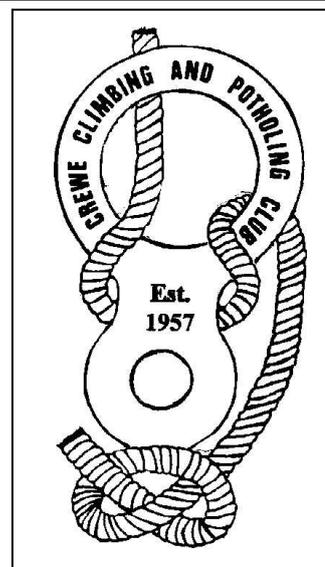


C.C.P.C.

Newsletter 121

December 2019

Log on to www.ccpc.org.uk



Editor: Steve Knox – colinknox@btinternet.com. All contributions welcome – please !!

Club Meets, etc., during September, October, November & December 2019.

Sat. 28 th Sept.	King Pot, Yorkshire.	CCPC Caving trip.
Tues. 1 st Oct.	DCRO Base, Buxton.	Training: Background to DCRO, + planning for various rescue scenarios.
Mon. 7 th Oct.	‘Bleeding Wolf’, Scholar Green.	CCPC Monthly Meeting.
Sun. 13 th Oct.	Peak Cavern, Derbyshire. CHANGED due to high water. Giants Hole / Carlswark.	CCPC Caving trip
Wed. 23 rd Oct.	DCRO Base, Buxton.	Training: Gas detectors & monitoring.
Sat. 26 th Oct.	Cwmorthin Slate Mine complex, North Wales.	CCPC Caving trip.
Mon. 4 th Nov.	‘Bleeding Wolf’, Scholar Green.	CCPC Monthly Meeting.
Mon. 4 th Nov.	DCRO Base, Buxton.	Casualty-Care scenarios..
7 th , 8 th , 9 th Nov.	Snelslow Swallet Project.	Assisting with clearing old digging debris.
Sun. 10 th Nov.	Poacher’s Cave, North Wales.	CCPC Caving trip.
Sat. 23 rd Nov.	Water Icicle Close Cavern (Mine), Derbyshire.	CCPC Caving trip.
Sun. 24 th Nov.	DCRO Base, Buxton.	Training: Cas-Care, stretchers & splinting.
Sat. 30 th Nov.	Waterways Swallet, Derbyshire.	Working party – car park clearing, + Caving trip.
Mon. 2 nd Dec.	‘Bleeding Wolf’, Scholar Green.	CCPC Monthly Meeting.
Sun. 7 th Dec.	Scoska Cave, Yorkshire.	CCPC Caving trip.
Mon. 16 th Dec.	DCRO Base, Buxton.	Training Review & Team Supper.
Sun. 22 nd Dec.	Day Shaft, Derbyshire.	CCPC Caving trip.



Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation training events, etc., are included in the table above, as CCPC has always maintained a strong involvement with that organisation, and a number of CCPC Members continue to play a significant part in DCRO, training regularly, and turning out whenever required to assist, when called upon to help those in trouble underground.

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



***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 28th September – King Pot, Yorkshire.
Report provided by Jenny Drake – 29.09.2019.***

Well that was fun. Feeling a bit sore today, with rather a lot of bruises. Thanks everyone for an excellent and tough trip.

King Pot is the hardest trip we have done as a club in a while. A descent to the Master Cave and back takes a long time, so we had decided to meet up at Inglesport Cafe for breakfast as soon as they opened at 8:30. There were eight of us in total. Again, due to the likely long trip, we decided to split in to two parties, with a rigging group going underground half an hour or so before the derigging team. After parking by Braida Garth, we walked up the east side of Kingsdale. There had been a fair bit of rain over the previous few days, including on the drive up and more was forecast that evening. The beck in Kingsdale was flowing, doubling in size where the water from the Keld Head resurgence joined it. King Pot is reputed to not have a flooding problem until near the lower reaches and the master cave.

Ade, guest caver Andy and Jenny made up the rigging team. Unfortunately, we had problems finding the entrance and were joined by the derigging team of **Des, Steve PA, Rob, Dan and Nicola**. Eventually we found it, but it was now 11am. So much for the early start! The rigging team forged ahead. We rigged the first pitch, but found all subsequent pitches were rigged, which speeded up this aspect of the cave considerably. We still had to carry the tackle sacks though and these accursed items gave rise to some less than genteel language in the tighter sections of the cave.

The most infamous feature of this cave is a T shaped squeeze that goes on for around 10m. The hardest bit is right at the end, where you have to project yourself out of the slot over a 7m or so drop and reach a hand line rigged to one side. This feels very precarious in a situation where you are struggling to work out how best to handle the narrow and winding squeeze that is simultaneously rather exposed! Ade talked me through this as I was rather unhappy. I've done this cave before and hadn't liked it then either. This section defeated the derigging party, who made their way out.

There was more water in the cave than on previous visits, though no sign of flooding, like high tide marks of foam and flood debris. We continued to make our way cautiously down. The rarity of flooding meant that some delicate formations could form in the stream passages. There is a lot of variety in this cave, with stream passage going from crawls to rifts and short cascades. Sometimes you need to climb out of the stream through boulder chokes, leading to halls, with pitches back down in to the streamway. Around ten minutes from the master cave we reached a chamber with Crystal Inlet coming in on the left. Here we could see evidence of flood debris and the stream went into a low narrow crawl that would form a restriction to flow and could lead to water backing up and filling the crawl. Ade and Jenny decided to stop here. Andy went on and reached the master cave which, as suspected, was rather wet. On his return we started to make our way out.

The return was rather taxing and showed that this cave fully deserved its grade 5 rating in the Northern Caves guidebook and inclusion in 'Not For The Faint Hearted'. I found the rock unusually slippery and polished in places and experienced poor traction in situations I wouldn't normally expect. The T slot loomed as a gateway to the entrance series. I negotiated the hardest section with an unusual set of contortions and ended up on my back. We reached the daylight after around seven hours underground and walked and slipped our way back down the steep hillside to the cars. The days difficulties were not over from me as I couldn't remember where I'd hidden the car keys! Several folk helped me look for them until Rob

found them. Thanks Rob. Thanks also to Ade and Andy for their patience with my slow progress and for doing most of the tackle bag hauling.

Jenny Drake



DCRO Training at Buxton Base:- 1st October – Bill Whitehouse started this session with a presentation on the background and development of DCRO, followed by groups brainstorming various rescue scenarios:

The groups were all handicapped by being told at the beginning, that the Rescue Vehicle would not start, so essential gear for each situation had to be selected, transported, and backed-up where necessary. This generated some lively, and imaginative discussion



Crews Climbing and Potholing Club:- 13th October – the planned trips in the Peak Cavern system, in Derbyshire, were scrapped due to the poor weather during the previous week, the bad forecast, and the high water levels, however some Members still got underground in Giants Hole and Carlswark Cavern, Derbyshire.

Gaz McShee commented :- Sadly the trip to Peak Cavern today was cancelled due to rising water levels. Not to be put off, myself, John Gillett, Sonia Mackenzie, Ruth Rabinowitz, and Alex decided to have a paddle in Giants Hole, just down to Garlands as no one had any gear to go further. After a walk down to the pot and a short foray into the streamway which enters from above in Base Camp Chamber we wandered out and parted company with John. The rest of us drove down to Carlswark Cavern in Stoney Middleton. We made a very wet, but sporting push to the far end of the Sump and back, before heading to ‘Insomnia’ for coffee and cake. Thanks guys for a great day even if the original plan fell through.

Sonia:- It was a great day John, Gaz, Ruth and Alex. Thank you. .So good to be back underground! I really enjoyed myself and not just because I enjoyed the caving, but I enjoyed the company too. Thank you for the photos Gaz, and nice meeting you.

Ruth:-It was really nice to do both trips yesterday - a great contrast to one another and I think Alex will be joining us again. My back will need some recovery time, but I hope it's ok for Cwmorthin! The company was brilliant and seeing John was an unexpected bonus.



Giants Hole , Entrance Series: ‘Basecamp Chamber’ (above), and the ‘Old Upper Cave’ - main stream inlet – (right).

Photos: Gaz McShee.





DCRO Training at Buxton Base:- 23rd October – Gas Detectors & Monitoring.



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 26th October – Cwmorthin Slate Mine complex in North Wales. Photos: Des Kelly.

A great trip on Sunday into Cwmorthin slate mine and playing on some of the equipment installed by 'Go Below'.





DCRO Training at Buxton Base:- 4th November – Casualty-care Scenarios.



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 7th to 9th November – assisting with the Snelslow Swallet Project, Perryfoot, Derbyshire. Report: Alan Brentnall.

Snelslow Swallet



Photos courtesy of Wayne Sheldon.

Snelslow is a hill to the north of Eldon Hill in the basin formed between Sparrowpit and Mam Tor, and forms part of the Peakshill Farm land. This area of land is a catchment for any rainwater which falls on the shaley high ground known as Rushup Edge, and, because the substrate is limestone and there is no downhill exit to the area, the only way out for this water is through sinkholes, swallets and caves. This is one of the very few examples of Dales-style allogenic hydrology in the Peak District, where water lands on impermeable ground, forming streams and becks which then flow onto permeable ground to be swallowed by potholes.

Long ago, the BSA (the British Speleological Association) gave P numbers to these potholes (as they did in the Yorkshire Dales). P0 is a tight little swallet up near Sparrowpit, P1 is the true swallet for the Perryfoot and Dr Jackson's caves, P3 is Gautries Hole and P12 is Giant's. Eventually, as you can see, most of these P-caves were given more descriptive names, or reverted to the original names used by locals - although cavers stubbornly refused to use the name Jackpot, giving preference to P8 instead.

All the water entering these swallets eventually reaches the Peaks Hole Water stream in Castleton, mostly via the Main Rising at the far end of Speedwell Cavern. The actual daylight resurgences being Peak Cavern Rising, Slop Moll or Russet Well. The course of the water underground, however, is far from simple, and, even today, there is work going on in an attempt to understand what lies beneath the grass.

Back in the day, following on from the second world war, there was quite a surge in underground exploration throughout all caving regions of the UK, and the Peak District was no exception. Unsurprisingly,

a great deal of this effort was put into the Castleton cave systems and quickly some of these caves gave up some of their secrets, with Peak Cavern itself falling to diving explorers and diggers on the very same day.

The larger of the P swallets were also being examined with the breakthrough at Giant's Hole's backwash sump being a major achievement. But the cave with the biggest catchment, Snelslow Swallet (P10), stubbornly refused to be an easy conquest. The BSA threw everything at this sink, creating a device to divert the massive stream down the valley to P9 (which eventually became Christmas Swallet, a superb Yorkshire-style SRT trip in its own right) and even sinking a huge hauling shaft through the flank of Snelslow itself to enable the easy extraction of digging spoil.

The "Snelslow Must Go!" project went on for years until both the explorers and the landowner, Tom Watson, eventually had enough and the operation was abandoned, leaving a huge amount of mining infrastructure above and below ground. It wasn't until the late 90s that the surface gear was removed and the hauling shaft walled off. By this time Tom Watson had passed away and Peakshill Farm and its land were now in the hands of a businessman, Steve Baldacci, who was content to allow cavers into Giants Hole, but refused access to either Snelslow Swallet or Christmas Pot.

My first look into either of these caves came about in January 20016, when DCRO were called out to Odin Mine, where we were asked to support PDMRO MR teams who were searching for a vulnerable adult. Our job was to examine any likely underground places where the chap might be, and Keith Joule and I were tasked with the Giant's Hole area. This was a great opportunity to have a look inside some caves which were barred from us. Christmas Swallet was well covered in soil and grass, with no signs of entry, so we couldn't access that. But Snelslow was wide open and I was amazed at the size of the main rift, and I couldn't help but agree that Les Salmon and all the guys after him were indeed correct in assuming that this really must lead to a major cave system. But that wasn't currently possible.

A few years later, discussions between DCA and Maurice Gregory, the farmer who keeps sheep on Peakshill land, revealed that, although the owner was reluctant to allow access, the tenant wouldn't object if cavers visited the area, and DCA thought that some limited unofficial access might be a good idea - but, obviously, no re-bolting of either Christmas or Snelslow could happen until access was officially agreed.

Since then, I've run a Tuesday night trip to both caves. Christmas was a well-decorated stream-washed pothole with 5 or 6 pitches (depending on your climbing ability, or common sense), fairly narrow in parts but equipped with very old, rusting spits which badly needed replacing. Snelslow was a huge venture, equipped with lots of traditional Peak signal ladder, and wooden platforms.

It was all very challenging and intriguing, but it wasn't until Nigel Atkins finally talked to Mr Baldacci and persuaded him to allow access to clean up the system that we finally got movement. By this time, DCA had a very enthusiastic Projects Officer, Pete Knight, who put together a long weekend plan for 08-10 November 2019 to deal with the remaining digging rubbish and prepare the cave for future exploration.

Leading up to the weekend, Pete and others rebolted Snelslow with standard BCA-provided BP bolts. The weekend itself was well supported by local cavers, with four coming from CCPC (Jenny, Roy, Steve and me). On the Friday we attacked the top of the hauling shaft, hammering the steel plates open, and setting up the old Longcliffe tripod ready for Saturday. We also removed an enormously long air pipe from the 40m shaft and beyond - proof, if any were needed, of the determination of the old diggers. At the same time, a party descended through the swallet entrance and dropped all the staging and ladders to the foot of the shaft.

Saturday was a busy day with a team below cutting and wrapping the heavy wooden timbers and conveyor belting into 1-ton heli-bags, while the surface team hauled these up, along with the ladders and stacked them on the surface. It took several hours to clear the cave, and then we had to dismantle the tripod and rigging, close up the shaft and take on the even harder task of manhandling the heavy loads the best part of a kilometre ... a very muddy kilometre at that.

When we finally got the last load into the skip back at the Giant's Hole cavers' car park, we were all aching in parts where we didn't even know we had muscles. But the job was done, and (pew!!) we didn't need to carry on into Sunday.

It's now just a matter of time before full access will be restored. The route to the cave has been planned and agreed with the owner. One stile needs restoring (Roy and I will be doing that - next Spring) - but Christmas Swallet will probably have to wait until much drier weather to enable the bolting to be done safely.

I'm sure that there will be an official detailed DCA write-up for this with pictures etc. Meanwhile many thanks to Pete Knight for organising this, and to all those from Crewe who assisted. There is always work to be done to keep caving alive and well in the Peak, and we only have volunteer (slave) labour to rely on!!

Alan Brentnall



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 10th November – Poacher's Cave, North Wales.



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 23rd November – Water Icicle Close Cavern, Monyash, Derbyshire.

A good trip, with Alan Brentnall (approved keyholder) guiding the group into the new extensions.



DCRO Training at Alderley Edge Copper Mines:- 24th November – Casualty-care – Stretches & Splinting.

This was an interesting event, initially involving three separate casualty scenarios, with small teams dealing with each. Other Emergency Service personnel attended – Paramedics; Fire Service; H.A.R.T – in order to gain a better insight into DCRO operational methods and ability – suffice to say that all the feed-back reflected how impressed they were with the way each casualty was treated, handled, and recovered to the surface. We made a point of using 'spectators' from those other services, to assist with stretcher handling in the more straightforward passages.



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 30th November – Waterways Swallet, Blore, Staffordshire :- this was a working-party session to clear excess vegetation from the edges of the parking area, and to install a drainage pipe to (hopefully) help to prevent vehicles getting bogged down. Report & Photos: Alan Brentnall.

Waterways Swallet - Annual Gardening Session 2019



Any icy drive across the White Peak, through sunshine and fog, took me to Dovedale and Ilam and then, over Blore Pastures, to Waterings Wood, where I parked outside the cavers' car park for Waterways Swallet. Today Crewe were meeting up to do the annual tidy-up of the car park, in line with the requirements for the access agreement between DCA and the Okeover Estate.

Left: The parking area and road gate.



I hadn't been there long before Will and Izzie arrived, and we transferred several gardening tools to the slightly overgrown parking area and started to clip the edges of the woodland and strim the reeds and other plants. Pretty soon, we were joined by Gaz and Roy. Roy and I seem to be getting a bit of a reputation for stile-mending (Gautries Hole, Watts Grove, Snelslow Swallet etc), and I informed him that the stile in the fence around the swallet itself was in need of repair (another condition of access), so we took a stroll down to cave to measure up.

Once at Waterways Swallet itself, we found that the recent heavy flooding, coming in the middle of the autumn floods, had washed a great deal of leaf mould up against the fence, and across the grill which spans the entrance. The stile, however, turned out to have been repaired since my last visit by persons unknown (possibly some of the Orpheus cavers - they used to have this job a few years back), so we will give this a miss this year, but the situation needs to be

monitored as the repaired stile won't last forever; the whole thing will, eventually, need to be replaced.

We cleared the heavy mulch of leaves from the entrance grill, and discussed whether it would be worth building a small circular wall around the entrance, with a new grill on top, the wall itself having gaps to allow the passage of water etc. Something else to consider for the future.

Back at the parking area, we found that the gardening work was nearly finished, but that was only part of the job. Earlier this year there had been two incidents where cavers' cars had got bogged down in the car park, and the farmer had been put to the trouble of towing out a one car, and an AA van! Consequently, DCA had decided that some changes were needed to prevent this from becoming a regular occurrence and, a few months back, I visited the cave with a couple of chaps from DCA to plan some work which would sort out the problem. There was a big roll of land-drain pipe in the car park; we just needed Scott from the DCA, who had masterminded the plan, to arrive with the rest of the materials.

In addition to digging land drains, there was other work needed, including finishing off the new gate which Scott had hung across the entrance a couple of weeks ago, removing the old gate and fitting new P-bolts on the Toad Haul handline pitch at the bottom of the cave.

Pretty soon Scott turned up and we got stuck into shifting various tools and bags of gravel into the woods. While several of us started digging the trench, Roy set about digging new foundations for concreting one of the gate posts, and pretty soon he was ready to add some water to the postcrete. The trouble was, the water had yet to arrive. In order to get around this issue, I set about taking Scott and a jerrycan down to the pool where the stream which drains Dunlowmoor Wood, and which travels around the edges of Waterings Wood, eventually sinks before reappearing in Wotno Streamway at the bottom of the Swallet. However, no sooner had we started walking than Charley turned up, complete with two full jerrycans of water.



The work, digging the trench, and the soakaway didn't take very long, once everybody got stuck in, and, by the time we were laying the pipe, Grace and Mark had arrived. Once the pipe was buried, and the gate was sorted, a group of students who were staying the weekend at the TSG Chapel arrived, set on bottoming the swallet. By this time, it became apparent that the DCA bolter wasn't going to arrive and that part of the job would need to wait until one of the bolters became available. So, after a quick lunch and chat, and

a brief tidy-up of tools etc, we all made our separate ways homewards.

Many thanks to everybody for their efforts - Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club has a long history of providing skills and labour in support of caving within the Peak District, and Waterways Swallet

is a very interesting cave. It's well worth the effort to maintain the open access to this venue, and I can heartily recommend a trip at least as far as the Main Chamber to anybody. For a variety of reasons, none of us went underground on this occasion, but we did discuss coming back for a trip sometime soon.

30th November – Follow-up to Waterways Swallet: Axe Hole, Stanley Moor.

Gaz.: Waterways Clean-up day: Great to meet a few more of you this morning hopefully no more transit vans will get stuck from now on! Shame we couldn't get underground but here are a few pics from under Stanley Moor this afternoon lovely and muddy but so much action in such small spaces. **Photos: Gaz McShee.**

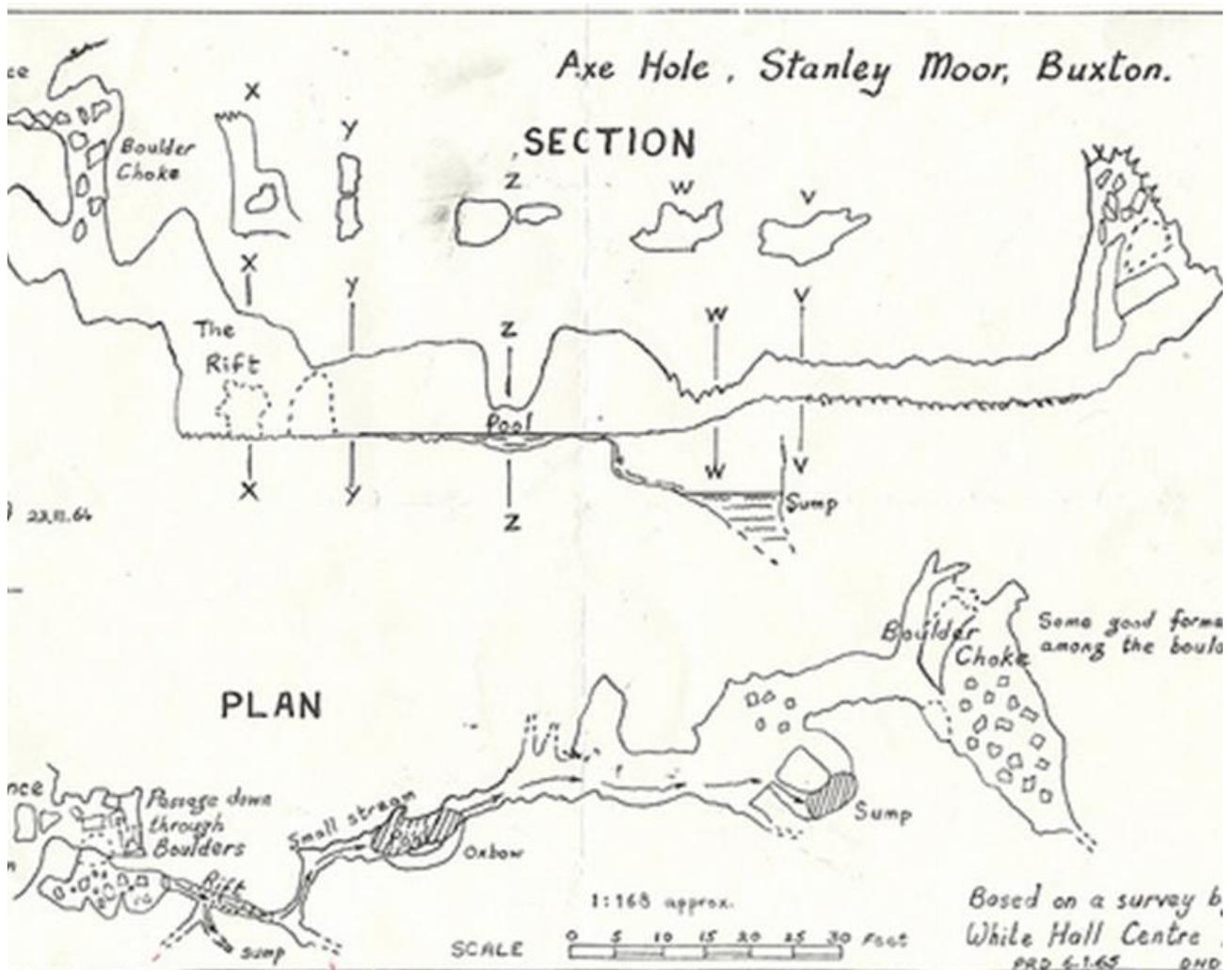




Axe Hole:-

Quite a lot of the stals in that chamber are vandalised but too far back to have been done recently. The new formations have grown in their place so the deposition must be really fast in that part of the cave. **Gaz.**

The following survey (below) has been widely circulated on the internet over the years – my apologies to whoever created it (in 1964 / 65 ?), for not asking permission to include it here, and for not attributing it to any particular person. I believe it was created by several White Hall Centre staff, for their use with groups of youngsters. Thank you ! – Steve Knox.





Don't Forget:

There are always additional chances to go caving or walking (..... and ?) with other Club Members, with many trips being arranged at short notice.

E-mail is the easiest way to keep in touch, and can be used to let other Members know what you are up to, and to invite them along, where possible. Remember, to get the most out of Your Club, you have to get out there, and get involved. Have fun ! Steve Knox

Coming Soon to a Saturday or Sunday near you !

The first section of the CCPC Meets List for 2020 includes the following:

Venue	Region	Grid Ref.	Grade	Alternative Venue	Region	Grid Ref
Flowerpot to Merlins, Stoney Middleton.	Derbys.	SK 219760	4	Giants Hole	Derbys.	SK 217759
Minera Mine	North Wales		3			
Peak Cavern	Derbys.	SK 148825	3 - 5	Giant's Hole	Derbys.	SK 119826
Lancaster Hole	Yorks.	SD 664807	3 - 4	Mistral Hole	Yorks.	SD 666803
Rowter Hole	Derbys.	SK 134823	3 - 4	P8	Derbys.	SK 107817
Ogof Draenen	South Wales	SO 246117	3 - 4			
Aygill Caverns	Yorks.	SD 663818	3	Bull Pot of the Witches	Yorks.	SD 662813

(Dates are intentionally removed, and grid references reduced – Members will already have the full Meets List, and will be reminded of forthcoming Meets by e-mail.)

At last I managed to get the Newsletter **beyond 10 pages**, thanks to the contributions from a small number of Members. The efforts of those few who provided reports or photographs are greatly appreciated. Cheers, Steve Knox, Editor.



Space Filler:-

You might find it interesting to compare this photograph I took in Axe Hole in 1967 (using actual film, and using a single-use glass flash-bulb !!), with the photos Gaz has taken. This picture has been used in a previous Newsletter – can you remember the caver ???

Steve Knox

HAPPY CHRISTMAS !!!