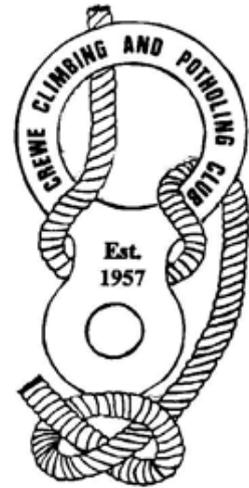




C.C.P.C. Newsletter 122 March 2020

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By the time this Newsletter reaches you, everything we have grown to accept as ‘normal’ will have changed, as the **Coronavirus** takes hold in just about every part of the world. Our particular leisure activities will be ‘on hold’, as we try to get through the next weeks, or months, without becoming ill, or spreading the illness to others. Our national caving and mountaineering organisations have joined those from other parts of the world in asking that all such activities cease until this most serious situation is past. Consequently, there will be no club social or business meetings, or trips, on the hills, or under them, for the foreseeable future. We will look forward to better times ahead.

Keep safe everyone, and use Social Media, telephone, e-mail, or whatever, to keep in touch.

Club Meets, etc., during late December 2019, January, February & March 2020.

Sun. 22 nd Dec.	Day Shaft to Youd’s Level, Matlock, Derbyshire.	CCPC Caving trip.
Fri. 27 th Dec.	Manifold Valley, Staffordshire.	CCPC - Christmas Social Walk.
Sun. 5 th Jan.	Flower Pot to Merlin’s Mine, Stoney Middleton, Derbyshire.	CCPC Caving trip.
Mon. 6 th Jan.	‘Bleeding Wolf’, Scholar Green.	CCPC A.G.M. & Monthly Meeting.
Sat. 8 th Jan.	Minera Mine: Grand Turk to White Vein, North Wales.	CCPC Caving trip.
Sun. 2 nd Feb.	Peak Cavern, Derbyshire. Giants Hole / Carlswark.	CCPC Caving trip.
Mon. 3 rd Feb.	‘Bleeding Wolf’, Scholar Green.	CCPC Monthly Meeting.
Tues. 4 th Feb.	DCRO Base, Buxton.	Training: First Aid.
Sat. 15 th Feb.	Lancaster Hole, Yorkshire, changed to Giants Hole, Derbys.	CCPC Caving trip. (Changed due to bad weather.)
Sat. 29 th Feb.	Rowter Hole new extensions, Derbyshire.	CCPC Caving trip. (Changed from Sunday, by request.)
Mon. 2 nd Mar.	‘Bleeding Wolf’, Scholar Green.	CCPC Monthly Meeting.
Sat. 14 th Mar.	Ogof Draenen, South Wales.	CCPC Caving trip.

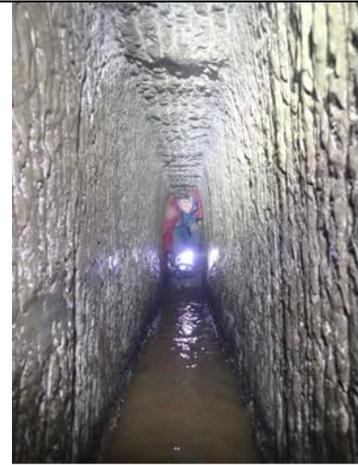


Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation training events, etc., are often included in the Newsletter, as CCPC has always maintained a strong involvement with DCRO, and a number of CCPC Members continue to play a significant role, training regularly, and turning out whenever required to assist, when called upon to help those in trouble underground. <https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireCaveRescue>



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 22nd December 2019 – Day Shaft to Youd’s Level, Matlock, Derbyshire.

Photographs provided by Grace – 05.01.2020



Nigel Cooper Reported: Sun 22nd Dec. – Day Shaft to Youd’s Level through trip: Eight Members made the trip out to Matlock Bath to undertake a descent of Day Shaft, up into Old Jant/Gentle Women’s workings, & back out via Youds Level. Unfortunately the route through from the upper end of Youd’s towards Gentle Woman’s, was not located (I think it’s a pig to find too!). Grace then enjoyed a nice stroll out via Youd’s, judging by her photos. The rest of the party, no doubt thrutched & stooped their way out, in varying degrees of discomfort!! The original plan for this trip, was to descend Gentle Women’s Shaft before exiting via the level. However, the shaft has fairly recently been blocked by the landowner. Alan Brentnall informed us (at the January CCPC Meeting), that this is under negotiation by the DCA. In the meantime, should honour demand a return trip, an alternative entrance may be available.....



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 27th December 2019 – Christmas Social Walk, Manifold Valley, Staffordshire.

Organised by Des Kelly.

An eight-mile wander around the Manifold Valley area, starting from Hulme End car park, and doubtless identifying plenty of sites of speleological interest, as well as locating an occasional watering hole.



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 5th January 2020 – Flower Pot to Merlin’s Mine, Stoney Middleton, Derbyshire.

Report provided by Rob Nevitt – 05.01.2020.

Six members turned out for this one, Ade, Alan, Dan, Jenny, Steve PA and myself, Alan decided not to do the though trip but offered to put the ladder in Merlin for our route out and meet us underground at some point, as we found out later after not seeing him rocks had fallen on his hand and shoulder changing his plans, our root though wasn't as dramatic but all the tight squeezes, twists and turns made for a good days caving with some of us getting stuck or going the wrong way at some point, we finally emerged looking like chocolate soldiers Ade tried cleaning up in a grated channel at the side of the road to our amusement.

After changing we had a well-deserved beer at the Miners Arms in Eyam.

The other side of the day - Alan’s Story:

Solo Caving - A Cautionary Tale

So, having just got over a chesty cough and a sneezy cold which dogged me along many walks in the hills and forests around Braemar over Christmas, I returned to my home on the edge of the Peak District where I attended a rheumatologist appointment; my physician letting me know that my aching joints had nothing to do with the decrease in medication for my polymyalgia rheumatica - I'd just have to cope! Ah, the joys of getting old! At least there was a Crewe caving trip to look forward to on Sunday.

The outing was advertised as a through-trip between Flowerpot (that being the Eyam Dale portal to the notorious Dynamite Series in Carlswark Cavern) and

Merlin Mine, taking in the relatively newly excavated route between the foot of Eyam Dale Shaft and Gimli's Dream. Flowerpot had long been on my To-Do list. In my youth, I had traversed the crawls and squeezes of the Dynamite Series, and now I wasn't sure whether my aching joints were up to the excursion.

Consequently, I opted to skip the Flowerpot bit, and simply do the Merlin part of the trip in reverse, which would at least allow me to rig the Merlin winze for the folk who were doing the trip the right way round, and save them from (a) having to drag a ladder and a rope through the tortuous route and (b) persuading one of their number to free-climb the 10 metre winze and rig it.

Having parked in the Fireset Mine layby, and watched as the lads pre-rigged the narrow blue Flowerpot pipe, I said farewell to Ade, Steve, Jenny, Rob and Dan and set out up the slippery, wooded valley side, weighed down with ladder and rope, in search of the Merlin entrance.

Merlin has two entrances, five if you include all the Carlswark Cavern entrances, but I needed to find the lower one, to save having to abseil an extra winze. Once the correct entrance was found, I made my way along the adit to the crosscut at the back, and dutifully rigged the winze with a ladder, and a lifeline, doubled over a screw-gate to enable secure climbing from below later on.

But, for me, secure ladder climbing wasn't really a possibility, and I knew from the experiences of friends that electron ladders, when they go, tend to break suddenly and without warning. Especially old ones - and the one Ade supplied certainly looked pretty old. One option might have been to abseil using the doubled line, but I didn't have a harness, or a suitable descender, and I certainly didn't fancy wrecking my fairly new over-suit by doing a classic! So, I gingerly descended the wire ladder one step at a time while leaning against the backwall and sliding the doubled rope through my left hand. It was indeed a relief to get to the bottom of the little pitch.

And then the fun began, as the large passage of my memory rapidly dwindled to a narrow, low, steppy affair down which I clumsily progressed, every one of my joints aching angrily at the exertion. My chesty Christmas cough decided to also make a brief come-back, and I began to sweat profusely.

Eventually the passage bottomed out at a low narrowing, where a smooth plank of wood indicated the moist wriggle into Gimli's Dream, a wondrous chamber discovered in the early days by the late lamented John Beck. It is still adorned by many beautifully shaped speleothems, but unfortunately these have all been made drab and brown by passing cavers.

At this point I stopped for a well-earned rest and got my breath back. I felt that this was a decision point. Going forward meant finding my way through the convoluted route to the foot of Eyam Dale Shaft - something I had previously done but only once. Could I find the way? Had I the patience or the energy? What if my joints just gave upon me? And, of course, this is one of the problems with solo caving. There's nobody else to share the decision-making, nobody to bounce ideas off and nobody to simply tell you that you're just a big Jessie and that you should just get on with it.

Consequently, after much deliberation, I decided to do the sensible thing for a change and beat a retreat. So once more through the wet gravelly entrance to Gimli's I went, turning towards the foot of the winze and forcing myself, as best I could, up the cobbly passage. On my way in it had been bad enough, but at least I had gravity to help; now I was having to struggle upwards to make any progress at all, and, to make matters worse, it felt much tighter in this direction.

And then suddenly it happened. It began with a small brick-sized stone falling from somewhere above and to the side of me glancing across my shoulder. This was followed by another rock, possibly three times bigger, falling heavily and painfully onto the back of my right hand. Even as I gasped and cried out in pain, more and more rocks were tumbling onto my helmet and my back, until, as suddenly as it had started, it stopped.

As I lay there, considering my situation, I realised that most of the rocks still on my back were light enough to slide off if I moved. No great damage done, except for my right hand, which was becoming quite painful. But, looking forward, along the passage, the going seemed tighter, and the walls and rocks above looked, if anything looser. Had I effectively sealed myself in?

And then I wondered whether I was in the right place at all. I've caved in Merlin's Mine many times over the years, and I really felt that I knew the place well but could familiarity cause carelessness. Had I unwittingly taken the wrong route from Gimli's Dream?

Well, whatever (as they say these days). I certainly didn't fancy staying in my current location, so I gingerly eased myself back and down to the point where I had exited from Gimli's Dream. Right enough, a piece of wood indicated that I had made a mistake and taken the wrong turn. I now tried to ease myself into the passage I thought was correct, which was both difficult and painful one-handed, and I was mightily relieved to see the knot in the bottom of the double-lifeline ahead of me.

Ascending the ladder was even more carefully done than the descent – I even tried to use my mashed hand but dared not even imagine what it would be like to have my whole weight hanging on it. And getting off the top of the ladder was as painful as I expected.

Back at the car, I dozed on and off for an hour or so while I waited for my friends to re-appear. I'd been very lucky – the hand-injury looked to be severe bruising, rather than a break; it could have been so much worse, and, if the collapse had completely trapped me or, worse, knocked me out, I would have been in a passage away from the main route through Merlin's Mine.

As they say ... Cave Caver!

Alan Brentnall



DCRO Training at Buxton Base:- 6th January 2020 – This was an opportunity to improve personal knowledge of the Base, and of the considerable range of kit stored there, either 'ready to go' on the vehicle, or racked up as back-up and replacement.



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 18th January 2020 – Minera Mine, North Wales: Grand Turk – White Vein Traverse.

Seven Members made the trip into Minera Mine and traversed Grand Turk Passage. Unfortunately, the fixed rope up from Grand Turk to White Vein was missing, so the trip ended there. It didn't spoil things too much however & an enjoyable trip was had by all.

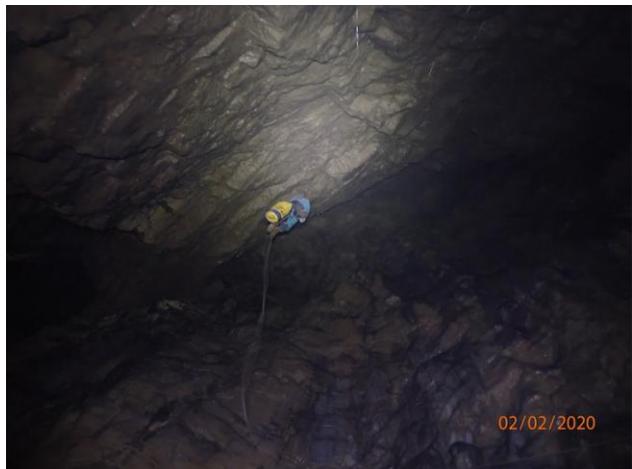


Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 2nd February 2020 – Peak Cavern, Derbyshire.

Report provided by Jenny Drake:

There were two main trips. One team, including a novice who recently got in touch with the club, doing the ‘tourist trip’, and seeing the best bits of the system,. The other team was five strong and went up the spectacular Victoria Aven and explored the SRT route down George Cooper's Aven to the vast Echo Aven, with extensive mud formations on the floor. Lots of loose rock around, so great care was needed. It was good to see John Gillet underground. We were mostly all out at near the same time, so met up at ‘The George’ for a drink after getting changed. Tony Seddon's mobile caving shop was at the TSG, drawing out some of our wallets.

Photographs provided by Grace – 03.02.2020



There are definitely some seriously big spaces to negotiate on the Victoria Aven route. Fortunately, it looks as if it is all downhill on the way back !



Going up !!

(-the photographer must have adopted a very interesting position for this shot !)



Its good to see some pristine formations (there used to be lots like this in the past) – always a sign that it takes considerable effort to reach this point.



Not every passage was huge, and in some places considerable digging has been needed to make connections.

Good photos, Grace !!



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 15th February 2020 – the planned trips to Lancaster Hole and Mistral, were scrapped due to the poor weather during the previous week, the bad forecast, and the high water levels in Yorkshire, so Giants Hole, Derbyshire, was chosen as an alternative.

Report provided by Steve Pearson-Adams:

‘Storm Dennis’ put paid to our original trip into Lancaster Hole, so a hastily thrown together trip was arranged into Giants Hole Derbyshire instead. Eight members braved the conditions, some opting for breakfast at the Yondermans Café, while the rest made their way directly to the cave. Des made good use of his recent acquisition (a new van) being well protected from the elements whilst getting changed, not that he's getting soft I'll have you know. Nine of us made our way to the entrance, the extra body being David, who as a temporary member, had made the journey from Grimsby. He had not caved for nine months and never in the UK and wanted to brush up on his SRT skills. Boss Aven was tackled initially by some of the party while others went to take a look Garlands Pot and the Wet Inlets, with a view to putting up the rope for a pull through. Sadly, they soon realised how gravity and volume, (I'm being kind), can conspire against you, so they joined the rest of us in Boss Aven. A very pleasant time was spent here with most of us getting up to the top chamber with the aid of the in-situ ropes. Once all were safely back down it was decided to make a second attempt at reaching the top of the wet inlets. It's true what they say, ‘perseverance pays off’. For those who have not been up there, it is a fine vadose passage with traverses over the stream below, which today was quite lively. It ends at a sump to its north end, and a purged sump at the other end, with some fine formations thrown in. A three-hour trip was enjoyed by all, with a pint and chips at one of Castleton’s hostelrys afterwards.

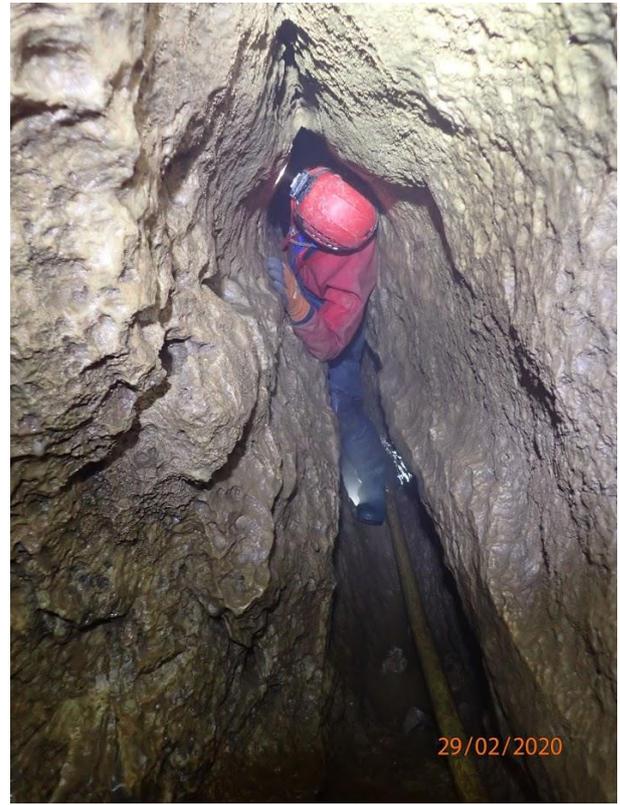


Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:- 29th February 2020 – Rowter Hole New Extensions, plus P8, as an alternative, Derbyshire.

Report provided by Jenny Drake. Photos provided by Grace Bechmanis.

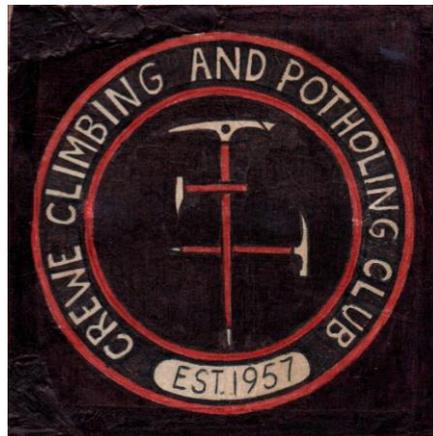
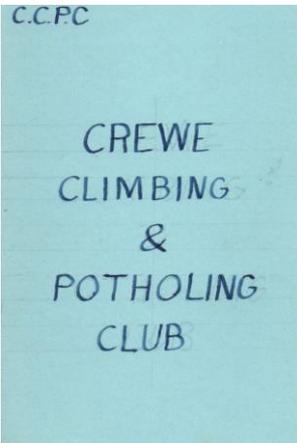
There were two trips involving lots of Crewe members and guests underground on leap year day. Eight of us descended **Rowter Hole**, heading to Gin Shaft and the extensions. There were lots of tight awkward bits to negotiate, but also some spectacular pitches, especially with the amount of water tumbling down them. In places it was almost like a Dales stream pot in character. People turned back at various points, sometimes finding that recent pie consumption had made the squeezes a bit tight! Some members got to Crystal Orechasm, and took a look at the current digging areas. It seemed an age for people to prussik back up the entrance pitch, despite us rigging both the straight drop and the rebelay route. The surface was not a place to linger, with a strong, cold wind and later on sleet and snow coming in from the west. Three members had an aquatic trip down **P8**, using a tarpaulin to divert some of the water away on the entrance climb. Many of us met up at the George in Castleton afterwards for food and drinks.





These are just a selection of the excellent photos shared by Grace. Thank you !!

Crewe Climbing & Potholing Club - a little history.



The Original C.C.P.C. Membership Card, first issued , and used on 4th April 1966, and the earliest C.C.P.C. Club Badge (unless you know different).

Although the Club started in 1957, it was reorganised and formalised in 1966, with defined rules and subscriptions, etc.. Under the revised structure, new Members paid an entrance fee of 2/6 (two shillings and six pence = 12 ½ pence) plus 6/- (six shillings = 30 pence) annual subscription, then there was a fee of 1/- (one shilling = 5 pence) for every trip attended. By 1967, the annual subscription had increased to 10/- (ten shillings = 50 pence), but students only paid half. All payments were recorded in our Membership Cards.

The original circular C.C.P.C. badge shows a vertical ice-axe, crossed by a pegging hammer (above) and an ice-hammer (lower), surrounded by 'CREWE CLIMBING AND POTHOLING CLUB' in a border, with 'EST 1957' at the bottom; black background, red

borders and tool shafts, white lettering and tool heads, with black lettering on white for the date - I still have mine ! It was designed by John Mather and accepted by the Club on 2nd February 1970 !!

Climbing was a significant part of all CCPC activities in those early years, and climbing trips were much more frequent than caving meets. The list for 1966 is a good example (almost certainly incomplete), with caving trip marked with an asterisk:

01-01-1966	Stanley Moor*	19-08-1966	Mow Cop
09-01-1966	P8*	20-08-1966	Wales
02-04-1966	P8*	27-08-1966	Carlswark*
09-04-1966	Tryfan	28-08-1966	Roaches
28-05-1966	Castle Naize	31-08-1966	Mow Cop
30-05-1966	Roaches	02-09-1966	Roaches
03-06-1966	Roaches	04-09-1966	Mow Cop
22-06-1966	Somerset*	09-09-1966	Roaches
24-06-1966	Wales	16-09-1966	Roaches
30-06-1966	Tryfan	11-09-1966	Roaches
03-07-1966	Roaches	19-09-1966	Axe Hole*
04-07-1966	Axe Hole*	25-09-1966	Castle Naize
10-07-1966	Roaches	08-10-1966	Wales
17-07-1966	Llanberis, Wales	15-10-1966	Castle Naize
20-07-1966	Roaches	16-10-1966	Wales
24-07-1966	Tryfan	23-10-1966	Roaches
27-07-1966	Somerset*	30-10-1966	Castle Naize
31-07-1966	Roaches	06-11-1966	Castle Naize
06-08-1966	Castle Naize	13-11-1966	Baslow
07-08-1966	Roaches	27-11-1966	Baslow
10-08-1966	Roaches	18-12-1966	Stanage
14-08-1966	Tryfan	26-12-1966	Wales
18-08-1966	Stanage		

It may be surprising to see the number of repeat visits, but back in 1966 personal transport was nothing like as 'normal' as it is today, and it was not unusual to choose a venue based on its proximity to a bus route. Caving sites which we take for granted today, were either unknown, or rarely visited, and written descriptions or surveys were limited. The development of better equipment for dealing with vertical pitches underground also opened up new opportunities.

As time passed, there was less and less climbing being done by Club Members (especially involving Ice axes or pegging hammers), and consequently a Club badge that more reflected our caving activities was required, without completely abandoning any connection with climbing.

During November and December of 1981 we had a competition for a new badge/logo to replace the original one, and three possibilities were submitted by Members (names now lost) and were judged at the meeting held on 4th January 1982:- 'caver' (7 votes), 'abseiler' (4 votes), and 'figure of eight' (12 votes), hence the current design. It was not turned into badges, as initially intended, as we still had a stock of the original badges and kept using them for some time, but it was used as the Club logo on the next order of T-shirts, and later for car stickers and numerous other clothing orders - I think the new design was easier to reproduce on fabric than the original had been, and it seems to have become something of a 'classic'. It is certainly widely recognised in the caving community.

Steve Knox

I usually end the Newsletter with the following 'Don't Forget' entry, and despite the current extraordinary circumstances, I'm leaving it there. The sentiment remains valid :-



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

Keep in Touch !

During this time of unprecedented threat to our individual health and wellbeing, it is important to remember that we may have relatives, friends, neighbours or work colleagues, who might be feeling particularly isolated and alone, as our opportunities to come together are increasingly restricted.

Most of us are fortunate to be supported by close family and friends, and, although we can't meet up, face to face, to enjoy a caving trip or a walk on the hills together, as a Club we care about the welfare of all our Members, and we can maintain contact with others through a chat on the phone or by using the internet, or text messaging.

Just calling to say, 'Hello, how are you ?' can make a difference when someone is feeling really low.

A poster pinned up outside the local church reminded us that although things are really stormy at the moment, it won't always be raining !

Coming Soon to a Saturday or Sunday near you - nothing for a while !

Sadly, we are in limbo, until we are through these challenging times. Keep safe and keep smiling !

Venue	Region	Grid Ref.	Grade	Alternative Venue	Region	Grid Ref

Steve Knox. 26th March 2020.