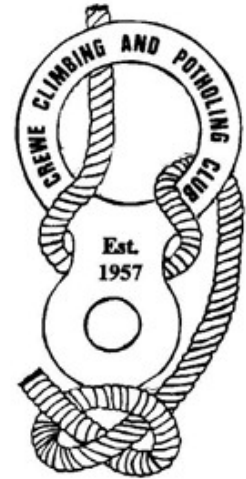


# C.C.P.C. Newsletter 147. July - September 2023

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

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## Planned Club Meets, etc., from July to September 2023:

Sat. 15 <sup>th</sup> July	Croesor to Rhosydd through trip, Tanygrisiau, North Wales. <i>Alt. Out Sleets Beck Pot, Penyghent, Yorks.</i>	Classic route through two linked slate mines, including 'delicate' traverses. <i>Weather dependent ! Crawls and SRT pitches which can be awkward and wet.</i>
20 <sup>th</sup> July – **** August.	Multi Club/ Multi Nationalities, <b>Gouffre Berger</b> Meet, Autrans, France.	GB is a HUGE, world-class system !!!! –plenty of other caving in the area, plus walking, canyons, bike trails, etc..
Sun. 30 <sup>th</sup> July	Simpsons / Swinsto, Kingsdale, Yorks. <i>Alt. Heron Pot, Kingsdale, Yorks.</i>	Both are Classic SRT through trips, exiting through Valley Entrance. <i>Through trip if water levels permit.</i>
Mon. 7 <sup>th</sup> Aug.	CCPC Monthly Meeting (also on-line via Zoom)	The Red Bull, Butt Lane, Nr. Kidsgrove 8.30 pm.
*** **** Aug.	Smeltmill Beck, Brough, Yorkshire. <i>Alt. P8/Jackpot, Derbyshire.</i>	Wet/cold entrance series but well worth persevering (I'm told). Wet suit recom.
*** **** Aug.	Old Ash Mine, Matlock, Derbyshire. (also Lords & Ladies Mine close by.) <i>Alt. Slaley Sough, Matlock, Derbyshire.</i>	Interesting cave/mine system, with optional 46 metre shaft entrance. <i>Interesting mine complex (not a sough !) about 700 metres long. No SRT.</i>
Mon. 4 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	CCPC Monthly Meeting.	As above.
<p>Plenty of other 'unofficial' trips continue to take place through the year, often organised at short notice, and sometimes mid-week, or evenings. If possible and practical, please let other Members know what you are planning, by using e-mail, and try to support Club trips whenever you can. <b>Steve Knox, Ed.</b></p>		



**Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation:** DCRO team members including a number from CCPC, continue to be ready to assist whenever required, and regular team 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>

### Planned DCRO Training:

10<sup>th</sup> July – Engineering.

\*\*\*\* August – Surface navigation.

2<sup>nd</sup> September – Open Day.

19<sup>th</sup> July – Underground hauling.

\*\*\*\* August – Stretcher handling.

\*\*\*\* September – First Aid.



## Gear Notes: Something to consider (seriously !)

Rob Nevitt:

'After a conversation with Steve PA yesterday about wear on a descender, I compared a newer one with mine. It's time for a change after 13 years; quite an eye opener seeing the comparison !'

Alan Brentnall:

'Surely Petzl aren't *still* making old-style Stops, are they ? They look like this now - have done for years !'



Oops – spot the 'slightly worn' item !



2019 version – priced around £100 (varies)



## South Wales Week-end

16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023



Late addition from Nicola:

Group photograph from the South Wales weekend.

Left to Right:

Steve Pearson-Adams,

Dan Baddeley,

Nicola Wellings,

Neil Conde,

Mark Krause.

Heather Simpson was there too (the photographer ?).

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## Croesor to Rhosydd through trip.

15<sup>th</sup> July 2023  
Gaz Mcshee

Not often can a trip draw such interest, but this one did. Eleven of us braved a very wet day, which almost guaranteed that we would be wet even before we hit the underworld, and as we stared at the downpour through the cafe window things were looking grim. I, however, had the foresight to bring my oil skin so that I was going to be dry, no matter what.

As we left the cafe things got worse. The sky opened, and boy did it rain, right up until we had to get changed at the parking area, and then it stopped.

All the others then decided it was a great time to criticize my choice of attire. Dan reckoned I was going trawler fishing, and Neil jumped in with 'boil in the bag'. No problem I thought, I'll get the last laugh on the way up.

**The approach:** Off we all set for the hour and twenty-minute walk up an atmospheric looking Welsh mountain to the Croesor adit entrance. The rain stayed off, and the hill got steeper. Then the sun came out and my pants got wet ! Why on earth did I pack this sweat suit ?



The old workings that we passed on the way up are beautiful in themselves, and looked all the more impressive in the gloomy, damp conditions, giving a real sense of the toil that took place here during the last century.

Dan, being the young sprite that he is, led the way over the mountain top, and then lost his leg in a bog. Shock, horror, whatever shall we do ? I know. thought I, I'm going to laugh and take the mickey. Need a trawler man now, don't you, I could fish you out !

Surprisingly, he managed to survive with his wellie still attached to his foot, and set off again, hoping no one saw, but we all did Danny Boy, ha ha ha. One down, one to go, but you will all have to wait until later for the downfall of the other individual.

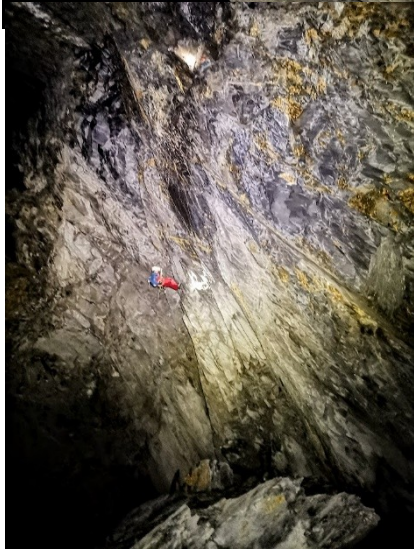
Finally, having reached the adit entrance, we kitted up, and in we went, glad to finally get out of the howling wind, which was inverting a waterfall on the other side of the valley as we looked across.

**Underground:** The entrance is pretty straight forward, with a few points of interest to break up the journey to the head of the first pitch, which marks the beginning of the real reason we all turned up. Now it was time for 'Ninja Warrior' !

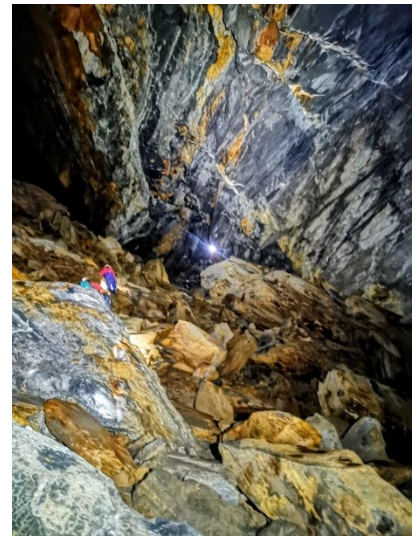




The first pitch is amazing; thirty metres or so into a cavern that goes up nearly as far, and across nearly as far, and is easily three times as long. The floor is covered with roof collapse, leaving boulders the size of cars to negotiate, making for a real adventure just to escape the first obstacle. We all made it down, descending like a row of ants down the precipitous wall and onwards to the next challenge.



Pitch Two is grim; not as big as pitch one, but still big, and 'unpleasant' doesn't really do it justice. Nothing really works as you would like it to, and you have to line the rope up with edge protectors whilst the lay of the land tries to pull you away from them. All of this is on well-polished, and beautifully slippery, wet slate, sloping away at a less than comfortable angle. Once safely down, you again land in an awesomely gigantic cavern, this time with caravan-sized



boulders that have parted company with the roof, and make for an interesting escape to the next challenge.

Now the game changes, and from here on the obstacles are roped between rooms, connected by short tunnels. The first of these is an 'either-or' challenge; you walk the rope, or zip the rope, the choice is yours. Jenny was already over when I arrived, so I don't know which she chose, but Dan was a solid rope walker, pacing it out to the ledge on the other side.

My turn next, and I don't do 'walks in the park', I do 'you only live once so live it well' - that puts me firmly on the zip wire. So up the ladder I go, and get my gear set ready for action.



Now here is how the zip wire is supposed to work: You connect in, you let go, you slide down the rope until you hit the bottom of the loop, before ascending, which slows you down, to the finish. No ! I connected in, I took a running jump, and yes, I was flying ! - and then I was really flying !! - and then, about halfway over, it dawned on me that there was no braking loop of rope; there was however a braking wall of slate, and by now I had reached terminal velocity !

I seem to remember some distant shouts of fear and trepidation from the ledge that I was now approaching at a cosmic level of velocity, and as

time warped around me, I put out my hand and braced for the inevitable.

Now I have a guardian Angel, I'm not a believer in God by any means, but I do believe in my guardian Angel (that's why she gets a capital A). So, I'm travelling headlong into a solid wall of rock at a ridiculous speed, with only my hand to save me. It hits the rock and my arm collapses. My elbow hits the rock, and a sharp pain shoots up my arm. My body catches up with my elbow a split second later, and is thrown backwards somehow, without a scratch. I'm now traveling the other way again and at a speed that would probably leave me back on the ladder ready for another go, when, by some miracle, I managed to latch on to something and found myself standing safely on the ledge with Dan and Jenny looking at me as if to say what just happened? Now I can tell you definitely that I'm not a cat, as I've survived well over nine death threats now, so it can only be the work of the universe's best guardian Angel!

Next up was the rickety bridge. Straight out of 'Scooby Doo', this safe 'rite of passage' has no scaff tag, and no warning signs, so obviously we are all going to turn round and go back the way we came, right? No! trip, trap, trip, trap over the rickety bridge we all went, and on to the next challenge.

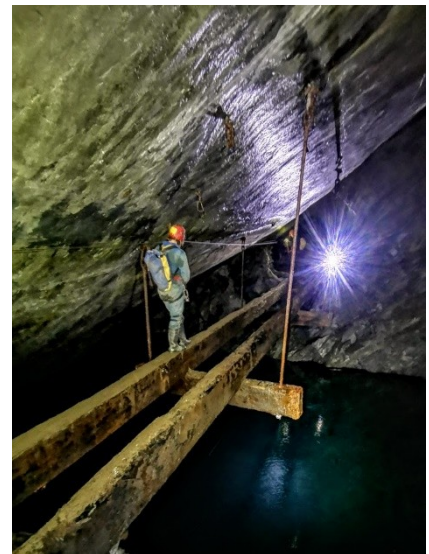


After a bit of mine exploring in some amazingly huge rooms we all arrived at the next obstacle - 'walking the plank'!

Once the path of a suspended railway, and now the path of psychotic cave and mine explorers, you get to walk across a piece of timber that is so rotten you can feel it squishing under your feet, suspended below the roof by some weird Victorian witchcraft. At its

far end, barely enough of it survives for you to stand on safely. There is an ominous rock too, as you progress along the beam, which focuses your mind somewhat on the decaying anchor points fixing your pathway from the roof.

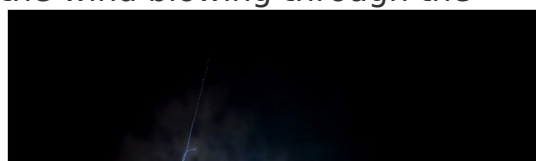
The beams in the next room had already departed to a watery grave in the flooded cavern below, forcing us to traverse on ledges around the walls of the cavern at high level, and although it was easy enough, you had to keep your wits about you, as there would be no way out if you fell into the icy blue water below.



The next flooded chamber, to everyone's surprise, had an old mine cart still perched on its tracks sitting where it was left when the mine closed in 1930. This chamber led to a

partially collapsed bridge which was traversed by a hanging rope walk, and which led to the main event, the boat trip.

Having heard that the boat was usually inoperable, Grace had packed a one-man inflatable canoe and pump. True to form, the boat was stuck halfway across, and like a true trooper, Jenny took to the high seas and precariously freed it off, before disappearing into the darkness to deflate the canoe. Now at this point the wind blowing through the



tunnel was pretty strong, and the boat trip was a fairly drawn-out affair. The first man abseils into the boat and holds it in place for the second man to lower himself into it, then they row across the lake before disembarking on the other side. They then climb up the wall while the boat is tugged back for the next pair. This process led to the cold setting in for all the party members on both sides of the lake. After making the awkward traverse off the pitch head, onto the ledge, I found Jenny hiding in a side passage, and the others huddled behind the partially demolished wall between Croesor and Rhosydd mines. Having no room to sit, I climbed into Rhosydd and as if by magic the wind stopped - well, maybe not magic, just a bit of Venturi action.

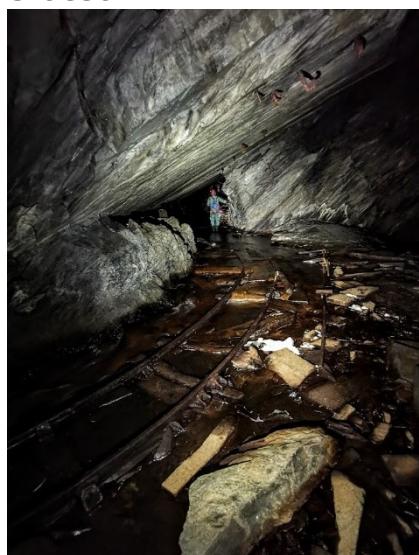


Finally we were all across, and off we set into the huge collapse which is Rhosydd Quarry. Initially the



rooms stretch up into the darkness in an impressive fashion, but eventually you are forced to grovel over the boulders, on rock falls that look all too fresh. High up above, the ceilings of the chambers give way to the cold light of day, and the grim weather outside, which was all too apparent.

After struggling through the boulder fields for an age, we finally got to the inclines leading down to the exit adit, and from there on, the historical artifacts were everywhere, making for a totally different experience to the one in Croesor.



The Exit adit is about a quarter of a mile long, carrying a stream all the way, and you can see the exit getting closer and closer as you walk on. As I got to the entrance, the amount of rain we had missed became very apparent, not only by the cascade curtain at the entrance but also by the streams and torrents which were visible everywhere. It was time



for my 'Boil-in-a-bag' oilskin to strike down his second hater. My lovely, yellow trawler-suit kept me lovely and dry all the way back, while Neil got a drenching (so did the others, to be fair, but they were just a bit of collateral damage, caught in the crossfire).

This was an absolutely awesome trip, and with so many people, a great 'crack' was had by all. Thanks for the company and a great trip everyone.

A link to the rest of my pictures is here if anyone has time to look at them all. I'm pretty pleased with some of them for a change. Enjoy and stay safe.

**Gaz Mcshee**

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/n9DtG2aLrvPS2gXH8>

*All text and photographs courtesy of Gaz - thankyou for your frequent contributions.* **Ed.** \_\_\_\_\_

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31<sup>st</sup> July 2023: News from France; four CCPC members have successfully descended the **Gouffre Berger**, as part of the international clean up expedition. Congratulations to them on this caving rite of passage.

We will look forward to hearing, and reading, all about the trip (hint, hint !! - **Ed.**)

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**Simpson's Pot, Yorkshire**

**30<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**Jenny Drake**

An old favourite had reappeared on the meets list for July. A perfect time to do this sporting trip, with low water levels, and a minimal risk of flooding you'd have thought. Unfortunately, July 2023 has been a wash-out in the UK, in contrast to the apocalyptic heat wave and wild- fires in southern Europe. The weather forecast here was changing from hour to hour, with Sunday's prediction swinging from dry to torrential rain and back again. The wisdom of the trip and various alternatives were discussed in the run up to the day and in the Inglesport Cafe that morning, but the consensus finally was to go for it, taking in to account the amount of rain overnight and the state of various streams seen on the drive over.

After breakfast, we headed over to Kingsdale, arriving at the parking area by the Braida Garth turning to find lots of cavers' cars. Most of the team were assuming there would be a piece of tat on the 20' pitch from Valley Entrance to the Master Cave streamway to let us exit the cave easily for a through trip, but I insisted on taking a length of rope in with Grace, and actually checking. "Waste of time" we were told. "There is always one there." We found no in-place rope, only a newly rigged one, obviously placed by one of the other teams who had parked outside, and which could be removed at any time. Grace and I stomped up the hill, through the high bracken, to meet the others at the entrance and I practised my smug, "told you so", for the meeting!



Underground, pitch followed pitch in quick succession. Swinsto has recently had new resin anchors installed, alongside the existing ones, to make pull-throughs easier, and Simpsons is next on the list to do. Unfortunately, this hasn't been started yet, so we were improvising pull-throughs on the anchors that were there. Several of us, who had been before, commented that we had few reliable memories of the caves, and that there were more

awkward squeezes and climbs to do than we remembered.

The duck gave us its usual soaking. We had a variety of ropes with us to speed rigging and derigging. One of them had a severe twist in it, that caused it to wrap round itself when we were trying to pull down the rope from the bottom of the pitch. It was like a hundred people had gone down it with figure 8's.

On reaching the pitch immediately preceding the narrow Slit Pot, we climbed the piece of tatty hand line in place to the Great Aven drop.

We realised that none of us had actually done this pitch before. What we had thought of as Great Aven was actually a climb up and to the left of Slit Pot, that drops you above the final pitch in Swinsto. We used the longest rope as the descent rope for Great Aven, with a couple of other ropes joined together as the pull-down cord. The take-off is quite tight, but soon opens up into the impressive Aven. After retrieving and packing the rope for the last time, we descended the hand line and saw the waterfall coming in from Swinsto and Slit Pot, before climbing down the boulder climb to the low crawls that lead to the Master Cave.

In the Master Cave, the water was a little higher than usual. You could feel it trying to push you off your feet, and the foam at the sump to Keld Head was remarkably foamy !

We met a team from Dudley Caving Club, doing some photography, before arriving at our yellow rope, and the route up, alongside the Dudley ladder, and another rope that had been rigged.



All of us were soon up the pitch, and with the rope packed we tromped and splashed our way to Valley Entrance. After getting changed, we had a drink in the now rather posh Marten Arms, going to the beer garden, as inside is set up for dining now.

A fine day of sporting caving and thanks to all for a great time.





**On the trip:** Ade Pedley (taking the group 'photo), and, left to right: Grace Chu, Rob Nevitt, Neil Conde, Paul (new guy!), and Jenny Drake.

**Jenny  
Drake**

*Thanks to Jenny for the report, and Grace for supplying the photographs. Ed.*

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12<sup>th</sup> August 2023 : **High Peak Emergency Services Day** – 10.00 to 16.00, Pavilion Gardens, Buxton.

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**\* Cleaning Tip for Down Jackets, Sleeping Bags, etc.:**

Please forgive me if you are already well aware of this clever trick, but we have only just discovered it ! Annie has several Down jackets, and after previous poor results (clumped, lumpy down in places), even using the expensive, special, Ni..... down wash product available from outdoor shops, she has been reluctant to wash them, until absolutely necessary. A scan of the internet revealed the same advice from most top manufacturers: yes, use one of the proper down-washing products, and follow the instructions on the label, but then add half a dozen clean tennis balls to the tumble-drier drum when drying the garment. Amazing results !! Totally fluffed up, evenly distributed down, no thin spots !! – who knew ??

**Ed.**

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.As always, my thanks to everyone who contributes to the CCPC Newsletter, and also to those who acknowledge receipt afterwards. We are always glad to receive **Alan's contributions**, 'our man north of the border', and items from Members anywhere in the world. All errors, changes, or corrections are mine – my apologies. Keep safe, keep caving, and continue to support your club.

**Steve Knox, Editor.**

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**PS.**

Did you know that the CCPC Peak Rigging Guide was first released to the caving world in 1994 ? Next year will be the thirtieth anniversary of this ground-breaking event. More about this in the next Newsletter. **Ed.**

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