

Jomfruland og Himmelstigen ser nye besøk

Jomfruland and Himmelstigen revisited

The Graft caves Greftsprekka and Greftkjelen are the favourite caves of the author Kenneth Mjelle. Their lengths are respectively 5 and 7 km, and still not interconnected, even the distance between the entrances is just 100 m. Much of the passages are vertical, more than 1000 m of rig pitches just in Greftsprekka. Since May 07 Kenneth and Arnt-Helge Tjugen have been working in the caves 10-15 times. They have surveyed 350 m, included 70 m rig pitches.

Himmelstigen. Last October Kenneth and Bjarne Hunstad did the heaviest thrust up to then. The target was the upper shaft series. After 60 m ascending from Camp David they got into Via Dolorosa, a 10 m high convex fissure leading 450 upwards for 150-200 m. The surface is covered with wet clay, so it is a painful job to work your way through! Well through they gapingly and dumbfounded looked up into Katedralsjakten, that goes 80 m vertical. Kenneth clipped on one of the three ropes hanging down from a small ledge 30 m above. He made a smooth ascend to the rebelay, but got scared of how the crab his rope was tied in looked like; it was almost dissolved! After the huge shaft the passage went horizontal, named Skjærsilden. Blocks and collapses made the passage very narrow. After a while it was just too narrow to go ahead any more. They found a small bone, 10 x 1cm. That indicates the surface should be not far away. There was no draft registered. The whole trip lasted 15 hours.

Jomfruland. The last year they have tried several times to get to the sump in Jomfruland. 18. December 2006 Bjarne, his girlfriend Lene Pedersen and Kenneth made a new try. They followed Sildergangen, descended Vertikalsprekka, through Sugerøret, and down Ønskebrønna, a 40 m pitch. Then they went through the very tight Ormebolet and so through Tynntarmen. After a easier part through Korridoren, they ended up after Mushølet where the passaged was fully blocked with sand. They started digging, and gave up after 90 minutes, 4-5 m ahead. They didn't know how far to dig, so it had to wait until later. Kenneth had recognized a roof tube close to the blocked passage. According to the survey, this tube has not been surveyed.

In June Arnt-Helge and Kenneth did the tube. They had a hard turn; first getting all the heavy equipments through the narrow passages to the shaft, and so rig the shaft. After a hard portion of work they reached the roof - dead end.

Ulv Holbye's survey showed that it was just to dig a few more metres to get through in the sand filled passage. Late in October Anne-Grete Grønneng, Arnt-Helge and Kenneth digged their way through the plug. They went into a roomy, clean blue marble passage. The sound of a roaring stream increased till they reached Greftbekken that emerged out of the sump. They wondered if it is just 50 m to the sump in Greftsprekka, only a new survey and a diving trip could tell. In the end of January 08 the sump in Greftsprekka will be dived.

Kenneth mentions a couple scary unsecured places in the part of Sildergangen closest to Vertikalsprekka. It is also a little difficult to find the easiest way through in that area. Two new 10 mm inox expansion bolts are placed by Avtaket, which keeps the rope free hanging ahead of a 45o ice slope, where it is recommended to use two ice screws as rebelay. Just downwards it is placed a bolt for optimal rope positioning. The next to do is to replace old bolts and ropes in Himmelstigen. If anybody wants to help to increase the security in the caves, that's great. We must not wait until it is dangerous to ascend on the ropes to replace them.