

Nig Rogers – 26/09/1953 – 03/08/2018

Nig Rogers passed away unexpectedly but peacefully at his home on Friday 3rd August. He is survived by Mary, his wife. He had been an SWCC member since the early 1980s when he was invited to join the club by Bob Hall.

Nig was born and brought up in Middlesbrough. He played a lot of football, like a lot of young boys back then, but went on to enjoy walking the North York Moors and the northern Dales and developed an early interest in caving by exploring the Cleveland iron ore mines near where he lived.

University education took him to Cardiff between 1972 – 75 and he joined the Uni caving club which also had John Lister and Martyn Farr as members. Following his Uni education, he lived in Lancashire and established a reputation as being a keen digger. Nig presented the Cave Rescue Organisation with one of their most complex rescues in 1975, when he dug in, and caused the collapse of the main choke in Crackpot cave in Swaledale. Bones were broken which nevertheless did not prevent an early return to caving, although the leg calliper Nig had to wear must have been a hindrance to him!

He went to Leeds University to do a post graduate qualification to teach, and it was there he joined ULSA, meeting and caving with Martin Lavery, Martin Hicks and the Brooks brothers. He took up a teaching post in Bacup, married Mary and joined the Craven Pothole Club in 1978.

In October 1980 Nig and Mary moved to Wales as he liked the idea that there was lots of relatively unexplored limestone around Brynamman, which is where he chose to live. I first met Nig at a CDG meeting held in Crickhowell that year and we quickly became friends, and with the time available to me due to working shifts, we spent many days exploring the Black Mountain, making lots of small discoveries there, although none were to lead to the ultimate prize of finding the Mynydd Du master cave, which Nig was convinced existed going from Herbert's Quarry to Llygad Lluchwr.

Nig was an accomplished climber, spending much of the summer months doing routes on Gower and Pembrokeshire. He applied his climbing skills to caving and digging and had his big moment of glory on New Year's Eve 1991 in Carno Adit when he traversed over the miserable looking sump at the end of Southern Discomfort, to find and subsequently open up, several kilometres of very challenging cave passages called the Precious Years Series which were discovered with Tony Baker, Dai Hopkins and the late Jeff Bain.

A few years after the Carno extensions were made, Nig joined the explorations taking place at the then newly discovered Ogof Draenen, finding the Underworld Series which was named after a popular computer game. He also found the Galeria Garimpeiros, Gwter Fawr, and the Hearts of Olden Glory streamway plus other passages were named by others, with reference to Nig, (Roger Senseless, The Last Sandwich).

He often went to France for holidays, combining caving, walking, rugby and surfing activities and it was whilst visiting the Lozere that he and the Belgian caver Erick van den Broeck made a significant discovery in an unnamed cave (see SWCC NL 119). He and Mary also explored much of the Serrane area where they did some out on a limb explorations of Le Garrel.

Back home, Nig discovered and pushed the remotely situated Ogof Garimpeiros, finding nearly 200m of loose, bouldery, streamway which had considerable potential to go big. Ogof Serra Pelada was also added to the list of Black Mountain caves.

Aside from caving, Nig's other passions were Welsh Rugby and for a number of years he was the match day program photographer for Pontypridd RFC. His photographic work, often carried out in the gloom of a dark, wet November afternoon was excellent.

In recent years Nig did less caving, although he visited Ogof Marros in the last two years with its discoverer Phil Knight. He devoted much of his time to surfing/bodyboarding around the coast of Gower, Pembrokeshire and Cardigan. He surfed on a daily basis, so long as there was a wave, and would often spend up to four hours in the water, no matter that it was freezing cold in winter.

He held passionate beliefs on cave access which brought him into conflict with those people holding a contra view to his own, but this is not the time or place to reflect on those beliefs.

In the end, I have lost a good friend of many years, and the caving world has lost a true character, who made a considerable contribution to caving during his lifetime. We won't see his like again. RIP Nig, life will be the duller without you.

I am sure everyone in the club will extend their deepest sympathies to Mary, his wife in her bereavement.