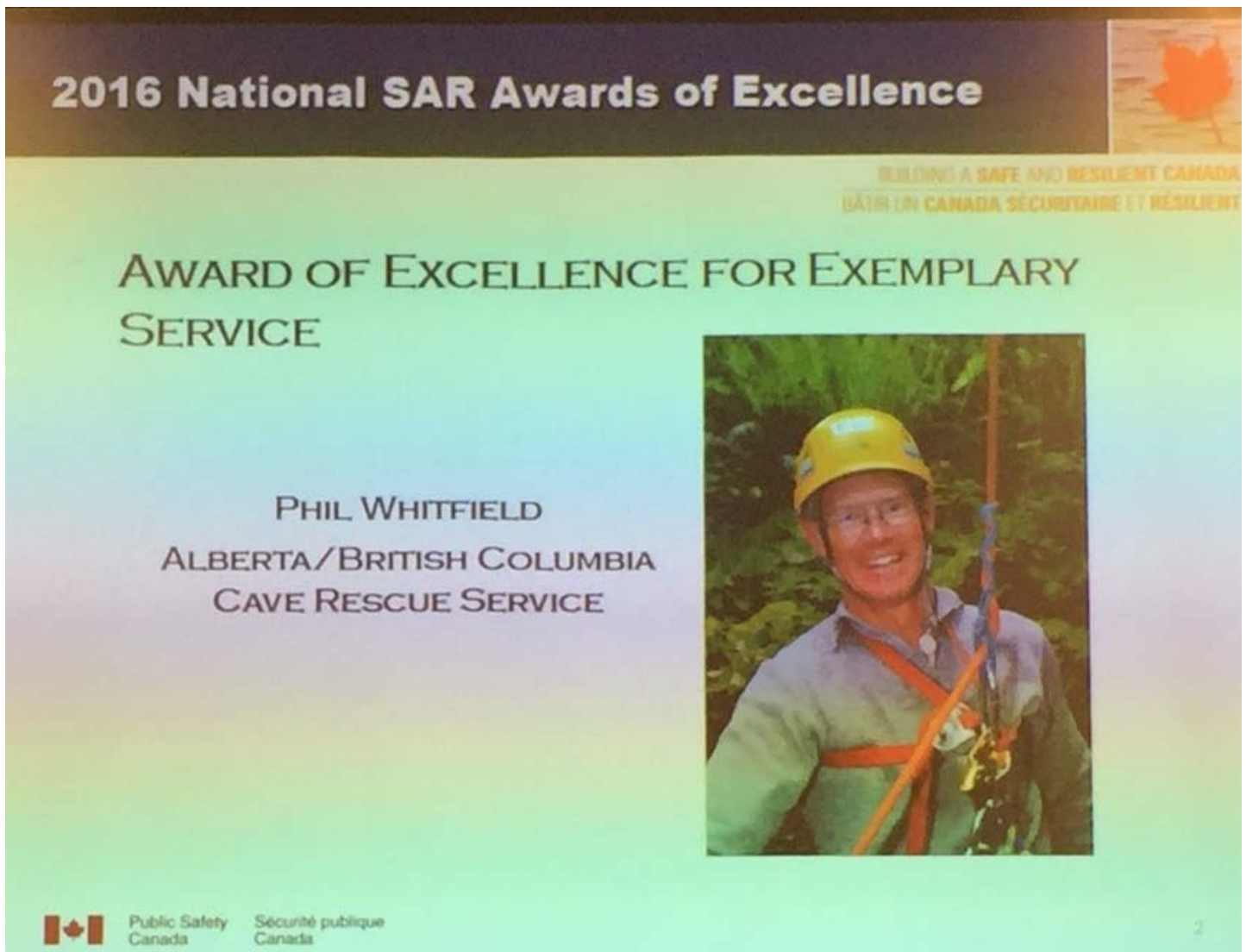
Unfortunately, this is where the recorded history of Tooth Decave ends. There was a trip in October of 1997 where one of the objectives was to at-

tempt a voice contact between Totally Tubular Tube in Tooth Decave and Bastard Crawl in the Top Entrance of Fang. However, this was not undertaken as the cavers became distracted by the exploration of new passages in Fang. Apart from that report, I could find no further reports of trips to Tooth Decave or work on the dig in Fang. I wonder...can the three caves actually be opened up and connected into one system?

Very Rewarding

Phil Whitfield Honored For Service to Cave Rescue

This year's National Search and Rescue Conference, SARScene 2016, was held from October 12-17 in Edmonton, Alberta. At the National Search and Rescue Awards of Excellence Banquet on October 16, 2016, a special honor was bestowed upon Phil Whitfield. For over 32 years of consistent dedication to search and rescue that has had lasting impact, Phil made significant



contributions to cave rescue and rope rescue over the course of his lifetime. For that service, Phil was the 2016 National SAR Program Award of Excellence Recipient in the category of Exemplary Service.

Mr. Whitfield has more than 32 years of consistent dedication to the search and rescue community. Since first registering as a provincial emergency program volunteer in 1981, he has made a lasting impact as the founder and provincial coordinator for BC Cave Rescue, a long-time member and one-time president of Kamloops Search & Rescue Society, and serving on a number of SAR Advisory and technical committees. Mr. Whitfield is a certified rope rescue instructor and has a long and sustained contribution to both the Provincial Emergency Program and the Justice Institute of British Columbia in this capacity.

We of course know Phil for more than his rescue activities, having been a long serving member and holder of leadership positions in the Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group, the BC Speleological Federation, and even the Northwest Caving Association, National Speleological Society. Active in cave exploration since 1964, we can count Phil as a member of the following:

Cambridge University Caving Club (UK) - Life Member.
Vancouver Island Cave Explo-



Above: Phil Whitfield poses with his award, flanked by Public Safety Canada's Stéphanie Durand—Director General, Policy and Outreach Directorate, Emergency Management Branch, and Dominik Breton—Director of the National Search and Rescue Secretariat—Photo by Mike Kary

ration Group - Honorary Life Member.
Alberta Speleological Society – Honorary Life Member (at the time only the third honorary membership ever granted by the society, in recognition to Phil's contribution to caver safety and rescue).

National Speleological Society (U.S.) - Life Member and appointed Fellow.
American Cave Conservation Association - Life Member.
Canadian Cave Conservancy - Life Member.

Phil helped design, organize,

and instruct the 7-day BC Cave Rescue Seminars on Cave Rescue Organization and Techniques. The 16th biannual seminar was just completed in July 2016 and this training session has evolved as the centerpiece of cave rescue training in Canada.

As a preventative SAR measure, Phil developed and delivered the companion cave rescue workshop which has been undertaken across Alberta and British Columbia as well as Alaska, Montana, and Idaho. The course focuses on small party self-rescue, risk management, and trip leader skills.

As a rope rescue instructor, Phil has had a long and sustained contribution to the BC Provincial Emergency Program/Justice Institute of British Columbia rope rescue program since becoming an instructor in 1985. Specifically, he has contributed as an instructor, course material developer, and most recently is co-managing a two-year Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund project to update the BC SAR Rope Rescue Training Program. Additionally, he was a member of the Kamloops Search & Rescue Society from 1984-2004 and served as its President from 1996-1998.

When a separate cave rescue organization was forming in Alberta, he assisted with the organization and equipping of the Alberta Cave Rescue Organization and promoted close coordination with BC Cave

Rescue. The combined Alberta/British Columbia Cave Rescue Service has grown to 180 current, trained members, and over the last 30-plus years, Phil has trained more than 600 individuals in cave rescue. Considering that the caving community is relatively small, with about 200 individuals belonging to the area caving clubs at any time, it's clear that Phil has met his vision to "mainstream" cave rescue skills within the community, with cavers viewing rescue skills as a responsibility and an obligation to uphold. Phil

only stepped down as the BC Provincial Coordinator for cave rescue in 2013 but continues his involvement as a trusted mentor.

With two major cave rescue incidents in Alberta and BC in 2015/2016 which relied on the legacy Phil created, the successful outcome in both cases is a testament to the endurance of the organization created by Phil. We thank Phil for the hard work and dedication he has shown throughout the years to cavers and the public.



Limestone in The Right Stuff Cave—Photo by Simon Amero

Wesa Gleave rollin' at Bergeron Falls, March 2008—*Photo by Kirk Safford*

