

Planned Club Meets, etc., from June 2022 to August 2022:



Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club:

19 th June 2022	CCPC Ibbeth Peril 1 & 2, Dentdale,	Classic cave, can be wet $-$ no SRT.
	Yorkshire.	Weather dependent.
	Alt.: Mistral Hole, Easegill.	Part of the huge Lancaster/Easegill system.
	Ogof Draenen, South Wales.	Permit required.
	Alt.:Out Sleets Beck, Penyghent, Yorks.	Classic SRT trip, 4 pitches; can be wet !
4 th July 2022	July Club Meeting	8.30 pm. at 'The Red Bull', Butt Lane, and
		hopefully also by 'Zoom'.
	Parys Mountain, Anglesey, North Wales	Extensive copper mines – with a guide.
	Gouffre Berger Meet, Autrans, France.	Several Members away until 10 th August.
	Giants Hole, Castleton, Derbyshire.	Excellent 'local' cave systems, with limited
	Alt.: P8 (Jackpot).	SRT.
1 st August 2022	August Club Meeting	8.30 pm. at 'The Red Bull', Butt Lane, and
		hopefully also by 'Zoom'.
	Turbary Pot – Valley Entrance,	
	Kingsdale, Yorkshire. Alt. Illusion Pot.	
Privately organise	d activities continue to take place especiall	v now as government restrictions (Covid)

Privately organised activities continue to take place, especially now, as government restrictions (Covid) have been removed. Even so, some members may still be self-isolating or 'shielding' for personal reasons. Please try to support Club trips when you can. **Steve Knox, Ed.**



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. Training continues. https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireCaveRescue

7 th June 2022	DCRO Training: steep ground.	Stoney Middleton, Derbyshire.
$24^{\text{th}} - 26^{\text{th}}$ June	BCRC Rescue Conference.	Based at 'The Rotary Centre', Castleton.
29 th June 2022	DCRO DASH – Fell Race, Castleton.	Fund-raising event.
	DCRO Training: the Larkin Frame.	T.B.A.
	DCRO Training: Underground Hauling.	T.B.A.
	DCRO Training: Surface Navigation.	T.B.A.



It should come as no surprise that (as in caving clubs everywhere) since the earliest days of Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club there has been a natural willingness by members to assist anyone in difficulties underground. Such assistance would often be offered, and given, in a casual situation, when meeting other cavers underground, who were obviously struggling with a problem. Unfortunately there are sometimes more serious situations where a much more disciplined and trained response is necessary, hence the formation of Cave Rescue Teams in all the caving areas of the country. These teams, like Mountain Rescue Teams, depend entirely on volunteers, who give up their time, whenever they are required, to go to the assistance of others.

To mark the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, individuals who have been members of such teams for five years or more (by February 2022), have been granted the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Medal in recognition of their service.

This is the third medal of its kind to be awarded in this way to members of the volunteer emergency services, such as Cave Rescue and Mountain Rescue. Previous medals marked the Queen's Golden Jubilee, and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.



The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.



DCRO Members (including CCPC Members) at the award ceremony in Buxton.



Steve Knox, John Preston, Mick Potts.

Those DCRO Team Members eligible for the award were invited to a joint presentation with Buxton MRT, at the team base in Staden Lane, Buxton, on Friday, 13th May 2022. Sadly, not everyone who was eligible was able to attend, however they received their medals later.

I always feel very proud of the continuing involvement of Crewe Climbing & Potholing Club Members in Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation, and it was a great pleasure to see a number of our Club Members being presented with their medals by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire.





Sunday, 22nd May 2022: Cwmorthin Slate Mine, North Wales.

Ruth Rabinowitz

On Sunday 22nd May I wandered up to Cwmorthin mine car park at 08:30; it was deserted except for two overnight 'campers'. I thought I'd get there early as I'm often late to cave meets due to travel distance, but for this one I stayed relatively locally at the Bowline climbing hut. It was sunny and warm, and I explored the bridge by the waterfalls and listened to the birds.

Shortly afterwards some cars drew up and the other club members tumbled out. Steve immediately gave me a gift that we've spent a number of months trying to exchange! It was lovely to see some members I've not caved with for a few years and a new member too, Kevin.

As we chatted the weather changed, and it was great to already be in my caving gear. This was my 4th trip to this mine, and I was determined to learn a route and not allow myself to become disorientated.

We walked up the track (which was not as steep as I remembered it, so all my hillwalking is finally paying off) as the rain grew heavier, and it

was a relief to get into the warm, dry cave, once Neil unlocked the huge gate. The passageway is easy going and quite sociable for walking as a group. We went straight to the top of **Back Vein Incline** and discussed the objectives for the trip. Kevin was a little surprised that we were all so comfortable walking down a 45% slope, but followed on, chatting happily until halfway down we turned left, and crawled through the porthole to a short passage ending at a stope, where there was a suspended plank traverse (**Catwalk Traverse**) around the wall to the back. I thought this was a baptism of fire for Kevin, as you're out of balance for much of it,





and trusting your cows-tails, but he

took it in his stride and progressed cheerfully all the way around. Steve rigged the pull-through descent to the bottom, which we all whizzed down to the floor. There was some more climbing down and we went past a passage on our left leading to the top of **Goliath**. There was a supervised group using the zip-line and it's out of bounds for groups like us, so we continued on down **Victory Biscuits** traverse.

There was a supervised group coming up a metal ladder, so we turned right and found ourselves presented with our first zip-line cable, which was one I'd not done before. We all checked what kit we had and found Kevin hadn't been given a pulley. We had the rope though, so that was to be used as a pull cord. The leader of the 'Go Below' group recommended that we hook our carabiners over the pulley to avoid wear, if they would fit, or use a steel one just for the cows-tail backup on the zip lines. After a bit of gear exchanging we set off across the abyss. At the far end was another zip-line which looked much longer, the rope had only just reached on the first one. Not wanting anyone to be stuck in the short passage between the two zip lines, Steve quickly asked the 'Go Below' leader how long the second zip-line was, and told her we had a 27m rope, and she thought that would be fine. We found it only just reached, and the weight of the rope pulled the rider back over the drop. A bit of arm strength was needed to get into the passage. We pulled the pulley back for the next rider and all made it safely across. I went last and had the comfort of knowing that they had the end of the rope and could pull me onto the ledge if my momentum was inadequate – I was travelling fast enough, but caught my feet on a big rock which stopped me before I was over the ledge. Someone promptly pulled me in, saving my arms from any effort – true luxury! We climbed down further, and to be honest, from here on I'm not sure where we want! We wandered through chambers with huge

sure where we went! We wandered through chambers with huge dark stopes, and remnants of equipment and buildings, and hanging platforms. The mine is huge, with

great dark stopes joined by passageways along the bottoms, and sometimes the tops too.

The route took us down a familiar



passageway, where on my last trip someone had pulled out the bung from the canal above and released a torrent of water onto the remaining climbers – I had been dry on that trip up to that point! On that trip we had come up this way, so I knew where it was heading, but there were new plastic pipes all the way down it, which perplexed us. We climbed down a set of metal pegs, steps, and bolted slates, to the flooded level where we looked at some new pumping kit that's been installed. It's odd to think this is well below lake level but the water is being pumped down to it! We wondered why, and also where the power was coming from for the pump. We followed those power lines and then we balanced along some scaffold poles over the water. We continued to follow the power lines, and then stopped for lunch at the old boiler house, and looked at the table of artifacts. Keith read

out some entries from the logbook in the ammo tin.

We found the way through to **Oakley**, and were trying to find our way back up to **Floor B**, and to **Corkscrew Traverse**, then to find the Bridge. Three people had three maps, and they were all pointing at different locations and saying, 'We are here because...'. If anyone knows exactly where we went, feel free to insert the directions here [!]

We frequently felt a draught as we wandered around, finding climbs and steps, rigged safety lines, and electrical cupboards – it was great fun exploring and looking for the way on. Lots of up and down the stopes, on steps and ladders and staircases, and round and round the passages. At times I did wonder whether we would keep going indefinitely and bemoaned that I had only brought one Mars bar, as this had never before been a long or strenuous cave. I decided to eat half of my emergency rations – it was feeling like that sort of a trip.

We saw lots of the remains of the workings and equipment - the boiler room; the **Horse Level** with a deep ditch on one side; a chamber with huge supporting beams and two big drops with old, broken, water driven generators at their tops.



Eventually we found ourselves back on Lake Level, but not after multiple wrong turns, and a scary climb up, above a very big drop, which some found a safer route around, but didn't want those already started off to try to come back down.

In the end we reached the **Back Vein Incline**, where the trip had started, Neil tried to persuade us we still had time to do the two zip-lines, and then get back up from **Floor E** now we knew where we were, but some of us were quite tired, and really couldn't face a climb up from the bottom for what was probably the third time. We agreed that time was not on our side to get the key back by 4:30, and so we wandered out into the continuing downpour. After a quick change, gear exchange and then we were off down to the Lakeside café for hot coffees, cake, and dinner for those with further to travel. Lots of lively, friendly conversation over the table and everyone felt they had had a good day underground.

Thanks to Steve for bringing the rope and everyone for chipping in with ideas along the way! [Members involved:- Steve Pearson-Adams, Ruth Rabinowitz, Des Kelly, Darren Conde, Neil Conde, Kevin] **Ruth Rabinowitz**

All photographs courtesy of Des Kelly.



Saturday, 26th May 2022: Parys Mountain Copper Mine, Anglesey.

Leon Warrington



It's been a bit quiet since my daughter was born, but I managed to get out for a trip down Parys Mountain whilst I was on holiday there.

Highlights of the trip were the crystal cave, the bronze age workings and hammer stones, snottites, acidic red pools and some rather dodgy looking false floors...!

It was a great trip, and with a very accommodating and knowledgeable guide.

Here are some photos from the trip:



More of Leon's photographs can be seen at: <u>https://photos.app.goo.gl/JpD49FrAdGNcMC6m8</u> **Note:** Coming soon :- There is a CCPC trip to Parys Mountain on the Meets List.



Saturday, 26th May 2022: Eyam Dale House Cave, Stoney Middleton.

Gaz McShee

Yesterday was my last day off and I was determined not to waste it. I had notified the landowner of my intention to visit **Eyam Dale House Cave** and received a lovely reply thanking me for informing him and telling me to enjoy the cave.



I hadn't been to the cave via the new agreed route, so after parking in the layby next to the Eyam sign I got ready. Finding the overgrown path started the epic venture into the unknown. If ever you need a warm-up then this is it, it's really steep and if it had been raining I reckon it would be impossible without crampons and axes. Today however, it was dry, and although tough going, the threat of a long tumble through brambles and nettles was not an option.

On the way I had a peep at the lids of **Fireset Shaft** and **Stub Scrin Shaft** noting their locations and rigging points for another day, before navigating the way, using the red reflectors strategically placed as waymarks on various trees along the route. I found the lid under a thick cover of leaves and twigs, its location given away by its shiny belay bar. I rigged the pitch

and, after a failed attempt to get me and two bags through the stupidly tight oil drum support girders, I hauled the rope back and sent the bags first.

It was still an effort to get through the entrance, and once in, it was a good idea to look down, as looking up just left you fixated on your rope pinging across one of the girders. I placed a couple of rope protectors on the rub points lower down and after hitting the hard deck set about rigging the second pitch.

You need to take spit hangers for the second pitch as there is no gear in place although a rusty belay bar is in situ for the brave. I dropped in and had a little look around at the muddy nastiness, and wondered at the chert bombs forming an indoor climbing centre on the smooth walls. I had to leave the tight crawl for another day as I couldn't do it in my harness and couldn't be bothered to take it off here as the clock was ticking.



Back at the top I headed onward through the cave to the 6m climbdown. I rigged it on naturals as I was alone, but really didn't need to, so next time I can save space and weight on the walk-



in . The **Northwest Chamber** was quite impressive and beautifully colourful. It is an immense space in such a small cave, but this was soon to change, as the way on dropped through a partly water filled hole in the floor to a low crawl, and the dreaded **Pearly Gate**.

The crawl is actually quite beautiful, and it takes your mind off the fact that the roof is getting lower, then, at the point where you first see the pair of stals barring progress, you find that crawling in face down was a mistake. Fortunately, about twenty feet back is a widening in a puddle that gives enough room to flip over and then, although for me awfully tight, I could push through. After that the '**Gate**' is actually easy. After another pretty passageway, and a belly-down soaking in cold water, another easy climb down found **The Other Side**, and I'm pretty sure I also found the bowels of hell ! There is a lot going on down there, both up and down. Most of the drop-downs and crawls trick you into following them, but then just stop. That swallowed up almost all my time, so after ages that seemed like minutes, crawling around in ever tighter spaces I had to head out, but not before climbing up to have a peep at **The Room With A View**, after all, it sounds nice doesn't it ?



Wow ! It was a pretty little grotto, not compared to some cave grottos, but in this muddy hell, it was breath-taking ,and I spent way too much time there, and now I was cutting it very fine on my exit time. Fortunately, having done it all on the way in, it wasn't anywhere near as bad getting out. Back at the first pitch, after derigging the internal shaft, I set off up. The problem with the pitch is its shape, you don't fit in properly and have to keep manoeuvring around, whilst your rope pings over the rub points above, and then right at the top you have to squeeze through the construction bars to escape.

After derigging and getting back to the car I cancelled my 'save me' call, with just under half an hour to go; pretty close that.

I didn't get many photos, as it's really hard in there, and often I had to leave my stuff to get into places effectively.

See more of Gaz's photographs at: <u>https://photos.app.goo.gl/TSbftXk8GAynpKmJ7</u>

Gaz McShee

Alan Brentnall commented:

'I free-climbed the entrance pitch once, just to prove that it was possible (and because I'd forgotten some of my SRT kit). It is possible to deviate the rope to avoid the top rub.'

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Gaz McShee

Steve Pearson-Adams, Steve Colley, CJ, Mark Krause, Rob Nevitt, Heather Simpson, Gaz McShee.

Seven of us made the pilgrimage up to Simon Fell for what was to be my first Dales trip ever and also the first time I'd turned right off the M6 North past Blackpool. I had asked for this trip

to be put on when Neil did the Meets List last year, so to say I was buzzing would be an understatement.

We stopped at Inglesport for a pre-cave breakfast, and straight away I was blown away with admiration for the self-control of all present, by studiously choosing the 'small caver's breakfast' so as not to interfere with the days caving which lay ahead. I pondered doing the same for a moment but then thought forget that, go big or go home, so a 'large caver's' it was. I always struggle with squeezes, and Steve was quick to point out that maybe this was why. I



ignored him!

At the lane next to Simon Fell, after paying at the farm, we got ready and marched off uphill to the distant coppice which marked the start of our adventure. At this point my lack of aerobic fitness and the 'large caver's' breakfast got to work, and before long I was struggling to speak to CJ and walk at the same time, as my already puny lungs had all the air squeezed out of them by a healthy 'food baby' trying to get comfortable beside them.

Alum Pot's open hole didn't seem as impressive as I had expected, as we passed by, but hey looking into an open hole wasn't on the cards today, going

down one however was. On past the entrance to **Diccan Pot** we went and down into **Long Churn**, and the beginning of our exploration. This was a totally different type of cave to the mucky horrid Peak mud-fests that I love so much. The whole place was pristine, and the water stayed clear even when you walked through it.



At **The Double Shuffle** we all managed to circumnavigate the murky



deepness with various techniques, all that is except Heather, who by her own admission has no upper body strength. I mean, she has some,

as she clung on for dear life for ages before finally falling in, only to land on the submerged floor two inches below.

Anyway having used up her quota of strength for the day we headed off towards the climb down to **St Paul's Chamber** stopping only to let a party

pass by on their way out.

Mark rigged the pitch on **Dolly Tubs** and after he and Rob dropped in, I followed, and after hitting the hard deck my eyes became fixated on the daylight ahead. As I approached, the spectacle burned an image into my head that I do not think I will ever forget. Sunbeams cutting the dimly lit pothole and illuminating the waterfall, turning the droplets into millions of shining jewels. Spray was being forced up from the depths as if a giant hot tub was steaming away, just out of sight. Below, the walls, decorated with moss, gave a strange glow in the









semi-light, and above the sun shone brightly in the blue sky, through the canopy of trees around the no longer unimpressive gash in the earth's surface. The rest of the party joined us, and we all followed Mark and Rob down from **The Balcony** to **The Bridge** below.

They rigged the main pitch from beneath the huge, wedged boulder, and me, CJ and Heather followed them down to the pit floor. Down here it was a twilight world, with the wind and spray lashing around a truly sombre place, and you were soaked to the skin wherever you stood.

Mark rigged the final pitch and we all dropped in, to get out of the icy monsoon, however it was not to be, as very soon, the mighty torrent belching out of Diccan Pot made visibility almost nil. There is a stark contrast between The Balcony and down here, in that the black walls suck up all the light you throw at them, and give none back. Couple that with the noise and wind and spray, and again you have an image that you won't ever forget.





We went down to the sump, which apparently would have been above our heads the day before, and then started to make our retreat as the cold was setting in. Heather took the lead, using her dwindling upper body strength to power her ascent, and then she stopped and sat on a ledge, while CJ and myself looked on in bewilderment as she adjusted her foot jammer. Eventually she continued up the pitch. Mark and Rob arrived from derigging, and we all waited for Heather to get off the rope. Meanwhile, down below all we

could do to stave off the cold was jog on the spot and wave our hands around whilst looking longingly at the sun and blue sky high above. Once Heather was off the pitch Mark shot up, to assist CJ if needed at the top. Just then, out of the sky shot a bolt of blue and red, as a caver descended the waterfall in front of us. He was swiftly followed by his partner who dropped in equally as fast. They turned out to be visiting cavers from Holland, and like saving angels, they offered up their rope so that we could both get out more quickly. We didn't need to be asked twice! Back up **Dolly Tubs**, Rob derigged, and we started the climb out.

It was an awesome day guys and I'm so happy for the company on my introduction to the Dales. Here is the link to the pictures I took:

https://photos.app.goo.gl/vRSftYSUWeokyrrz6

Gaz McShee

Heather added to Gaz's (slightly edited) account: The 6 inches that makes all the difference!

I made several rather silly errors on Saturday, causing unnecessary suffering to the rest of the group (apologies!) whilst providing some (hopefully) useful training points:

I descended the main pitch, even though I could see that it was more than (the promised) 75ft and I wasn't very caving fit.

When I broke my light at the bottom, I used my emergency torch on the side of my helmet instead of replacing my main light, both proved fairly useless though.

I went back up first of the final group, even though I hadn't been able to reach the safety loop on the rebelay to unhook my long cowstail on the way down, and therefore more sensibly might have let others go ahead for support at the top.

I put my foot-jammer on the wrong foot, so the rope kept dropping out and with little light, I couldn't see to get it on my other foot.

Worst of all, with hindsight, I put my short cowstail into the loop of the knot instead of the top karabiner, while safe, this lost me an extra 6 inches. This was key in trying to get my chest jammer into the (then) very short rebelay loop.

Instead of resting a little and pondering sensibly how to get off the pitch, my mind was on the ever-increasingly cold group below me as I flailed around. I almost swapped my Croll onto the rebelay loop when first I reached the pitch-head, but it was just too short to shut it. I tried my hand jammer on the rebelay loop but initially didn't have the energy to drag myself off the pitch. I tried to pull the safety loop towards me but that just wasted energy, so I tried to get my Croll onto the loop again a couple of times. It was so close, but I couldn't stay high enough for long enough or see enough to close the catch on the rope.

I didn't spot that I was too low down, didn't ponder moving my short cowstail further up and didn't use my main, or extra kit that I carry, more usefully.

ie. I could have made an extra foot-loop from a spare karabiner and the short sling that I carry and put that, or possibly the maillon of my footloop, into the top karabiner.

The embarrassment of Steve C. heading back to help me gave me the energy to try my handjammer on the belay loop again and this time I managed to haul myself off the pitch.

Apologies for freezing my lovely companions on what was otherwise a wonderful trip!

Heather Simpson

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Gaz responded:

Everyone has bad days Heather, I have them all the time but usually I'm alone so have to deal with them on my own, but I have made a few mistakes that have had consequences for other people in the party. You are doing the right thing by reviewing what happened so that you can try and formulate a solution should a similar event occur. I'm pretty sure we were all just happy that you got out OK, as from where we were we couldn't really help, and the noise made communication impossible. Please don't beat yourself up over it, we had a really good day, and you were very much a part of that, and I look forward to caving with you again soon.

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Steve Knox added:

Sounds like a bit of a drama Heather (yes, we have all been there – several times, in my case !! - I even abandoned a foot loop and jammer at the rebelay below the Event Horizon in Titan, while descending, because I was in a tangle and getting tired. I knew Paul Nixon was coming down next and would recover it for me – he did !).

The important thing is that you got sorted, considered your various options, and solved the problem - and, most important of all, everyone came home safe. Well done. Apart from your little problem, it sounds as if you all had a brilliant trip.

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A clever idea.

Jenny Drake

I'm always a sucker for a clever idea. Here is one that I've not seen before, though it won't be new I'm sure.

Gaz and I were guests on a mid-week TSG trip to the Titan Streamway. As those of you who have been there will know, the cascades can be rather tricky to climb. I've never made it up them without a lot of assistance from one of the good climbers in the club. Phil Wolstenholme of the TSG has used a length of hickory pickaxe handle, an etrier and a short length of rope to make a 'travelling stemple' as an aid-climbing gadget that can be jammed across the narrow lip on several of the cascades, helping us lesser climbing mortals to get up and down.



I've included a couple of photos by Grace of it in action. The first shows the Etrier, with Phil climbing; the second shows the handle, with Gaz at the top of the climb.



Gaz added: It was a great idea that I feel could be improved. Without some climbing ability the etrier was useless for some. I think the addition of a handline for the longer or more tricky climbs would have speeded things up and also helped where the wood was ineffective as we found out where I had to rig off a natural using slings. It is however a very useful bit of kit for somewhere like the Streamway. It's a shame that time was against us.

And Jenny: A short length of old electron ladder would be easier to use than an etrier, at the expense of weight and size when rolled up. There are only a few places where the travelling stemple would be useful. The Streamway just happens to be one of them. I agree, we should have taken a handline as well.

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

Late additions: More of Gaz's adventures:

17th June 2022: I went for an explore at **Sallet Hole** this morning, but sadly it's been permanently sealed up. As a save-face I decided to have a go at **Waterfall Hole**, but on inspection it too is inaccessible, due to some heavy-duty logs and branches that have been washed in. I know CCPC has a trip there later in the year so just a heads up that it may need to be rearranged. **Crock Pot** was open, and quite fun, but it's not very big so not really an alternative to Waterfall.

Alan Brentnall commented:

18th June 2022: Have you been before, Gaz ? - and were you looking at the correct entrance? I remember someone having an issue of not being able to get into Waterfall Hole because of flood debris and silt, however, when I took that person on a CCPC trip there a few years back, I realised that she'd been trying to get into where the water normally sinks. The real entrance is on the right, higher up the slope, before you get to the sink - a low crawl which leads to the short drop into Ward Wins Crawl.

It's well worth a trip into this place - it's a complex maze which is, in reality, an enormous chamber filled with huge boulders, creating many ways through. Because of the sheer amount of water that gets swallowed here, and, because it's yet another potential route into the Stoney Master Cave, over the years there have been many efforts to find a way through. This is reflected in the names of the various "Bits" - Mark and Keith's Bit, for instance, being a section discovered by Mark Noble and our own dear departed Keith Joule.

Like Hungerhill Swallet, further down the road, Waterfall Hole will, one day, be yet another entrance to a superb underground system - which will, by then, probably have almost as many ways in as Easegill Caverns up in the Dales !

Note: An Eldon Potholing Club trip report, dated two days before Gaz's visit, found the entrance open, although it was a little 'snug'.

19th June 2022: Convenience Cave, Eldon Quarry - Jack Lingwood



Jack's photographs give some idea of the entrance crawl.



To see more of Jack's photographs of the amazing formations : https://photos.app.goo.gl/hCNq9tP1TDoBDEKB9