



SC AVALON

ACTIVITY REPORT 2003

JANUARY

- * **Bois de Waerimont**: Installation of a fixed ladder in Puits de l'Espoir Perdu.
- * **Chantoir "Le Pressoir"**: Was flooded so we had to postpone our work.
- * "The 24 hours of Belgium": our Frank had the unfortunate idea to do a **Wéron-Dellieux** through-trip, together with a friend of his. Things went wrong (a fallen boulder had blocked their way on) and so Paul, Rudi and Mark had to go and look then next day for the missing two cavers. They were found in the Dellieux and escorted out, after an underground stay of 32 hours. This rescue was just finished, when a second alarm came, this time for a severe accident in a new cave in **Chaudfontaine**. Paul, Herman, Flip and some others joined the Belgian Cave Rescue team and worked until late in the morning to get the caver out.
- * **Chawresse**: again a long day of surveying, this time the area of the Chicanes and "Suppo".
- * **Chawresse-Veronika**: attempt to make a through-trip, unfortunately in Salle de la Cascatelle a boulderchoke had collapsed.
- * Caveradio-experiments in **Trou Wéron**; followed by some more digging in the **Pressoir**.
- * **Ancienne Carrière**: ordinary visit by Jarl, Frank and Mark.
- * Rigging exercise in **Abime de Lesves**; however the big pitch was totally flooded so the trip had to be canceled.
- * Trip in **Bois de Waerimont** by Paul, in company of Francis P.
- * **Pressoir**: stabilisation of the entrance, and despite the very wet conditions, some digging work at the end of the cave.

FEBRUARY

- * **Chawresse**: The surveying continued, this time in de Réseau Persephone.
- * We checked **Chantoir de la Tricointe**; but apparently an other club has already started a dig there.
- * **Chawresse-Veronika**: Paul joined the GRSC-club for an attempt to clear up the boulder choke that blocks the way. There was too much water and it was too unstable to dig. Then we went in the Chawresse to check from there, and things looked safer from there...
- * **Enfer-Fissures**: after 3 attempts to locate the cave in the quarry, Mario and Marjan could finally do the cave. Probably one of the last visits ever, because the quarry is very busy covering the entire area with gravel and boulders.
- * Annette made her comeback in the **Ancienne Carrière**. We had chosen this nice little cave for a surveying-training.
- * 4-day stay in the French **Doubs**: we went skying near Pontarlier but did a lot of caving as well: **Gouffre de Champremond** (we didn't get to the bottom...); **Gouffre du Paradis** (recommended); the ever beautiful **Pourpevelle** to the Barrière Blanche and to finish the small but pretty **Gouffre des Ordonis**

MARCH

- * We participated in the first "Explo-Congres" of the UBS near Arbre.
- * **Chawresse**: long and difficult trip, carrying loads of stuff, to go and make an artificial climb at the extreme end of the cave (in Rezo B). Paul and Rudi made the climb and discovered +/- 35 m of new passages.
- * The "**laminoir**" (crawl) in the Lembrée valley, where we had been digging many times in the past, was re-attacked (Erwin, Herman). This time a sort of monorail was installed to make the evacuation of the dug-out material easier.
- * Jos and Paul finished the fixed, steel ladder in **Bois de Waerimont**, surveyed a bit, and took a look in Salle Zen (taking the way through the extreme squeezes)
- * Mich and Mario passed their Saturday at a "jumble sale" and offered the (substantial) profit to SC Avalon.
- * Marjan participated in a caving rally at the **Barchon Fortress**.
- * Patrice (GRSC) and Paul finally manage to clear the collapsed boulder choke in **Chawresse-Veronika** which makes the through-trip possible again. But it remains unstable.
- * A new member, Eric, is guided around in **Trou de l'Eglise**.
- * **Ancienne Carrière**: Mario and Mich continue the surveying training. The cave is more complex than we had estimated: this survey isn't finished yet! The following week Mario & Frank continue the work, and yet another weekend the ladies (Annette and Annemie) go surveying there.

* In **Bois de Waerimont** Jos and Paul work all day long to make a new way to Salle Zen, after the initial plan (working in Boyau Choco) had to be cancelled because of the water level in that part being 2 metres higher than normal.

APRIL

* Routine inspection in **Grotte des Emotions**: a lot of water everywhere.

* Classic visit of **Grotte Veronika**.

* Fantastic 10-day stay in the **French Ardèche**. Very good camping in the Gorges de Chassezac. We did some classic caves (**Aven du Marteau, Aven Nouvelle, Cocalière**) but we did mainly very decorated and beautiful caves: in **Aven des Pèbres** we made the climb to the Réseau Supérieur: magnificent. Paul had the opportunity to visit **Orgnac 2 en 3**; this cannot be described in words.

Also the trip, guided by Hans Litjens in Réseau 4 of **St-Marcel d'Archèche** made many of us speechless, and the **Aven de Noel** also proved to be a jewel. In between all of the caving, we went climbing and hiking..

* **Chawresse**: Flip & Paul put two of our new members (Jan & Paul L.) to the test: a round trip in Rézo B followed by a visit of Réseau Persephone.

* **Waerimont**: we finish the job at the new entrance of Salle Zen, and we also show the cave to Eric (very impressed).

* **Emotions**: the entrance door which had suffered some damage is repaired.

* Annual job: rigging the old factory in Hemiksem where we go to exercise our rope-climbing techniques twice a week.

MAY

* During a trip in **Trou Bernard** Mario gives a demonstration of how NOT to climb out of the Puits des 3 Pedales. The others wait patiently for the him to get out of the squeeze... for about 30 minutes!

* **Trou des Manants**: Much to our regret we saw that the few nice and white corners of this cave have been muddied by irresponsible cavers.

* A whole day of surveying in the **Chawresse**, Salle de la Pluie area. We find 10 metres of new passage.

* Paul & Annette pass a long day in the **Bois de Waerimont** to make pictures.

* One week later, a new trip in the **BDW** has to be postponed because Annette forgot the key of the door. Instead, they visit **Tienne du Moulin and Ancienne Carrière**.

* And that survey of **Ancienne Carrière** just doesn't get finished...

* **Grotte "X"**: after some minor works, we find a nice continuation. But it is very narrow so only a couple of clubmembers can enjoy it.

* **Pressoir**: the dig there continues, we now have reached a horizontal bedding plane, very narrow. The "shock-team" continues steadily and progress for another 2 metres.

* 4 days in the **Côte d'Or (France)**. Beautiful sunny weather and nice caves: **Creux-Percé, Gouffre du Soucy** and of course the magnificent **Combe-aux-Prêtres**.

JUNE

* In **Bois de Waerimont** two teams of 2 cavers, heavily loaded with gear, go to Salle Serre. One team climbs artificially to a gallery high in the roof of the room, the other team digs in Salle des Bains. Neither of the teams makes a significant discovery.

* **Grotte "X"**: this time we do a nice discovery there, we find about 80 m of decorated passage: "Réseau des Délices"

* **Chawresse**: finally we can start with the survey of the Rezo B. A long but fine trip, with some laughs because of Frank's clumsiness (like losing half of the surveygear).

* An Avalon-delegation attends the conference about cave diving, organized by the SS de Namur at the occasion of their 50th anniversary.

* **Trou de l'Eglise**: 6 personen of Proviron guided by Marc & Co..

* **Sainte-Anne**: Novice Gerrit guided around.

* Club-barbecue, organized by Herman & Michaela

* **Pressoir**: it really is looking hopeless now, we decide to quit the dig.

* Fun trip in **Abime de Beaumont**.

* Another trip in **Trou d'Haquin** where we guide 3 novices around.

* This time the **Abime de Lesves** is not flooded. New member Eric is initiated in SRT-techniques.

JULY

- * Another day lost in **Grotte des Emotions** when trying to continue in the dig near the final sump: the area is flooded once more. Some others have more fun: they take pictures.
- * **Grotte "X"**: we continue in the "Réseau des Délices", and after making a narrow passage wider, we discover another 30 metres.
- * **Waerimont**: final attempt by our two teachers Frank and Jos to continue the very unstable dig in Salle des Bains. They have to give up because it is too dangerous .
- * **Nou Moulin**: we make a nice trip, in the company of some cavers of other Flemish clubs.
- * And again we guide a few people around in the Haquin. It is the same story as always: they enjoy it much, but afterwards you never hear from them again.
- * We continue the survey in Rézo B of the **Chawresse**.
- * Finally we find the time to go and eliminate the fallen boulder in the **Dellieux** cave that was the cause of Frank's disastrous trip in January. Annette forgot her oversuit and had to do the cave in some borrowed old clothes.
- * In **Trou d'Haquin**, Wilfried & Annemie made a trip with a couple of well-fed guests.
- * **Grotte "X"**: again 30 metres more, after moving 1 little boulder. Our "première" now totals 150m.
- * Big fun in "our" Bretaye where a big part of Avalon-members made a spectacular through-trip.

AUGUST

August is the **Anialarra-month**. For those who don't know what I'm talking about: Anialarra is a beautiful karstplateau in the Spanish Pyrenees. We organised, for the 5th time in a row, an international expedition. Some nice discoveries have been made in the upstream parts of the cave system. Unfortunately, the downstream part (blocked by a boulder choke at -648m) did not reveal a continuation, despite a lot of work and energy.

We also worked hard in other promising caves, such as AN60.

SEPTEMBER

- * Solo-prospection by Paul in the valley of Pont-le-Prêtre, where an old dig of ours (E14) draws our attention again.
- * **Bois de Waerimont**: big dig in the Western corner of Salle de l'Euphorie results in 15 m of new passage. 30 metres are also found after an artificial climb in Puits Mario.
- * Unforgettable episode of the "**Speleological Days**" (a two day event, organized every 2 years by the Flemish Caving Federation); the best ever with over 400 participants. With as an extra bonus, a cave rescue in Trou des Crévés where a big party of ours got trapped after a temporary sump.
- * Verification in **Grotte Strauss**, followed by a major digging attempt in **E14**. To be continued.
- * The "**laminioir**" of the Lembrée is again attacked. Many more attempts will follow. Badgers have partially refilled the gallery we dug out two years ago, so right now we are digging to get to our previous terminus.
- * **Galerie des Sources** (Eric/Annemie) is visited.

OCTOBER

- * The trio Annette, Mark & Paul have a good time in the Spanish **Anialarra** zone again. Hard work, lot of surveying and prospecting. Unfortunately, the AN561-Sima del Viento is a disappointment: after 3 days of hard work to get beyond a narrow zone at -60m, the cave ends at -100.
- * Two days of more digging in the "**laminioir**" of the Lembrée.
- * The first "official" guided tour in **Bois de Waerimont** and we are sure that many more will follow (limited to 6 a year). Before the end of the month we guide 3 clubs around: GS Charleroi, Les Stalacs and Continent 7). But these trips are very satisfying because of the deep appreciation by our fellow cavers for the work we did in the cave.
- * We go digging in a small cave called **l'Autre Trou**.
- * The De Bie family visits **Galerie des Sources**.
- * A visit to **Grotte d'Eprave** must be terminated a bit too soon, when Stefan manages to fall into the lake!
- * Jos installs discreet tapes, to protect the formations, in the **Tienne du Moulin cave**.

NOVEMBER

- * We try not to get lost in **Béron-Ry**. And yes, this time we do find our way, all the way to the end of the cave and even back out again.

- * The **laminoir** is visited again, twice, by our digging team armed with spades and Hilti's.
- * A digging day in **E14** has to be cancelled because of a hunt which is going on and so Paul and Annette go to continue a very old dig in **B11c** (Bretaye). Many a boulder gets crushed.
- * Mario and Peter also have to cancel a trip because of hunters and go prospecting a bit near Dinant/Yvoir.
- * Pierre and Annemie participate in a VVS-Interclub in **Montagne Noir (France)** and visit some beautiful caves.
- * **Waerimont**: A long and difficult trip brings Jos & Annette again near the super-muddy dig in Boyau Choco. Progression: 1 meter! Another 10 hour trip brings Paul, Mark & Mario to Puits Mario; which is even muddier. We continue an artificial climb there which results in 25 m. of new passage.
- * **Eprave** and **Tienne du Moulin** are visited by Eric & Mich.
- * No succes for our diggers: near Yvoir they soon abort an attempt to dig in Chantoir d'Evrehailles (because of stinking waste water running in) and they finally end the day in **Grotte de la Batte** near Walzin.
- * Guided tour of a few interested people in **Sainte-Anne**.

DECEMBER

- * In the "**laminoir**" it also has become very muddy after the wet November month. We have already dug for 35 metres and the gallery is becoming too narrow to go on. A week later, we go there again "to be sure".
- * **Bois de Waerimont**: surveying the new part in Puits Mario had to be cancelled: the bottom of the pitch was flooded. Again another +8 hour trip for nothing!
- * Yippie: in **Chawresse** we finally, after countless survey sessions, close (topographically) the "big circuit" of Rezo B. The closing error is only a couple of decimetres!!
- * We re-open **Chantoir Malopattes** and go down to the bottom of the cave. Nothing special found. Chantoir de **Normont** is also visited, but a very narrow meander stops most of our teammates.
- * **Chawresse** (again?): Paul goes to finish a dig with Patrice (GRSC), in a chimney at the bottom of the Grand Puits. 30 m of new passage found, big fun.
- * In **Trou de l'Eglise** we finally finish and de-rig an artificial climb that Paul & Annette made there in 1993 in Salle de la Cathédrale. Twenty metres above the floor, it really becomes too narrow. **Trou Dury** is also visited that day.
- * An oldie but goodie: **Trou des Furets** is visited in detail. Very muddy but big fun.
- * A load of fresh snow in the Eastern part of the country... so we go ski walking there.

CONCLUSION

Again, as in the 18 preceding years, we were very busy. Despite the fact that an average month has only 4 or 5 weekends, we had between *8 and 12 activities per month....* for some Belgian caving clubs, that represents there *year average*!

We have invested a lot of time and energy in some tough digs: the "laminoir"; Pressoir; Grotte "X", Waerimont, Chawresse) and this yielded several hundreds of metres of new passages. Maybe not the BIG stuff we dreamt about, but not too bad neither. Anyway, the Anialarra expeditions and discoveries made us happy as well.

We also invested quite some time in guiding small groups of interested people around, but the return of that was practically zero two new member, Eric and Jan)! In between we did a lot of classic caving, we continued our ongoing project of resurveying the Chawresse, and organized a survey course in the Grotte de l'Ancienne Carrière.

Finally some members participated in other caving club's expeditions: Socotra (Jos) and Gouffre Berger (Rudi).

We had a great year, thanks everyone for the enthusiasm and friendship.

Paul