THE STEP

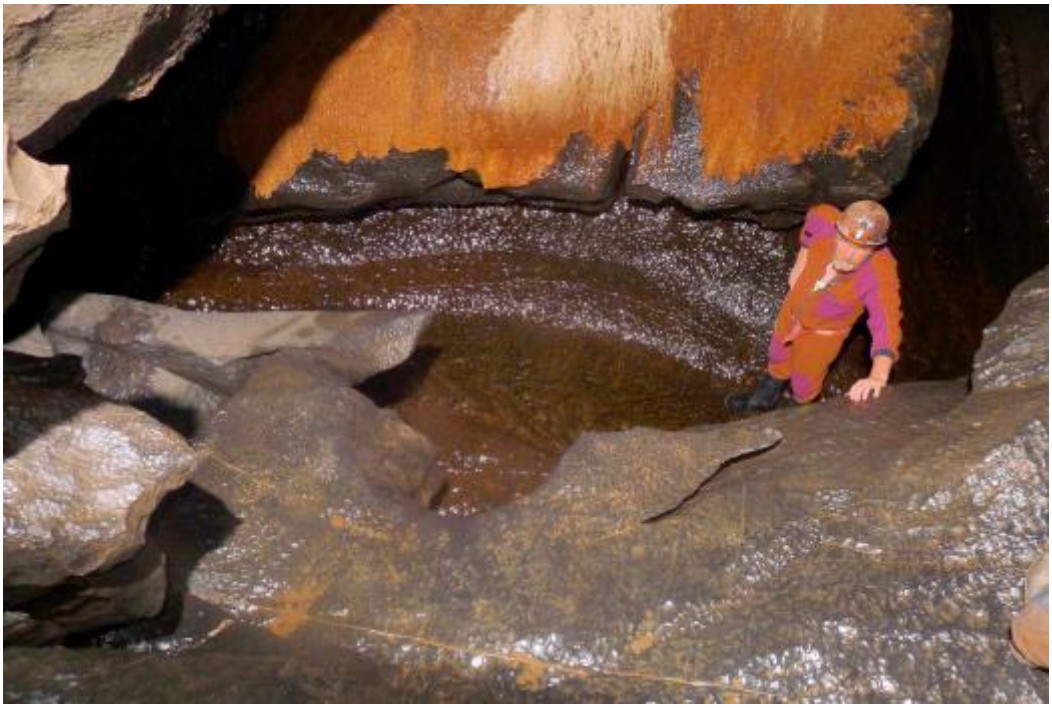
This is important for the safe passage of the Main Streamway in OFDI.

If the water on The Step is 6" (150mm) or more DO NOT enter the Main Streamway.

Explanation

Prior to any entry to the OFDI Main Streamway, the local recent weather and weather forecast MUST be considered. These, together with rainfall data, may be available at SWCC HQ. After wet weather, runoff time is shortened and any additional rain may cause a dangerous flood pulse in the stream. Before entering the Main Streamway in OFDI at any of the possible entry points (e.g. Pluto's Bath) the water level at The Step must be checked.

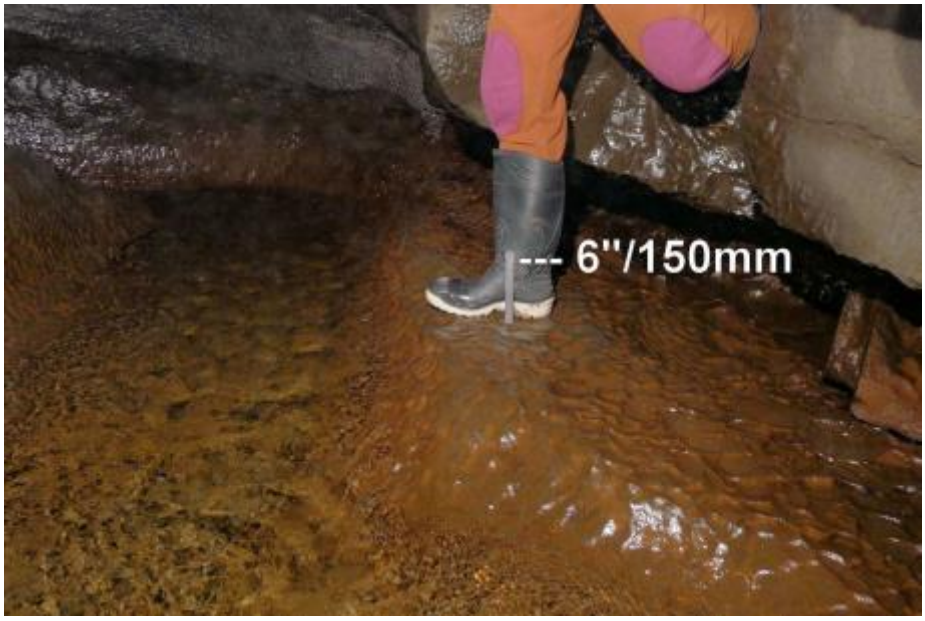
The Step is a small relict pothole in the southern side of the stream passage (see survey and photo) which has been breached by the down-cutting of the stream to leave the floor of the pothole elevated above the present water level.



The level of the water relative to the floor of The Step is may be used as a rough gauge as to whether it is safe to attempt the trip up the passage. If it has not rained in the last few hours, is not currently raining and the weather forecast is good, a rough guide is:

If the water level is **below** the level of the floor of The Step, the Main Streamway may be entered safely.

If the water level is **over** the floor of The Step and not obviously dangerously deep, the height up a leg is used to gauge the practicalities of a trip in Main Streamway. If the water is up to ankle depth, 6" or 150mm, the stream may be entered, but will be very strenuous for novices and only undertaken if the capabilities of the party members are known.



Once water depth reaches calf level the trip should be considered dangerous and should **NOT** be entered.

In any event, it is important that the escape routes out of the water, via Maypole Chain and Low's Chain be known as it is always possible that the stream becomes too difficult to pass safely.

The picture below shows high water conditions in Upper Flood Passage at Low's Chain. It must be borne in mind that Upper Flood Passage does become impassable in high water, as in the photograph. This also illustrates the possible difficulties of climbing out in such conditions.