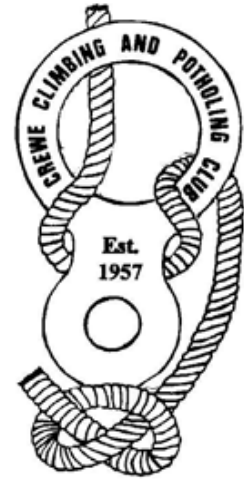




# C.C.P.C. Newsletter 145. May 2023

Log on to [www.ccpc.org.uk](http://www.ccpc.org.uk)

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## Planned Club Meets, etc., from May to July 2023:

Sun. 7 <sup>th</sup> May	Mouldridge Mine, Derbyshire. <i>Alt.: Moorfurlong Mine &amp; Cavern.</i>	Interesting mine complex, often used for novice trips. No SRT needed.
Mon. 15 <sup>th</sup> May	CCPC Monthly Meeting (also on-line via Zoom)	The Red Bull, Butt Lane, Nr. Kidsgrove 8.30 pm.
Sat. 20 <sup>th</sup> May	King Pot, Kingsdale, Yorkshire. <i>Alt. ; Illusion Pot.</i>	Challenging, with some technical squeezes. Lower passages - flood prone.
Sat. 27 <sup>th</sup> May – 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	<b>Bradford Pothole Club</b> Gaping Gill Winch Meet + surrounding caves – <i>all week.</i>	Earliest descent 08.00. Limited number of places per day. £15 per person, cash only, pay at shaft surface control.
Sun. 4 <sup>th</sup> June	Bog Mine, Llanferres, Denbighshire, North Wales. <i>Alt. Oxlow Caverns, Derbyshire.</i>	Lead mine with various fixed ladders.  <i>Classic multi-pitch Lead Mine SRT trip.</i>
Mon. 5 <sup>th</sup> June	CCPC Monthly Meeting (also on-line via Zoom)	The Red Bull, Butt Lane, Nr. Kidsgrove 8.30 pm.
Wk. End. 16 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> June	Ogof Draenen and social weekend around Crickhowell, South Wales. <i>Alt. Mandale Mine, Derbyshire.</i>	Largest cave system in Wales. Details to be arranged. <i>Impressive lead mine sough + workings</i>
Sun. 2 <sup>nd</sup> July	Hendre Spar Mine, near Mold, North Wales. <i>Alt. Ogof Cefn Gist, World's End.</i>	Impressive chambers on several levels with fixed ladders between levels. <i>Natural cave – rarely visited.</i>
Sat. 15 <sup>th</sup> July	Croesor to Rhosydd through trip, Tanygrisiau, North Wales. <i>Alt. Out Sleets Beck Pot, Penyghent, Yorks.</i>	Classic route through two linked slate mines, including 'delicate' traverses. <i>Weather dependent ! Crawls and SRT pitches which can be awkward and wet.</i>
Sun. 30 <sup>th</sup> July	Simpsons / Swinsto, Kingsdale, Yorks. <i>Alt. Heron Pot, Kingsdale, Yorks.</i>	Both are Classic SRT through trips, exiting through Valley Entrance. <i>Through trip if water levels permit.</i>

Plenty of other 'unofficial' trips continue to take place through the year, often organised at short notice, and sometimes mid-week, or evenings. If possible and practical, please let other Members know what you are planning, by using e-mail, and try to support Club trips whenever you can.

**Steve Knox, Ed.**



## Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation:

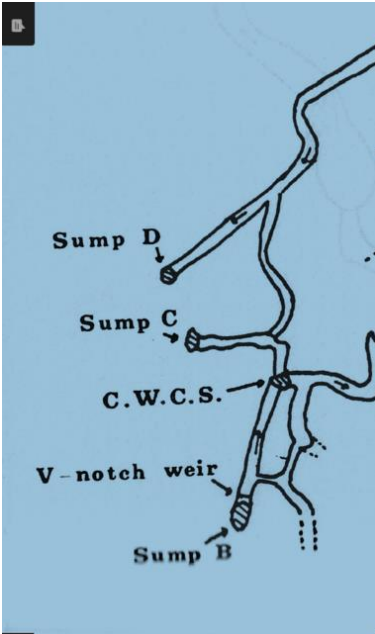
DCRO team members including a number from CCPC, continue to be ready to assist whenever required, and regular team training continues, either at the DCRO base in Buxton, or at cave locations in the Peak District – both underground and on the surface.  
<https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireCaveRescue>



## More chat concerning P8 SUMPS !!

Steve Knox, Editor.

Alan Brentnall pointed out that in my previous article about P8 / Jackpot, I missed a couple of things out:



*“Don't forget CWCS (Clive Westlake's Curious Sump)”.*

Yes, I should have mentioned 'CWCS', but to be honest, I've never seen it anything but full of water, and just appearing as a pool in an undercut ! I need to seek it out the next time we have a significant drought. Another place of interest used to be obvious, low down on the left, where the last of the Main Stream passage water-chutes ended, just before the start of T'Owd Man's Rift. In normal stream flow, practically all the water disappeared there into a too-tight, smooth-sided, twisting tube, to re-emerge further down the main passage, near the big boulders, but debris from Ben's Dig quickly blocked it, causing the water to back up and creating the situation you find today, with the water-chutes all submerged under the pool thus created (hence the traverse commonly used to keep dry), with the overflow spilling water downstream towards T'Owd Mon's Rift again.

It is always a fascinating place, with the suspicion that there is

still more to be found.

**Alan added:** Clive Westlake quite often used to come out with us on Tuesday nights, and the last time I was in P8 with him, I asked him about his "curious sump", but I think that it was so long ago that he'd more-or-less forgotten about it too. I'm surprised that nobody has dug out the sink that was blocked by Ben's spoil - that's an area which must have a lot of secrets. Pete Dell reckons he can see a high-level passage near there, which must be part of what SUSS's extensive dig in Xmas Aven is heading towards.

As you say, lots still to be found. One of these days you'll be able to do a P8-P7 exchange I reckon.

**Gaz commented:** Thanks Alan, I didn't even know that was a sump. Over last summer I spent quite a bit of time in P8 and found a few interesting and intimidating things about it:

**First:-** the connection between Sand Passage and Top Sump is shown on all the surveys as dropping into Top Sump's passage, when in reality it drops you straight into Top Sump, a wet shock usually, but when the water is down, you either drown (as climbing out would be a real struggle) or hit the deck six metres below.

**Second:-** Sump C, which is the other flooded-pot photo in the previous newsletter, has a really muddy and difficult climb down to a very tight squeeze to a lovely little streamway which emerges, and then shortly afterwards, sumps again. After I had struggled in and enjoyed the discovery I made the even more tricky (slippery as !) climb out. Not knowing where I had

been, I looked it up when I got out, only to find that it flooded for no apparent reason, to the roof - without warning ! That put the 'b'jesus' into me, I can tell you. P8 is definitely unique.

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## Caving North of the Border

6<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Alan Brentnall

Alan's first trip into '**Rana**':- This is the mined entrance to **Claonaite-7**.

Claonaite is currently Scotland's longest cave, and it is found as a sink in the moor above the crag where the famous Bone Caves are situated in Allt nan Uamh (Stream of the Caves) in Assynt. Originally there were 7 sumps in the cave, but now all of them but 3 and 7 are passable by breathing humans. However, a while back, ancient bear and other bones were discovered at the far end and, because of this, GSG (Grampian Speleological Group) got permission to create an entrance so that the bones could be examined and extracted for scientific purposes. Hence '**Rana**' (named after a frog who was living in the dig) was created, and it's the only Assynt cave with an SRT topo - although the two in-situ iron ladders actually make SRT unnecessary.

**Rana Hole,**

**Allt nan Uamh,**

**Sutherland.**

***Rana Hole Doline** - note the mesh across the entrance at the foot of the doline, and the spoil heap above it.*

For many years, while living near Hayfield on the north-eastern edge of the Peak District, whenever I went caving, which was quite often in those days, I used to feel really lucky because my drive (or cycle) to the cave would usually involve passing through some beautiful countryside. Quite often it would be a ride up the Rushup Edge road followed by a descent of Winnats Pass, sometimes it was through the pretty town of Buxton and down into the dales via Monyash, and, occasionally, I took in a ride down the Via Gellia, through the southern Peak's very own jungle!



Nowadays, in my dotage, the caving trips aren't quite as frequent, but the journey to them is at least as beautiful as any of those fond Peak District memories. Very early, on the morning of King Charles' coronation, the weather was pleasant and sunny, with clouds and scotch mist rolling over the higher tops, as I drove up beside the Black Water stream and across the "deery" moor by Loch Droma, with crystal-clear views of An Teallach, out towards Little Loch Broom. Passing through Ullapool, the mountains of Coigach, Cul Mor and cheeky Stac Polaidh all sought to distract me from my driving as I passed by Knockan Crag and descended into Elphin.

The GSG hut at Elphin was very busy, as we have the "Mendip Invasion" at this time of year. Since time immemorial, groups of cavers from the various Mendip clubs drive a phenomenal distance to cave and, more often, to dig in the Assynt Caves, and, over the years, they have added some quite significant finds and, of course, quite a few folk tales involving non-caving activities! As well as our Mendip chums, I was delighted to find Simon Brooks ensconced in the breakfast conservatory. As well as being a fellow Peak Cavern key-holder, Simon is a diver of some repute, and he has used his diving skills on more than one occasion when the DCRO have needed them. He is also a GSG



member, and is responsible for finding his way through some of the Assynt sumps to new passageways of some significance.

But today's caving trip was to involve neither digging, nor diving, although it was to be a visit to the site of the most impressive dig ever seen in Assynt. High on the flanks of Beinn an Fhuarain, above the famous Bone Caves, in the midst of a wilderness of peat hags and deer grass, lies a small lochan, Loch an Claonite, the outflow of which rapidly sinks into the sponge-work of the moor, never to be seen again until it bursts from the foot of a small crag in the lower part of the Allt nan Uamh glen. As this is a limestone area, with many caves in evidence, this phenomenon is highly indicative of a potentially large and significant cave system, but it wasn't until 1966, when a party from Kendal Caving Club (yes, that's correct, Gareth Williams' club !) discovered an opening beneath a small crag in a depression, that any real progress was made.

There's a long and interesting (and on-going) story attached to the discovery of the Claonite system, and it is now the longest and deepest natural cave in Scotland. It is three and a half kilometres in length, and has a 110m vertical range, so we're not talking long and deep in terms of some of the caving regions south of the border, but it certainly is impressive, as I was to find out on this particular trip.

Over the years, the Claonite cave system slowly opened up to the divers, and it now has at least seven sumps, of which all but 3 and 7 have now been by-passed with dry routes. However, in amongst the divers' explorations came the discovery of bones, including a bear skull, which attracted the attentions of folk in the scientific world, who had already been alerted to the area by similar discoveries in the famous Bone Caves nearby. Because of this, permission was sought, and given, for the GSG to excavate a new entrance beyond the sumps, and the divers radio-located a large high aven in Claonite 7 known as Belh Aven (named after the well-known Edinburgh brewery) to a small doline which had already been briefly explored, and which is now known as Rana Hole, because a frog was found living within its depths.

The excavation of Rana could itself provide enough material for a decent sized book, as it included as much engineering as TSG's efforts to re-open Longcliffe Mine – at one point there was a permanent winch powered by no less than three fixed pedal-cycles working in parallel! But, despite such creative efficiencies, it was still a long, hard job which took them a whole decade before it was finally successful. The result, I can now tell you, is seriously awesome.

As for any of the caves in the Allt nan Uamh area, the parking for Rana Hole is at the old fish farm on the A837 south of Inchnadamph, NGR NC 253179. There's a popular tourist walk starts from here, a circuit of the glen going past the afore-mentioned Bone Caves, and there is a description of this walk on the [WalkHighlands website](#). Follow this (either way round, but clockwise is easiest if you're visiting Rana Hole) until you get to the valley coming down from the south, just past the huge Bone Caves crag. There is a good path up the true left bank of the valley which will lead you to the Rana doline, the first sign of which is the substantial spoil heap left over from the dig.



*The Entrance Shaft.*

The entrance to Rana is a 30m shaft, rigged with two fixed ladders, although the top 4m of the shaft is left un-laddered to deter inexperienced folk from entry. It is usual to rig this with a short electron ladder, although there is rigging, and a topo, for SRT covering the full shaft. Alongside all the ladders etc there is an in-situ safety line, re-belayed at intervals, so that individual cavers can progress independently using their cows-tails, although, on this occasion, we did use a lifeline for those in the party who preferred this. The junction of the top electron ladder and the first iron ladder is covered by a horizontal scaffold pole, along which you must carefully walk, very reminiscent of the Claudine's Cascade in the Gouffre Berger, and the junction between the platform at the base of



the first ladder and the top of the second ladder is an airy traverse on stainless steel staples. For those of us who like via ferrata, it's a very enjoyable way to descend a shaft.

#### *Via Ferrata*

Once down, the way on is The Skye-Way, a passage which starts as a short, gravelly crawl, but soon becomes a narrow fissure of standing proportions. This leads to a descent through boulders into Two-'A's Chamber, a low, wide cavity, reminiscent of Main Chamber in Winnats Head Cave. The way on is down through the boulders again, ultimately arriving at a slot where the Black Rift pitch bolts indicate that rigging is required. This is a two-section pitch with the top half more like a wire-ladder-assisted scramble, and the bottom half a nice clean ladder pitch into Black Cuillin Chamber, where we stopped to remove any harnesses etc, as that was the last of the serious pitches.



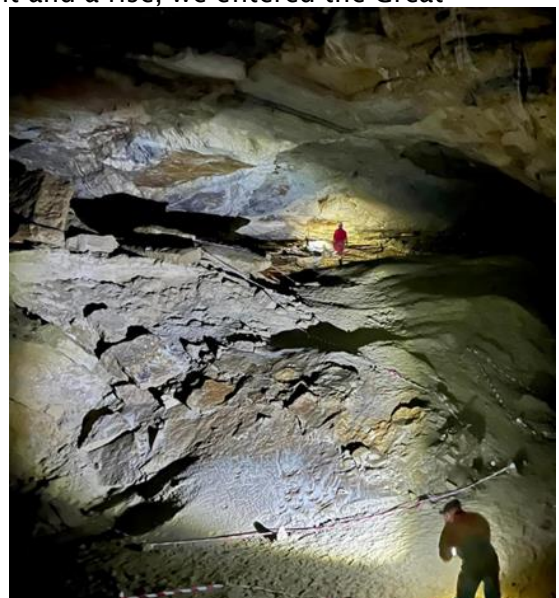
#### *Sump 6b*

From here we went through, beneath Belh Aven, to a point where we could descend to the very pretty Sump 6b – we were well and truly in the Claonite streamway now! But not for long, as Julian (one of the divers/diggers who did a lot towards discovering this place) took us up to a place with the enchanting name of “The Palatial Abode of Edward Concrete Head” where they dug a dry connection between Claonite 4 and Claonite 6, having first proved the close proximity using a rape alarm to create a loud noise.

We then retraced our steps for a bit before keeping high and following cairns and white dots (survey stations) through to Portobello Promenade, where there was a small notice marking the point where the original bones, including an almost complete skeleton of a brown bear, had been found. The notice pointed out that it wasn't inconceivable that other bones may still be found, and, if so, would cavers please

leave them just off the main path and let the GSG know. We were now in Claonite 7 and things seemed to be getting bigger until, after a short stoopy bit and a rise, we entered the Great Northern Time Machine, the largest known chamber in any Scottish limestone cave.

#### *The Time Machine (below and right)*





The Time Machine was closely followed by the smaller, but still large, Antler Chamber, where deer antlers and bones had been found together with a second, brown bear skull. This point is shown on the survey to be almost beneath the Bone Caves in Creag nan Uamh on the surface.



From here we retraced our steps, through the Time Machine, and dropped down a steep scree-ridden path to an awkward climb down into a lower chamber, at the foot of which were The Twin Falls of Jabaroo, where a wet climb in the stream took us to a further climb through to sump 7.

#### *The Twin Falls*

Sump 7 has been passed by divers, but it is reported to be fairly “gnarly” on the other side (Claonite 8) and no dry by-pass route has yet been found.

Reclimbing the twin falls, we stayed at the bottom of the slope with the Claonite Stream and followed it upstream, through a section called Memories of Tangalle. This was an awkward bouldery section on a huge slope (naturally - this is Moine Thrust country, after all!) which led us back to Belh Aven and the Black Cuillin Chamber where our harnesses were left.

The climb back up through the boulders, and then up the two pitches was uneventful, but satisfying. One of the party discovered two young Ranae at the foot of the entrance shaft, and insisted on “rescuing” them. I’m not sure that they appreciated this as they appeared to be well nourished, there being evidence of insect life a-plenty in this remarkable threshold zone.

Back on the surface, the earlier fine weather had been replaced by heavy rain, so it was a pretty quick walk around the remaining part of the Bone Cave circuit back to the cars. But I can really recommend this trip to any caver travelling this far north who wants a memorable underground experience.

Text: Alan Brentnall.

All Photos: Courtesy of Krzysztof Pajak (Kris)



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#### **Additional Comments from Alan:**

‘I was totally gobsmacked by Saturday’s trip. As well as the passage sizes, the length and complexity of the trip were both unexpected. I need to go back and see if I could navigate my way through without Julian’s assistance.

Being used to caves formed in autogenic areas, and tending towards a predictable pattern, I am not used to the oddities which are thrown up by the kind of upheaval northern Scotland went through when the two continents collided - even though similarities on a less chaotic scale do exist around the Craven fault and, of course, in Castleton.

The trip I missed the following day (due to a planned week in Skye) was the other end of the Claonaite system, from the entrance to sump 3, which is a fair bit wetter than the Rana end, but I have all that to look forward to.

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**Filler:** ‘Saving’ the frogs reminds me of arriving back at the foot of Chadwick’s Shaft, Ecton, after a trip round the workings, to find literally dozens of malnourished frogs, toads and newts sitting in the disk of faint daylight which illuminated the stoney base. We brought out as many as we could, and released them in the nearby Back-of-Ecton reservoir. **Editor.**

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I finally managed to get a break from overtime and made the most of it by making an early morning visit to Knotlow for a trip into **Meccano Passage**.

It's been on my list of 'to do's' for a very long time, so at 8am this morning I rigged the 210' shaft and left the sunshine behind for a dark adventure in one of my favourite mine systems in the Peak.

I had already tried to do it from Hillocks two years ago, but failed after getting stuck in a very low, water filled passage, and having to retreat backwards uphill, whilst trying desperately not to dunk my face under the water whilst doing so.

As you may imagine it was with some trepidation that I clipped into the bolts and rigged into the entrance of the passage, with the crashing of the waterfall to add terror to the situation, in the chamber behind me.



Once safe I de-rigged and left my gear for the return trip, and headed off past the 'death-trap' shaft in the passage and onwards into the crawls.

Soon I arrived at the flooded level, and slid through with more ease than I had expected, but still getting the standard cold-water shock, as the icy water invaded my wetsuit for the first time.

From here the passages were mainly low and tight with tricky obstacles in the way to add to the interest. Sadly the passage didn't last long before I popped up in the familiar surroundings of Hillocks Mine, and after a little rest headed back for the return trip.



After covering the ground quickly on the way back I re-gearred and started the long pull up the engine shaft, with a beautiful blue sky above as a motivator to keep my legs working.



All in all this has to be one of the Peak District's classic trips; not long, but very sustained, and very much in keeping with the wonderful Knotlow/Hillocks Mine system. A link to the photos is [here](https://photos.app.goo.gl/ikWjNy2djTqd5qjZ7), all ripped from my GoPro footage so pretty close up, but it gives a good impression of the nature of the place.

Gaz Mcshee

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/ikWjNy2djTqd5qjZ7>



## Mouldridge Mine, Derbyshire.

7<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Jenny Drake

There were no takers for our planned trip to Mouldridge Mine at the weekend, but some CCPC members did get underground. Steve Colley, Jack Lingwood and Jenny Drake were in Giant's Hole for a trip to Chert Hall and a climb up Boss Aven. There was also a visit to Minera Mine in North Wales - more details on that trip later.



## More P8 Chat – concerning the car park shafts, and beyond !

**Jenny Drake** started this off by commenting on the Spring issue of 'Derbyshire Caver', No.157, which mentions mine entrances in the P8 car park!

Pages 13 & 14: 'Perryfoot Car Park Shaft Clean-up'

The car park shafts are well known among the geriatric ranks of cavers ! I have a write up on them somewhere, from when the man-hole tops were put on (can't find it !!). **Editor.**

**Will Cooper** wrote: 'Dr Jacksons or Perryfoot, or something isn't it ? Weren't they just behind the bushes somewhere, lost in the past now.'

**Alan Brentnall:** No. These are under manhole lids in the P8 car park opposite Perryfoot Farm. Ralph used to have a set of "lid lifters" to make it easier to get into them.

(Dr Jackson's and Perryfoot are both natural caves in the field just the other side of the little lane up to Rushup Hall and are both excellent trips. Permission for these is at the posh dog kennels you drive past on the road down from Sparrowpit, just before you get to the Rushup Hall junction and the P8 car park.)

**Will Cooper:** Ok, am I right in thinking they are P1 and P2 in the series ? Which was the one where the entrance is no longer visible - in that field next to the carpark ?

**Alan Brentnall:** Yes P1 & P2 are Dr Jackson's and Perryfoot Cave respectively.

Not sure what you mean about a hole no longer visible - I'm unaware of any "vanishing" Perryfoot sinks.

*[Warning. Grace reckoned Dr Jackson's Cave was 'quite snug' ! = impossible for normal folk.]*

Both caves 'have their moments'.

Indeed I remember a Tuesday night trip, with, among others, a "professional cave leader" who screamed "I'm never going f\*\*king caving ever again!!!" at me and Jess Stirrups as he attempted to pass through the Iron Maiden in Perryfoot.

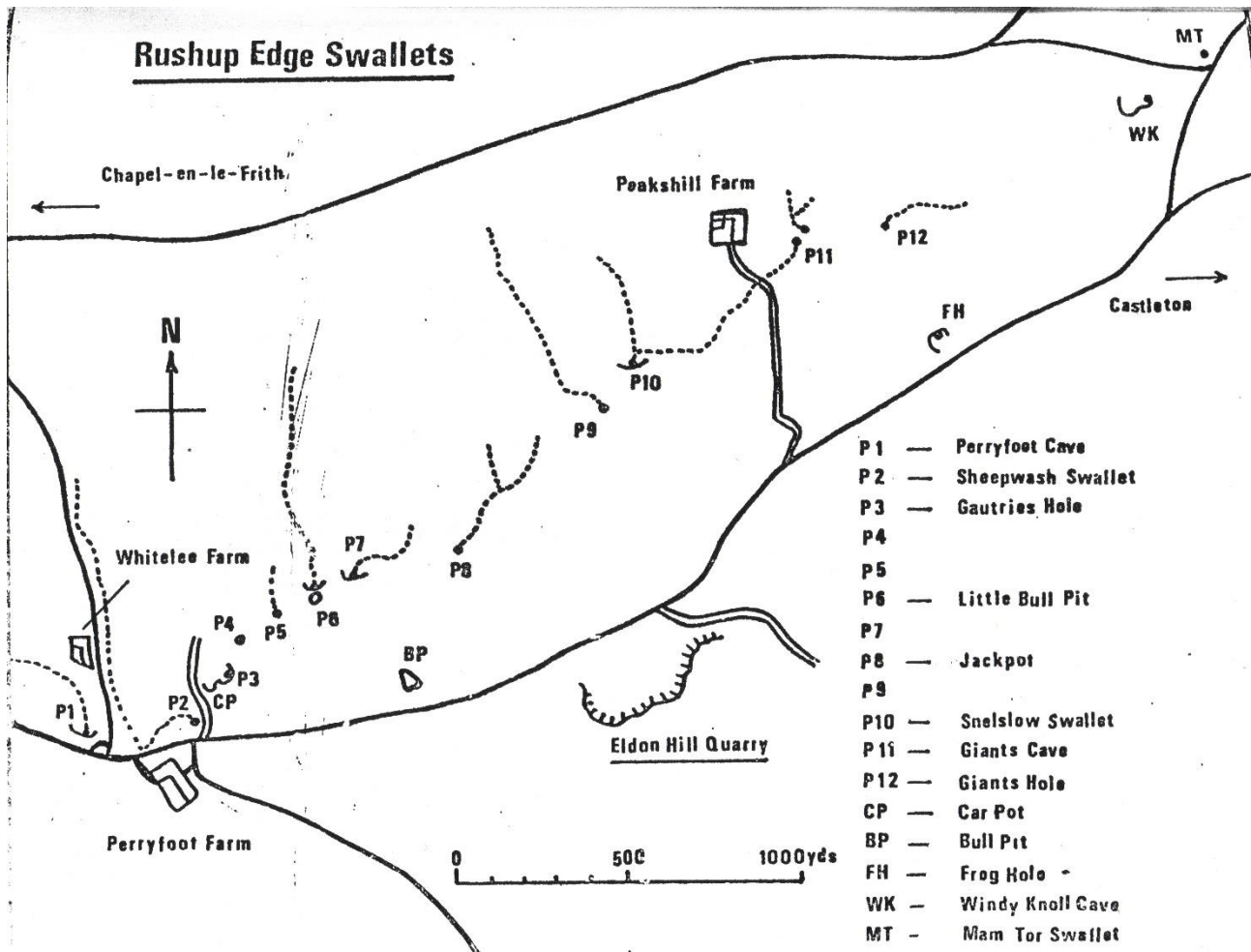
Will's second question got me thinking, and I took out my copy of Trevor Ford's "Castleton Caves" where he has a diagram (page 57) of the Rushup Swallets. This doesn't include P0, as that was an "afterthought", being discovered way after the P series was decided - hence its name, I suppose. Well it appears that, contrary to John Gunn's nomenclature, Perryfoot Cave and Dr Jackson's actually share the P1 title, with nearby Sheepwash Swallet getting P2. Perhaps Sheepwash is your vanishing cave?

P0 is a bit of an oddball. It's a sink in the middle of a field near Rushup Farm - look it up in the DCA Cave Registry. I last visited this place with Ann Soulsby a few years ago to organise a visit by John Gunn and others to dye-trace, not P0, but Coalpithole Rake No. 10 shaft, and, yes,



this was the event which resulted in the fatality of the DCA's one and only multi-gas meter. However, P0 isn't on Rushup Farmland, but in a field belonging to somebody in Sparrowpit who denies any access. But there has been access in the past - it was originally explored to its (almost) 40 metres end by none other than Keith Bentham, of "Ben's Dig" fame. It was also the scene of an early and notorious DCRO animal rescue, when a horse got stuck in the hole and "Five Daves" (including Dave - 'Moose' - Nixon) went to rescue the poor thing, and after a load of shenanigans, the horse whinnied, "I've had enough of this!" and promptly self-rescued and galloped away. I was part-way through gathering the facts about this odd rescue for an article in "Derbyshire Caver" when Covid and Scotland intervened, and I've since forgotten about it.

Ed.: Just to clarify the location and names of the various Swallets mentioned:



This diagram is taken from 'Caves of Northern Derbyshire. Part 4: Rushup Edge Swallets.'

Produced and published privately by Dave Elliot in 1975.

Steve Knox, Editor.

**Will Cooper:** I thought I'd read something, years ago, about a cave that was no longer accessible, around there somewhere. Maybe P3 or P4 ?

**Alan Brentnall:** Gautries Hole is P3, and, for a while, a few years back, that was made inaccessible by some of the Eldon cavers who were digging there. They used a plug to change the hydrology of the place so that, instead of flowing down to its usual sump, the entrance stream backed up and flooded the upper series. It was eventually successful, because it cleared out all the silt in the lower passage beneath the pool in Pool chamber, and cleared a further two sumps, more than doubling the length of passage in the system.

I'm pretty sure that the "plug" is no longer in place, so the cave is once more accessible, but there is a tendency for the entrance passage to sump in very wet conditions. Another good Perryfoot trip - not quite as snug as the earlier suggestions!

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**Darren Conde:** I remember abseiling down a 50ft shaft not far from P6 about 30 years ago, not sure whether that was covered by corrugated iron or not. It was an old lead mine that dropped and then doubled back on itself several times, to a dead end, possibly on false floors. Never heard or read any information on it.

.....  
**Alan Brentnall:** In the entry for Little Bull Pit, aka P6, in Caves of the Peak District, there is mention of a mine shaft to the west which could be the one. The other source of info I have is the set of five guides to Northern Derbyshire which were produced by the late Dave Elliott in 1975 (*see diagram above*). Obviously some of the descriptions will now be out of date, but these guides include a lot of information which just isn't available anywhere else. I doubt that you would find Coalpithole Rake No.10 anywhere else, and it does have good descriptions of P6 and Sheepwash Swallet etc., which can be useful. Sometime next winter, when I'm less busy, I might get around to scanning these guides so that Jenny can put them on the CCPC website for members' research.



## Alum Pot, Yorkshire

Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Steve Pearson-Adams

The club was contacted by Samantha (newbie) early last month asking if she could take part in some club trips with the view to becoming a member. It was during Covid that she started taking an interest in caving and had a few mines and SRT trips under her belt. Due to other commitments Samantha was unable to make any of the trips last month, however last Saturday changed all that. I made my way to Ingleton on Friday, after work, arriving in the car park just after 8:00 pm. Samantha was aiming to leave Lichfield at 18:30 but got delayed and didn't arrive until 22:30. Kettle boiled, brews made, and biscuits handed out, we made our introductions and discussed our intentions for the following day. The plan was to enter Alum via the middle entrance (Lower Long Churn) making for the Dolly Tubs pitch, and following up with the Greasy Slab. I was conscious that Sam, as she likes to be known, hadn't caved recently and was probably SRT rusty, so I didn't want to make it too difficult, to the point where she wouldn't enjoy the trip.

After 'fuelling the furnace' in Inglesport Cafe we were soon parked up on the lane. There was plenty of activity in the area that day, with a 3-Peaks Challenge in full swing, and Mountain Rescue hosting a fell run. Somehow the caving to come seemed quite leisurely in comparison. We enjoyed a steady walk up, in brilliant sunshine under clear blue skies, with a welcome light breeze. Water levels were very low - no surprise there given the settled weather during the previous week. With the two plunge pools safely negotiated, sorry, just one as I had a splash up-to my waist in the second one, much to my and Sam's amusement. Soon we stood at the head of Dolly Tubs pitch which I proceed to rig. After a focused 'refresh' on SRT basics, Sam was heading off down the pitch, in a slow and controlled manner, to the bottom, following up with the call, "rope free". I quickly joined her at the bottom where we made our way out to the viewing ledge. Alum was a stunning site that morning; in a benign state, with the sun's soft rays cutting across the shaft, and with the mist slowly rising towards the daylight.

We stood around for about 30 mins, taking in the view, while a guided group made their way

up the Greasy Slab, then it became free for me to rig. I pointed out to Sam how slippery it could be, and to be sure of her footing. Once back up the slab we met Gareth Williams and a few others who were on a short trip to the Ledge, we would catch up with Gareth later for a natter over a drink at the Craven Heifer. After a steady prusik up both pitches, we soon caught up with the guided group who were tentatively negotiating the plunge pools, which caught a few out, immersing them in the not-so-warm black pools. Sam was grateful, and overjoyed to have been underground, and thanked me for making it possible. Keen to get on more trips, Sam is looking forward to joining CCPC, and meeting some other members on the Ogot Draenan meet in June. A nice little trip of 3.5 hours .

Steve Pearson-Adams



## Cussey Pot, Stoney Middleton. (1<sup>st</sup> visit)

20<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
Gaz Mcshee

With the collapse of the King Pot trip I decided that I would start my campaign in Cussey Pot. I'd found it long before it was made public but left it alone until the proper access was in place then once the information started to filter out the normal I'm going to die feeling led me to put it off.

Anyhow after losing a bit of weight and having done Winnats head a few times among other snug caves I figured what the hell and given the weekend opening, the game was on. Jenny had issues so couldn't make it, so I made the decision to go anyway and only push as far as I felt comfortable. The description says getting into trouble anywhere after the entrance rift in either direction would make rescue very difficult, so I didn't expect to get very far but at least I would know whether it would be worth returning.

After changing on the car park in Eyam I popped the lid and almost lost my hair to the blast from below, damn, that cave blows hard! Care is required whilst getting in as the ropes are rigged to scaff poles below the lid and you have to clip your tails after climbing in over the pitch; there follows a muddy slide to the floor about 10 metres below.



*Photos, left to right: 'Coconut Airways'; 'Poetry Corner': Near 'Shattered Dreams' pitch head.* I chose to go west at the bottom, towards the 'Inglorious Bastards', just because I was intrigued by the name, so off I went. Almost immediately I was on the traverse lines of 'Coconut Airways', which was easy enough to do without clipping, and the fall isn't that far, but to be safe I did. At the far end a drop down, and climb up on boulders, led to 'Poetry Corner' with some lovely straws and flowstone, but the main route leads down through





Above: Some of the amazing formations in 'Shattered Dreams'.



Right: 'Shattered Dreams' pitch head.

for the rest of the cave .  
'Shattered Dreams' pitch followed, and almost immediately after that I was standing over 'the main event', 'Inglorious Bastard' pit.



Far right: 'Inglorious Bastard' pitch head.

'Inglorious Bastard' looks innocuous from the top, but once you pass the bottleneck the place opens out into an amazing, awe-inspiring free hang. It's not the biggest I've been in by any

means, but it's impressive.



Above: 'Black Draught', and right: 'Loperamide Lust'.

I set off into Black Draught, and soon got a taste for the place -flat out in mud and water is the rule down here. Black Draught is a dead end, and as I couldn't turn round I had to reverse all the way out. Loperamide Lust was next up, again flat out, and in a lot of water and slurry. I can't tell you how much fun this actually was, but all too soon, the water got to within a couple of inches of the ceiling and I knew it was time to quit.



Maybe it's a little too early in the year for an attempt at the Wet West and beyond. I chose to call it a day at that, leaving plenty to go back for on subsequent visits, so off up Inglorious I went, and made for the entrance.



*Above, both: More wallowing through Loperamide Lust !*

A couple of points worth noting for anyone attempting it: First - a wetsuit makes life easier as it doesn't bag up on everything, and is especially helpful coming back out. It also helps in the slurry. Second - tackle bags are a total nuisance. Coming back out they get stuck on everything. I took one small bag, and cursed it a lot between the top of Inglorious and the shaft lid. Another thing - don't be fooled by the survey. It's actually quite a compact little cave/mine. Anyway after scaring the wedding guests arriving at Eyam Hall, I got changed and headed off to Calver for a posh coffee and to plan Cussey trip 2.

Link to pics here: a lot of helmet shots, as that's about all you can take in the flat-outs, and sadly no decent shots of 'Inglorious' as it's just too big to illuminate properly with a head lamp, But all in all, a great addition to the Stoney Middleton Dale caves. [All text & photos: Gaz.]

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/Wygi1hoJWZbPwRqU8>

**Gaz Mcshee**



## **Gaping Gill, Yorkshire**

**27<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

**Steve Pearson-Adams**

The usual cast of members sadly couldn't make this bank holiday Gaping Gill winch meet, which for May is organised and operated by the Bradford Caving Club. It was left to Mark and me to carry the flag for CCPC and so we began to work out our strategy. We decided to travel up on Friday, arranging to meet in Ingleton. I wasn't able to leave home until 4:00 pm, Mark however 'got a flier' so to speak, and was on his way north by 2:00 pm. Being that it was the start of the bank holiday weekend, I think we both anticipated heavy traffic. Now there's 'heavy' traffic and there's 'HEAVY' traffic ! Joining the M6 at junction 17, it wasn't long before I hit standing traffic. Never mind, I thought, "it will soon start moving again", and indeed it did, but all too soon, the traffic ground to a halt. I was beginning to have flashbacks of our journey to Dover last year. Those that made that trip will understand. One and three-quarter hours later, I was crossing Thelwall viaduct, hurray!!!! The celebration was short-lived, and it was back to the old start-stop for mile after mile. Oh how I yearned for the M-routes of France. Eventually, I arrived in Ingleton at 19:45. Mark would tell me it took him 4 hours, a journey as most of you will know that is usually about one and a half hours. Anyway enough of the joys of bank holiday motoring.

As I was preparing my tea, we cooked up a plan to leave Ingleton by 8:00 am the following morning, to be fairly sure of securing a parking space at the car park in Clapham, and then start heading up the Gill as early as possible to avoid the heat of the morning sun. After some discussion, Mark and I decided that we would drop in through Marilyn's pot, and make our way to the main chamber, and then, having had a look around, exit via Bar Pot. Not being really familiar with the system, I had printed off route descriptions for both inward and outward journeys, courtesy of CNCC.



The following morning Mark and I were up and on our way, nice and early, arriving in Clapham just before 8 o'clock. Twenty minutes later, and after some trouble with the pay-and-display machine, we were geared up and making our way to the Gill. The walk up was a steady one, taking in the sights, and sounds, and smells that nature had to offer. By 09:30 we had signed in at the tent and made our way over to Marilyn's. Just before we were ready to descend, three members of the Bradford Caving Club ( Pete, Amber, and Gene) appeared. Pete remarked that there was an issue with the rope on Niagara pitch, and that he had brought a rope protector. Pete entered first, then me, then Mark, followed by the girls. On reaching Niagara pitch all was in order, so there was no need for the rope protector. We dropped the next few pitches of Disappointment Pot and made for Hensler's Master Cave. Turning right at the junction, we headed upstream, as per the description, however, it didn't look right and we began to doubt if we had taken the right route. Heading back to the junction, we carried on downstream for a short while, then gained a low cobbled crawl after climbing over a mudbank. Still not sure, Mark decided to have a look, but it closed down after a short while. Needless to say we made our way back to the Master Cave to read over the route description yet again. Soon we heard voices in the distance which turned out to be Pete and the girls, who were making their way to the Blowhole. Pete said, "We won't be long, so if you want to wait for us, we will make our way together". Twenty minutes later there was no sign of them, so Mark and I decided to make our own way out, after speaking to a lone caver who confirmed turning right upstream initially was correct. Reassured we pressed on. Our progress was steady and sure, albeit stopping occasionally to check the description. Before long we had made our way to the awkward squeeze that leads up into South-East Aven. I had forgotten how awkward this squeeze was, especially with SRT kit on, and after two failed attempts to push myself through I had no option but to remove some of my kit. I passed through the squeeze to freedom at last. Mark soon followed, and we both delighted in the relief of it all.

Soon we passed the rope for Bar pot, on our right, and made our way steadily to South-East pot, where the route from Flood entrance/Wades enters from above. Having traversed South - East pot and reached the opposite side, we made our way towards Sand Caverns, then took the lower passage on the right. It is partly stooping with some short sections of hands and knees crawling, then walking size again, and eventually reached Gaping Gill Main Chamber in all its magnificence. Members of the public were milling about, keen to explore the further reaches, while the winch chair continued to deliver the paying public, who after having a look around formed an orderly queue for the return trip to the surface.

After a few minutes we made our way back to the bottom of Bar Pot where we waited patiently for a couple of cavers to make their way up. One of them making a comment about having got parts of his anatomy stuck in a sit harness. Was he bragging, or just being a fool? - perhaps a little of both. With the shout of, 'Rope free' I started making my way up, soon followed by Mark. We climbed up through the boulders to the Greasy Slab, which I found more awkward than the last time, and was glad of the fixed rope. Next was the final pitch. Memories of having got my head wedged near to the pitch head on my last exit of this pitch, were all too present in my mind. Not wanting to repeat this debacle, I made sure to keep over to the left as I neared the top of the pitch. After a short struggle releasing my gear, I was soon lying sideways on the ledge and staring at the daylight above. I shouted for Mark, and he began his ascent. All was going well until Mark's bag got caught up behind him as he was positioning himself towards the ledge. It took a few minutes, and some brute force, before Mark got himself free - relief all round. Mark stated, "I'm not doing this exit ever again !" It was a great 5- hour trip, and one that will stay in our memories for some time to come.

**Steve Pearson-Adams**

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## Cussey Pot – back again !

28<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
Gaz Mcshee

Jenny (who remembered her bus fare this time! ), Myself, Jack (who forgot his wellies this time! ) and Rob went back to Cussey pot for another trip to try and push a bit further given that it had been a dry week and maybe the water levels were more favourable for a pop at Doom.

I picked Jenny up from an old stumping ground of mine by Burbage Edge and we went to the Lovers Leap parking in Stoney to wait for the others to arrive. Jenny who was really happy to have remembered to bring her purse and make the trip this week found it hilarious when Jack rang to say he had forgotten his Welligogs and had to go home. "I've got two pairs," he said, both at home. I said, "Can't you just wear what you have on your feet, and drive home in your socks?" "Naa, bruv. The misses bought me these, she'll kill me!" Just then he passed a Screwfix and said, "I'll ring you back", and with that he was gone.

Rob arrived in his posh new car, and we admired it as we waited for Jack who by now would be the proud owner of three pairs of wellies. Once 'three' pairs arrived we jumped into my car and headed off to Eyam and got ready for the descent into the muddy hell that is Cussey Pot. Upon opening the lid, expecting to entertain the others with my levitation of leaves technique, I was disappointed to find that the pot was not draughting. Odd, I thought, but in I went anyway, and was soon parked at the bottom of the shaft, waiting for the others to head in. From the bottom we headed off into the darkness over 'Coconut Airways' and down into the depths, everyone realising just how true the statement is in the description, that rescue would be extremely difficult after the entrance pitch.

The tight entrance squeeze to 'Shattered Dreams' was easily passed by everyone, along with the pitch that followed, trying not to pay too much attention to the not-so-captive bolt-hanger ! The bottom of 'Shattered Dreams' is a boulder-choke floor, and in places there are crawls between the boulders, which are very loose in places, allowing access to spaces in the rift that makes up this entire system. We explored some of these as I hadn't looked at them last week. All were too tight at present to push further, although there is potential to dig them at some point. Some of the moves required to navigate the choke were quite 'funky', and one in particular was even more 'funky' to get back out of. The survey shows a much more complete part called 'Pickaxe Rift', but we couldn't find anything that resembled it beneath the boulders today, just a high chance of picking your own headstone.

'Inglorious Bastard' pitch is quite impressive, and after we had all dropped in, I decided to climb up to have a look at 'T'Owd man's' workings, but backed off when I saw the dodgy traversing climb, with nothing to use for hands or feet, and just your cow's-tails to aid progress (etriers would be a good idea here.)

No one wanted to try 'Blackdraught' after I told them it was a dead end, but that's a shame because it's a lovely flat-out crawl and a lovely flat-out reverse as you can't turn around. Anyway everyone was up for a push to try and get through to the entrance to the 'Doom' series, so into the flat-out muddy hell we all slid, and down the mud slide into 'Loperamide Lust'.

I went first, and suddenly found that my face was half immersed in water through the lowest sections, not like the previous week. Then it dawned on me why the entrance was not draughting. Most of the airflow must come through this passage, and when it sumps the airflow is cut off (a great indicator as to whether or not it's worth the effort of making the trip if 'Doom' and beyond are your goal.) It was a bit of a surprise to me that the water had risen in a week with no rain; it should have gone down, which was why I was keen to return to try the connection. It would be interesting to see how this was possible, but maybe later in the summer I can return and try and find out. Anyway, for now it's a mystery, and everyone had to

go back through the mud bath, and climb the slide, whilst covered in a coating of water, which was fun!

Back out we all went, and all enjoyed the tight sections in reverse, which are much more testing, especially with gear bags. Sadly I got no decent pictures of the trip, but I think all who went got some good memories from it. As Rob said, "I won't be in a hurry to come back !" Even so, I'm definitely at the start of a campaign to see the newest cave in Derbyshire when the waters finally subside.

Thanks for the company guys especially Jack who kept us all entertained with his list of calamities. **Gaz Mcshee**

Descent 285 (April 22) has an article on the relationship between Cussey Pot, Doom, and the Stoney Middleton Master Cave. **Jenny**



**'Sandstone Scouts' in Giants Hole.**

**21st May 2023  
Steve Pearson-Adams**

After what seems a very long hiatus our twice-yearly caving trips with the Cheshire Sandstone Scouts finally resumed on Sunday with a trip into Giants, taking in Upper West then on to the head of Garlands Pot. We ( Mark Krause and I) were expecting a group of 8 scouts and 2 leaders but only 4 plus 2 arrived. David explained that GCSE exams meant some of the original 8 couldn't make it ,one felt sick the night before, and there was one no-show. Still it was great to reconnect and forge new contacts with the two leaders.

Mark and I shared the talks on cave formation and the Giants development and history. Two of the scouts, and one of their leaders, conquered the sporty squeeze at the top of Pillar passage, which was impressive, with high-fives all round. We spent two-and three-quarter hours with them underground, and all went away having thoroughly enjoying the experience. A big thanks goes to Mark for helping out, and passing on his knowledge to the group. An even bigger thanks goes out to Alan Brentnall, who served as my mentor and who actively encouraged me to put in for my LCML level 1. three years ago.

We look forward to our next adventure, with October 8th already pencilled in as a preferred date. Watch this space. **Steve Pearson-Adams**

**Finally (this was definitely, and unintentionally, a bumper issue !):**

20 <sup>th</sup> July – 10 <sup>th</sup> August.	Multi Club/ Nationalities, Gouffre Berger Meet, Autrans, France.  Pre-booking required for G.B.	GB is a HUGE, world-class system !!!! – there is also plenty of other caving in the area, plus walking, canyons, bike trails, etc..
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Several Club Members are involved – contact Steve Pearson-Adams or Mark Krause if you need more information.

As always, my thanks to everyone who contributes to the CCPC Newsletter, and also to those who acknowledge receipt afterwards. It's good to receive **Alan's contributions**, 'our man north of the border', and from Members anywhere in the world. All errors, changes, or corrections are mine – my apologies. Keep safe, keep caving, and continue to support your club. **Steve Knox, Editor.**