

Hidden Earth 2005

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The conference took place in the village of Churchill in Mendip. Field trips in Mendip Hills were arranged prior to the conference. The author took part together with David St. Pierre. Another well-known participant: Trevor Faulkner. Comfortable accommodation was provided in the club house of Wessex Cave Club. Among places visited: Templeton Dig Project, now down to 120 feet. Cavers work there three times a week around the year. On the evening of the visit 8 persons were in activity at the bottom. Les Williams - Hidden Earth's technical chief - guided an historical stroll through the geological epochs of the area, back to the time when parts of the Mendip lay south of the equator. The G.B. cave, dug out in 1939, had, as most caves in this area, a concrete hut above the entry, securely locked.

The conference was housed in the Churchill Community School. 1600 persons visited during the two days, among whom four Swedes and a Dane. As usual, the choice was difficult among lectures/films: 6 topics in three places in two days. There were competitions in mapping, rope climbing and SRT-racing. Hidden Earth 2006 will be held somewhere in Derbyshire, hopefully with a large Norwegian attendance.

Following the conference the author was the guest of David St. Pierre in the Yorkshire Dales. Trips were made to Alum Pot, a real pothole with an entry pitch of 50 m, to Upper Long Churn cave, a river cave where the author was taken by the water fall to a bath in Dr. Bannister's Handbasin, to Wilson's cave where it was necessary to crawl for 20 m in a passage 40 cm high, with water up to the neck, and to Great Donk Cave. The Cave Rescue Organization HQ in Clupham was visited. They have about 50 rescue operations annually, in caves or elsewhere in the mountains. Since 1935 they have had 1928 actions, of which 628 to cave accidents. Field exercises are held regularly. The Response Team of the Norwegian Cave Rescue Services should cross the sea and take part in one of the exercises!