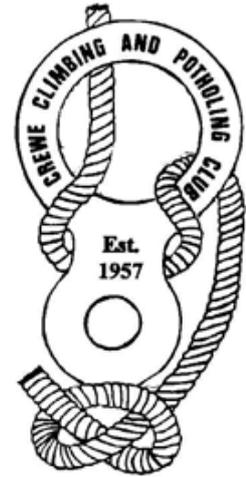


C.C.P.C. Newsletter 151. January - March 2024

Log on to www.ccpc.org.uk

Editor: Steve Knox
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Planned Club Meets, etc., from January to March 2024

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Mon. 8 th Jan. 2024 | CCPC AGM, followed by the January Monthly Meeting. (Also available to Members via 'Zoom'. | The Red Bull, Butt Lane, nr. Kidsgrove, Staffs. 8.30 pm.. |
| Sat 13 th Jan. | Waterways Swallet, Nr. Ilam, Staffs. (Originally for car park clearing.) <i>Alternate: P8./Jackpot</i> | Deep complex of bouldery climbs. No SRT, but some climbs should be roped. <i>Classic Swallet cave – absolute gem.</i> |
| Sun. 28 th Jan. | Sidetrack Cave, Eldon Hill Quarry. <i>Alternate: Gautries Hole, Perryfoot.</i> | A rather snug crawl which intersects well decorated passages. <i>A contorted swallet cave, wet & muddy.</i> |
| Mon. 5 th Feb. | CCPC Monthly Meeting. (Also available to Members via 'Zoom'. | Upstairs at The Red Bull, Butt Lane, nr. Kidsgrove, Staffs. 8.30 pm.. |
| Sat 10 th Feb. | Odin Mine, Castleton, Derbyshire, (main route.) <i>Alt. Cumberland Cavern, Matlock.</i> | A massive, historic mine complex, with several short pitches – lots of mud. <i>Complex of large passages; no pitches.</i> |
| | Longcliffe Mine, Castleton. <i>Alt. Son of Longcliffe (Mine).</i> | Recently reopened after a major dig. |
| Mon. 4 th Mar. | CCPC Monthly Meeting. (Also available to Members via 'Zoom'. | Upstairs at The Red Bull, Butt Lane, nr. Kidsgrove, Staffs. 8.30 pm.. |
| | Peak Cavern, Castleton, Derbys.. <i>Alt. Neptune Mine</i> | Outstanding, major cave system, with serious SRT route options. <i>Adit & workings. (A CCPC project.)</i> |
| | Various Mines in Via Gellia. | 'BATS' led by Jess Eades. Limited numbers. |
| | Bull Pot of the Witches, Casterton Fell, Yorks.. <i>Alt. Mistral Hole, Easegill, Yorks..</i> | Fascinating complex of chambers and passages, with several short pitches. |

For Yorkshire trips it is always worth looking up (and printing) the route descriptions provided on the internet by **The Council Of Northern Caving Clubs**: www.cncc.org.uk/caving
The descriptions are regularly updated, and can be downloaded, as they are Licensed under a: *CreativeCommonsAttribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives4.0International Licence* (!!)

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

There have been two call-outs so far, in January 2024, with successful outcomes on each occasion.



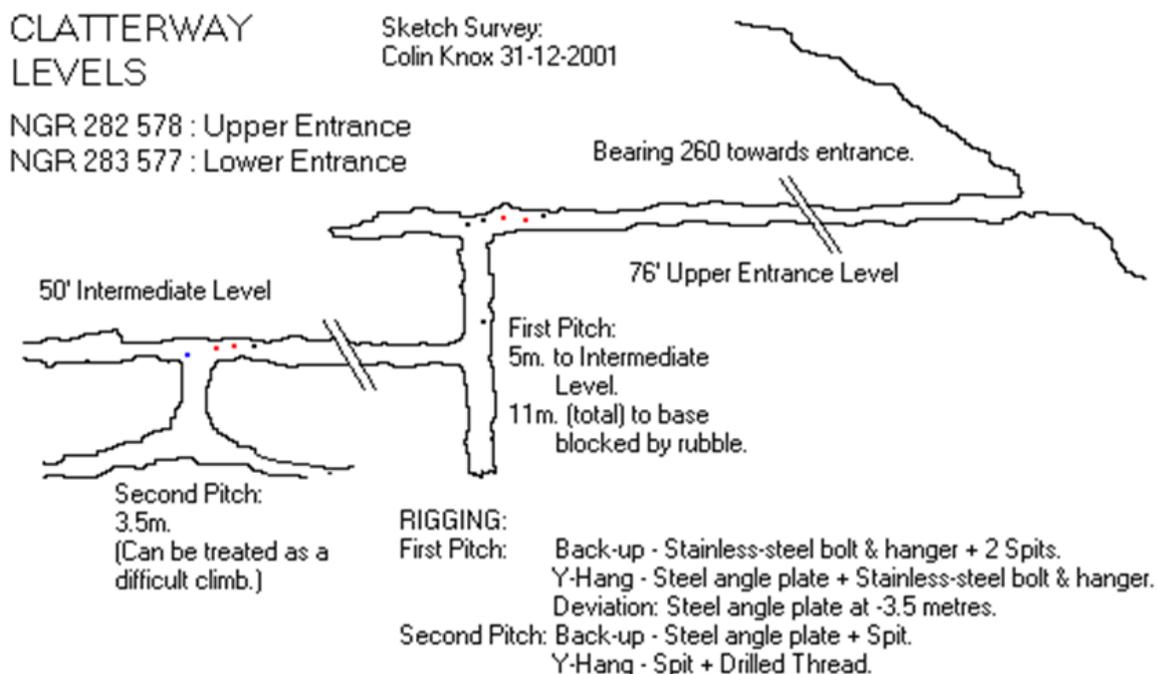
Clatterway Levels

Thursday, 27th December 2001

Yes, **2001** ! As it seems that no-one decided to give this trip a go on 30th December 2023, I found this earlier report in the hopes that it might encourage Members to have a look during **2024** !

Paul Nixon and I wanted something casual to fill in a snatched caving day between Christmas and New Year, so we decided to have a look at the rigging in Clatterway, prior to the planned Club trip (aimed at beginners) on Saturday, 12th January 2002.

Parking is easy; just up the hill from the Pig O' Lead pub (now closed) from the Via Gellia towards Bonsall village, there is a large lorry parking area with bottle-bank containers. Once changed, it is a short walk back down the road to the cluster of cottages around the tiny green on the left. Take the narrow footpath between the cottages, which leads uphill, until just beyond the last cottage on the left a pair of old gateposts marks the edge of the woodland. Sixty paces beyond, a very faint 'path' on the left leaves the main path and leads back uphill across the slope. Once clear of a clump of holly trees, (near a small rock outcrop, with a short trial level, on the slope above and right) the 'path' drops steeply back towards a large tree immediately above one of the cottages. The tree marks the Upper Entrance to Clatterway Levels:



The entrance gives access to a horizontal passage which leads easily to the top of the first pitch after 76 feet (my tape is pre-metric), and continues a short distance beyond. The original explorers from Masson C.G. placed two spits at the pitch, but these are now supplemented by an initial stainless-steel bolt and hanger which can be used as a back-up with one or both spits, and another stainless-steel bolt and hanger with a stainless-steel bolt and steel angle-plate hanger to give a good Y-hang over the pitch. A stainless-steel bolt and steel angle-plate hanger can be used for a deviation 3.5 metres down. After 5 metres it is easy to step into the Intermediate Level, although the shaft continues down to rubble at 11 metres depth.

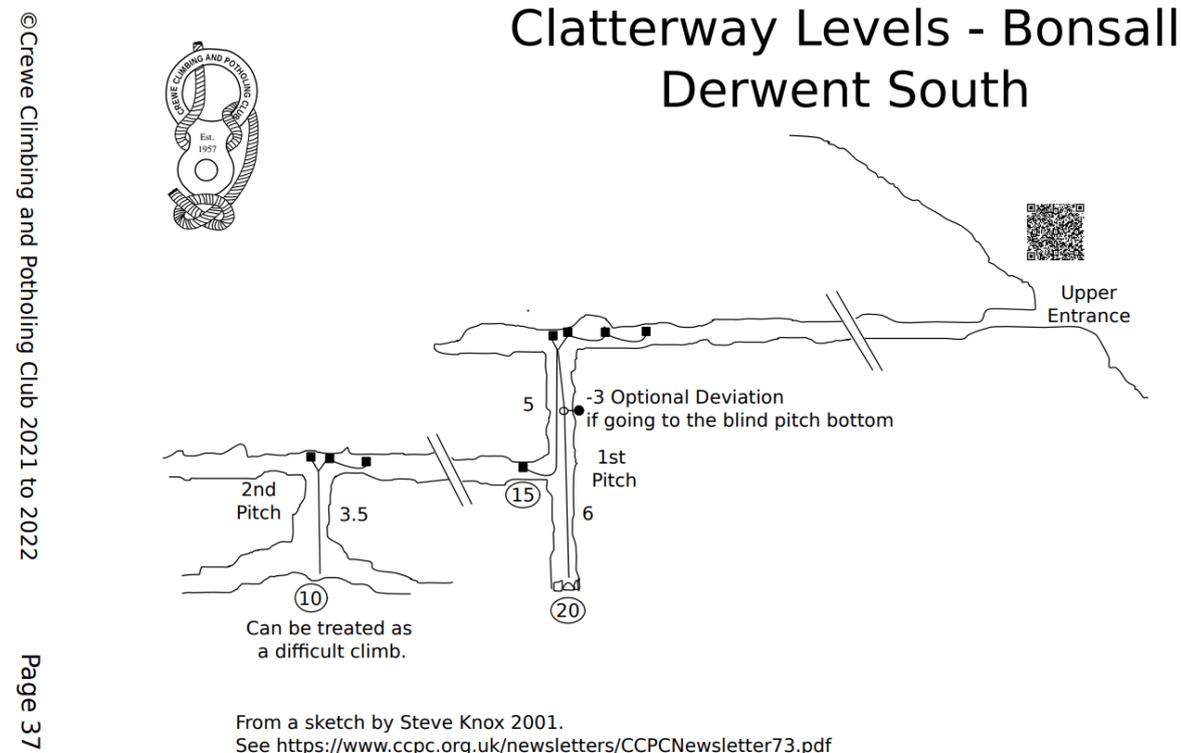
The Intermediate Level leads to the second pitch after 50 feet.

The second pitch is described in 'Caves of The Peak District', page 113, [this is the old edition, in use in 2001 – in the current 2010 edition it is Page 144] as a free-climbable shaft, however it is awkward to descend safely without a rope, and desperate to get back up, so it seems sensible to treat it as a pitch and rig it properly. The passage walls in this area are highly mineralised and consequently provide few decent locations for anchors. There are two old Spits here, but these are now supplemented with an initial stainless-steel bolt with a steel angle-plate hanger which can be used with the first Spit as a back-up, then a newly drilled thread in the left wall which provides an acceptable Y-hang when used with the second Spit. The pitch is only 3.5 metres deep, but a 10-metre rope would allow plenty of extra for rigging. Using a 20-metre rope on the First Pitch would allow a full descent before prussiking back up to the Intermediate Level.

For a more complete description of this little system, including the through-trip, see CCPC Newsletter No.68, December 2000, pages 13 & 14.

Steve Knox.

.....
 The current rigging situation, as recorded in the **CCPC Peak Rigging Guide**:



.....
 You can see a more recent trip-report – 30th August 2016 - on the TSG Website, written by our own **Alan Brentnall**. I particularly liked the folk song words, by Ted Edwards (1939 – 2023), well worth reading, and you can hear the full version on the internet: 'Coal Hole Cavalry'.



P8 / Jackpot, Derbyshire.

Sunday, 7th January 2024

So today Mark and I were introducing young Harry to P8, affording him some more SRT practice. Earlier in the week I asked if anyone else wanted to join us and in the end Grace, Jenny, Heather, and Steve Colley joined us. As our trio had arrived earlier than the arranged 10.00 am, we got kitted up and headed off to get started on the rigging, just as the others began arriving. Water levels were higher than usual - to be expected given the recent stretch of wet weather - and the tall grasses flanking the stream had been flattened as a result. The water falling into the entrance was enough to give us a proper soaking. Safely over Idiot's Leap, we made our way to the first pitch. This would be Harry's first go at a rebelay under wet conditions, and how well he did too !

While I waited on the traverse ledge for Harry to join me, Mark ensured he was correctly secured for the descent. Unfortunately this was where the trip ended for Mark as he needed to get back home. The remaining six of us made our way down the second (old iron ladder) pitch, then on to Mud Hall, where we took the right turn, which takes you to the climb down from the ladder pitch high traverse, used by the divers. From here we re-entered Mud Hall, joining the Canal then heading upstream to the upstream sump. This is an area which I have visited so many times, and today was the first time of seeing the stream being active as opposed to its usual benign state. The group decided to make their return to the surface, with Heather, Jenny and Grace exiting as a group, while Steve C and I, with Harry between us, as the other group. I took the lead on the way out while Steve C (thanks Steve) derigged. Harry commented on just how much he had enjoyed the trip. He continues to build on his SRT skills. A big thanks again to Mark and everyone who came along.

Steve Pearson-Adams.



Bottle Pot,

Sunday, 14th January 2024

I had popped up to the hills behind Buxton this morning for a TSG-led trip into Bottle Pot, when up rocked Grace and Jenny to make up a team of six, so I guess as half of us were Crewe that kind of passes loosely as a joint venture. Anyway, for such a tiny pothole this place packs quite a punch; very Dales-like for Derbyshire, with its clean washed walls.

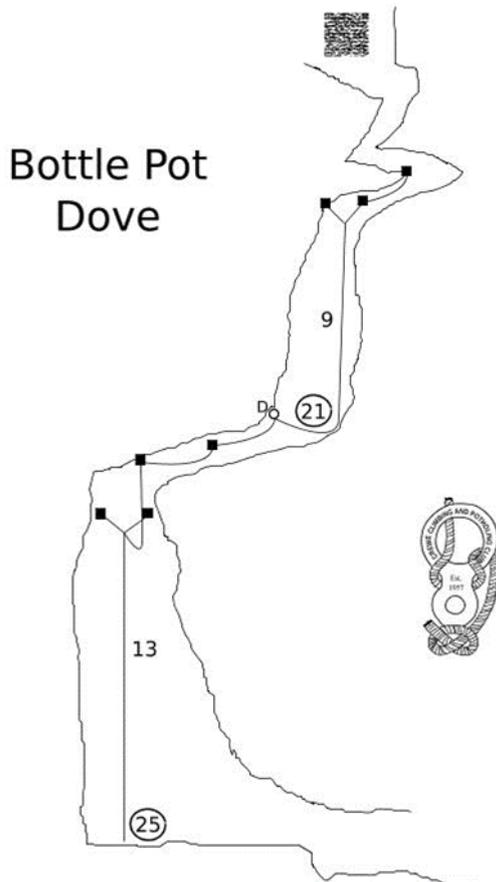


Sadly the trip is over way too soon, but, as with much of the area, there is potential for lots more. The area is literally littered with shakeholes, so it's quite likely that the Buxton area is a literal honeycomb of little wonders like this.

I took a few pictures, only a few, with it being so small, but the "Bottle Pot" is totally worth every one of them.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/GWHTCTwGPPyJgyCE6>

Gaz Mcshee



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I took along my waterproof notebook and the farmer let us borrow his tape measure to find the pitch lengths from the knotted ropes after the trip. I'm putting together a rigging topo for the guide, as the place is now on nicely located stainless through-bolts.

Jenny Drake.

NGR 0665 6807
Length: 59.8 metres
Depth: 29 metres.

Located in a shakehole close to Stoop Farm, just north of Hollinsclough, and close to Buxton Racetrack.

Thanks to **Jenny** for all her continuing hard work to keep the **CCPC Peak Rigging Guide** complete, and up to date. The Guide carries a safety warning, and emphasises personal responsibility for the safety of every individual venturing underground. It remains, free-to-use. **Editor.**

As previously included, but now with a twist :-

'Help !!! 'Descent' appeal: Every few years I put out this same enquiry !

My collection of Descent Magazine has a few gaps which I would love to fill if anyone has any surplus copies :- .

Issues 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10 – all original small format – I loaned my first twenty issues to a dear friend, no longer with us, but unfortunately these seven issues never came home.

I would be really grateful to borrow any of these early issues for a short time !!!

Issues 53, 55, 127, 136 – the standard size (A4) issues with the coloured photo covers.

- no idea who borrowed these, but it used to be 'open house' for borrowing !

Steve Knox

How the CCPC Peak District Rigging Guide is Made

This year is the 30th anniversary of the very first Crewe Peak District rigging guide. The early editions used hand drawn topos and were comb bound for sale in caving shops in the area and the Dales. In 2020, with traditional caving shops disappearing, we moved the guide on-line and made it freely available to all. This has let us make continuous changes so it can be kept up to date without the wait for shops to run down their stock and for a new edition to be put together, printed and distributed.

This is the current workflow for making a change to the guide. Either an update to an existing route, or the addition of a new cave, or mine to the guide. It will give you an idea of what is involved. It may seem complex at first sight, but allows changes to be quickly and easily made.

When updating the guide, the first step is to gather information. A waterproof notepad, with a pen on a string allow notes and sketches to be made during a trip. Often these are unintelligible to anyone else, but act as an aide memoir to the drawer. When rigging, a knot is put in the rope at the base of the pitch, to allow pitch length and overall rope used to be measured afterwards. On the surface, a tape is used to measure pitch lengths from knot to knot. Then the knots are removed, except the last one, to measure the overall rope length used, with everything going in the note-book. Sometimes we will use information from people outside the club whom we can be sure know their stuff; often the original explorers of a cave, or the bolters of a new route.

The rigging guide used to include location and access information for the caves. Access arrangements can soon go out of date. A safety, or landowner issue can close a site at any time. Fortunately, the DCA provide up to date location and access information on-line at the peakdistrictcaving.info web site. The guide links to this information for the latest advice. QR codes, a sort of two-dimension barcode, on printed pages from the guide can be read by a smartphone to link directly to the DCA information for that cave.

The topos are drawn using the open source [Inkscape](http://inkscape.org) vector graphics program. Vector graphics allow a drawing to be scaled up and down to any size, while keeping the features smooth, with none of the jagged pixels that can appear on bit map-based images produced in programs like MSPaint, or Photoshop, if they are zoomed in too far. Inkscape has many capabilities, only a few of which are used for the guide. Ropes are created using the bezier curve tool, making smooth flowing lines that can mimic the shapes that hanging ropes form between anchors. Cave passages are represented with freehand lines, which look like rough cave walls and features. Various square and round shapes, either filled, or open, cover the symbols for various anchor types. Text and arrows annotate and label the topo. The resulting file is saved in scalable vector graphics (SVG) format.

The SVG format isn't fully supported by web browsers and the file sizes are large, so they need to be converted to other, more suitable formats for the on-line guide. These days most cavers just download and perhaps print the topo they need for the cave they are visiting that day. We offer the guide in a number of formats.

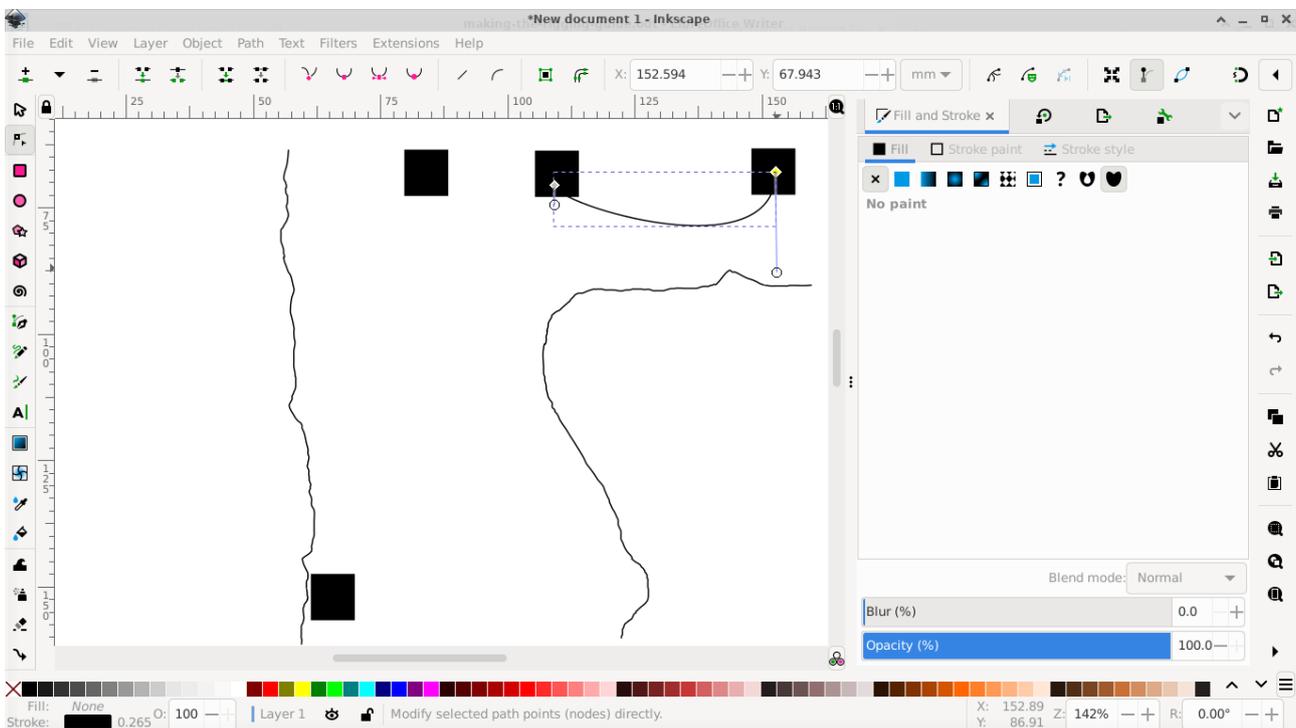
- As html web pages for each cave/mine, with the topo key and the important safety information. This uses bitmap png, or webp format for the topo images, as this is best suited to quick download and viewing on a screen. Webp files are smaller than png.
- As a download, A4 format, multi-page vector PDF for each cave, ready to print, with the topo key and important safety information.

- As a complete A4 format PDF rigging guide, with index and page numbers. The same style guide as we used to sell, but for home printing. In practice, few people use this, but it is useful for club huts.

The generation of the png, webp and pdf format pages, the compilation of downloadable pdf documents and the complete guide pdf, with page numbers, is now automated by a script. Once the topo svg file is drawn, the script is run and various open-source image manipulation tools are called in turn for each site svg file to generate a png and pdf file, join pdf files in to multi-page pdf's for sites, add page numbers to the pdf's and join them up to form the complete guide. This takes several minutes to run, but at the end, the new edition of the guide is complete and ready for checking, before uploading it to the CCPC web site server. Adding new caves and pages to the guide is a little more complex, as the script needs updating, but this isn't as common as changes to an existing site.

Finally, we have to let cavers know about the update. The rigging guide page on the CCPC web site is [updated](#) and the news announced on the site [home-page](#) and the [RSS feed](#). Additionally, we announce it on the [UKCaving forum](#).

Examples:



1. Creating a traverse line rope in Inkscape with the bezier curve tool, between the square symbols for two stainless steel anchors, on the approach to a pitch head. Additional anchors for a Y hang and a rebelay are already in place for the rope to be drawn in.
2. (below) Part of the script used to generate the various image files and create a multi-page pdf for each cave. In this extract of the script, for each cave name in the list, a png format file is generated, a pdf file is generated, a webp format file is made and the safety and key pages are added to the pdf file.

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~/Documents/CCPC/newsite/rigging-guide/make-rigging-guide.sh - Mousepad
File Edit Search View Document Help
65
66 #One topo per site.
67 for guidepage in "bagshawe" "longrakemine" "longcliffe" "maskhill"
"oxlow" "p8" "cliffcavern" "farsump" "georgecooper" "ncc" "victoria"
"whiteriver" "pindale-end-mine" "snelslow" "suicide" "titan"
"winnats" "clatterway" "youds" "devonshire" "bottle-pot" "robins"
"hillockswhalf" "knotlow" "gardenpath" "lathkillheadupper"
"watericicle" "carlswark" "eyamdalehouse" "hungerhill" "layby"
"merlin" "level7" "nickergrove" "putwell"
68 do
69 echo $guidepage
70 if [ $inkscapeversion == 1 ]; then
71 inkscape $guidepage.svg -e $guidepage.png -C -d 159.34
72 inkscape $guidepage.svg -C -A $guidepage.pdf
73 else
74 inkscape --export-type=pdf $guidepage.svg
75 inkscape --export-type=png --export-dpi=159.34 $guidepage.svg
76 fi
77 convert $guidepage.png $guidepage.webp
78 pdfunite $guidepage.pdf key.pdf safety.pdf $guidepage$printed
79 echo PNG, PDF and WEBP files for $guidepage complete.
80 done
81

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Jenny Drake

We are really fortunate to have such a skilled Member of our club, who is able to carry out such complex, but essential tasks to maintain our CCPC Rigging Guide. This work must surely benefit all covers who plan to visit the more significant SRT caves of the Peak District, and will make a positive contribution to their enjoyment, safety, and welfare.

Editor.



Odin Mine, Castleton, Derbyshire.

Saturday, 10th February 2024

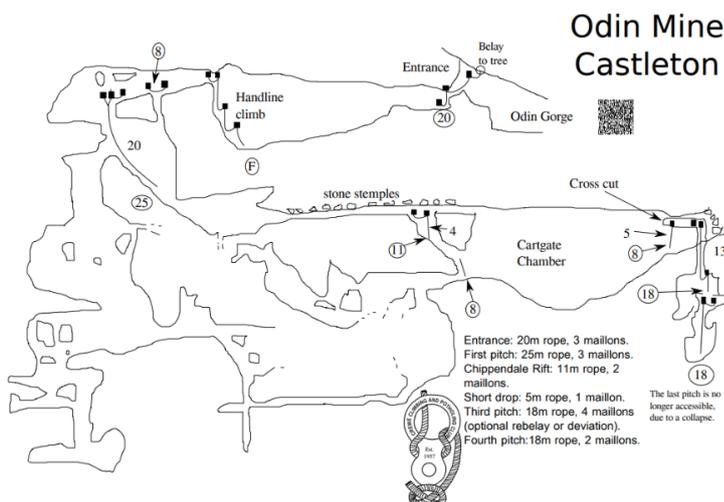


Jenny Drake: There were Five people underground at Odin Mine, plus Steve Knox, who was out walking and met up with us at the start and the end of our trip.

'Before !' Left to right: Dan Baddeley, Jenny Drake, Gaz Mcshee, Steve Knox, Grace Chu. Steve Pearson-Adams was the photographer.

Castleton, and the surrounding area, was packed with people on what was a miserable day, weather wise – fog, and melting snow everywhere.

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We made our way down to the Cartgate chamber, admiring the mud and the dry-stone ceilings along the way.

There had been some intention to have a look at the pitch back under the main route, below Chippendale Rift

[left from the bottom of the 8-metre pitch shown here, to the left of Cartgate Chamber].

Jenny and Gaz tried to pass the squeeze at the start of the passage leading to the pitch, but found it too tight without stripping off SRT kit, however Grace did get through, but it was wet, and with time running short the pitch was left for another day.

Full caving account follows below:

Odin Mine: Gaz's account, and a selection of his photographs:-

Five cavers were met at the bus turning spot on the old Castleton road by Steve Knox, who had come out for a walk around the beautiful but foggy countryside in the surrounding area.

After having a natter and enjoying a fine display of advanced driving techniques from Grace while getting ready, we parted company and headed up the hill to the tree belay at the head of the gorge.

After a while of discussing the most likely tree to hitch to, as no one had a clue which one was the resin rooted DCA approved beech, we chose the one furthest from the edge of the gorge, and after rigging it, jumped on the bus back !



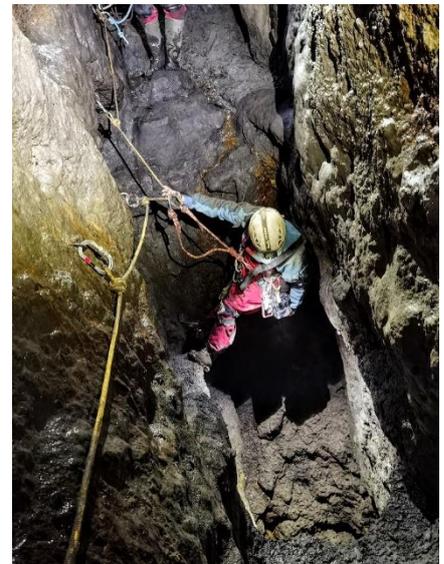
Left: Grace on the pitch down into the gorge, to reach the entrance.

There was no need for a rope protector as there was a strategically placed tree root protecting the rock edge, so I connected on, and off down the pitch I went.

As soon as I was over the edge I had a moment of enlightenment as I realised the slick wet sides of the gorge were devoid of useful foot placements, and as the tree belay was not in line with the pitch, a slip would send me sailing off sideways over the deeper part of the gorge, and then require my bruised and battered body to free climb up a 'choss' pile of very mossy, wet and mud-covered boulders. Not a task I fancied very much, so I put a hell of a lot of effort into staying on the pitch, and not letting the rope have its own evil way with me. I dropped the last barren six feet in one go, almost giving Steve P-A a heart attack in the process, but it was the only way to avoid the inevitable. Steve dropped next and we decided to rebelay off the mid height P-bolt so that the swing could be avoided by the others as they made their way down.

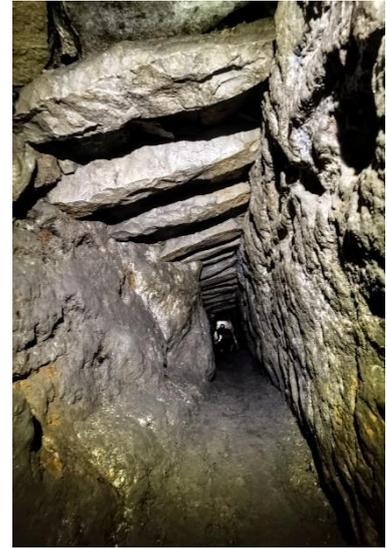
Steve rigged the proper first pitch, while the others caught up, and one by one we dropped into the 'choss' pit below. It's quite pretty in there for such a filthy hole. The iron-flows always seem to thrive in shale beds, so most of the walls have lovely gold, orange and brown streaks and runs, contrasting with the dark blackness of the shale.

After passing a couple of cross-cuts we arrived at the notorious collapsed pit that closed the place a few years back, now sporting a lovely airy traverse over the bottomless darkness beneath your feet. Steve rigged, and we all followed over, and up to the higher passage, and eventually to the shaft leading to the sloppiest of the sloppy slopes, and the start of some of the best stonework in the Peak.

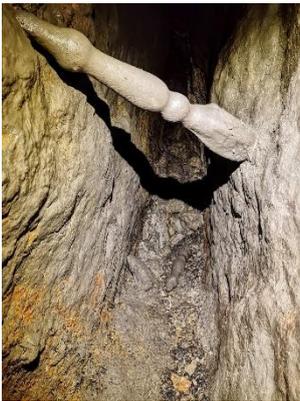


Left to Right: The iron-stained walls. Steve rigging across the collapsed pit. Grace tackling the airy traverse.

After a bit of rope re-jigging to allow Steve to rig out of the slippery slope below, we all dropped in, and marched off past the bottom of the collapsed shaft we had traversed earlier, and into the stunning stemped passage. It shows just how skilled these old guys were; many of them couldn't write their names, but boy, could they build works of art !



Above: Further pitches and traverses, all carefully rigged, led to the start of the Stone stemped passage – amazing !
 Below: Chippendale pitch – as in ‘Chippendale furniture’ !



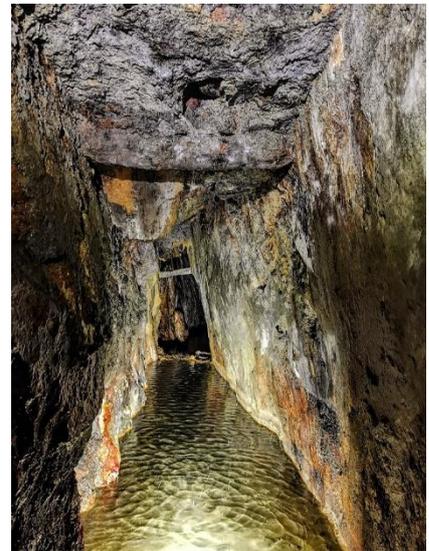
Steve rigged the Chippendale Pitch, and we lowered in, passing the table leg which in folklore, holds up the whole mine and protects the explorer from being buried alive. Now as awesome as the stemped passage was, the first sight of Cartgate Chamber stepped it up to another level, high overhead, and by ‘high’ I mean stratospheric ! The whole roof was adorned with the most perfect dry-stoning along its entire length, and that was some freaking length too. What’s more amazing is that it hasn’t deteriorated at all over its entire span, despite the

precariousness of its situation. We climbed up to the passage entrance in the far wall and looked at the top of the pitch to Bell Chamber but did not venture in today.



Above: The incredible dry-stone, arched roof of the main Cartgate, and the entrance to the passage to Bell Chamber.

Back in the Cartgate, I explored a low crawl in the boulder choke and to my surprise found an internal climbing shaft leading to a small chamber in which resided a creepy looking clay head and yet another Peak penis ! There seem to be more penises in the peak than anywhere else in the country unless anyone knows otherwise.



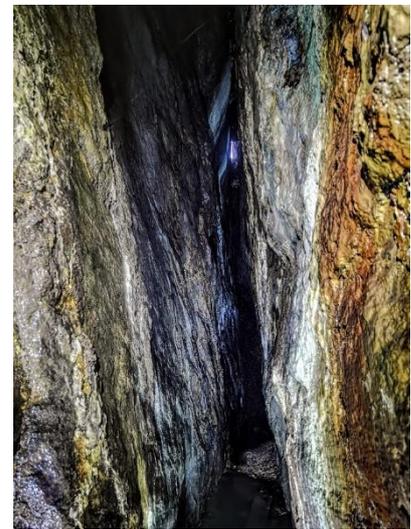
Above: It wasn't all dry (!), and it wasn't all mud – could that be Blue John ?, and some passages are just stunning.



Back at the handline up to Chippendale, Jen and I tried to get through the tight passage leading to the lower workings but we both failed whilst wearing our SRT gear, and as time was running short, we didn't push it further on this occasion, however, annoyingly, Grace romped it, and confirmed that the pitch we sought was definitely there and waiting for a future push into the unknown.

Left: Just too tight, this time !
Right: Daylight beckons.

After making our way out, to some strange looks from the general public, we were met by Steve who had completed his walk and hung around to see how the exploration had gone. Having to head off for the weekend up in Whitby, I had to part company with everyone to get packed for the drive up north that



evening. Thanks all for another great trip and another cave of wonders to which I must return. The Link to the full set of pictures I took is here for those interested.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/dHDkyPfMtpa5qDuX7>



And After !!

The five explorers:

Left: Grace and Steve P-A

Right: Dan, Grace, Gaz, and Jenny.

Photos: Ed.





Walking: Meanwhile, while the hardy cavers were busy underground, I set off on a circular walk intending to visit about fourteen cave / mine related sites, while avoiding the teeming hordes of other visitors in the valley. **Treak Cliff Cavern** and **Speedwell Mine and Cavern** seemed busy with paying customers as I passed, which was not surprising, as the car parks were filling up, and the Castleton to Odin road was nose-to-tail with parked vehicles, many of them 'campers', set up for the weekend ! I turned away, and climbed the **Longcliffe** slope, almost to Peveril Castle (cloud/fog base), to reach the cliff edge above Cavedale, where I could look down on the steady stream of fell runners splashing along the path below (17 ½ mile race apparently !!).

I moved on to the Rowter Farm area, and passed close to **Titan** and **J.H.Mine**, then to the **Hazard Mine** [79-metre-deep shaft, covered by a grill] and **Hollandtwine Mine** sites (somewhere in the murk).

I descended **Hollandtwine Mine** in the very early seventies, using electron ladder and lifeline, but the shaft top is 'lost' now – obliterated by open-cast mining for fluorite in the early 1990s. The entrance shaft (for hauling) was 375 feet (114 metres) deep but there was a scaffolding and boards platform at -150 feet, where we were able to get off the ladder and use a cross-cut to access a series of climbing shafts, fitted with fixed ladders. The shafts dropped to the level of the (wet) natural series, and eventually to a further 70-foot (21 metre) pitch to the lowest point, at -420 feet (-128 metres) where the water disappeared into a too-tight fissure. We had no tackle for this pitch, so never reached the bottom. **[See Descent No. 22, Aug/Sept 1972, page 13, for an account of digging here – by Pegasus C.C..]**

As visibility cleared at last, I passed close to the **Slitherstone Mine** site [Shaft No. 1: 70 metres deep; Shaft No. 2: 55 metres deep – both covered with concrete sleepers] and eventually reached the Rowter Farm Drive/main road gate, and crossed the road to reach **Windy Knoll Cave**, close to the path towards Mam Tor, for an attempt at completing a Cave Conservation Form.



Windy Knoll Cave entrance.



Elaterite deposits on the wall at the back of the entrance chamber.

My route finally took me down the collapsed roadway, past **Blue John Mine**, and back to the cars parked below **Odin Mine**. After leaving my ruc-sac, I wandered up to the Mine entrance at the top of the Odin gorge, and forty-five minutes later, after a few muffled shouts from below, the first of the cavers, Steve P-A, appeared just below me, and the others were close behind. **Steve Knox**

Editor's Final Comment:- There would be no Newsletter without the contributions made by Members. As Editor, I do sometimes 'tweak' write-ups, with very minor changes, perhaps to a particular word or two – please don't be offended, as this is not a criticism, but I sometimes find it necessary for our wider readership. Please keep writing in your own style, and leave it to me to mess it up ! **The End !**
