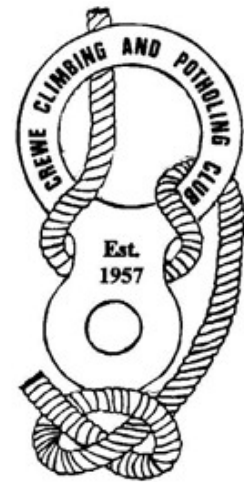




# C.C.P.C. Newsletter 140. November/December 2022

Log on to [www.ccpc.org.uk](http://www.ccpc.org.uk)

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colinknox@btinternet.com



## Planned Club Meets, etc., from November 2022 to January 2023:



### **Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:**

Fri. 25 <sup>th</sup> Nov.	Giants Hole, Castleton, Derbyshire.	Exploring passages above Garlands Pot, plus the Boss Aven Series.
Sun. 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	Minera Mine, North Wales. <i>Alt. Grand Turk Passage (same area).</i>	
Mon. 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	CCPC Monthly Meeting. 8.30 pm. Usually also accessible to Members via Zoom.	'The Red Bull', Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent. ST7 3AJ.
Sat. 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	Winnats Head Cave, Castleton, Derbyshire.	A deep system with a series of challenging boulder chokes, leading to serious SRT pitches.
** ** Dec.	Waterfall Hole, Stoney Middleton, Derbyshire. <i>Alt. Carlswark Cavern.</i>	A complex series of crawls and climbs, with numerous squeezes. <i>A Classic Peak District cave system.</i>
** ** Dec.	A Christmas social walk.	See online information.
** ** Dec	<b>Changed venue:</b> Waterways Swallet, Ilam, Staffordshire.	Deep and complex series of climbs, crawls, and chambers.
Mon. 9 <sup>th</sup> Jan.	CCPC A.G.M. & Meeting. 8.30 pm. Usually also accessible via Zoom.	'The Red Bull', Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent. ST7 3AJ.

Plenty of other trips continue to take place, often organised at short notice. If possible and practical, please let other Members know what you are planning, by using e-mail, and try to support Club trips when you can.

**Steve Knox, Ed.**



### **Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation:**

DCRO team members continue to be ready to assist whenever required, and regular training continues, either at the DCRO base in Buxton, or at cave locations in the Peak District – both underground and on the surface.

<https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireCaveRescue>







Wed. 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	Use of Gas Detectors.	Staden Lane DCRO Base, Buxton.
Mon. 19 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	Team Supper & Training Review.	



# Peak Cavern: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022 Mcshee

Gaz

Six of us had the whole of Peak Cavern to ourselves on Saturday as no other groups were booked in. [There was also a full-day DCRO exercise at Alderley Edge. Ed.] As a new prospective member (Rob) was with us we opted to stick together and do the 'tourist trip', hoping it would be sporting after the rain earlier in the week. Although it was quite wet, it was not as wet as we anticipated, but was still a great wander, as is always the case with Peak Cavern.

		
The old show-cave section.	Approaching 'Surprise View'.	The 'Surprise View' ladder.
		
Down the Main Streamway.	Main Streamway cascades.	Upstream from 'Surprise View'.



Left: Finally, there are always the delights of 'The Mucky Ducks' (again !) on the way out.



Here's the link to my best pictures.  
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/NYivLsuFPaXpTKV6A>

**Gaz**

**Mcshee**



.....  
**Giants Hole: Garlands to Chert Hall:  
November 2022**

**25<sup>th</sup>**

Grace, Gaz and Jenny were planning a trip to Giant's Hole to have a look at a high-level passage leading from the top of Garlands Pot, towards Chert Hall, as Jenny wanted to check the anchors and rope lengths so she could add the route to the CCPC Riggings Guide.

**Background - Steve Knox:**

I was glad to hear that 'my' flyover route, through a roof tube, was getting some attention ! I pointed out that my original anchors might still be there, as I'd never heard of anyone replacing them. When I put those anchors in, a very long time ago, it seemed certain that no-one had been that way before, as the flowstone floor of the passage was pristine. I vaguely remembered using a couple of natural threads in the chert bands on the initial climb up from the right-hand end (facing downstream) of the main Garlands ledge, then I put an anchor in the floor of the roof passage, as far as I could reach, over on the left-hand side, and, with that anchor as protection, I was able to climb up into the passage. I thought the route might provide a useful by-pass to the usual Garlands SRT pitch, or even the alternative (right-hand side) SRT pitch, especially if there was a queue, or if the water was high. I rigged the pitch at the far end of the roof passage, down to the Chert Hall ledges, using a sling through a natural thread, where water dribbled in from above - it was a bit awkward at the top. That pitch definitely needed decent top anchors put in, but all this happened at a time when anchors had been appearing all over the place in the Peak, and so placing further anchors in Giants was a sensitive issue, and I never added any extras.



**Gaz takes up the story - 25<sup>th</sup>  
November 2022:**

Jenny, Grace, Steve Knox, John Preston and I had a trip into Giants today. While Steve and John had a sniff around Boss Aven Jenny, Grace and I had a look at the high-level traverse from Garlands to Chert Hall as none of us had tried it before.

*Left: Jenny starting the initial climb from the lip of the Garland's Pot waterfall, to reach the roof tube.*

After a little confusion over the way on we finally made it, and although it was entertaining, it ended a little prematurely, with only the option of dropping into the

Crab walk to further the trip. However, we had done what we came for and turned back at that point, and met Steve and John at Garlands. They had finished their trip and had come to cheer us on. After a very interesting history lesson on the original way in by Steve (thanks Steve you've made sense of something that has confused me for ages) we headed out to get changed - only for all three DCRO members present to get a call out - to save themselves and me !

Inadvertently we had passed our call out time, and the wheels were in motion. Anyway, we all survived to become a statistic on the DCRO call- out site.

To see all of Gaz's excellent photos go to: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/TJ2f5gJmHjUSPrFr7>



Left: Jenny clipping the anchor at the start of the roof tube.

Below: Jenny moving away into the tube, and Gaz following up to the two anchors which



protect the climb. [Photo: Ed.]

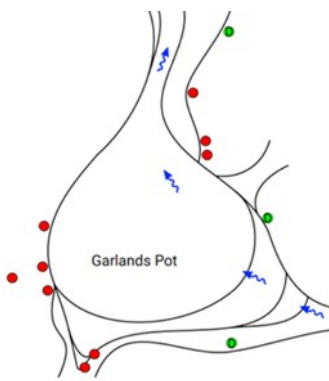
At the end of the roof tube there is a significant inlet, directly above a short pitch.

**Jenny:** We rigged the pitch and dropped straight down from the end of the tunnel for about 4m, to a big ledge, then turned left to continue, downstream, following ledges along the crabwalk above the main stream. The short pitch confused me, as the DCA topo, being a plan view, gave no indication that there was a pitch.

**Steve:** Back at home I had a look at the DCA topo and text description, and concluded that the DCA route was not the route that Jenny's group had been checking !

The DCA description includes: '..... a line of natural anchor points on the right-hand wall can be used to traverse around and **down** to a ledge above the continuation of the streamway below.'





The DCA topo (in plan form) shows a traverse line following the right wall of Crabwalk, but also includes a pair of 'open' lines indicating the start of a passage heading off to the right of Garlands chamber - this must be the roof tube. It seems clear that the DCA topo and description refer to a much lower traverse route, which starts by going **DOWN** at Garlands, not **UP**.

I know it is possible to free-climb the left wall, from the bottom, as I had to do it many years ago (pre SRT), when we arrived back at Garlands to find another party had kindly left our ladder and lifeline nice and tidy on the top ledge, after de-rigging their own tackle. More recently I have seen the low-level traverse route used by instructed groups going from Chert Hall to Garlands Chamber, and ending at the **BOTTOM** of Garlands pitch, which would fit in with the DCA Topo.



**Jenny:** Using one of Gaz's photographs (*Left*), the route back to Garlands chamber, along the DCA traverse route, seems obvious. You can see the water falling on the main Garlands pitch. Grace has just descended from the roof tube. Behind her, you can see a ledge heading towards Garlands, which matches the DCA topo. There is a rib of rock at this end, which would be perfect for a drilled thread, as in the DCA topo, and does match the DCA drawing better. It looks like we did not do the route in the DCA rigging guide. We did an alternative, which climbs up into the roof tube above Garland's, then has a 4m pitch down to the ledges that lead to Chert Hall. The DCA route, we now think, carries round on a descending traverse on the right-hand side of Garlands to reach those ledges. It isn't obvious from Garlands Pot. I didn't

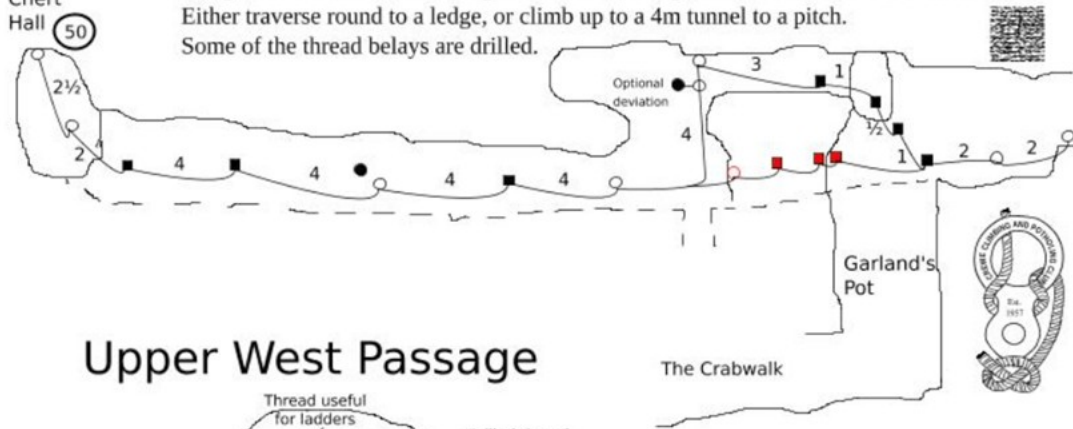
spot any more anchors heading in that direction while there.

I was trying to make the DCA topo fit what we did, which it sort of can be made to do, if you squint at it, but using the ledge makes much more sense, as it matches the DCA topo better and a pitch is not mentioned.

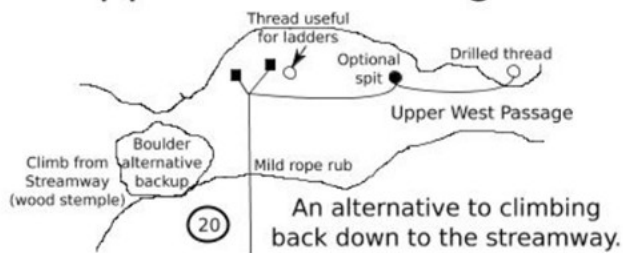
Below is the new topo I've drawn for the rigging guide with the route we did, and my guess of the official DCA route. The extra anchors, based on DCA, needed to do this lower route are in red. Obviously we'll need to make another trip to check them against reality before we publish.

## Giant's Hole topo 3. Castleton Garland's Pot to Chert Hall

A high level route around the right hand side (facing downstream) of Garland's Pot. Either traverse round to a ledge, or climb up to a 4m tunnel to a pitch. Some of the thread belays are drilled.



### Upper West Passage

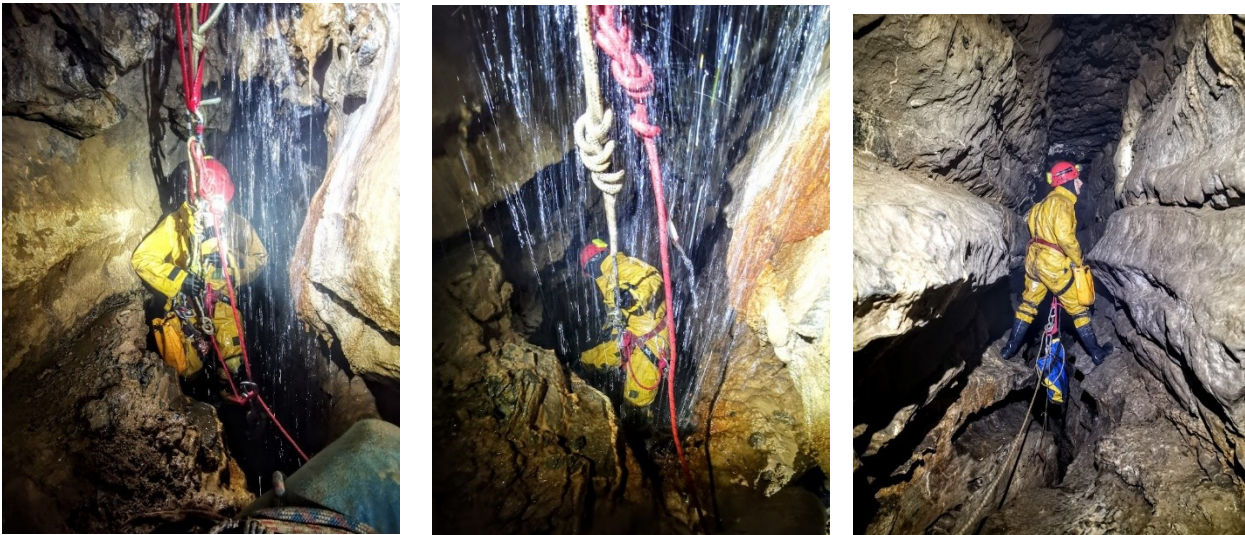


The other new pitch I'm planning to add to the Giants section of the Rigging Guide (included in the topo above) is an alternative descent from Upper West Passage, rather than down-climbing at the wood stemple. This is based on a sketch from Pete Knight. Guided groups of novices use this a lot, so it is fairly detailed.

I've not found much mention of the Garlands roof tunnel route on-line. The only trip report detailed enough to work out where they went was one by Alan Brentnall for the TSG.

Alan has subsequently added his always welcome, and very useful addition to this account:

**Alan Brentnall:** The two "through holes" in the limestone leaf and the set of through bolts leading up to the Garlands By-pass may well have been the creation of some "casket-avoiding elder statesmen" in the past, but were used by me in the early part of this century in an attempt to find a dry route when Garlands was in spate. This came about following two DCRO shouts in such conditions, one of which resulted in a fatality, and I did manage to successfully use the route on a TSG trip when the stream was pretty high - but not as bad as it was in either of the two shouts. It's not bad, but it relies on a natural belay at the downstream end where you abseil back down to the ledge above the stream, and, unfortunately, this belay is situated beneath a small inlet which gets a bit bigger and wetter in the kind of conditions the route was meant to avoid!! We did think that proper bolting could make a better job of it, but that didn't happen. [Possibly something that might be discussed with Pete Knight at some point.]



*Left to Right: Jenny at the top of the 4-metre pitch; definitely a wet descent; and on the ledges towards Chert Hall.*

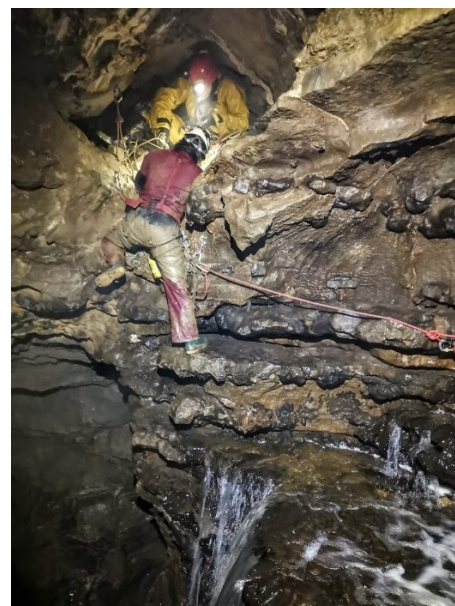
**Alan Brentnall, continued:** The easy traverse along the ledge back towards Garlands has been the subject of quite a bit of discussion at DCA meetings over the years. Originally, I believe, this spit traverse was created by instructors for use with children at outdoor centres, and I've seen it so used. The kids would be hauled up onto the ledge at the Chert Hall end, then they would traverse the ledge using cows tails (after a surface demonstration) and they would be lowered from a through-bolt anchor at the Garlands' end. The spits are beginning to show their age, and the DCA discussions involved centre instructors (PICA) wanting them to be replaced with P-bolts. The arguments against included the premise that this route would never be used by an adult caver, and some considered maintaining a safe spit traverse was useful for expedition training and LMCLA L2 training. I believe that the current situation is that the spits will in fact be replaced with eco bolts, as and when they fail. The rising traverse between the afore-mentioned ledge lower-off, and the top of Garlands, is the old climbing route which was used on odd occasions when cavers returned to Garlands to find their ladder had been removed. It is a feasible free climb, but some of the rock here is suspect. At some point one or two spits have been added to enable this climb to be rigged, but I have found that the threads on one of the spits are so bad that the bolt tends to pop out with unnerving regularity. I discussed with Gaz the rising traverse/climb from the downstream end of the instructor's ledge up to the passage leading to the round-trip Eyehole. In the dim and distant past, I have been involved in an 'Up & Down Adventures' trip with youngsters where the spits on this route were used to provide a cows tail route up to and through The Eyehole followed by a lower back into the Crab Walk. Indeed, I have used this route myself (without rigging) when doing a reverse round trip (my favourite way round!!). However, there is one part of the climb which can be a bit intimidating (without rigging) for shorter folk. When I was involved in a dig up in the Earth Leakage chamber, because of all the gear we were carrying, we preferred to carry on down the Crab Walk and climb straight up - hopefully (but not always) arriving at the old abseil rock and missing out The Eyehole altogether.



**Jenny' final comments:** Recently, within the last two years, or perhaps even the last year, the DCA published their proposal as to where they were going to drill threads and install resin anchors for Garlands to Chert Hall, and above the Crabwalk. Unfortunately, this is either not on the new revamped DCA web site, or I can't find it now, as the search engines haven't updated, and all I get is '404 errors'. I've also deleted the local copy I had, but you can see it being discussed in DCA minutes in 2021. The roof tube was on older anchors and naturals, and there have been spits on the elevated route to Chert Hall for decades (some of them were installed by Steve Knox) but they have been replaced with stainless expansion bolts.

The inlet at the 4-metre pitch natural belay, along with other inlets, had a lot of percolation water going down on Friday. We got soaked. Just knowing that the option is there, then a couple of bolts could be put in if needed on a shout. The rock on the right-hand wall, over the pitch, didn't look too good, but the left-hand wall seemed fine.

Thanks to Alan for the background to the traverse. It would be really easy for most of the way.



Left: Jenny at the Chert Hall end of the traverse.  
to the top of Garlands.

Right: Grace exiting the roof tunnel, back

**Steve Knox:** I spent some time looking through my collection of 'Giants' material, and discovered a couple of interesting items:

The Giants Hole write-up by Les Salmon in BSA Cave Science, Volume 4, No. 25 (1956), includes a contemporary survey of the known passages at that time, and, although the Garlands Pot roof tunnel isn't shown on the plan view, it is indicated on a passage cross-section. I immediately thought that, as it was included, it must have been explored, however, there are references to it in the text which indicate that it was noticed from Garlands, but not entered:

*Page 8 - 'GARLANDS POT:*

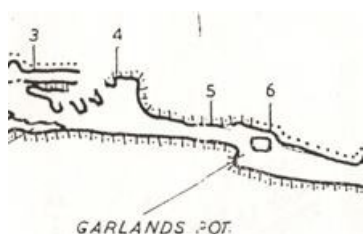
*At the head of the pitch a shelf is washed out in the bedding to the north [leads to October Aven], whilst on the south side, an inaccessible bedding cave opens in the roof, the probable continuation of the old cave prior to the pot's erosion.'*

*Page 9 - 'GARLANDS POT AND LOWER STREAM CANYON:*

*[Heading downstream from Garlands] ..... a small chamber is soon reached - Chert Hall ..... At any point along the stretch just covered one can climb into*



the roof and so attain a much wider bored passage, oval in section, and the remnant of the old cave, communicating as before with the stream canyon [Crabwalk] along its full length. In an upstream direction one is brought to a halt on a wide shelf platform, overlooking the pitch [Garlands] and somewhat below the level of its lip. Here an accumulation of debris from above suggests an inlet in the roof. Sure enough, an aven discharges a shower of water from a rift cutting across the passage in a north-south fracture line. At the top can be seen a wide low passage on the north side, probably the point of entry of the old top series before the pitch was eroded.'



**Conclusion:** The early BSA explorers saw the roof tunnel opening at Garlands, and saw the probable end of the tunnel above the upstream end of the Chert Hall ledges where the inlet comes in, but never entered the passage. The passage shown here, side view, on their survey of 1956, marked 6, was probably based on assumption.



Left: John prusiking up the main Boss Aven pitch. (Photo: Ed.)

**Boss Aven Series - Steve Knox:**

While Jenny, Grace and Gaz were playing above Garlands Pot, John and I went back upstream to the flowstone boss which indicates the entry of the Boss Aven Series from above. It was good to find a fixed rope on the initial climb up from the stream, as I'm getting too old and stiff for the usual free-climb, and as is commonplace these days, the main pitch up the massive, hanging stal-curtains, was also rigged. Both ropes looked to be in reasonable condition, although I'm always very cautious about ropes 'left in place' - on a previous trip up Boss Aven, a few years back, I was happily prusiking up the main

pitch, but seemed to be making very slow progress, then I reached the ragged end of the rope's outer sheath, and was faced with just the inner core strands for the last couple of metres ! The sheath had completely failed, and by then was bunched up somewhere below, against the knot in the end of the rope. I removed the damaged rope and (sadly) left my spare rope rigged there when we left. Fortunately there were no such surprises on this visit.

**The 'Call-Out' - Jenny:** 'Our call-out person was very prompt - no problem with that. I 'phoned three minutes past our due time, as soon as we got back to the cars, but the 'phone was engaged, as he talked to the 999 handler! Oops... Fortunately, we were able to cancel the call-out before too many people left home/work.'

**Text:** Various contributors. **Photos:** All provided by Gaz Mcshee, unless otherwise credited.



## Minera Mine, North Wales: December 2022

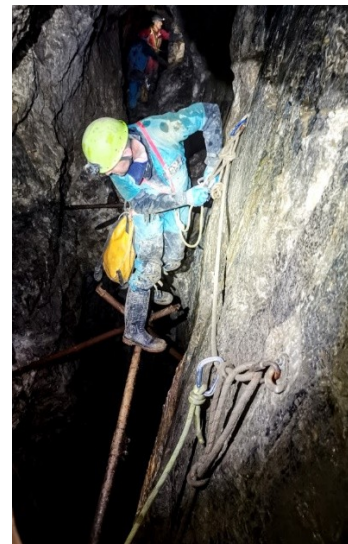
4<sup>th</sup>

### Gaz Mcshee



Seven of us turned up for the Minera Mine trip [Gaz, Darren & Neil Conde, Dan Leather, Jack Lingwood, Rob Nevitt, Steve Pearson-Adams] I never knew that Wrexham had so much underground, but before we left the carpark a lifetime of caving on one hill had been described to me by Darren, all I need now is the time to discover it. We all dropped the short but roomy shaft into the main chamber and wandered off into the huge maze of passages which formed the old lead mine. You soon become aware of the amount of 'shonky' timber still holding back tonnes of waste rock from over two centuries

ago and you don't stand around underneath for too long, just in case today is the day your helmet gets to protect your dental records for identification purposes. Fortunately, we all survived .



The list of death-traps got longer as the trip went on, with questionable ladders missing a rung or two, rusty scaffold poles protecting huge voids and dubious mallions tacking even more dubious rope to the wall via loose hanger plates. The squeezes were a welcome break from the danger and made for great fun, as the old boys held their own against the newcomers.



After about six hours we all emerged back into the semi twilight and headed off to the pub for a recap on the day, and on other matters caving related, before heading home.

Thanks Darren for all the knowledge you passed on over the course of the day, and for making sure we all found our way out again.



Gaz's extensive set of photos and video clips can be found at:  
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/nKXocXEhByYWoNfbA>

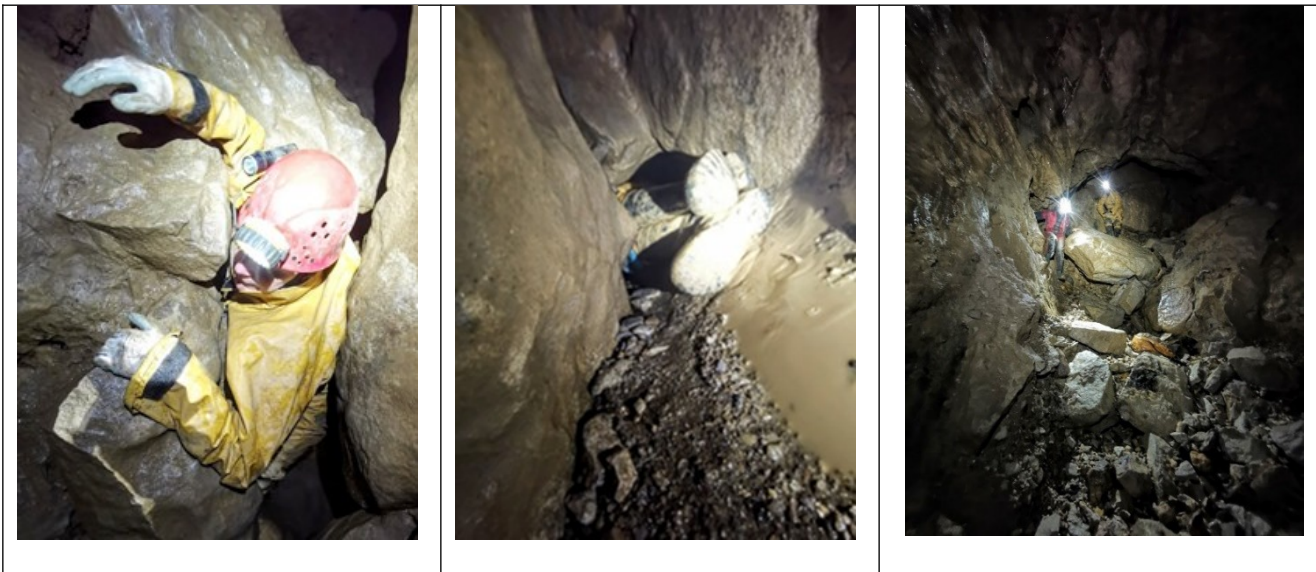


**Winnats Head Cave, Castleton:  
December 2022**

**10<sup>th</sup>**

**Gaz Mcshee**

Three of us [Gaz, Jenny Drake, Grace Chu] turned up for this additional trip to the Crewe calendar, so that Jenny could collect more information for the rigging guide. Our goal was the Upper Streamway pitches, which meant that all the full horror of Winnats had to be passed in order to gain access. I'm not going to lie, I over-thought the whole thing, as usual, and had a restless night's sleep leading up to it. All the usual, 'If the choke slips past Foxes Chamber you will die alone in a cave'; 'If you get injured past the first boulder choke, no one will rescue you, and you will die'. It sticks with you, the read-up for this cave, oh, and then there are the squeezes, also things of legend and popular mythology. We dropped into the large cave entrance, and almost immediately we were forced down into an uncomfortable passage with a rocky floor, that made progress a little uncomfortable, and soon got to the first little chamber. Then, it was on through the 'Fatman Filter' into easier passage, and more gentle squeezes into the Main Chamber.

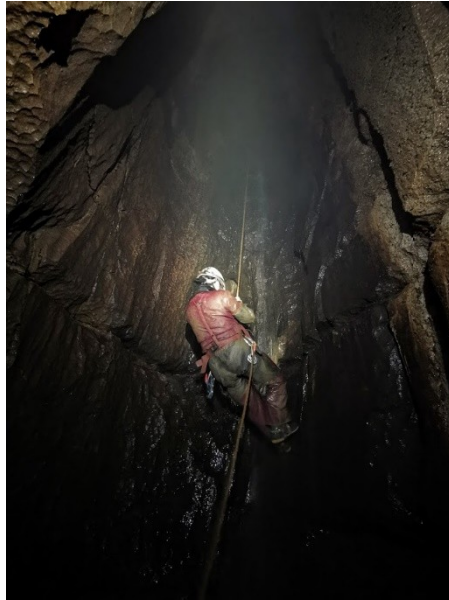


This was pretty easy, I thought, given its fearsome reputation. I was confident now, and the fear had left me. The next squeeze however, into the boulder choke, quickly quashed any hope of an easy ride, as I got well and truly jammed, and getting out again was as hard as trying to get through. After what seemed like an age I made it out and let Jenny take the lead, as Grace had gone through like water down a plug hole. Jenny made it



through with a little trouble but now I had to go again, or the trip was over for me.

Off came the oversuit, and from then on it was wetsuit caving all the way. Again I got stuck, but in one last attempt I let every ounce of wind out of my chest, and very slowly I slid past and re-joined the others. The rest of the difficulties passed without any problems, and I was a little disappointed at how relatively simple all the fearful difficulties I had built up in my head, actually turned out to be.



The pitches were fun, winding off into the roof, and following the ever-present streamway, and even through it in places, via a spiders' web of rigging. Then at the top, there was a beautiful, delicately decorated chamber, with the streamway trickling gently through. By then the cold was setting in, due to the constant wet and dry cycles through the stream, so off we set, down and back to the Sewer and

our path of retreat.

*Left: Grace demonstrating her SRT skills.*



Strangely, getting out, although an effort, was surprisingly easy, and all the obstacles passed without effort, and all too soon the only obstacle left was the Vice-like guardian blocking the way into the Main Chamber. Grace struggled, which wasn't a good sign! Jenny went next and got stuck, so I had to act as a step to help her force her way through, taking a kick to the face in the process, and then it was all on me. To my surprise I levitated through without an issue, and

was reunited with my oversuit before exiting into a snowy Castleton twilight, after a trip of around six hours. Cheers Jenny and Grace for a very memorable trip and some very bruised ribs today.







All photos courtesy of Gaz, with more at:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kXw1ZMbUaBCBiBn8>

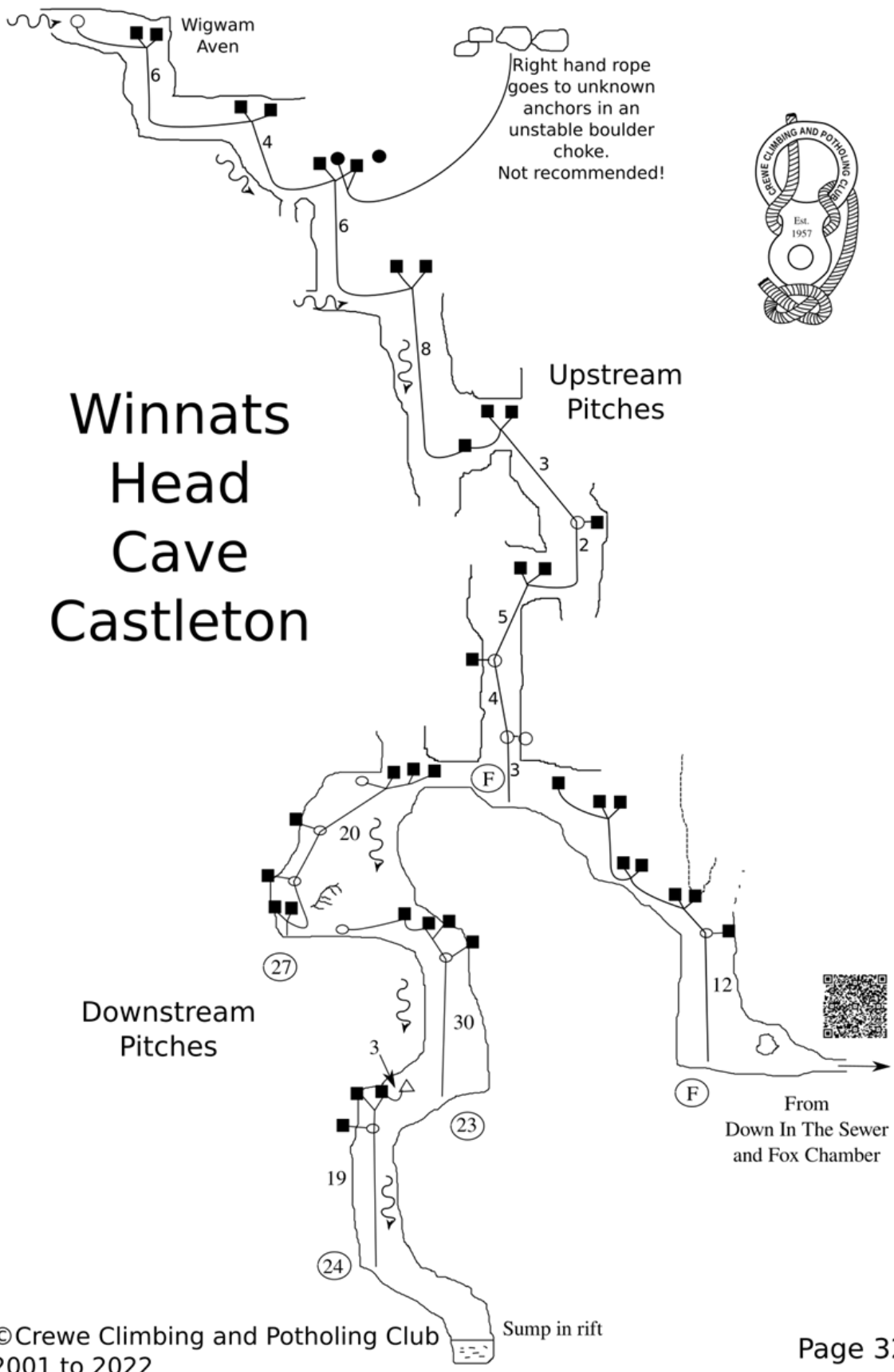
*[It's good to actually see a photo of Gaz 'at the sharp end' ! No doubt he was too busy to hold the camera for this shot. I particularly like the 'Richard III look', with a little 'battle blood' included for effect. **Ed.**]*

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**Hot off the Press !**

**- the latest CCPC Rigging Guide Topo - thanks to Jenny and her trusty team of helpers.**

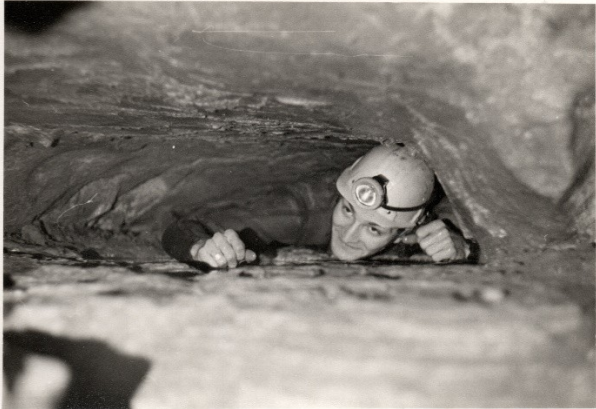



©Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club  
2001 to 2022

**From the Archives:**



Most Club Members will be familiar with some of the more notorious ‘pinch points’ in Peak District caves, in particular if you happen to be at the bulky end of the body size range ! I immediately think of ‘The Vice’, and ‘The Bung’ (such excellent descriptive names), but despite it being well used by cavers (if my identification is correct), I’ve never heard this particular location (below) referred to as **‘The Wringer’**. The name is written on the back of a photograph in my collection, passed to me by a club member, sadly no longer with us.

	
<p>1. Caption: Stan Kowalik in ‘The Wringer’.</p>	<p>2. Caption: ‘The Wringer’. (<i>Spot the boots !</i>)</p>

The photos were obviously taken on the same occasion. Photo 2 also has the location named, and the date, ‘1957 or 8’, which seems impossible, as ‘Stan’ is wearing a wetsuit, and a helmet and lamp combination, which, by style, would more correctly indicate the 1970s (I know that I made my first wetsuit during late 1971, when they were just becoming more widely used underground – see this Newsletter back cover).

Incidentally, Stan didn’t join CCPC until 1974 (I think these photos were taken on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1974), and he first paid his Membership Fee in January 1975. He last paid in 1982. I’ll be glad to know if anyone can positively identify the cave, and the location within the cave, and if the name is still known and used. (No prizes !!)

**Steve Knox. Editor**

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 .....  
**Club Changes:**

Just before the CCPC Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December, our ‘temporary’ Club Secretary, **Nigel Cooper**, informed us that he was reluctantly giving up his post, due to ongoing family health issues, but would remain a Club Member, and would join in Club activities whenever possible.

We owe a huge debt of thanks to Nigel for all his hard work on our behalf, a sentiment fully supported by those involved in the Meeting. **Thank you.**

It is the quiet, behind the scenes, commitment of such individuals which has enabled our club to continue to function, particularly during the trials of the ‘Covid Years’. We all benefit from the work of our club officers – Secretary; Meets Secretary; Treasurer; I.T. Specialists (near & far); Equipment Officers; Training Officer – and all who step forward to help the Club in other ways.

**[Next AGM is on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.]**

**Thank you all.**

**Ed.**

.....  
 My thanks to everyone who contributes to the CCPC Newsletter [this time **Gaz**

seems to have sharpened his pencil and got stuck in], with text, photos [**Gaz** again], additional comments [thanks **Alan**], etc., and also to those who acknowledge receipt afterwards. All errors, changes, or corrections are mine – my apologies. Once again: **a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year** to you all ! **Steve Knox, Editor.**

.....



# SOME GIRLS...

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Back covers of Descent Magazine, No.12 - May/June 1970 (left), and No. 16 - Jan./Feb. 1971 (right) . Sadly, Aquaequipment went out of business, many, many years ago. I'm not sure if the advertisements would be considered 'politically correct' these days. Everything changes ! Ed.