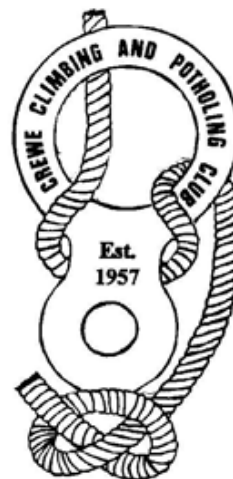




# C.C.P.C. Newsletter 127. July - October 2021

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## Editorial:

In my last editorial I wrote, **'Fingers crossed that the worst is behind us'**.

It seems that I was overly optimistic, as we are still struggling to get back to what used to be seen as normal. On a personal level, Annie and I continue to avoid close contact with anyone outside our immediate family, we still wear face masks, and we get through litres of hand sanitiser !

There are times when this seems unnecessarily over-cautious, but once you lose someone to Covid, you are reminded how serious the situation is. You just have to do the best you can – whatever makes you feel safe.

Please continue to remain careful everyone, and use social media, telephone, e-mail, or whatever, to keep in touch.

On a positive note, our monthly CCPC Meetings have started to return to face-to face sessions in a new venue, 'The Red Bull', in Butt Lane, less than a mile from our previous venue at 'The Bleeding Wolf', and we are continuing, in a very informal manner, with 'Zoom', on-line. For those who have only been involved with the Club during the past twenty-five years, or so (I'll have to look up the exact date), you may not know that for many years CCPC met regularly at The Red Bull, only moving to The Bleeding Wolf because re-modelling at The Red Bull removed our meeting room ! Our recent return has been prompted by similar remodelling at The Bleeding Wolf, with the same loss of a separate room. There may even be a few existing Members who can recall our even earlier meeting place during the 1960's, The Cheshire Cheese (now called Hickory's), on Crewe Road, between Crewe Railway Station and Shavington. It was convenient for me, as I could catch a train from Kids Grove to Crewe, then walk to the pub (about a mile), and hope for a lift back to the station afterwards.

Steve Knox 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

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**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.**  
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## **Planned Club Meets, etc., from July 2021 to December 2021:** **(Partly affected by the Covid situation).**

The Meets Programme has continued to be challenging to follow, but Members have managed to get out and about whenever possible.

As before, the following list gives some idea of what was planned, and frequently 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 (all mine, as I don't always get to hear the outcome of a proposed trip), but it does show that CCPC continues to be a club of active and enthusiastic cavers.



## Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: July to December 2021

4 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	Penyghent Pot, Yorkshire.	Changed to Sell Gill, Holes, Yorkshire.
5 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	July Meeting.	Held, socially distanced, using 'Zoom'.
11 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	Eldon Hole, Derbyshire.	DCRO supporting Historic England. <b>Members involved.</b>
17 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	Agen Allwedd, South Wales. Alternative: Merlin Mine, Derbyshire.	<b>Members attended.</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Aug. 2021	Giants Hole	<b>Two Members attended.</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2021	King Pot, Yorkshire.	<b>Four Members attended.</b> Abandoned due to weather conditions
14 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2021	Ogof Dydd Bryaf, Minera, North Wales	<b>Four Members attended, plus two others.</b> Joint trip with North Wales Caving Club.
21 <sup>st</sup> Aug. 2021	Roaches, Staffs.. Picnic & Climbing.	
29 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2021	Bagshawe Cavern, Derbyshire.	<b>Eight Members attended.</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 2021	September Meeting.	Held at 'The Red Bull', & using 'Zoom'.
11 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 2021	Turbary Pot, Kingsdale, Yorkshire.	<b>Seven Members attended.</b>
26 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 2021	Peak Cavern, Derbyshire. Alternative: Jug Holes, Derbyshire.	<b>Members attended.</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2021	October Meeting.	Held at 'The Red Bull', & using 'Zoom'.
9 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2021	Lancaster Hole, Yorkshire. Alternative, Ibbeth Peril Cave, Yorks.	<b>Members attended.</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2021	J. H. Mine, Derbyshire. Alternative: Suicide Cave, Derbyshire.	<b>Four Members attended, two reaching The Workshop, and two, the bottom.</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Nov. 2021	November Meeting.	Held at 'The Red Bull', & using 'Zoom'.
6 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2021	Notts 2, Yorkshire. Alternative: Short Drop Cave, Yorkshire	<b>Members attended.</b>
13 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2021	Waterways Swallet, Derbyshire.	Surface work, plus underground trip.
21 <sup>st</sup> Nov. 2021	Water Icicle Close Cavern, Derbyshire. Alternative: Mandale Mine, Derbyshire.	
4 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2021	Pasture Gill Pot, Yorkshire. Alternative: Hagg Gill Pot, Yorkshire.	
6 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2021	December Meeting.	Held at 'The Red Bull', & using 'Zoom'.
19 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2021	Eyam Dale House Cave, Derbyshire. Alternative: Carlswark Cavern, Derbys.	
10 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2022	CCPC AGM, followed by January Meeting.	'The Red Bull', Butt Lane, Staffordshire, and also via 'Zoom'.
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.		



### 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.

## DCRO Assisting Historic England: Rigging Eldon Hole for lowering and Hauling.



On **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021**, a considerable team of DCRO personnel, including a number of Crewe CPC members, assembled at the top of Eldon Lane, ready for an interesting day of rigging and hauling. The object of the day was to safely lower two archaeologists, from Historic England, down the impressive, main shaft (about 60 metres -depending on where you rig from), look after them underground, and then recover them, intact !

The background story concerns a digging project started by the 'Buttered Badgers' in 2015, to sink a shaft down through the debris which forms the floor of the main chamber, just beyond the foot of the huge, daylight entrance shaft.

The excavated shaft appears to be natural, and, at about 20 metres depth, the diggers came across bone fragments in amongst the calcified debris. Realising the possible importance of the discovery, they informed the relevant authorities. Some material was recovered for examination during 2016 and 2017, and was identified as both human and animal remains, with the human bones being dated as between 2100 and 2200 years old. All activity on the site was stopped while the situation was considered, and then Covid delayed progress even more – a delay of three years. Finally the opportunity arose for the archaeologists to visit the deposition site, to examine the remaining bones, in situ - if they could be assisted in reaching it !

DCRO team members erected a 'Larkin Frame' - a series of linked poles which can be set up on the brink of a vertical drop and can be pivoted to swing a suspended person out over a void, avoiding the lip, then allow them to be lowered clear of the shaft wall; after hauling them back to the surface the frame can be pivoted to swing them back onto safe ground. This is a complex but practiced procedure, and teams of DCRO team members were able to carry out the process without difficulty. Three team members were lowered first to establish communications and to receive, and supervise the archaeologists at the shaft bottom.

Tim Allen and Andrew Chamberlain (archaeologists) and John Gunn (BCRA) were guided to the remains by 'Buttered Badgers' club members, who had descended independently using SRT on the North Gully route. After several hours underground, the visitors were successfully recovered, having taken numerous photographs and measurements, and bringing out further remains from the bottom of the excavated shaft: thirty-five fragments of human bone, and nineteen specimens of animal bone.

Writing in 'Derbyshire Caver No. 115, Andrew Chamberlain, expressed his belief that the remains were relatively undisturbed from their original deposition site, based on the close proximity of particular bones to each other. The bones are from at least five individuals: two children, 18 months old and three to four years old, a child about ten years old, an adolescent and at least one adult.

It is assumed that there was a continuing void, from the entrance shaft down to the location of the remains, which has subsequently been filled, during the past 2000 years or so, by material falling from above, leaving the remains buried.

I can't help puzzling over the event, or events, which led to the bodies of those individuals ending up where they did. Eldon Hole is not the kind of shaft which was ever likely to have been climbable, even allowing for changes over the past 2000 years, and there is no evidence visible today of a horizontal or sloping passage from the hillside which might have provided access, so it seems unlikely that the bodies were intentionally 'buried' by others. The range of ages of the individuals could possibly indicate a family group. Did they all die at the same time, and what happened to them ?

It is tempting to think of a conflict situation, where the individuals were driven over the edge, or thrown down, alive or dead, by an opposing group, but it could equally well be accidental. I imagine a family group moving across the landscape in winter, and looking for a sheltered spot to spend the night. A snowy hollow, in the lee of scrubby birch trees, might offer a camp site (or hiding place) out of the wind, and they settle down, huddled together. At some point in the night, the snow collapses,



and they plummet down into the darkness, then finally, their bodies tumble down the steep scree slope into the main chamber to come to rest at the base of the internal shaft. Later to be covered by more scree, moving naturally down the slope as the years pass.

I would like to know if any artifacts have been recovered, and if laboratory examination might reveal signs of injury not consistent with the huge fall. Signs of animal activity would seem to be unlikely due to the inaccessibility of the deposition site to scavengers.

We eagerly await a full report of the expert findings in due course.

Steve Knox



Assembling the Larkin Frame close to the shaft edge, before moving it into position, and securing with ground anchors and ropes. Everyone near the shaft was securely belayed, and everything was under the watchful eye of the Safety Officer.  
All photos: Steve Knox



DCRO down, to set up communications, followed by the archaeologists. You need to be very sure about the ability of the team controlling the ropes when you are being lowered down such an impressive shaft. Members of the Buttered Badgers crew can be seen on the North Wall SRT route behind.  
All photos: Steve Knox

References: 'Mountain Rescue Magazine' - Autumn 2021 – Page 31 – DCRO by Bill Whitehouse.  
'Derbyshire Caver' – No. 155 :- Page 12 – 'Excavations in Eldon Hole' by John Gunn.

Page 12 – 'Human & Animal Bones from Eldon Hole' by Andrew Chamberlain.

Pages 13 & 14 – 'DCRO Hauling Exercise at Eldon Hole' by Pete Knight.



***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021.***  
**Agen Allwedd, Llangattock, South Wales.**

Several Members travelled to South Wales and to explore some of this vast and complex system.

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***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.***  
**Giants Hole, Derbyshire.**

**Jenny Drake**

'Gaz and I went to Giant's today, rather than on Sunday with the rest of the club. Not being anti-social, but his shift patterns made Sunday impossible for Gaz.

The aim was to visit Carnival Aven, above Geology Pot. It was bolted by Darren and Ralph, I believe, in the early years of this century and has been in the CCPC rigging guide ever since. I'd never visited it and wanted to see what state the bolts and any fixed ropes were in. Gaz hadn't seen much of Giant's. Just the Crabwalk, as far as the Vice and the upper passages before Garlands Pot.

Not a lot of water around. We passed a party being guided on a round trip and made good time to Geology Pot. Backtracking from there, we found a point where we could climb into the roof and then traversed into a short passage that broke out over the rift above the Geology pitch. The anchors that we could see still look good. The stainless expansion bolts with stainless plate hangers seem fine. The stainless bolts with home-made angle aluminium plate hangers show no obvious sign of corrosion to the very thick gauge aluminium. There are two fixed ropes of unknown vintage, and at least one of those is likely to have been there 20 years. I tried rigging with our rope and krabs and made it along the traverse till I reached the first upward section. Climbing this would have meant relying on the existing ropes and anchors above, which I couldn't see and with the full height of Geology Pot underneath. I decided that, if discretion is the better part of valour, then cowardice is the better part of discretion! Gaz also took a look and reached the same conclusion. If I were to climb it I'd want to be belayed on a proper climbing rope.

We rigged up a short pull through Ab from a really good natural thread to drop back into the rift before Geology Pot, then headed out. We met the guided party at the Eating House and had something to eat. After the guided party left, we set off. I made a major route-finding blunder and took us a long way up Maggin's Rift. In my defence, it has been a long time since I'd done the Round Trip. Back on route, we made our way out. The Giant's Windpipe didn't have enough water to give you a wet ear. We used the pull through Y hang to drop into the Crabwalk. There we met Helen Blyth, Dave Ottewell and Dave's teenage son, who were camping for the weekend in Edale. Helen and Dave are ex DCRO and now involved with CRO after moving to the Dales. I'd also been on a Berger bottoming trip with them in 2010, so lots to catch up on.

We arrived back in the sunshine to find another guided party about to descend. Properly kitted up. No folk in street clothes, and using mobile phones to see with, today. An excellent trip that showed me I need to do some upper body strength exercise! Thanks Gaz for doing more than your fair share of the tackle bag carrying.'

**Jenny Drake**



**Gaz added:** 'Best days caving I've had in a long time Jenny. I'm kind of glad we went a little off piste because it added to the enjoyment. I think I'm going to be spending quite a lot more time in Giants now. Cheers for a great day Jen and we'll definitely have to do that Winnats Head thing next time I'm off.'

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***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021.***

**King Pot, East Kingsdale, Yorkshire.**

**Adrian Pedley**

[Due to appalling weather conditions one Member turned back on the motorway, and consequently the ropes and gear for King Pot never reached Ingleton. Four Members attended.]

Ade reported: 'So the King Pot trip didn't go so well, having no rope, so very limited options. We decided to bypass the committee-tedious-decision-making process and buy a rope and some mallions, on the Club's behalf so we could at least get down the entrance. We justified this in our minds 'cos apparently we don't have any short lengths ! By the time we got changed and walked up to the entrance, which as usual took some time to locate, due to overhanging ferns and water filled eye sockets, in pouring wind and rain. We were already soaked, so our enthusiasm was already somewhat dampened.

The entrance had a steady run of water from all angles into the slot. Once inside the slot there was also a small stream entering from behind a flake. The top of the pitch was do-able but anymore water would make an exit pretty exciting, plus I could see more water coming in from various inlets ,so we sacked it, and trudged back down the hill. We had a quick venture inside Valley Entrance, but with water obviously rising that was not viable either.

On the plus side, we all enjoyed a very good breakfast in 'Bernies', with quick service, and in my opinion a better breakfast than Inglesport, so we at least learned something !'

[Note: The treasurer was happy to refund the cost of rope and maillons purchased.]

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***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2021.***

**Ogof Dydd Byraf, North-East Wales.**

**Steve Knox**

Four CCPC Members: Steve Pearson Adams, Steve Knox, Heather Simpson, and Emerald ...

The cave and mine complex lies beneath Esclusham Mountain, at the side of the Minera



Limeworks quarry, now part of a North Wales Wildlife Trust nature reserve. Access to the system, discovered and explored in 1964 by the Wrexham Caving Club, is controlled by the North Wales Caving Club.

Heather organised the trip, and arranged access through Tony Smith (NWCC) who joined us, along with David Roberts (NWCC). We met up and changed on the car park at the end of Maes y Ffynnon Road, then set off through the quarry and up a steep slope to the small, gated entrance.



Inside, we were immediately into a series of walking-size, mined passages with a couple of small climbs, but then we reached the top of a 7 metre pitch, down a very narrow rift. Being the only pitch we would descend during the trip, SRT gear was felt to be unnecessary, and instead Tony had brought, and rigged, an electron ladder and lifeline from a scaffold bar. Descending wasn't a problem, I just relied on gripping the ladder rungs to prevent gravity taking over, but I did wonder how awkward the pitch would be on the way back out.



Above: Heather in the entrance series.  
Right: Steve P-A descending the very 'snug' section near the top of the pitch, with Tony Smith lifelining.

Beyond the pitch we entered the first of a series of massive, breakdown chambers, and here the party separated into two groups. Tony, Steve P-A and Emerald set off on a more strenuous route, while Heather guided David and me on a more leisurely photographic trip to visit numerous passage and chambers with superb formations.







Left: Steve Knox – just to prove that I do occasionally get underground !  
Right: One of the enormous breakdown chambers – photo courtesy of David Roberts (NWCC).

It was certainly a pleasure to see so little damage to the formations, and clearly most visitors had taken notice of the conservation tapes laid out to mark the best pathways.



Eventually we met up with the other group, and headed back to the foot of the pitch. I wasn't looking forward to the narrow section, but with Steve P-A and Tony above, ready to give a pull if needed, it was straightforward.

Left: Steve Knox at the foot of the pitch – photo courtesy of David Roberts (NWCC).

Back on the surface we were tempted to explore through another lidded entrance, close to the quarry road, which led through to a thigh-deep 'canal' stretching away into the distance, but thigh-deep was deep enough, so we retreated, and ended our day at the nearby pub.

Altogether an excellent day underground – thanks Heather !!

All photos: Steve Knox, unless otherwise stated.

**Steve Knox**



## ***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021.*** **The Staffordshire Roaches.**

This was planned as a social event – basically a picnic, with the opportunity for some climbing. The weather was disappointing.

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***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021.***

**Bagshawe Cavern, Bradwell, Derbyshire.**

**Steve Pearson-Adams.**

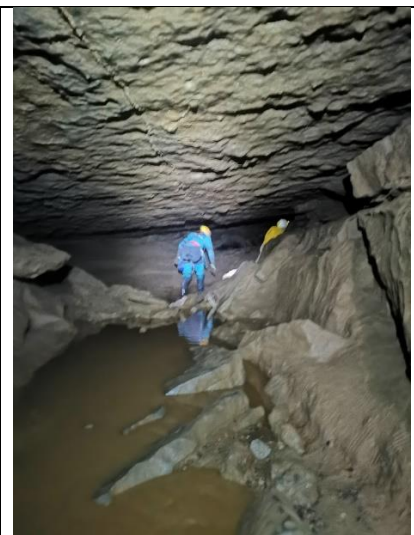
'Eight members gathered for Sunday's trip into Bagshawe Cavern. Once the obligatory signing in was done and shekels deposited it was downward into the darkness. The route in follows the path of the vein which was chased by the miners long back when. For some this would be their first time in Bagshawe. Some of the group took up a holding position in the main passage while the virgins to the system were directed to take a look in Calypso's Cave. The Dungeon was rigged en route to the Hippodrome, and from there, most of the group descended into Glory Hole Passage. In periods of prolonged rain it's not unusual for this passage to become impassable, as it can fill up with water. Today it was bone dry and even the duck further on had air space. All negotiated this without incident and continued along the upward crawl until the Glory Hole was reached, which was dry down to 35 feet.'



The steps down, approaching 'The Dungeon'.



Rigging 'The Dungeon' for later.



The main route towards 'The Hippodrome'.



'Glory Hole Passage'.



'Glory Hole Passage' duck.



Descending 'The Dungeon' pitch to access the lower series.

'The group retraced their steps back to the Dungeon where all then descended to explore the lower series. Today the lake under the Dungeon was more like a puddle and the lake further

along the passage was also low. The group pushed on towards Agony Column and after branching left, pushed on until reaching the hole in the floor. Two members carried on to the sump thinking it was only 50 meters away (author's apology).'



Formations in the Lower Series



The Lower Series, towards the final sump.

'All in all a very pleasant four hours of caving in a very interesting system. Once changed most members gathered at the Anchor Inn for a much-earned libation, trip reflection, and general chit chat.'

**All photos courtesy of Gaz Mcshee.**

**Steve Pearson-Adams**



***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021.***

**Turbary Pot, Kingsdale, Yorkshire.**

**Steve Pearson-Adams.**

'Seven club members ventured north to Ingleton having prearranged to meet in Bernies at 09:30 for the obligatory pre caving breakfast. Having fuelled up for the trip ahead we made our way to Kingsdale and began kitting up. Ade set the grid ref on his all singing all dancing wrist gadget as we set off on the trudge uphill. I was feeling quite happy until Ade said it was 300 meters to the entrance. Cutting trail through the ferns, gaining one ,two, three false summits, and stopping briefly to catch a breather. Soon we dropped on the entrance (nice one Ade) and waited for Gareth to arrive. He was biking out from Ingleton to say 'hello'. Sure enough 10 minutes later Gareth came whizzing along Turbary road, stopping just short and narrowly missing the sink hole. Some banter about body size and a tight bit, between Neil and Gareth ensued. Not sure if this reassured Neil to any concerns he had, or invited more doubt. Before long, Ade, with rig bag in tow, entered the short crawl leading onto a fairly exposed pitch head, which is protected by a short traverse line on the right wall. Two p-bolts, positioned on the drop side of the pitch head, provide a clean drop to the ledge below, leading directly onto the second pitch. A hand jammer on the first rope is advisable when on the ledge, as there is no other means of protection when gaining the second pitch head. Following Ade down the first 2 pitches were Steve C, Rob, Dan, Steve P-A, Darren and Neil, who all landed safely on the floor of McShea Chamber. It was from this chamber that a narrow rift at the base of the right wall was dug out to the start of a crawling passage making the connection to Swinsto in 2020.

It was noticeable that the diggers spent as much time stacking the debris from the boulder choke as they did clearing it, as a finer stone wall I have yet to see.

The passage making the connection is approximately 143 metres of low, hands and knees



crawling, with a few short flat out sections, one of which is slightly constricted on the right-hand side by intruding flow stone. All opted to remove SRT kit at this point, and it was here also that Neil overcame his inner demon (nice to have you back Neil !!!). On reflection most thought it was perfectly do-able with kit on. I, for one, welcomed the point when the passage emerged into Swinsto, downstream of the main split pitch, offering easier going. Soon Spout pitch and Cascade were negotiated, although Cascade today was a trickle. From here it was down the gap between the wall and boulders into East Passage and a short blast to the Kingsdale master cave, where water levels, like Cascade, were benign. A few minutes later we reached the sump and the 6 metre climb up into Valley Entrance. Two in-situ ropes made for a quick exit, although Ade impressed us by opting to free climb it. A thoroughly good two and a half hour pull through trip was enjoyed by all, topped off by a welcome pint and natter at the Marton Arms.'

**Steve Pearson-Adams**



***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021.***  
**Peak Cavern, Castleton, Derbyshire.**

A number of Members took part in this meet – always very popular – with at least two groups following routes through the system. It is good to see that several newcomers were included.



***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021.***  
**Lancaster Hole, Easegill, Yorkshire.**

The meet happened, but I have no information.



***Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club: 24<sup>th</sup> October 2021.***  
**James Hall Over Engine Mine, Castleton, Derbyshire.**

**Jenny Drake**

'There were four of us underground today. Des Kelly, Mark Krause, Rob Nevitt and Jenny Drake. We had some confusion over route finding part way down Leviathan, but sorted ourselves out. Des and Mark turned back at the last 30m pitch. Rob and Jenny reached the bottom. Then it was the long return up the pitches with increasing numbers of tackle bags. Bitch Pitch lived up to its reputation as usual. We are definitely in Autumn now. Getting changed at Rowter Farm was rather chilly. Around six hours to do the trip. Thanks all for a cracking trip.'

**Jenny Drake**

**Gaz McShee** added: 'Good effort, this was the one I really wanted to do after failing to bottom it last time round, but hey it will have to wait. I bet you guys know you did it this evening.'

**Jenny:** 'Thanks Gaz, I've long said that a hard caving trip gives you a sneak preview in to being very old for a couple of days after. You have no energy, and everything hurts to move. The bruises have come up a treat, so no short skirts, or shorts today !'

**Rob Nevitt:** 'To add to Jenny's trip report I had problems at the hanging rebelay in upper Leviathan when derigging, the krab wouldn't undo. I had the same problem in the entrance to Lancaster Hole on the previous trip. I knocked hell out of it, and came close to leaving it. It's one of the new Petzl ones, so I will mark it up to monitor.

JH is a trip you remember for days after due to the aches and pains.'

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Thanks to those Members who have contributed reports or photographs, as part of the ongoing process of recording our Club activities. I make no apologies for omissions – if I don't get to hear about something, then I can't include it ! Any contributions are welcome from Members for future Newsletters.

Keep safe, everyone.

Steve Knox.

8<sup>th</sup> November 2021

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