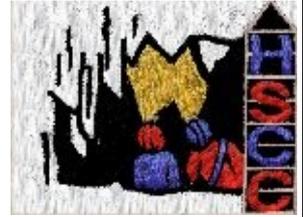




Hampshire Scout Caving Club



Newsletter – November 2015



Scout leaving the Smartie Tube, Goatchurch

Website: <http://hscc.randomstuff.org.uk>

Contents

More Caves Visited on Lundy – Oct 2014	Andy Watson	3
Ogof Clogwyn	Andy Watson	4
Birthday Weekend – Jan 2015	Andy Watson	5
Ardeche 2005	Ros White / David Chadwick	6
Caving Expressions	Ros White	8
Andalucia	Ros White	9
Quiz – Inside & Out	Ros White	11

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Provisional Programme

(All Events are Subject to Change)

14 th to 15 th Nov 2015	Wales Weekend (Croydon Hut)
28 th to 29 th Nov 2015	Training Weekend (staying at MCG)
2 nd Dec 2015	Christmas Social (contact Sue Chase for details)
19 th Dec 2015	Mendip Caving Day (meet at MNRS)
30 th to 31 st Jan 2016	Birthday Weekend (staying at MNRS)
2 nd Mar 2016	SRT Practice (1 st Sandleheath)
12 th to 13 th Mar 2016	Scout Caving Days (staying at MNRS)
2 nd April 2016	French Holiday
7 th to 9 th May 2016	Scout Caving Days (staying at MNRS)
1 st Jun 2016	Rope & Ladder Training (Highbridge Farm, SO15 6HN)
6 th Jul 2016	Annual Barbecue (Shrewton)
8 th to 12 th Aug 2016	Yorkshire Caving
24 th to 25 th Sep 2016	Training Weekend (staying at MNRS)
15 th to 16 th Oct 2016	Scout Caving Days (staying at MNRS)
2 nd Nov 2016	AGM
7 th Dec 2016	Christmas Social (contact Sue Chase for details)

More caves visited on Lundy - October 2014

On Friday 24th October a small group of HSCC were off to Lundy again, some of us had visited in 2010 and again in 2012. Apart from the usual walking and bird & seal watching on this beautiful island and nature reserve, I was keen to check out a few more sea caves. I think I was the only enthusiast though! I almost managed to get to the interesting cave of volcanic origin near the base of the Montagu steps (the HMS Montagu was a first class battleship and was wrecked near Shutter Rock on the south west of Lundy in 1906). The steps were built to assist with salvage from the ship which continued until 1922. However, down at sea level the tide was low but not fully out so I was able to photograph but not to get access to the cave. I also managed to locate Tibbet's Point Mine but could not get to it without some SRT and rope (next time maybe) due to the significant exposed drop adjacent to the cliff gully.

On Monday, at the South East of the island, I was more successful getting through the Needles Eye cave into Lametry Bay to enter the caves there at low tide. Access to the bay is from the Landing Key and by staying close to the cliffs near Devil's Cauldron, climbing up and over the cliffs on the landside of Mermaid's Hole (a natural small swimming pool) and crossing the first small bay over to the Needles Eye where a careful climb allows you to enter a large entrance which narrows to the far end where you can climb down to the shingle beach of Lametry Bay. This must be done at low tide or you will be stranded in the bay.

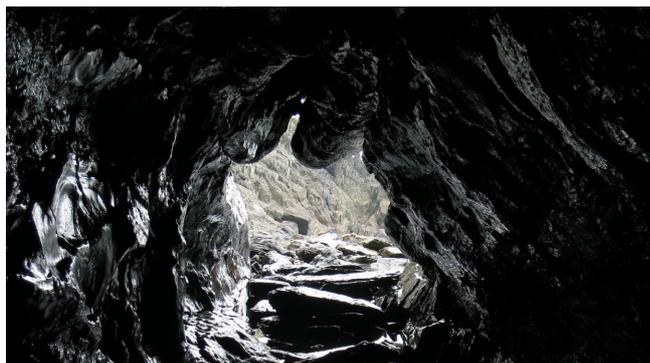
Once in Lametry Bay, the first cave on your right is Cave No.1 (GR 1430 4367) it is the longest cave at 49m with a large pool in the entrance, followed by a deeper pool and seaweed. It has no side passages and closes down at the end.

Cave No.2 is the second on your right when you enter the bay (GR 1425 4370) in the corner under an obvious fault line. It is about 40m deep leading to a nice pool followed by deep seaweed and a roomy end chamber with a 6m long side passage both with sandy floors.

Cave No.3 is shorter at 24m and is opposite where you entered the bay (GR 1418 4362). This cave also has a high level chimney hole in the cliff above and separates into two short parallel passages. The tide was lapping at my feet when I entered this cave.



Lametry Bay Cave 1



Lametry Bay Cave 2

Unfortunately we had return home from the island early which curtailed my other planned visits.

If you want more information on the other Lundy caves and access policy etc please see my full write up in the Chelsea Speleological Society magazine Volume 55 Nos.9&10 Sept/Oct 2013 to which this article is an add on.

My thanks go to my patient friends in HSCC Phil & Sue, Ralph & Gavin and of course my wife Susie.

Andy Watson Nov 2014

Ogof Clogwyn



David at Entrance to Ogof Clogwyn

I first went to this cave located in the Clydach Gorge, South Wales in 1972 when I attended Longtown Adventure Centre. The cave leader Bill Gascoigne from Brynmawr Caving Club, passed away a couple of years ago.

The return, 41 years later, was during the 2014 November HSCC trip to Wales. We were staying at the Chelsea Speleological Society caving hut. A small but elite group of scout caving leaders (Dave, Ros, Phil, Sue, Andy, Susie & Ralph), all at various stages of ill health, recovering, injured, knackered or generally not very motivated, which is not a very positive start to a caving club away weekend; but we all persevered and actually did some caving!



Sue in Ogof Clogwyn

We drove to Clydach Gorge via the tramroad trying to remember where to park for access to the cave. We parked near the main road footbridge not far from the burnt down pub, got changed, walked over the footbridge and realised we were a long way from the cave. So we piled back into the cars and parked in the large layby on the left going up the gorge main road. We then walked up the road and climbed down into the gorge and proceeded downstream from the slightly treated sewage outlet. After getting wet gorge walking we climbed out of the gorge and walked down to the footpath that goes across the Devil's Bridge, rather than going up the stream, we staggered uphill to the old quarry railway line road/track from where you can see over to Ogof Craig a Ffynnon. one of Sue's favourite caves in South Wales. We then walked down another footpath on the other side of the small side gorge which led to the base of Clydach Gorge near the cave entrance. Over 2 hours of gorge walking to get to the hole.

After a 2 metre climb and a short crawl, a stream passage with rock shelves goes for about 250m to the main sump. On the way out we explored all the side passages. On the left a short crawling passage to another sump. From near a left hand

bend, a climb up straight on leads to a narrower shelved passage to some gour pools and a decorated bedding plane where you can see daylight from the gorge through a too tight link and a right turn right into some standing height passage which finishes in an old dig with a saucepan at the bottom. Returning to the main passage there are two further short oxbow crawling loops on the left side one of which could be used to exit some 10m further up from the main cave entrance (slim cavers only). We then left the cave after about one hour. A lovely little trip after 41 years.

We then went up the gorge slightly, crossed the stream and climbed up the side near the pylon which brought us out near the layby in which we parked.

Only Sue, Andy & Ralph went caving on the Sunday. They had a 3 hour trip in Agen Allwed visiting the music stand at the end of the Main Chamber.



Agen Allwed

Andy Watson HSCC, MNRC, CSS

HSCC Birthday Weekend - January 2015

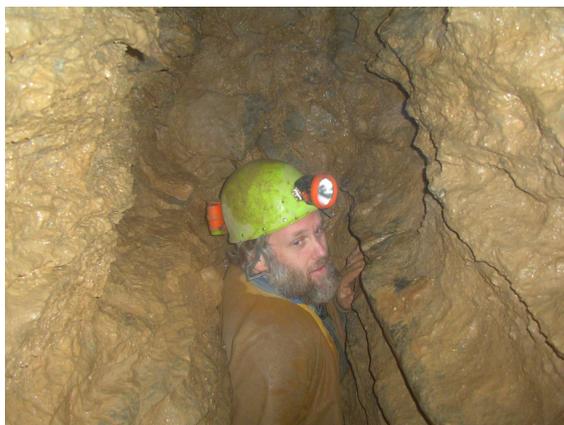
Ralph, Susan, Graham, Sue & Andy went to Manor Farm Swallet, we paid our goodwill fee of two pounds per caver at the farm. Graham went back to MNRC to get his caving kit that he had left by the front door and Andy hunted for his lost gloves. Ralph and Andy rigged the entrance pitch (16m - 2 ladders). Passing the old car wheel on the left we turned right to September Rift which we abseiled. Downstream to Curtain Chamber, then left up the bypass to avoid the six metre pitch at the bottom of the chamber. Down through some easy calcite squeezes and out through the very wet exit (below the 6m pitch from Curtain Chamber). The stream rift passage continues down over the fluted pots which are two 3m



Manor Farm Entrance

climbs on flowstone down in the base of the rift. The short squeeze Albert's Eye is best approached head first, it is very short and rather wet. Graham decided not to progress further and waited for us. We continued down a very wet sloping calcite cascade on which I put two slings. Both Sue's made this look rather difficult before retreating! Ralph and I continued and briefly popped down to the T-junction before turning around and making our way up to the ladies and then Graham. Back through the pitch bypass (getting another soaking) to the bottom of September Rift in which we all slowly huffed and puffed our way up using an assisted hand line and a knotted rope. This short sporting climb would no doubt be assisted by a ladder with rungs to push on! Sue and Susan continued on up to the laddered entrance pitch and Sue lined Susan who went off to the car to get changed and warmed up. Ralph lined Sue up while I sorted out the bags. Sue, being short, could not get off the ladder at the top easily, but eventually managed by pushing off the far wall and swinging across the pitch head to make a bold step on to concrete. We all got up the ladder with arms aching and we de-rigged and walked back across the very muddy field to the car.

On Sunday we went to try Tynning's Barrows Swallet. It was often a problem getting the cave key but the new Mendip Underground has a telephone number for Mrs Reaks of Tynning's Farm, she was off to church but left the key out for us. We could not find the spit hanger points but managed to rig on another point and a backup lifeline to some secure natural anchors. Once down the entrance pipe pitch and through the narrow slot onto the 'immediate' second pitch and through the scaffold bars we regrouped. We continued down a muddy passage with boulders and out into a small chamber, where you drop between two large rocks in the lowest corner to carry on down a nice rift passage to the T-junction. Left is a dead-end, right continues down past two inlets on the right, one closes down quickly but the other goes upwards (Sheep's Jaw Passage); which we explored on the way out of the cave. It goes towards Dragon Chamber via a rather exposed 3m climb, probably useful to have an assisted hand line or two long slings. Mendip Underground seems confused here, but somewhere above the climb is the entrance to Dragon Chamber, as only I climbed the pitch, we did not go further. Carrying on down the main passage for 40 foot or so you reach another T-junction; a short climb on the left leads to a muddy passage and Peyton Place which passes some pretty formations and then splits three ways, which we all admired rather than explored. Downstream we went under 'The Book' and over the Aardvark Trap, a 3m deep pot, where the ladies required some encouragement to make the 'bold step'. Through a squeeze with a puddle and around a snug right-hand bend after which we realised that Ralph had been rather 'over squashed'. After I had checked out the way on (a gravelly wet flat-out crawl), it seemed like a good time to turn around. This was a good call as Tynning's out is up, up and more up and we were all pretty tired by the time we reached the final pitches after 2.5 hours. An enjoyable trip down a cave we had not done for 7 or 8 years.



Dave (not) leaving Dragon Chamber

Andy Watson

Ardeche 2005

This being the tenth anniversary of the club's first trip to France and with the possibility of revisiting the Ardeche next year I thought I would include a summary of the club's first Ardeche trip.

Thursday 24th March. We left Eastleigh after Taff's funeral and headed to Dover, caught ferry to Calais and headed down through France.

Friday 25th March. We continued down France relying on mobile phone communications to keep track of the convoy. More by good luck than any sort of planning met at the services before our overnight destination. We went in convoy from there as only David had the address or directions.

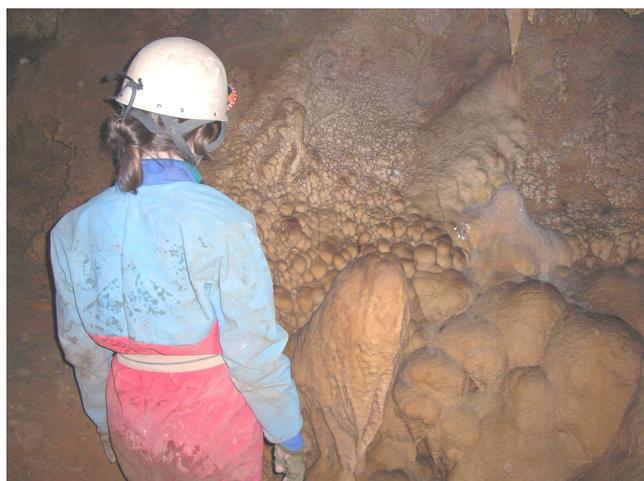
Saturday 26th March. Having tried to persuade the French that you need boiling water to make tea. We continued south to the Ardeche Gorge and then had an interesting tour of various small villages set atop steep hills, with streets marginally wider than the Land Rover but corners that could only be negotiated by "shuffles". We eventually arrived at the gite near Sanilhac and our home for the week.

Sunday 27th March. One group tried Fontaine de Champclos and the other went to Grotte du Barry. We had an interesting few hours scouring the hillside before finding Grotte du Barry, then after squeezing David through the entrance had quite a fun trip. There were some little climbs and a large chamber with lots of formations including a large number helictites. We got out early and went to find Aven des Neuf Gorges, a cave we intended to visit later in the week. Phil and co. had had an enjoyable trip in Grotte de Mont Blanc and its resurgence entrance, Fontaine de Champclos. There was lots of calcite in the cave and newts outside the resurgence entrance. The cave, already rigged with traverse lines, has a huge cavern with 'Mont Blanc' in it and an amazing striped wall. This made a good trip for those not ready for major SRT trips, just a ladder in then cowstails on the traverse lines. Phil attempted to drown himself in the supposed connection to Fontaine de Champclos, shown on the survey, before being told that it had not been open for at least 5 years.

Monday 28th March. Phil led a group round Grotte des Chatagnier (a cave with some interesting traverses and a comedy climb), while the rest toured Grotte de Mont Blanc and Fontaine de Champclos and then went to find Event de Peyrejal.



Gite near Sanilhac



Grotte du Barry



Mont Blanc

Tuesday 29th March. It was time to find Neuf Gorges again. This time we had to negotiate a herd of goats and their goatherd. We did not take the same route, but still found it reasonably easily. The first pitch is in daylight down one of the 9 holes, but as you go down you can see daylight and vegetation in varying numbers of the holes above you (more impressive on the way out). We encountered some wildlife, a not-very-well toad covering on the boulder-slope near the bottom of the cave.

Phil took a group to Event de Peyrejal, where they turned left too early and wandered for ages down a fossil passage finding lots of mud, but failed to find the "classic" phreatic tubes!

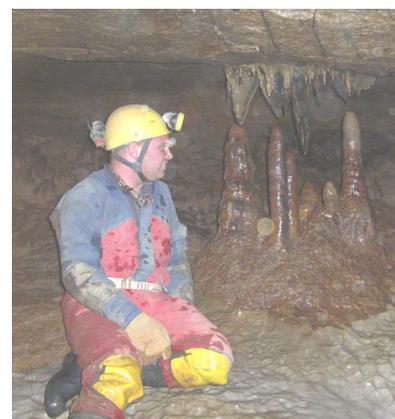


Aven des Neuf Gorges



Ardeche Gorge

Wednesday 30th March. With the weather still fine, we decided to go kayaking to see the Ardeche Gorge from the water. The water level was quite low – but there was still enough to cause amusement. It is a very scenic area, but Dave and Richard were too busy trying to get on waves in the huge sit-on kayaks to notice their surroundings. This caused considerable amusement to the playboaters in their very expensive, posh, diddy boats, all togged up in dry kags and helmets.



Event de Peyrejal

Those who took their caving seriously could not go a whole day without going underground and so took the opportunity to visit Event de Peyrejal. This cave is famous for its "classic" phreatic tubes. They are impressive and worth visiting. Unfortunately the atmosphere was dusty and the photos did not show them up at all well. There were also some large gour pools.

Thursday 31st March. Another day of scouring the Ardeche Gorge, looking for a cave. Event de Rochas looked quite near the road, but we were soon to realise that the entrance was a sheer 100m almost directly below the road – we had to find the way down to the right level then traverse along. The entrance to the cave was a polished slit at the back of one of the many rock shelters lining that part of the gorge. The cave was memorable for long pitches with grim spits and an elephant! Phil, Sue and co chose to go for a pretty cave. They found a non-SRT cave with lots of little waterfalls – Fontaine du Vignal.



Event de Rochas

Friday 1st April. Everyone did various bits of Aven de Despeysse (a fun SRT trip with some impressive pitches and excellent formations) and Grotte de St Marcel (provides access to the show cave of the same name, huge passages with vast quantities of calcite). Some did just the top, some did just the bottom and some did both. Unfortunately we did not have time to attempt the through trip (9 hours if you are fit and know the way).



Aven de Despeysse

Saturday 2nd April. Up early for the long drive back to Calais, ferry to Dover, then home.

Adapted from an article by Ros White

Caving Expressions

You might recognise some of these expressions
and know what they really mean to fellow cavers.
You may have some of your own to add

Navigation:

I know the route
I know a short cut
Oh I'd forgotten about this bit
I don't remember this
This bit looks vaguely familiar
No worries, been in here lots of times...
This way. It's had lots of traffic

Crawls:

There's no crawling
Just a short crawl

Squeeze / tight / awkward:

It gets bigger / easier / wider / taller soon
A little tight
Cosy / Snug
Its not that tight
Esoteric
Just tuck your right ankle up near your left ear
Awkward manoeuvre
Letterbox
It looks worse from this side
But I fit!
Immature passage
Sporting

Time & Distance :

It's a quick trip
We'll only be in there 2-3 hours
It's not far
It's only 20 minutes out
Daylight just round the next bend
We'll be out in time for a pint

Water:

Its not wet
It's a nice, clean-washed passage
It's not more than ankle / knee / thigh deep
A bit damp
Slightly aqueous

Sumps:

Low airspace
A quick tug & you're through

Climbs / traverses:

It's a bit exposed
There's plenty of decent holds.
A bit hairy!
Airy stance

Pitches / SRT:

I'm sure the rope is long enough
An awkward to get off
The deviations easy to reach
Short technical section

Photography:

Just one more shot
Can you stop shivering you're blurring the shot
Don't breathe until I say you can!

Digging:

Today's the breakthrough day
Three more trips...
The dig's about to go
Another couple of feet and it'll be through

Loose:

Don't sneeze for Christ's sake...
A bit loose in places
Tread lightly
Don't touch the roof / walls / floor
Don't look too closely

Grim:

Collector's piece
Dubious passage
For the discerning collector
A must see for passage tickers
Character building
Classic
Interesting
A Mendip cave

Atmosphere:

Air's a bit chewy!

General:

Entertaining
Atmospheric
It has a "little bit" of challenge
You can do it, no problem
Well decorated
What could possibly go wrong?
Near misses make good stories.
It'll be fine.

Andalucia



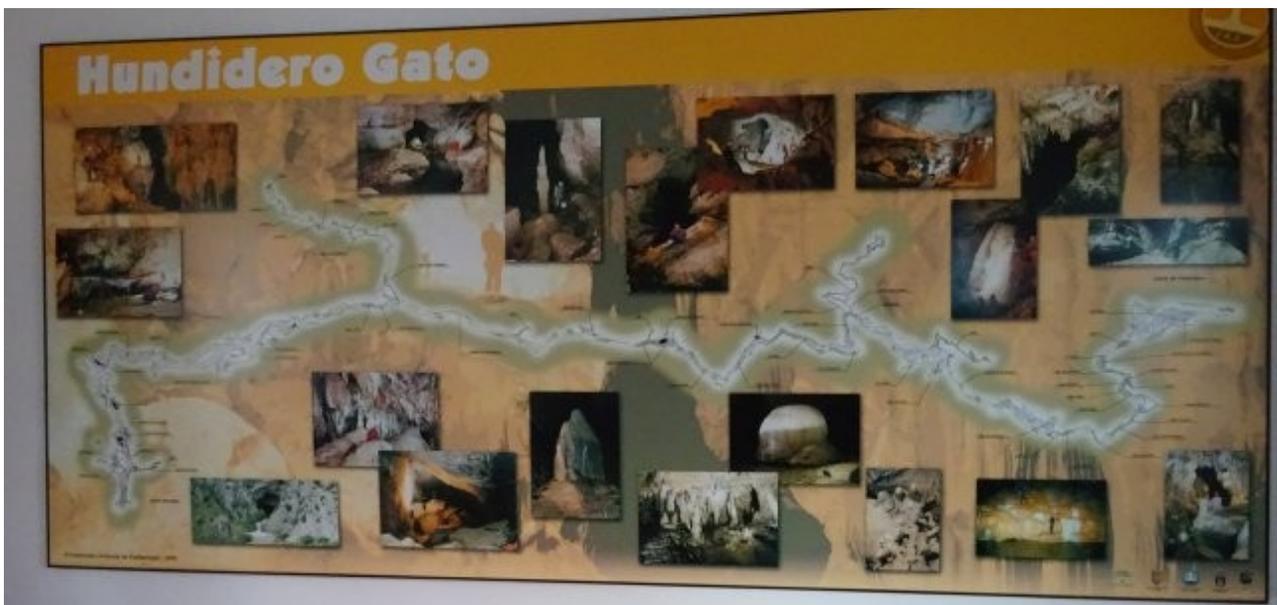
Last April I went, with a friend, for a holiday to Andalucia, in the south-west of Spain. We went for the scenery, flora and fauna, and booked a tiny cottage at the top of Montejaques, one of the "white villages" in the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, an area of karst. Only afterwards did I discover that in the village was the "Centro de Interpretacion de la Espeleologia" - The Caving Interpretation Centre. It was obviously a must to visit.

The Caving Interpretation Centre is a joint project between the council of Montejaque and the Andalusian Federation of Speleology.

There were lots of display panels about the formation of caves and pot-holes, the different cave types, cave fauna etc and cabinets of artefacts, displays of rocks, tools, paleoanthropological remains and caving equipment, both new and old. There were also some videos, mainly about karstic geology and cave exploration, most of which did not seem to work.

The centre had lots of information about the major cave systems near Montejaques, some of which can be visited without caving equipment; namely the Cueva de Gato end of the Hundidero-Gato through cave and La Pileta (a show cave). There are also some deep potholes such as Sima Gesm and Sima del Aire.

The Caving Interpretation Centre was free to visit, but the opening hours are fairly limited. Shame it was all in Spanish!



We went to look at the entrance to **Cueva del Gato** one evening on the way back to Montejaques.



Entrance to Cueva del Gato

It is in a very scenic valley. The trip through from Gato to Hundidero is 4.5km long and follows an underground river. There are huge caverns and underground lakes, but access is with a guide only, and sadly we did not have time to organise that. We decided we could fit in a visit to **Cueva de la Pileta**.



Cueva del Gato

This is a show cave with guided tours. It is only a few kilometres from Ronda, just outside the white village of Benaolan, and not far from Montejaques. In some ways it is quite a spectacular cave system. There are several galleries of cave paintings that are as old as 30,000 years, and were created by palaeolithic people of Ronda before the last great ice age. The steps that climb from the parking (686m altitude) to the Cave (711m altitude) have 101 steps and the visitors route in the cave 243 steps. Not trivial. The cost was e8 each, with groups of 15 – 25. In true Spanish style tours often start late as the guide waits for enough people to make the tour



Entrance to Cueva de la Pileta

worthwhile. Tours start at 10 am and last about an hour. The caves were rediscovered in 1905. A local farmer followed a group of bats because he wanted to collect their droppings to use for fertilizer. The bats seemed to be living inside the mountain. He managed to crawl in to explore and was surprised to discover discover pictures on the walls, pieces of ancient pottery, and human bones. At first he thought the artefacts were from the medieval times, and thinking they weren't important, he



Way up to Cueva de la Pileta

abandoned his search, but in 1911 a retired British colonel heard about the paintings and visited to see for himself and significance of the paintings was immediately obvious to him. Both skeletons and pottery indicated that the cave must have a better entrance and dating indicated that the remains went back to the Neolithic. The son of the man who found the cave managed to find a better entrance in 1924 which is used today.

http://www.cuevadepileta.org/textos_archivos/pileta.html

Ros White – Oct 2015



Cueva de la Pileta - just inside



Quiz – Inside & Out

Match the pairs of pictures

