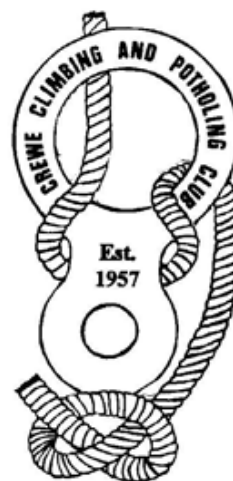




C.C.P.C. Newsletter 126. July 2021

Log on to
www.ccpc.org.uk

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Editorial:

It is eighteen months since the 'normality' of our lives was brought to a shuddering halt by Covid, but, at last, there is some hope that lockdowns, social distancing, facemask regulations, and vaccination, have finally contributed to the start of better times ahead. There are more and more people returning to the outdoor activities which are so important to us all, and, at last, actual caving is taking place. Annie and I have continued to get out walking in the hills together, whenever possible, but we have missed the social interaction of meeting up with family and friends, and we have struggled with the restrictions on travel. Fingers crossed that the worst is behind us.

From recent e-mails, it has become clear that a number of CCPC members have been forced to accept that their Gouffre Berger trip, scheduled for July this year, is not going to happen. Apparently there are increasing problems with documentation, etc., at the French border, and the possibility of enforced quarantine on arrival there, or on return to the UK, have made this impractical. This will be hugely disappointing for all those involved; perhaps 2022 will be more successful.

Continue to keep safe everyone, and use social media, telephone, e-mail, or whatever, to keep in touch. Our monthly CCPC Meetings are still continuing, in a very informal manner, on-line, and hopefully we will be able to go back to normal face-to-face meetings before too much longer.

Steve Knox 1st July 2021.

LATE NEWS: All Covid restrictions are due to finish on 19th July !!!!!

5th JULY 2021

.....
Many thanks to those who share accounts of their adventures, and their amazing photographs, with the rest of the club membership. It is greatly appreciated.

Please consider sharing something during the rest of 2021 !!! Anything welcome.

Steve Knox.

Planned Club Meets, etc., from January 2021 to June 2021: **(Severely affected by Covid).**

At each AGM in January, our Meets Secretary puts forward a comprehensive programme of proposed Meets for the following months (lots of work here !!). Although, in previous years, unavoidable circumstances have sometimes resulted in a few Meets being cancelled, generally Members have managed to complete most of the trips planned.

During 2020, and the first half of 2021, the Covid situation has made the Meets programme impossible to follow, but plans have continued to be made, and modified, in the hope that regulations would be eased.

The following list gives some idea of what was planned, and sometimes completed. Changes have had to be made, often at short notice, in order to try to give Members the opportunity to get underground, so this list will almost certainly have errors and omissions, but it does give some idea of what a busy and enthusiastic club CCPC normally is, and will be again, very soon:



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: January to June 2021

2 nd Jan. 2021	Waterfall Hole, Derbyshire.	Cancelled.
4 th Jan. 2021	A.G.M. and January Meeting.	Held on-line, using 'Zoom'.
17 th Jan. 2021	Langstroth Pot / Hagg Gill Pot, Yorks..	Cancelled.
30 th Jan. 2021	Nettle Pot / Maskhill Mine, Derbys..	Cancelled.
1 st Feb. 2021	February Meeting.	Held on-line, using 'Zoom'.
14 th Feb. 2021	Snake Mine, Derbyshire.	Cancelled.
27 th Feb. 2021	Link Pot to Serendipity, Yorks..	Cancelled.
1 st Mar. 2021	March Meeting.	Held on-line, using 'Zoom'.
14 th Mar. 2021	Poachers' Cave, North Wales.	Cancelled.
11 th April 2021	Peak Cavern, Derbyshire.	Cancelled.
11 th April 2021	Manchester Hole to Goyden Pot, Yorks..	Members attended.
12 th April 2021	April Meeting.	Held on-line, using 'Zoom'.
24 th April 2021	Snake Mine, Derbyshire.	Members attended.
1 st /2 nd May 2021	Eldon Hole, Derbyshire.	Members Training for Gouffre Berger.
9 th May 2021	Providence Pot, Yorks. CHANGED	Odin Mine, Derbys. – two Members .
10 th May 2021	May Meeting.	Held on-line, using 'Zoom'.
15 th May 2021	Eldon Hole, Derbys..	Members Training for Gouffre Berger.
22 nd May 2021	Cwmorthin Slate Mine, North Wales.	Cancelled.
29 th /30 th May	Eldon Hole, Derbys..	Members Training for Gouffre Berger.
6 th June 2021	Ogof Draenan, South Wales.	Cancelled.
7 th June 2021	June Meeting	Held on-line, using 'Zoom'.
12 th /13 th June	Eldon Hole, Derbys..	Cancelled.
13 th June 2021	P8 (Jackpot), Derbys.	Six Members attended.
19 th June 2021	Juniper Gulf, Yorks..	Cancelled.
26 th June 2021	Pippikin Pot to Mistral, Yorks..	Six Members attended.
<p>Limited privately organised activities have taken place as, and when, permissible, under the government restrictions, and some Members have continued to be self-isolating or 'shielding' during this period.</p>		



Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation:

DCRO team members continue to be ready to assist whenever required, throughout the present period of the Pandemic, and will use PPE, where appropriate.

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

Training for Team Members has continued to be organised – initially as on-line sessions, but more recently as practical sessions, with limited numbers attending on each occasion in order to maintain safe working practices during the ongoing Covid pandemic.

Jenny Drake's report on a practical training session follows:

DCRO Training Session – Rigging and Hauling – Jenny Drake



On **Saturday 3rd April 2021**, Crewe members Mick Potts, Steve PA and Jenny Drake were with DCRO at Giant's Hole for a training session on rigging and hauling casualties. This was the start of face-to-face training after lock down 3. The training took place over three days, with relatively small groups of DCRO team members each time as a way of minimising potential COVID exposure. As a rescue team different rules apply, but we try and be as COVID secure as we can.

For many of us, this was the first time underground since December and we were dismayed just how much the enforced lay off had caused our cave clothing and SRT harnesses to shrink! A distressed sheep was found lying in the small stream by the changing car park area. This was dragged from the water and covered with an orange sheet to try and warm it up. Strangely, no one was keen to cuddle a soggy and smelly sheep to give it a bit of warmth. The farmer was phoned and soon appeared on a tractor fitted with a digger bucket. By this time, the sheep was starting to perk up and after being loaded into the bucket was poking its head over the top to see where they were going as the farmer drove off.

Once underground we stopped at the base of Boss Aven to discuss what we were going to do at Garlands Pot, away from the noise of falling water. Garlands is a short, simple pitch, but is a regular for DCRO call outs. It is easily accessible by novice and non-cavers and people underestimate the difficulty of getting back up it, especially when there is a lot of water hurtling down.

Rigging for rescue hauling is very different from normal SRT progression rigging. We divided into smaller groups and practised a variety of ways of rigging the pitch head with pulleys and adjustable deviations to cope with different scenarios from tired, but healthy people, through to stretcher cases. Hauling was done with dual Z rigs set up along the approach passage. Everything is doubled up, so the failure of single components will not result in a casualty getting dropped.

After a couple of hours everyone had seen and done all the tasks and practised hauling and lowering the volunteer "dope on a rope" on command, so we returned to the surface. By this time, the day had become bright and sunny, but with a brisk easterly wind.

It was great to get back to hands on training again, after three months of on-line sessions.

Jenny Drake



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 13th to 15th March 2021

A Bit of Detective Work – Jenny Drake.

We received this unusual enquiry via the club web site contact form. Between us, we were able to deduce which cave this gentleman had visited all those years ago.

Jenny Drake

13/03/2021 from: Richard Whittle:

Back in the mid-1970s I attended a geological Society of London Engineering Group conference at Liverpool University. One of the field trips was to a cave not that far away (maybe a half-hour drive?) and organised by a local caving club. All I remember was that most of us were wearing suits and were not warned that it would be a 'proper' caving trip! Most chickened out, but some of us went in with a club guide, with hard hats and lamps. All I remember was a dry slide down a bedding plane and then an hour or so of muddy passages that made us all filthy - unfortunately, I was more interested in keeping clean than the cave trip! I'm just interested in where it might have been. I used to cave on Mendip back in the 1950s, but by the 70s I had given it up.

Thanks, Richard

13/03/2021 from: Jenny Drake:

Hello Richard, Thanks for getting in touch. An interesting tale. I can't think of a cave that it could be from your description. Assuming it was a natural cave, rather than a mine, then the nearest ones to Liverpool would be in Wales, in the Flintshire area, 30 miles or so from Liverpool, as the crow flies. Can you remember what direction you travelled? Across/under the Mersey to Birkenhead, or through Runcorn both would be on the way there. If this sounds plausible from what you remember, then North Wales Caving Club might be good people to ask.

The nearest caves in the Peak District would not have been a short drive. 50 or 60 miles. There are old copper mines at Alderley Edge, but they are in a sandstone, not limestone. There are various other mines. I can think of one in Skelmersdale and I'm sure there are plenty of others.

Regards, Jenny

14/03/2021 from Richard Whittle:

Thanks Jenny, I'm pretty sure it was southwest of Liverpool, and definitely a natural cave and not a mine. Flintshire is probably the best bet. I was working on the site investigation for the North Wales Coast Road A55 at the time and had a lot on my mind, which is probably why the memories are so vague about it all. 30 miles or so sounds about right too, the drive wasn't much more than an hour. I do remember the entrance - a horizontal slot at ground level, then a bedding plane slide of about 20 feet at around 30 to 40 degrees. I know I would have been much more interested if I hadn't been trying to keep my suit clean and dry (and I failed). The trip was badly organised by the Engineering Group committee, we should have been warned to take suitable kit. I think we were all expecting a show cave like Gough's! The reason I'm asking is that I now live near Edinburgh, and I swap emails with an old caving friend in Stafford (we are old friends in both senses!). We are both in lockdown and are swapping caving tales, mostly Mendip. Now I know it's likely to be Flintshire I'll do a bit more online searching.

Regards, Richard

15/03/2021 from Jenny Drake:

Hello Richard, Good luck with your search. If you can find someone who has done a lot of caving in North Wales, there is a good chance they can identify the cave you went down. A lot of the known caves in the area have been discovered, or significantly extended since the 1970's, so knowing it was accessible then will narrow it down quite a bit. I've done some caving in that area, but not enough to be of much help!

Regards, Jenny

15/03/2021 from Richard Whittle:

Hi Jenny, Success! I decided to trawl the internet for Liverpool Uni conferences and found this. I'm fairly sure the cave is Ogof Hesp Alyn, discovered in 1973, (the year before the conference). I recall walking with the others up a long track through trees, to an entrance beneath a small cliff. It couldn't have been the nearby Ogof Hen Ffynhonnau because that cave hadn't yet been discovered. Also, I remember the guide saying that the cave was extensive - we kept to the upper series. Wikipedia says: "Much of the cave is wet and muddy, with the entrance series setting the theme for what is to come later on". Sounds like the right place - none of the other Mold caves sound right. The entrance is now a manhole in concreted ground, but it looks as if the natural rock ledge of the original entrance is still visible.

I notice that No2 on the Geol Soc fieldwork list is Dinorwic. Ironical that I didn't go on that one, because by the end of that same year I was the site geologist there for 3 years, during the excavation of the exploratory and access tunnels. Thanks again for your help and interest. Without it I'd probably now be searching through descriptions of Peak District caves!

Regards, Richard

15/03/2021 from Jenny Drake:

Hi Richard, That is excellent news. Glad you managed to narrow it down to Ogof Hesp Alyn. Would you be willing to let me pass on this email exchange to our club newsletter editor? I think it would make an interesting little article for people to read. Our editor is always desperate for copy, but especially at the moment when lock down has meant we can't go underground!

Regards, Jenny

15/03/2021 from Richard Whittle:

Hi Jenny, I'm very happy for you to do that. Using my name and emails is no problem. My friend and I were both members of the Wessex Cave Club and we caved in old clothes, wellie boots, coal miners' helmets, and with acetylene lamps. I became more interested in geology and left the club in the late 1960s. He told me the other day that he stayed a member until the 1970s and did several trips to Welsh caves. It turns out that he never visited Ogof Hesp Alyn, so I'm chuffed about that.

Thanks again, Richard



Unsung Heroes:

- all those Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club Members who contributed to the production of the various editions of the Peak Rigging Guide.

Following an e-mail chat with Jenny, I went back through my stack of C.C.P.C. Newsletters, and Club Minutes, to find the earliest references to the C.C.P.C. Peak Rigging Guide.

In the December 1994 C.C.P.C. Newsletter is the following:

DERBYSHIRE RIGGING GUIDE

Don't be disappointed – order your copy of the new C.C.P.C. Rigging type guide to Derbyshire. Approximately £2.50. All profits go towards the bolting of the caves we all use.

As a Club, we had initially decided to donate all profits from the sale of the guide to the D.C.A. Peak Bolting Fund.

A letter from D.C.A., dated 20th May 1995, includes the following:

'Here's the next statement re. Peak Rigging Guide so you'll know how much money has been transferred from sales directly by DCA. I have also just received from Ralph a cheque for £100 from shop sales – making a total from Crewe C.P.C. so far of £332.18 (including the £50 you donated in 1992). Please pass on our thanks to your Members for their effort.'

Extract from the DCA Annual Report for 1995, presented to the A.G.M. on 3rd February 1996:

The Association's Balance at the end of the financial year was approximately £420 down on the previous year, in part accounted for by the excess expenditure on the 'Bolt Fund' at one point ... this deficit rose as high as £400 but further income from the 'Peak Rigging Guide' has helped to reduce it. Income will continue to come from sales of the 'Peak Rigging Guide' and the Association owes a particular debt of gratitude to the Crewe C.P.C. for their initiative in producing this and making the profit available to the DCA 'Bolt Fund'. Jenny Potts 7/01/1996.

As with any guide, each revised edition was almost immediately outdated, as new passages were discovered, and new routes created.

The C.C.P.C. Newsletter No.82 – Autumn 2004 – contains an article (Colin Knox) which includes a reference to the 'Peak Rigging Guide':

Credit, Where Credit is Due !

While looking over the 'Summary of Accounts for the Year 2004', produced by John Martin for the A.G.M. in October, I was interested to see where the Club income actually comes from.

.....The two remaining income sums (not counting the £6.93 interest on the Deposit Account) are £207.00 from the continuing sale of Rigging Guides, and £249.10 from the hiring out of gear.

Most Members will be well aware of the considerable efforts made by a small group of dedicated individuals, several years ago, to install permanent 'P-bolt' anchors on the more popular S.R.T.

routes of the Peak District. C.C.P.C. Members were involved in much of this strenuous and time-consuming work, and subsequently a number of those Members collaborated to produce the first edition of 'The Peak Rigging Guide', giving clear descriptions of S.R.T. routes, and topos (rigging diagrams). The Rigging Guide has gone through a number of editions since that time, each with modifications, and continues to be the essential S.R.T. handbook for visiting cavers to the Peak District. Every individual copy of the Guide is now produced by just a couple of Club Members, who print off the pages and covers, assemble everything in the correct order, bind it all together, and then, of course, the copies have to be delivered to retail outlets or dispatched by post to individual purchasers. All done voluntarily, in their own time. Phew !! Paul Holdcroft, it seems, is highly efficient with the Comb Binder, while Ralph has mastered the photocopier at a local educational establishment, which will remain nameless.

All profits from sales of early editions of the Rigging Guide were donated to the D.C.A. Bolt Fund, but once the major expenditure of bolt installation was over, profits were given to D.C.R.O. for a while. Eventually it was decided that C.C.P.C. should benefit from the profits, and since then sales have generated a steady income for the Club. (£207.00 in the first nine months of 2004). 'Hitch and Hike' still donate their retailer's profit to D.C.R.O..

Everything changes, (2021) 'Hitch and Hike' no longer exists, and the internet seems to have taken over from printed text. Your original paper copies of the Peak Rigging Guide will now be collector's items ! the story continues

Colin Knox

.....
Jenny Drake brings the story up to date:

My first involvement with the rigging guide was to put together the ninth edition in **2005**. Rather than using MSWord, this edition was produced on Scribus, an open-source desk top publishing program, that is still my favourite for setting out anything that needs to look good when printed on dead tree paper. The resulting pdf print files were so large that the guide had to be split into four sections for printing for the computers and printers we had back then to be able to cope with, without getting 1's and 0's indigestion! Ralph Johnson had the black and white laser printer and comb binder, so handled printing, binding, and distribution to the caving shops who sold the guide. These were Hitch'n'hike and Caving Supplies in the Peak District, and Inglesport in the Dales. Subsequent editions were type set by Alan Brentnall, using his preferred software. Printing and distribution remained with Ralph till his death, when the job passed on to Rob Nevitt.

As the years passed, the sales of the printed guide slowly dropped. Hitch'n'Hike closed and the other outlets saw decreasing demand. As a club we had raised the idea of moving the guide 'on-line' several times, and decided it was a good idea, but hadn't taken it further. CNCC had already moved from printed books of their SRT routes in the Dales to their web site. DCA were web publishing topos for the routes that they had installed anchors on. I had completed a major rewrite of the CreweCPC web site in late 2018 to early 2019. Towards the end of 2019 I decided to bite the bullet and add the rigging guide. The catalyst for me was when the tattered copy of edition 11 at the TSG's Chapel hut in Castleton went missing. The folks there just assumed they should be able to find the guide on-line and the fact that it wasn't was a bit embarrassing.

After getting the OK from the club and informing the shops that sold the printed guides of our plans I made a start. Rob gave me a memory stick with the 11th edition to use as a basis. Alan Brentnall passed on the work he had been doing for a paper 12th edition, which included new sites like Victoria Aven in Peak Cavern. The 11th edition topos were still based on scans of hand drawings. I used these as a basis for entirely new vector graphics-based topos, made using Inkscape. Vector graphics allow drawings to be zoomed to any extent without exhibiting jagged pixels.

Our guide had always included location and access information for each cave, or mine. Since the early days of our guide, the DCA have made up to date location and access information available on-line at their 'peakdistrictcaving.info' web site. A decision was made to concentrate on the rigging only and to reference the DCA for all location and access information using links. This means that cavers are directed to the most up to date access information, and means we don't have to duplicate the effort of keeping this up to date. The guide is still produced to look good when printed. An entire printable copy can be downloaded, or any individual topo can be printed from an A4 formatted pdf. Much of the html and css code for the rigging guide was written over Christmas 2019, in gaps while I was away visiting family. This page, along with five trial topos was put on the club web site in a hidden page and the link sent out to the club mailing list for comments. After a few modifications, the other topos were drawn and the guide went live on the 8th January 2020, a couple of months before caving almost stopped for months on end with the onset of COVID!

Despite the gaps in caving being legal, over the last eighteen months, the guide has proved very popular with Peak District cavers. We have made seventeen updates so far. Some have corrected mistakes, or clarified ambiguities. Some have inserted new routes in existing site topos. Some have added sites that have never been in the rigging guide before. Much of my local caving has ended up being rigging guide related to check things out and draw up new topos!

Jenny Drake

3rd July 2021



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 5th April 2021.

Hillocks Mine and Hoptonwood, Derbyshire – Gaz McShee

I hope everyone has survived the last three months of house arrest. It was the hardest punishment to accept this time round but all the sweeter when finally, it was over. Due to work I was unable to take advantage of the first few days of freedom but at the first opportunity I headed off to Hillocks to try the Wharf Climbing Shaft, reopened curtesy of members of this club.

Cautiously I lowered myself in, surprised at how nervous I was after a lack of practice, but soon I was safely at the bottom and off I scuttled to try Meccano Passage. I found the way very quickly, thanks to great information from Alan Brentnall, and made my way quickly to the first wet crawl. There started the problems; how the hell do you get into this thing?

Head-first, face down, would have led to drowning if I had to retreat! Feet first, face up and face down failed as I couldn't feel the way through and couldn't see it either. So, awkwardly I slid in, back down, face up, with no helmet. Fortunately, it worked, because getting out again would have been horrendous. After a bit of low and easier crawling I arrived at a very tight squeeze. Alan had pointed out that it had been enlarged and was easier now, but alone in a hole was not a place to be pushing the limits of what is possible, and it soon became apparent that today was not the day for heroics. Going back was a totally different story the first wet crawl was so easy the other way, face down, and soon I was back in the main chamber. After having a little potter around and finding someone's dig in a lovely little coffin level I'd not seen before, I headed back to the surface. The first pitch is a lovely, wide, picked shaft. I made a quick ascent of that and after de rigging set off up the main shaft. Damn it was awkward after such a long break. The whole thing just gets in the way, and where being fit gets you through, being so rested made it awful. Add to that, the nerves that had set in by not being on a rope for so long, and you have an epic ascent that made all the senses heighten, and the exit was one of those moments that stays with you forever and makes you realise why you do these things in the first place.

[Continues below.]

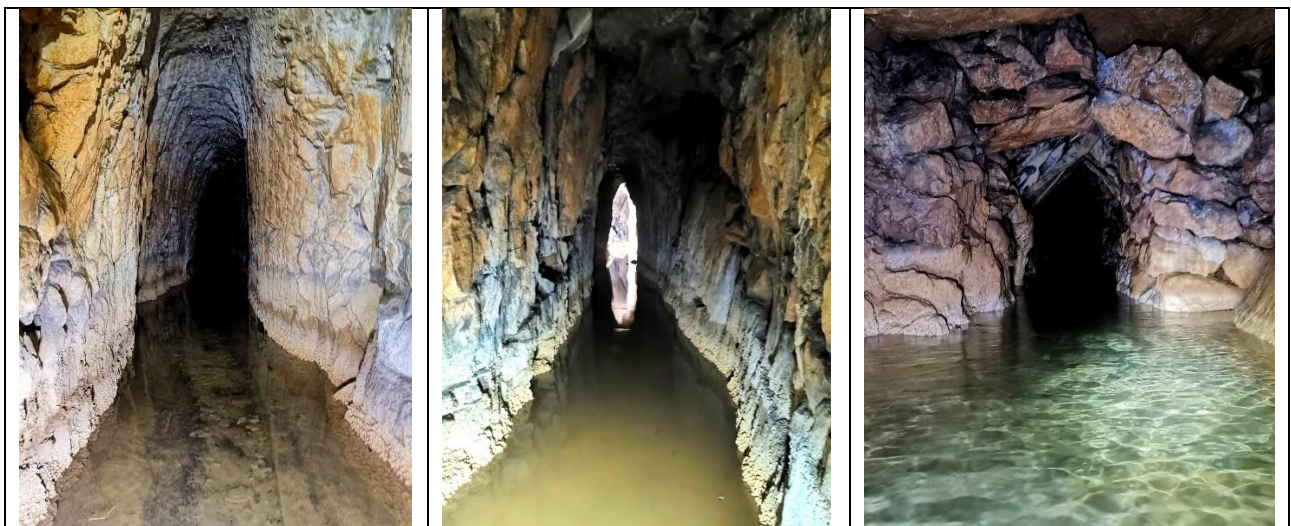
The Via Gellia Mines, Derbyshire – Gaz McShee

Today I made my first venture into Via Gellia to try out some of the walk-ins. Slaley Sough proved to be quite a venture. It had a lot more passage than I had anticipated, and after the first low passage, it opened up into a lovely walking height passage for the rest of the visit. Being alone I didn't climb into the raises but that is something for another day. Next I had a look in Bonsall Leys Level with its knee-deep junk filled passage, and waterfalls spouting from openings in the wayboard. It has a hugely impressive entrance that fills you with excitement for great things, only to spoil it once you get past the lake.

Mine number three stole the show, to the point that it may have ruined the rest of the valley for me ! Spinney Level is literally roadside, and should not be anything other than a vandalised rubbish tip, but for some reason it has escaped the attention of the pests. Maybe its the knee-deep water guarding the entrance passage, or maybe its the fact that it can't be seen from the road, but whatever it is the whole mine is in amazing condition.

I had heard it was wet, so I was equipped with a wetsuit, and crouched down into the entrance. Immediately my 'gogs' filled to the brim with water but who cares, the beautiful square block work passage looked amazing as I made my way through the knee-deep stream. The square passage soon changed to a large, picked, coffin-type passage. It led to a lovely little calcified water cascade, which ran into a pool that had several creatures swimming around, confused by the sudden brightness that had filled their dark world. Carefully passing the pretty water feature, so as not to damage it, I squeezed into a larger chamber and gazed into the entrance to the canal which marked the way on. In I slid, almost instantly waist deep in icy cold water, but the passage was amazing, leading off for around fifteen meters or so to the most amazing gothic- type archway. As impressive as it was the archway was hiding the real deal with this mine. Once under the arch you immediately become aware of the level of calcification; the archway, the walls, the deads, everything is beautifully decorated, and more unusually, undamaged. Once through the arch the water started to shallow and below the remains of the tramway sleepers could be seen fossilized forever in a calcite overcoat. More flowstone, mini stals and fins decorated the walls, and the floor consisted of a beautiful combination of Gour pools and cave pearls which looked like it had been laid by someone, as you would lay gravel on your garden path. After reaching the limits of exploration, I exited to a beautiful sunny day, with no sensation left in my toes - an ailment that plagued me until I arrived in Leek on the way home. The only question remaining, is what is at the bottom of the internal shaft?

A selection of Gaz's photos from **Spinney Level, Derwent South. NGR261561** :





I didn't get many worthwhile photos from the first two mines or Hillocks, but I've linked some from Spinney Level for anyone interested. Looking forward to seeing you all again soon.
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/19ZTtz2rrMBj7BuHA>

Gaz McShee



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 11th April 2021 **Manchester Hole to Goyden Pot.**

It was arranged to meet for 10:30 at the parking area adjacent to the railway tunnel in Nidderdale. So it was that 9 club members(who's counting ?) gathered and readied themselves for a socially distanced trip (I say that loosely) with much excitement and anticipation.

We entered via the upstream entrance of Manchester Hole We quickly made our way through to the river passage making our way down stream, until we were forced to take the low crawl on the right through the water. This is a fairly short immersion in ice cold water, bracing to say the least, as testified by most in the group. On the other side of this one enters Swindon Bypass and after traversing round the right side above the bypass we descended again to the river in search of the connection with Goyden Pot.

What is very noticeable and serves to sharpen the mind is the amount of flood debris throughout the system, in particular how high it can be seen, often at roof level even in the big chambers. It should be noted at this point that Neil was forging the way with Ade behind (Braemoor route description in hand) with the rest of us following on behind. Continuing on we negotiated the low short bedding plane and a squeeze through a gap into an ascending rift. We crossed over the flowing water as it disappears into a hole guarded with a scaff bar and saw Neil investigate an opening on the right wall to find the way on. After a couple of minutes we beckoned the others to follow. Again, we dropped through and around some more boulders to regain the Lesser Stream Passage and made easy headway into the impressive main passage of Goydons. We passed a chain on the right which would be our exit point via Gaskell Passage and Church Pot entrance upon our return. First, we needed to negotiate our way through Labyrinth Passage, an easy feat with Ade narrating from the route description. We regrouped allowing others in the party to catch up before making our way along Cap Tunnel and onto the Twenty Foot Pitch. Rob recalled this from our last trip in here although it had completely escaped me. Funny what your mind remembers and chooses to forget. We then picked up the knotted hand line allowing you to descend to New Stream Passage. All were very careful not to take an unwanted bath in the 11-meter-deep sump pool below. From here we pushed up New Streamway Passage eventually joining the cobble strewn bedding plane on the right which is followed for only a few meters following it round to the right to a T junction which put us back in Labyrinth Passage. We then headed back towards the river (the route description says "look out for a passage on the right you can't miss it, a thin calcite covering at its entrance") Well guess what we all missed it, and wound up back-tracking once we realised our error. Another rope climb ensued, that while not technical, required a degree of thought. What followed was a traverse high above another sump pool via a window, all being careful again not to go for a swim!!! Once we found our way (good effort from Ade breaking through flood debris, and caught site of daylight we gathered to take on fuel and refreshments. Back down to re-join Goydon main passage, we were soon at the chain seen earlier, and after making the climb out of Church Pot we were stood in the middle of the dry riverbed reflecting on a decent 3-ish hours of good caving, and plenty of variety. Thanks to all for making it another great club trip. Special thanks to the newbie who goes by the name of Darren, what a thoroughly nice chap. (Sorry Darren, couldn't resist.)

Cheers,

Steve Pearson-Adams.



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 24th April 2021.

Snake Mine - Hoptonwood, Derbyshire – Jenny Drake.

I'd badgered the meets sec to put Snake Mine on the schedule after an evening trip down part of it, the evening that Lock Down 1 was announced. Neil obliged, but this trip was cancelled by Lock Down 3. The Cwmorthin trip planned for the 24th April had to be moved as access wasn't available at the time and I suggested Snake Mine again.

Five club members arrived at the lay-by for the trip. Ade, the Conde brothers, Gaz and me. We sorted out the considerable amount of rope we needed. I was keen to explore the Chain Ladder shaft, Old Man's Steps climbing shaft and the lower shaft that had been bolted by Dan Lay a few years ago. The evening trip last year had explored the main shaft, the climbing shaft and 140' pitch to do a round trip, so for me this would mean that almost all the mine would have been visited. None of the others had been there before. The day was warm and sunny, so getting changed was pleasant.

We walked up the road and through the yard of the firm whose permission we had to visit the mine on their land. Our descent was via the Coe climbing shaft down to the 80' level. This is a crawling passage that

starts from inside the remains of a small building with a fireplace to keep the miners warm as they got changed. The mine was busy in the late 19th century and the last work took place in the 1920's. After a few yards, the first 10m pitch was reached, with a scaffold bar to belay from. At the bottom of this is a window in to the adjacent 250' deep main shaft. We carried on down the next pitch in the climbing shaft to reach the 80' level, again with a window into the main shaft. From there we made our way along the worked-out vein passage, the roof of which was largely back filled with rock, supported on stone stemples. We crossed the top of the 140' shaft, under another surface shaft and over a blocked shaft to reach the Chain Ladder pitch and Old Man's Steps climbing shaft. Ade and I descended the Chain Ladder shaft, and the others did the climbing shaft. The chain ladder shaft has the eponymous heavy chain ladder in place till the first rebelay. Reaching the bottom, we searched for the bolted lower pitch. There are several shafts down from this 230' level and we found Dan's bolts to descend to an area that the miners had worked. We found what looked suspiciously like finger width sticks of bang in a small pile that matched the shot holes we saw. The passage linking the base of the Chain Ladder and climbing shaft had been backfilled, but we had a clear vocal connection between the two groups. There is also a window between the shafts part way up, though not a safe route to go through.

After returning to the head of the two routes we swapped and explored the other route. The Old Man's Steps shaft is more convoluted and drops into a small amount of passage, but there are some miner's initials carved into the rock. After derigging, we returned to the surface and made our various ways home. No pub visits without pre-booking yet!

The mine needs to be treated with respect. In general, it is in good condition, but expertly stacked deads make up the walls in much of the shafts, and the roof, in a lot of the passages, so any clumsiness with these could be disastrous. There is a PDHMS journal description of the mine from 1968 and they were using ladders and lifeline. They were rather unhappy descending these shafts. The expansion bolts, rebelay and deviations that Dan Lay has installed into good rock mean people can descend while minimising the amount of contact with the stacked walls.

A second rigging topo for Snake Mine has now been drawn for the Crewe Rigging Guide, so all the SRT routes here are now covered.

Jenny Drake



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 9th May 2021.

Odin Mine - Castleton, Derbyshire – comment from Jenny Drake.

Jenny commented on-line: Hope you both had a good trip down Odin Mine.

I've had a go at a new topo for the rigging guide. It has been split over two pages as I found adding the extra anchors to the existing topo made it too busy. Please can you check it against what you've seen in reality. In particular, I've put 8m on the second rope in Chippendale Rift. Is that correct Ade? Also, that pitch just has a single resin anchor, as does the one on the rope up to the last two pitches. Again, is that correct? It is all based on the DCA topo, just done again in the Crewe style. I've added a profile of the cave, based on the one in the Peter Lord 1975 survey, showing where the pitches are. Hopefully, it makes sense! I have put in the entry and exit abseils that DCA recommend, even though they are not necessary if you scramble up and down the gully as Ade Pedley and John Preston found. Unfortunately, I didn't get to go underground myself. Own stupid fault!

Jenny Drake



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 15th May 2021.

Eldon Hole - Castleton, Derbyshire – Jenny Drake.

Four members at Eldon Hole today. We rigged the East Wall and South Gully routes. John Gillett and Steve PA practised their SRT in the shaft. Gaz and Jenny rigged the pull up into Millers Chamber, then followed the fixed rope up Damocles rift. Gaz taking photos as we went. Met up with Steve again on the surface and we had tea and Eccles Cakes in his camper van after getting changed. Very civilised. I was mortified getting crumbs all over the interior after my Eccles cake exploded in my hand. Don't know my own strength! Great to see John underground. Thanks everyone for a good day's caving.

Jenny Drake

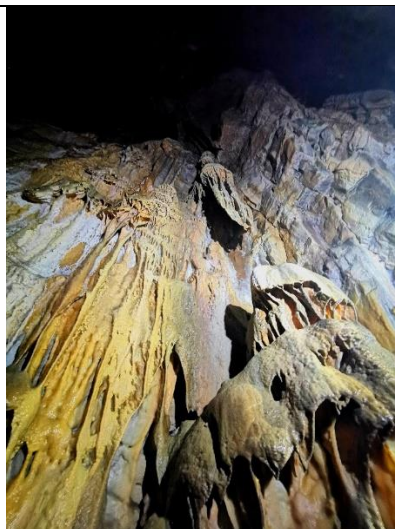
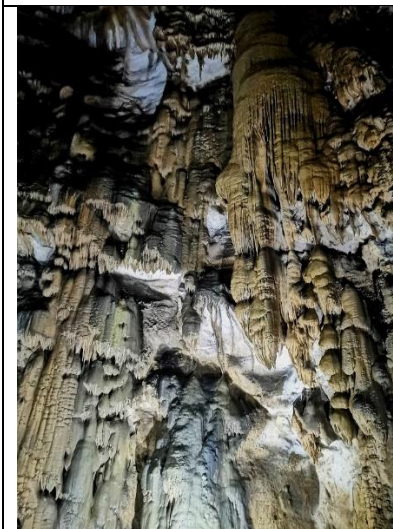
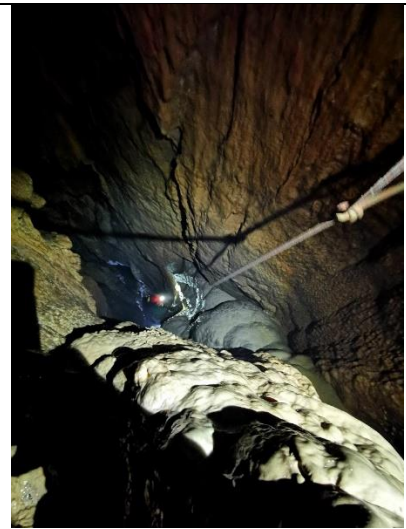
Gaz added his photographs:

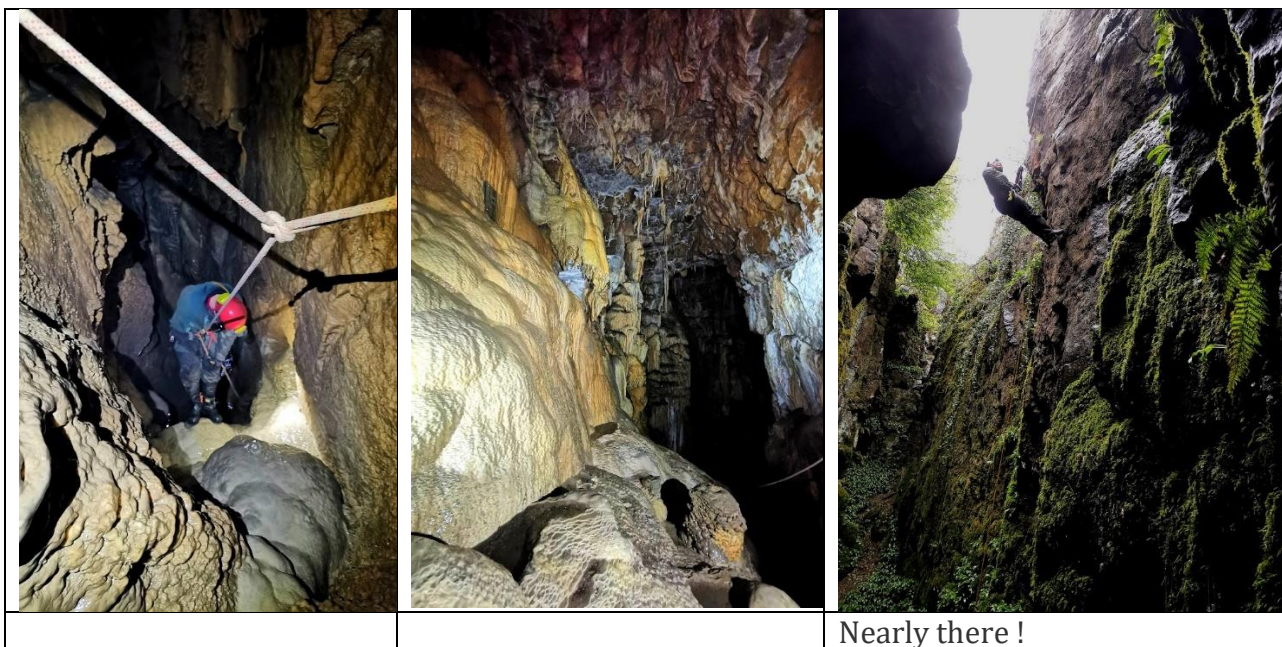
'The best of today's pictures. Quite a lot taken freehand again, so many were very blurry, but they kind of sum up the day. Thanks guys for a lovely introduction to the famous Eldon Hole.'

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/86hQGhPHQqeRmcKZ6>



John Gillett at the top of Eldon Hole entrance shaft.





Another amazing set of photographs from Gaz McShee.

.....



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 13th June 2021.

P8 (Jackpot) - Castleton, Derbyshire - Steve Knox

Jenny Drake, Steve Knox, Gaz McShee, Steve Pearson-Adams, John Preston, Heather Simpson.

Jenny Drake was keen to investigate, and remeasure the alternative entrance series pitches in P8, and it seemed like a good opportunity for several other Club Members to get underground together.

A group of four (Combined Services ?) had arrived earlier, and set off some time ahead of us, but we were soon kitted up, and wandered across to the entrance. There had been a period of dry, warm weather, so it was no surprise to see the stream reduced to a trickle, and the usual entrance 'shower' was hardly noticeable.

Steve, John, and Heather set off downstream to rig the first pitch, while I climbed up where the jammed boulders hang in the roof above the first mini cascade, to locate 'Boney Pitch' (more about this below), followed by Jenny and Gaz.

The climb quickly reaches a sloping area of bedding break-down, with two small exit holes over on the right-hand side, one above the other. Both holes are easy to squirm through, and lead out onto a climb down into a parallel chamber, with an obvious pitch head just ahead. This I have always believed to be 'Boney Pitch'.

The drop was rigged, using in-situ bolts, and a natural back-up. I was sitting on the lip of the drop, and thought Gaz, just above me, understood when I said I would catch the others up, just before I dropped down the pitch. I shouted up, 'rope free', and headed off downstream. Immediately before the First Pitch, I joined John and Heather, waiting while Steve finished rigging. I was surprised to see that the four military guys had tucked themselves out of the way, up in the oxbow just before the pitch – I had expected them to be well ahead.

Just then I was aware of someone else coming down the streamway behind me and Gaz appeared, apparently concerned about where I had disappeared to. He asked me if I had seen Steve Knox, and I confirmed that I was me (!!) and that I was waiting to go down the pitch after Heather, then Gaz returned upstream to re-join Jenny.

Our group of four made a straightforward descent, then followed the dry, upper passage to the head of the old Iron Ladder Pitch (the Upper Series Pitch), which, once again, Steve Rigged. We passed through Mud Hall, and into T'Owd Man's Rift, and on to visit the main downstream sump, then returned to check the upstream sumps - all water levels were well down, but the sumps were not 'open' (no airspace through).

At one point we were a bit puzzled when we heard Gaz shouting from somewhere further back up the passage towards the pitches. We had a long-distance, shouted conversation, and it became clear that he was looking for me, as he and Jenny were unsure where I had gone after leaving them. 'Crossed wires' leading to some confusion, but no worries - we were all fine, and I appreciated the concern.

Coming out, we met the military guys at the bottom of the Iron Ladder pitch (they were on their way to the bottom), then we had an uneventful trip out until we reached Idiot's Leap. There was a party of six, making a complete bottle-neck - one down (looking miserable), one half-way up in the downstream rift (he seemed OK, and quite happy), then a girl came down (slowly, and a little unsure), followed by a huge bloke who practically fell down. The first four headed off down-stream, underneath where we were perched, waiting on ledges, then we waited for ages, while the leader (?) explained every detail of soft locks / hard locks / cows tails / descenders etc., to the remaining female novice. She eventually came down in a series of barely controlled jerks. Once she was clear the remaining guy still took a while to come down himself, and then pushed through without a word.

Back on the surface we discovered that Jenny and Gaz had already gone, so we retired to the Devonshire Arms in Peak Forest for a drink.

Thanks to Jenny for getting this trip sorted. It was an excellent day!!!!

Later Jenny commented that she had enough information to improve the high-level Idiot's Leap and Boney Pitch parts of the P8 topo and would correct the Iron Ladder and high-level traverse details. She and Gaz had been quizzed about route finding by the leader of the group of six, on the surface, when they exited.

Steve Knox

Gaz added an explanation to Steve Knox:

'I heard Steve P-A mentioned at the top of the first pitch but couldn't get round to see everyone as the passage was a little full. I never heard you mention joining the others, so we got quite a shock when you had vanished at the bottom of the pitch. To be honest I saw a hell of a lot more of P8 as a result of searching for you. I had to free climb up into the roof and back a few times, which was so much fun, and the speed descent to catch you guys up, and then the rush back to alert Jenny was a great way to pressure test my techniques. I was exhausted when I got out though, so the thought of catching you guys again went out of the window pretty quickly. Sorry for the confusion, it was a fun day though, and nice to finally meet you. Next time though make sure I hear you, years of working with machinery has left its mark on my poor little ears, haha.'

Gaz

.....

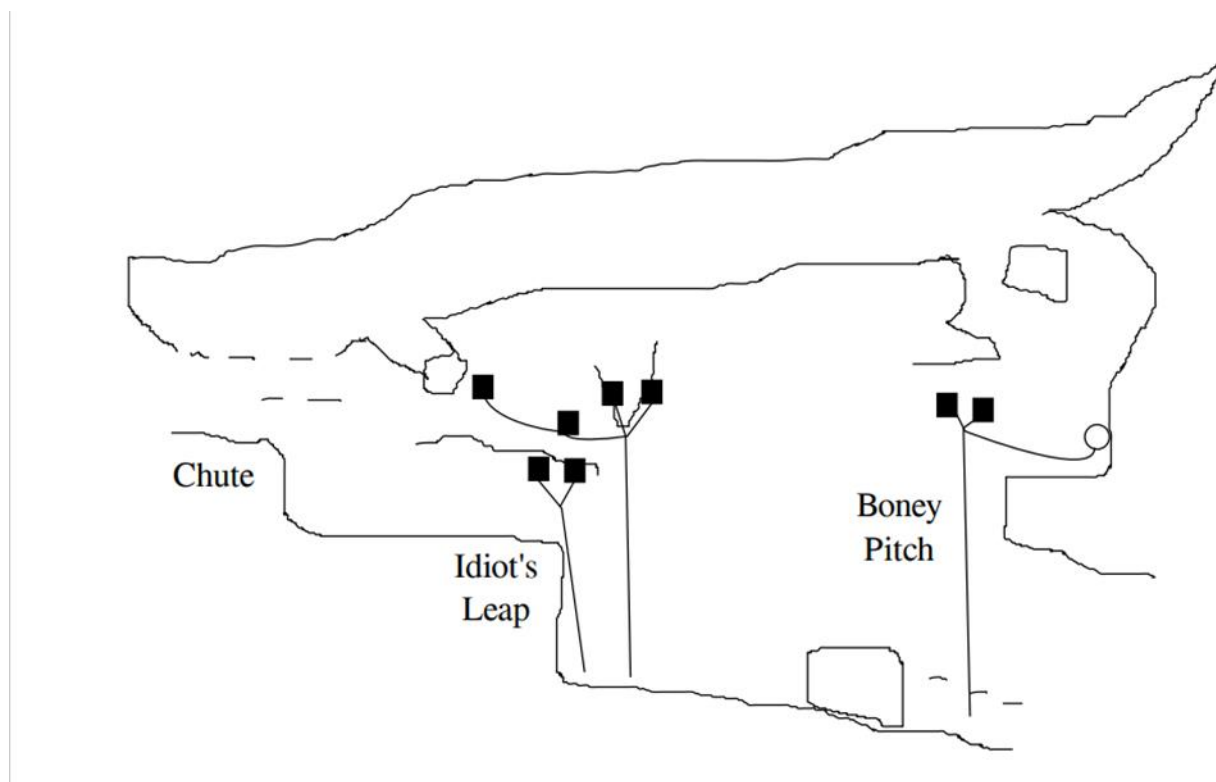
P8 (Jackpot) - Castleton, Derbyshire

What's in a name ? - pitches and passages !

As already stated above, Jenny Drake was keen to investigate, and remeasure the alternative entrance-series pitches in P8.

Following our trip, she drew a replacement topo for Idiot's Leap and Boney Pitch to go in the P8 section of the Peak Rigging Guide. It was hoped that it would make these two pitches easier to find, as it is a complex area.

Considerable e-mail traffic was generated as a result !



Alan Brentnall set the discussion off:

'I'm not sure whether these names are absolutely correct, but I've always referred to the pitch immediately downstream from Idiot's Leap as the Boney Pitch, and the one around the corner, after the boulder you climb over, as the Gulley Pitch, although that is called the Flats Pitch in an earlier version of the Rigging Guide.'

Also, there is a high-level spit traverse from the top of Boney to the top of Gulley, which Nigel Atkins calls the Electric Ferret.

Plus - if you descend half way down the Gulley Pitch, you can swing round into the passage at this level and then traverse downstream to a solid floored section which leads to the squeeze through to the top of the climb up to the traverse going to the high level alternatives to Pitch 1.

The useful place where there really should be a pitch is at the top of Steve's Passage (goes off Stalagmite Passage). You can look down to the top of Pitch 1 - some bolts here would be very useful for getting out in flood conditions.'

All very useful information, which just goes to show that you can think you know a place really well, only to find out that you don't !! Alan's final paragraph led to questions about **'Steve's Passage'** - where it is, and the name of the passage it branches off from.

Due to the way the widely circulated survey of P8 is drawn, it is easy to be misled. If you look very carefully at the area just downstream of Pitch 1, you can see that there are three passages, almost on top of each other :- (a) the streamway itself, which leads to the true Pitch 2; (b) the dry way above the stream, which leads to the Upper Series Pitch / Old Iron Ladder Pitch; and (c) Steve's Passage above them both.

Steve's Passage can be accessed from the middle route (b) at the bad step-over, where the normal route turns sharply left, and an obvious passage leads off to the right - '**Stalactite Passage**' (see below). Step right into Stalactite Passage, then, almost immediately, leave it by climbing steeply up to the right. This is 'Steve's Passage' - take care as it ends at a downward sloping, muddy, calcite floor which drops straight into the Pitch 1 chamber roof, at the very top.

There is considerable confusion about the true name of '**Stalactite Passage**'.

The passage is named Stalactite/Stalagmite/Stagamite Passage (depending on which text or survey you look at !

Jim Ballard - Caves, Potholes and Mines Of Derbyshire - 1974 - uses **Stalagmite** Passage in the text - there is no survey - and no mention of Steve's passage.

Dave Elliot - Caves of Northern Derbyshire - 1975+ - uses **Stalactite** Passage in the text, and **Stalagmite** Passage on the survey. - Steve's Passage is not shown on the survey, but is described.

Trevor Ford - Caves of Derbyshire - 1984 - uses **Stalactite** Passage in the text, and **Stalagmite** Passage on the survey. - Steve's Passage is shown on the survey but not named, but is correctly described.

Dave Gill & John Beck - Caves of The Peak District - 1991 - uses **Stalactite** Passage in the text, and **Stalagmite** Passage on the survey. - Steve's Passage is shown on the survey but not named, but is correctly described.

Iain Barker - Classic Caves of The Peak District - 1997 - uses **Stalagmite** Passage in the text, and **Stagamite** (!) Passage on the survey. - Steve's Passage is shown on the survey, is named there, but is not described in the text.

Iain Barker & John Beck - Caves of The Peak District - 2010 - uses **Stalactite** Passage in the text, and **Stalagmite** Passage on the survey. - Steve's Passage is not shown on the survey and is not named, but is correctly described.

Jenny added:

*'The old Hitch'n'Hike mini guide, that is now on the peakdistrictcaving.info web site says **Stalagmite**.'*

It seems that once a name is applied to a text or survey, that name will keep being repeated, despite the obvious contradiction of using different names in the text and on the survey in any particular guidebook.

Apparently the BSA entered P8 in 1964, so the obvious answer is to seek out any early write-ups of their explorations, and to find a copy of the earliest survey - I think that will be the Eldon one, about 1970/71.

Jenny sent an email to Clive Westlake, who is one of the names on the 1972 EldonPC survey, concerning the Boney Pitch name, to see what he remembers, and to see if he knows if the Stal* passage goes up, or comes down!

Getting the earliest evidence for pitch names might need a trip to, or an enquiry with the British Caving Library. The P8 description in CotPD references several EldonPC journals

and BSA Cave Science. The caving Library, near Buxton, has a copy of the 1972 EldonPC survey along with the whole of the Eldon library.

Jenny added:

'We can't even rely on the passage itself for the correct name. If it has lots of stalagmites, but no stalactites, then it might end up being called stalagmite passage. Equally, cavers being the perverse bunch they are, it could be called stalagmite passage because there are no stalagmites! For the names of the pitches above Idiot's Leap. The earliest sketch I can find is a pre 2005 Crewe rigging guide one that I used when I typeset the 2005 edition. This has the name Boney Pitch nearest the one that drops from the Flats to beyond the streamway boulder. We may have got it wrong, but without documentary evidence, preferably from the people who bolted it, the name has probably now stuck.'

Clive Westlake's reply:

It's usual for cavers to accept the names given by the original explorers, in this case the Manchester Group of the BSA, who published in BSA Newsletter no 72 (1966). Next week I'll be at Greenclose, where I can check the NPC library and so find whether the explorers' name was Stalagmite or Stalactite Passage.

Your first paragraph deals with various pitches, which the explorers did not name and probably didn't even descend. This was still the case when I published in 1972 and presumably continued until SRT cavers sought these other drier pitches and bolted them. I don't know who "found", bolted and named these pitches, but I reckon that whatever is put on a published rigging topo is likely to be commonly used. When Dave Elliot and Dick Lawson bolted new routes down well-known Northern potholes and named them in their Rigging Guide of 1987, these names were, and still are widely accepted: Diehedral, Twilight Zone, Flyover, Valhalla.

Yours to the final sump, Clive.



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 26th June 2021.

Pippikin, Yorkshire - Nicola Wellings

Six Club Members: including Ade Pedley, Rob Nevitt, Neil Conde,

Hi all, just done the report. Even though it was yesterday, I apologise in advance if any of it is wrong... let me know and I'll adapt it! All I know is it was a lovely, lovely cave! All cave passages eventually turn in to one... focusing on one problem, overcoming it, and then focusing on the next !! There are a few photos - nothing amazing! Just helmets, knees, and backsides in squeezes. I'll try and get them uploaded :)

Thrutchy, squeezey and epic are just a few words that can be used to describe Pippikin Pot to Mistral Hole, but no trip report or video can actually describe the beauty that is this trip.

Six cavers headed over to Leck Fell to do this through trip. We prepared in the sunshine, streamlining our harnesses and personal kit down as much as possible. As a group, only two sets of 'up kit' were needed for the trip. Once ready we ambled across the fell, before coming across the small and not overly inviting hole in the ground.

Straight to it, the first couple of cavers jumped in. As there was an in-situ rope, we left our entrance rope on the surface. The route was down the first hole and onto a short but 'roomy' entrance pitch, before exiting via a shallow bedding plane and heading down into the first squeeze. By now everyone was in the cave, but aside from hearing people scraping along the floor, you couldn't hold a conversation. The first obstacle involved having to go through an opening in the wall and crawling onto a metal pole (just above Cellar Pot), before turning 90° and heading head-first into a short and constricted tube. On the other side of the tube was a 2m drop - this took some negotiating. The group swapped who was at the front of the cave as it was difficult to not only fit, but also work out which way was best to tackle such an uninviting hole. Once through the constriction, another hole opened up into a small sitting area with another spicy squeeze to go through. The squeeze involved cavers having to remove their harnesses to give vital extra cms, as well as some removing their outer suits. The section was particularly thrutchy, and involved real technique, making yourself small in stature, and breathing out to make yourself smaller. Unfortunately, not all cavers made it through here, with one deciding their trip for the day was done (luckily he had previously done Pippikin... and is currently vowing not to touch the cave again). He was left armed with one set of up-gear, and was given instructions to remove the entrance series rope from the surface. The remainder of the team continued down.



Some of the horrors / joys of Pippikin !! It is almost impossible to take photographs which can convey some impression of the difficulties of passing through such constricted passages.

Photographs by Nicola Wellings.

Nicola's account of the trip continues below.

Once through the squeeze, another pitch lay ahead, of about 15m. Starting narrow, it opened up a little. Once at the bottom more tight passages lay ahead, with a couple more climb downs. Descending gear was taken on and off, on and off, throughout the trip to make easing through a little easier. Eventually stemple squeeze was reached. This is where you have to keep high in a constricted passage, and grab the bar on the way out - very exciting, if not daunting ! A few more short climbs down, and pitches lay ahead, before coming to an awkward and long traverse. Stretching over 46m, cavers must use all limbs to meander around the tight bends in the passage, before completing another short climb down. Not long after here, the group got back together and enjoyed a quick snack break before heading on into the next chamber, which had some 'pretties' in it.

The cave from there onwards took on a different persona, much muddier and in general not as tight... that said it still had its fair share of awkwardness. Scrambling upwards through boulder chokes, and 'leopard crawling' between layers, we eventually came to 'The Hall of the Ten' - a huge chamber !! From there we made our way outwards, negotiating a couple of 90° bends in clay-like mud. Eventually daylight and fresh air were sensed, and we made our way out.

We expected to be greeted by our other team member, but we were only met by sunshine. Concerned over whether he had got back out of the first squeeze, we moved up the steep slope and back to the cave entrance. Our rope was still there, on the surface. One caver shouted in, to see if our friend was still there and he was. Nearly four hours after we left him, he was still in the same cramped spot ! A mini rescue was put into place and three members of the team helped to pull him out. Eventually all four emerged from the small hole, with smiles on their faces and a tale to tell.

The day was rounded off in 'Costa del Marton Arms', with stories of how most people were never doing Pippikin again... but suggestions of other caves equally as challenging in other ways that were worth a visit.

Nicola Wellings

Brilliant report, Nicola, well done. Thank you for submitting this.

S.K.

Ed.

Coming Soon to a Saturday or Sunday near you (we hope !):

The CCPC Meets List for July to December 2021 includes the following caves or mines:

Penyghent Pot, Yorkshire.	J.H. Mine, Derbyshire.
Agen Allwedd, South Wales.	Notts II, Yorkshire.
Giants Hole, Derbyshire.	Waterways Swallet, Derbyshire.
King Pot, Yorkshire.	Water Icicle Close Cavern, Derbyshire.
Bagshawe Cavern, Derbyshire.	Pasture Gill Pot, Yorkshire.
Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, South Wales.	Eyam Dale House Cave, Derbyshire
Peak Cavern, Derbyshire.	
Lancaster Hole, Yorkshire.	

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

No trip is guaranteed to take place until nearer the actual date, depending on the interest shown by Members, weather conditions, etc.. It is essential that Members keep in touch, and use e-mail to ensure they have the latest details before travelling.

Best wishes to you all. Keep safe, and keep caving. Hope to see you underground very soon. S.K.