

7th April 2019: A day trip to the Gower Peninsula.

With John Cooper (JC) and Danny McCarroll (DM)

Left for the Gower around 08:40, straight over the Severn Crossing as there are no longer fees to pay. Arrived at the National Trust's Pennard Cliffs car park, 2 hours later at 10:40, time to drink a cup of tea. JC turned-up about 11:00, followed 20 minutes later by DM. We set-off along the cliff path to **Bacon Hole**.



Bacon Hole

We followed a feint path through the gorse and bramble, then a scramble down the cliffs, then along the rocky shore, the tide still falling, to the impressive cave opening. At the cave we investigated and discussed the cave sediments mostly dating to MIS5, but possibly some MIS7 are also present. DM pointed out several areas where bone fragments can be located. Within the cave there is plenty of graffiti to be seen too.

We continued along the rocky shoreline to **Bosco's Den**, passing some good exposures of raised beach deposits along the way. At the cave, climbers were enjoying the warm spring sunshine in this sheltered spot. We didn't enter the cave, DM considered it was a bit dodgy and involved a bold step to gain access and we didn't have any kit. From a distance, sediment could be observed adhering to the rock-face.

We continued, west, along the shoreline.



Fragment of animal bone, Bacon Hole



Graffiti, Bacon Hole



Raised beach deposits



Bosco's Den

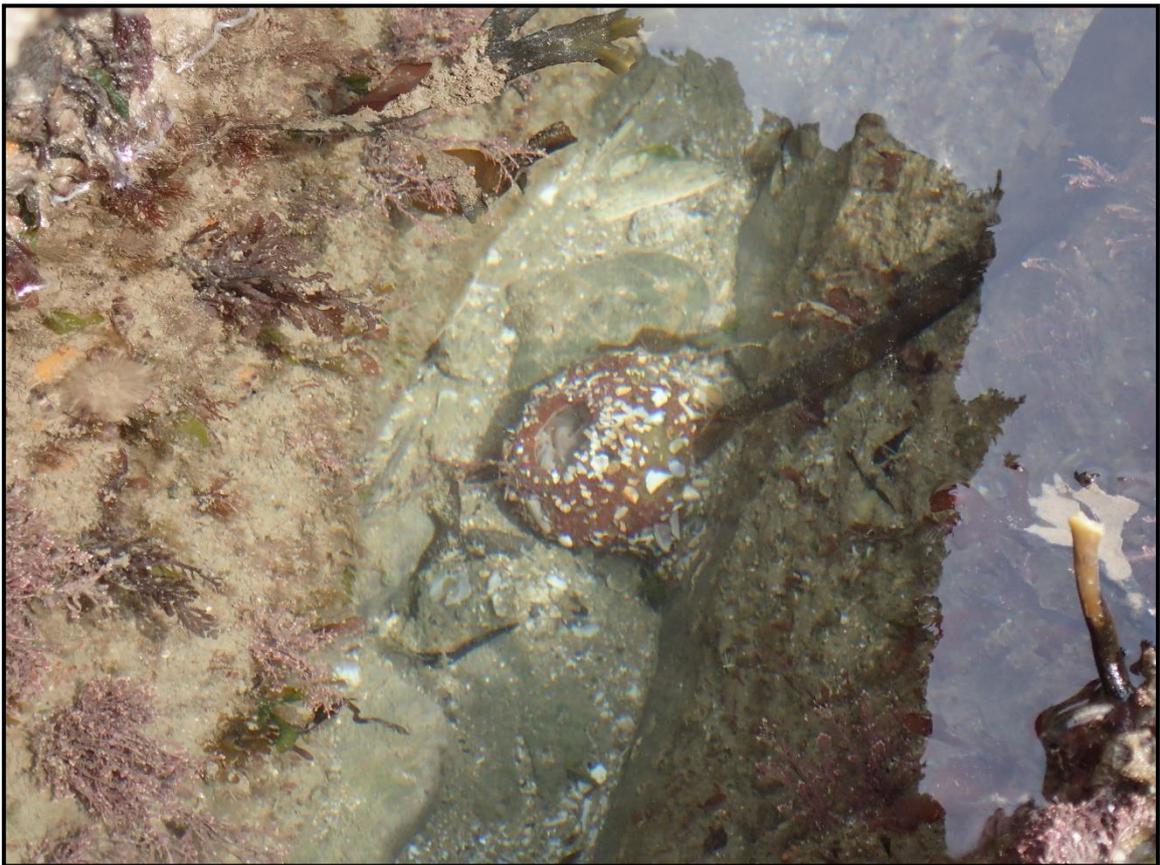
Our next stop was at **Bowen's Parlour**. The cave is entered through a partially collapsed false floor c.0.50m thick, where calcite flowstone has been deposited onto the sediment. There is evidence that the cave had once contained a substantial pool of freshwater, there were 'water' line clearly visible and calcite formations that could only be precipitated in carbonate-rich water.



Bowen's Parlour

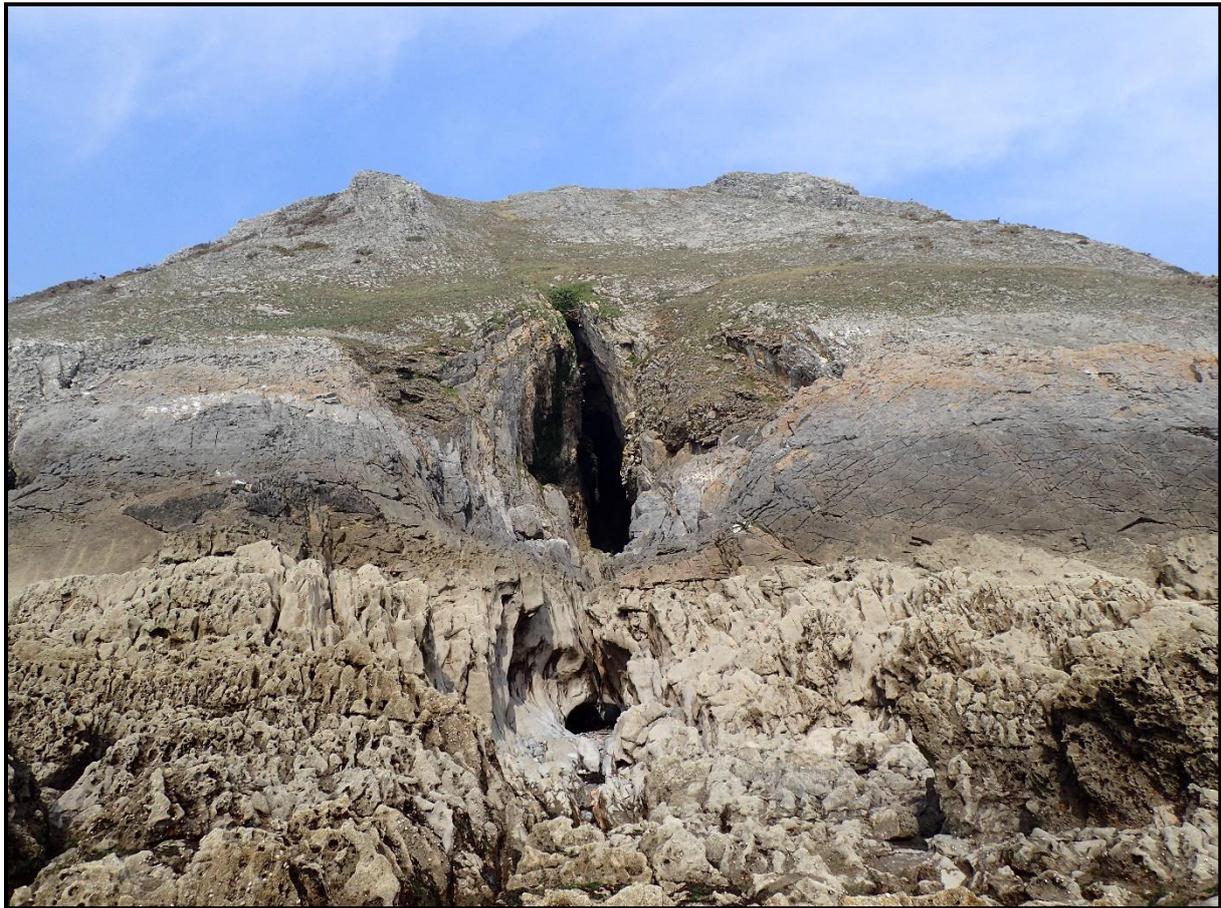


'Water' lines in Bowen's Parlour



Anemone

The final stop of this excursion was at **Minchin Hole**. At the cave entrance DM left us to explore, he was due to travel to Manchester on Monday and had work to do on the presentation he was giving.



Minchin Hole

A scramble up to the entrance, then access is gained to a very impressive, cathedral-like, chamber, c.25m high. I clambered up the steeply sloping mud-packed sediment to the highest point and the view was spectacular. The cave sediments have been subjected to several excavations in the past, we didn't find any animal bone fragments that might remain, although I have to say, I didn't really look that much. I did find a couple of rock dove nests with eggs.

After exploring as much of the cave as we could we left. It was a steep climb back up to the cliff top, had to wait for JC to catch his breath a couple of times, when we reached the cliff top we had a look around at several potential sinkholes where the cave sediments below might have washed into the cave. That done, we made our way back to the NT car park, made some arrangements regarding the next visit to Gower (HT Cave) later in the month and we parted company. A 4½ hour walk, very enjoyable, interesting and informative. I arrived back home at about 18:15.



John Cooper looks at the entrance to Minchin Hole



The chamber, Minchin Hole