

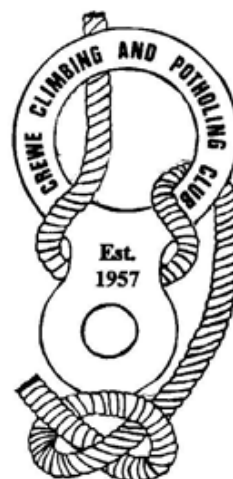


C.C.P.C. Newsletter 159. August 2026

Log on to www.ccpc.org.uk

Editor: Steve Knox

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Planned Club Meets, etc., for June 2026 to September 2026.

Mon. 1 st June.	CCPC Monthly Meeting – this one is ‘social’. Available to Members via ‘Zoom’.	Sometimes we meet at The Red Bull, Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Staffs. 8.30 pm.. Check before travelling.
Sat. 13 th June.	Ogof Darren Cilau, Crickhowell, South Wales.	
Sun. 14 th June.	South Wales. Any suggestions ??	
Wed. 17 th June. evening.	‘D.C.R.O. Dash’ Castleton, Derbyshire. (Fund raising event)	A hill race which takes in a number of major cave sites in the route. Check the internet for details.
Sat. 27 th June.	Brown Hill Pot, East Kingsdale, Yorkshire. Grade 4.	Entrance and big pitch (30m + 21m.) can become flooded in wet weather.
Mon. 6 th July.	CCPC Monthly Meeting – Available to Members via ‘Zoom’.	Sometimes at The Red Bull, Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Staffs. 8.30 pm..
Sat. 11 th July.	Miss Grace’s Lane Cave, Forest of Dean (South Wales).	
Sun. 12 th July.	Forest of Dean.	
Sat. 25 th July.	Alum Pot, Selside, Yorkshire. *Alternate is Washfold Pot.	Absolute Classic !! Main shaft direct, or alternative via Long Churn system. Plenty of alternatives.
Sat. 1 st Aug.	Fairy Holes, Weardale.	Weather dependent.
Mon. 3 rd Aug.	CCPC Monthly Meeting – Social Available to Members via ‘Zoom’.	Sometimes at The Red Bull, Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Staffs. 8.30 pm..
Sat. 22 nd Aug.	Lathkill Head Cave, Derbyshire.	Lovely trip from top entrance.

NOTE: Any planned trip can be subject to change, even ‘last minute’. Always confirm your intentions with others before travelling, and check that the trip is still going ahead.

Dates of future Meets and Events are always redacted from this page for copies of the Newsletter which are placed online, or are otherwise made available to non-members.

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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.

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

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Some Meets from earlier in the year: January to June.



4th January 2026: Maskhill Mine & Oxlow Caverns.



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1st February 2026: May Day Hole, Yorkshire.



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14th February 2026: Streaks Pot, Stoney Middleton, Derbyshire.



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1st March 2026: Lancaster / Easegill System, Yorkshire.



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14th March 2026: Peak Cavern, Derbyshire.



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28th March 2026: Bull Pot of the Witches, Yorkshire.



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12th April 2026: Hungerhill Swallet, Derbyshire.



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25th April 2026: Giant's Hole, Derbyshire.



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9th May 2026: Cwmorthin Slate Mine, North Wales.



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31st May 2026: Magnetometer Pot, Yorkshire.

A Blast from the Past (Facebook does have its uses after all) :

On 9th May 2026, Stan Kowalik added an entry to the Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club (CCPC) Facebook page:-

'I've got quite a lot of 70s books and Descents. Free to anyone wanting to pick them up. You'll not be disappointed.'

Stan had been an active member of CCPC back in the 70s and 80s. I replied that I was always happy to accept caving literature, so Stan gave me his address and telephone number, and I arranged a collection time.

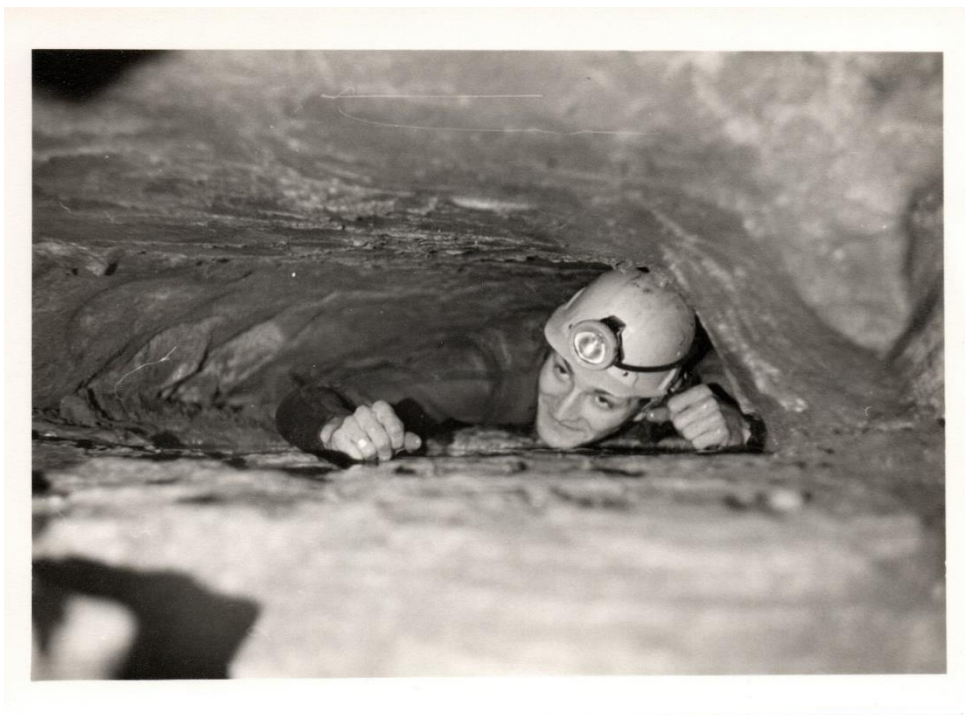
Another member from the past, **Liam Kealy**, also saw Stan's post on Facebook:

'Hi Stan, Liam Kealy here. I went caving with you often in the 80's. Good to see you on here.'

*I tried getting up **Hypothermia Passage** with you, but was too big. Rowter Hole has a lot more passages nowadays.'*

Stan then responded with an anecdote from the past :-

*'**Hypothermia Crawl** was a nightmare, I had a man who lived on Rowter farm who followed me in, he had no wet suit and when he got to me he was in Hypothermia. Had to give him my top so he could get back out. Always thought Rowter would lead to Speedwell cavern'.*



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'Stan Kowalik in 'The Wringer', Giant's Hole.'

This photograph came to me as part of a mixed bundle, with the label, as shown here, written on the back. I know Stan was in Giants on 29th December 1974 (with Malcolm Holmes and Mick Stratford), so that may be the date for the photo – no doubt you will all recognise the exact location. The comments about Stan's trip into **Hypothermia Crawl** reminded me of the interest at the time, and the several visits in the years that followed – see below. Ed.

Hypothermia Crawl

From CCPC Newsletter No. 67:- October 2000:-

'**Matt Ryan** has made two visits to Hypothermia Crawl - on his last one (15th July 2000) reaching the same point as **Stan Kowalik**, **Mick Stratford** and **Keith Bentham** in 1975, which they had named "Crewe Junction". Nothing seems to have changed- the crawl is still horribly wet and tight (but not for Matt !) and the aven and boulder choke still need further investigation! It remains an unpopular, rarely visited location !'

Stan Kowalik's original write up follows:-

No sense and good luck at Rowter Hole !

Driven to Rowter Hole by vivid visualisation of entering Speedwell Caves from above, and by a "back door", Mick Stratford and myself, in high spirits, equipped with an entrenching tool, luck and ciggys, prepared ourselves for the descent of the main shaft.

As we were about to descend we were accosted by a stranger who called himself Ben, and who, by his own description, was a fanatical "digger", belonging to some minor club, 'Orpheus' or the suchlike.

After trying to persuade us that Rowter had no potential, and failing, he asked if he might join us. Well, anything for a quiet life, and so that we could get started, we agreed and he dashed off to his abode (a chicken shack at the farm) to get changed. Meanwhile Mick and myself made our descent, and began making preliminary exams around the bottom, as we were going to leave no area in Rowter untouched. Ben joined us while we were pottering, and so we decided to show him (and allow him to assist in) our potential digging place.

Now for all of you that have not yet visited Rowter, on the way to the twin shafts where we were heading, water enters the mine on the left wall, at a high level, through an extremely tight and narrow bedding plane that, in the words of Dave Elliot (Ref: Caves of N. Derbyshire part one), is 'easily reached by climbing but becomes too low after a few feet'. This is an understatement, and in the words of **Stan Kowalik**, is bloody impassable, wet and uncomfortable ! However, on this day (I've been to have a look before) we had Ben with us, and I was in a posing mood. I climbed up to show him just how tight it was, but because of my mood, and with the help of our spade cum pick, I realised that if six inches of calcite floor could be removed we could gain a two-foot extension, which would enable me to peer around the 90-degree left hand bend which the water took.

With battery and helmet removed (it's that tight) I scraped away, and after a few minutes managed to effect an opening just large enough for me to force entry to where I was able to see round the bend (no pun). "It goes", came back my excited little voice, "if you struggle". What my eyes beheld was a passage, no, a slit, roughly the same cross section as an eye, and approximately the same size (actually about six to eight inches high in the middle, where the eyeball should be) and blocked off in places by fragile stals. Without a thought of how I was going to back off, save finding a passing-place, I started to worm my way up, dragging my lamp behind me, inch by inch. With lots of grunts and groans behind me, I imagined Mick was following my lead, as Ben had no wetsuit and the passage had two inches of water in it, but I was mistaken. Mick had tried, and failed to get in, and Ben being somewhat smaller in diameter and so excited by this find (also because he must have been somewhat of a 'case') had followed me in. Anyway with a forced draught blowing in my face, and the impossibility of retreating backwards, off I went at my snail's pace, followed ten minutes behind by Ben, who I could not see. With so much effort forcing myself up that passage I find it hard to recall an accurate description of total distance covered, but I imagine (after close collaboration with both Mick and Ben) that I must have travelled at least two, or perhaps three hundred feet, in a westerly direction, which although I would not dare to suggest, or even think, is towards Giants !

There are also two more 90-degree bends, (which although like a dog's leg, still made the direction due west), and one extremely tight lump in the floor, which collects water on one side of it, and makes avoiding getting your face wet impossible. With the water on the floor reflecting the light of my cap lamp, it kept giving an illusion that a yard further would be the start of the passage opening up, so after such illusions all the way along, it was with relief and excitement, when the passage did open up, large enough to stand, then crawl up a slope and scale a small waterfall into a large cavern decorated with beautiful formations.

I attempted to shout down the passage to tell the others of the find, but the answer back was unintelligible, indicating that the person following was way back and at least ten minutes away, so I decided to explore very carefully.

This new cave was actually the junction of two passages one left (west) and the other right (east). The easterly one was the one where I could hear water cascading, so that became the priority, but disappointingly it seemed to end in a calcified boulder choke after a few yards, with the water pouring down from its heights. Knowing boulder chokes of old, I retreated to leave that for a second opinion from Mick, who I still imagined was worming his way up the passage, and still a good distance off too, by the gurgled moanings, so I had a look up the westerly passage. Its extent is perhaps ten yards, with all interesting bits in it, including a solid wall of mud that indicated that at least the place was never entirely submerged in recent times, even in flood. From what appeared to be the limit of this cavern, by facing back down, and looking up, a climbable aven was observed, and a large proportion of the draught I had felt in the passage seemed to come from there.

Assuming my partner must be close, I went back to the start (or ending) of the passage, to give vocal assistance to the crawler. I was really taken aback when Ben showed his face two minutes later ! He had taken on a deathly pallor, and was obviously starting to suffer from exposure, teeth chattering and spasms of shivers that visibly rocked him from side to side. His "tee-shirt" was ripped from his back, caused by the bits of stal that had taken lumps out of the back of my wetsuit. It was plain to see, and he knew himself, that he'd never get down the way he'd come, so the only hope was my wetsuit. I knew if he got warm he might make it, so he donned on my jacket and within minutes the change that came over him was incredibly swift. In fact I thought it was just a ruse to obtain my warmth, but really, a lesson showing the dangers of exposure, when using such light clothing. What to do ? - that was the poser. seeing him come out of the passage like that convinced me I wouldn't like to try it without a wetsuit, so the only solution was for him to get out with my jacket on, give it to Mick, and try to force him up the hole with it, while Ben shot to the surface to get his wetsuit. On this we agreed, so off he went, while I was left behind trying to keep warm.

About things that appear impossible - when there is desire to do it, most impossible becomes possible, and what was impossible for Mick to achieve at the start, became his achievement once Ben had told his story and had given back my jacket.

Mick was back with me in double quick time, much faster than I'd thought could be achieved, and after putting my wetsuit back on and my blood becoming liquid again, I thought he deserved a kiss but shook his hand instead.

After showing Mick the finds of which, the junction I'd called "Crewe Junction, and we'd mutually agreed to call the passage "Hypothermia Crawl", we retreated.

Ben was awaiting our exit and after a ciggy we motored back to the surface. By this time Ben was really excited. Apparently he'd been digging around for ten years (he was on the dole) and was reckoning this find was the best of Derbyshire's last ten year's finds. After settling him on the names "Crewe Junction" and "Hypothermia Crawl", we gave him permission to invite Paul Deakin, the photographer from Eldon to photograph "Crewe Junction".

At the present time of writing we have no idea if the find has been entered again for photographs or anything else, because shortly after this trip the draught suddenly ended very dramatically, and as the passage "Hypothermia Crawl" is a water course, and a tight one at that, we assumed, although this is not known fact, that it may take a larger volume of water, and if this is the case, two inches more water down that place would make it impassable and also a pretty dangerous place to be as the water would tend to back up against you, as a large obstruction! Now we need to know: does the volume of water increase ? And, where does that aven go? Also, is the boulder choke passable ?

Any member of the club weighing no more than 160lbs, wet through, is more than welcome to extend our knowledge, but in the meantime I await a favourable time that I can go in again myself

(Party:- Mick Stratford, "Digger Ben" [Keith Bentham], Myself - **Stan Kowalic.**)

A.S. Kowalik, April 1975

12th August 1979 : Another look at Hypothermia Crawl:

Stan Kowalic and Tony Gamble visited Rowter Hole to attempt to extend the passages at the end of Hypothermia Crawl. Tony got stuck after 15 feet, and had to retreat, but Stan got through, though he was very cold. No new passage was found, but he did note that there had been a boulder collapse.

21st February 1980 : Hypothermia Crawl again.

Stan Kowalic and Liam Kealy both managed to pass the crawl, but no further passages were discovered.

Classic Caves of the Peak District by Iain Barker – Published 1997:

Rowter Pot – explored in the 1950s by the Derbyshire Speleological Group – records that Hypothermia Passage (not named at that time) was looked at and immediately dismissed. The description states, “In 1976 (this should be 1975) Stan Kowalik and Mick Stratford of the Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club excavated and entered Hypothermia Passage, discovering 25m of very tight and nasty crawling, terminating in a transverse passage containing a choke and a **blind aven**”.

Descent Magazine (No. 156) October/November 2000

Hypothermia Revisited:

A short item recording a visit by **Matt Ryan** (CCPC) with two Eldon PC members, Tony Revell and John Taylor (Matt’s second visit in two weeks). The trio reached ‘Crewe Junction and decided that ‘the aven and the boulder choke are worth further investigation’.

Hypothermia Passage was described as ‘tight and wet’. No change there then !
(According to a CCPC Logbook this was **15th July 2000**):

The ‘Peak District Caves’ web-site entry for Rowter Hole (SK1343582334) states :

“..... a 6m climb reaches a small inlet. This is **Hypothermia**, a flat out and in places, very tight crawl in water. After 24m this intersects a larger transverse passage. Right leads to a choke from which the stream enters. Left leads to a small chamber with a **blind aven**”.

From this statement it would seem that someone has investigated the aven – does anyone have any information about this ? – it may simply be repeating the ‘**blind aven**’ comment made in Iain Barker’s book (see above).

‘Caves of the Peak District’, by Iain Barker & John Beck, edition **published 2010**, also states ‘**blind aven**’.

NOTE:

Keith ‘Ben’ Bentham was the ‘Ben’ mentioned above, as the person who followed **Stan** up Hypothermia Crawl.

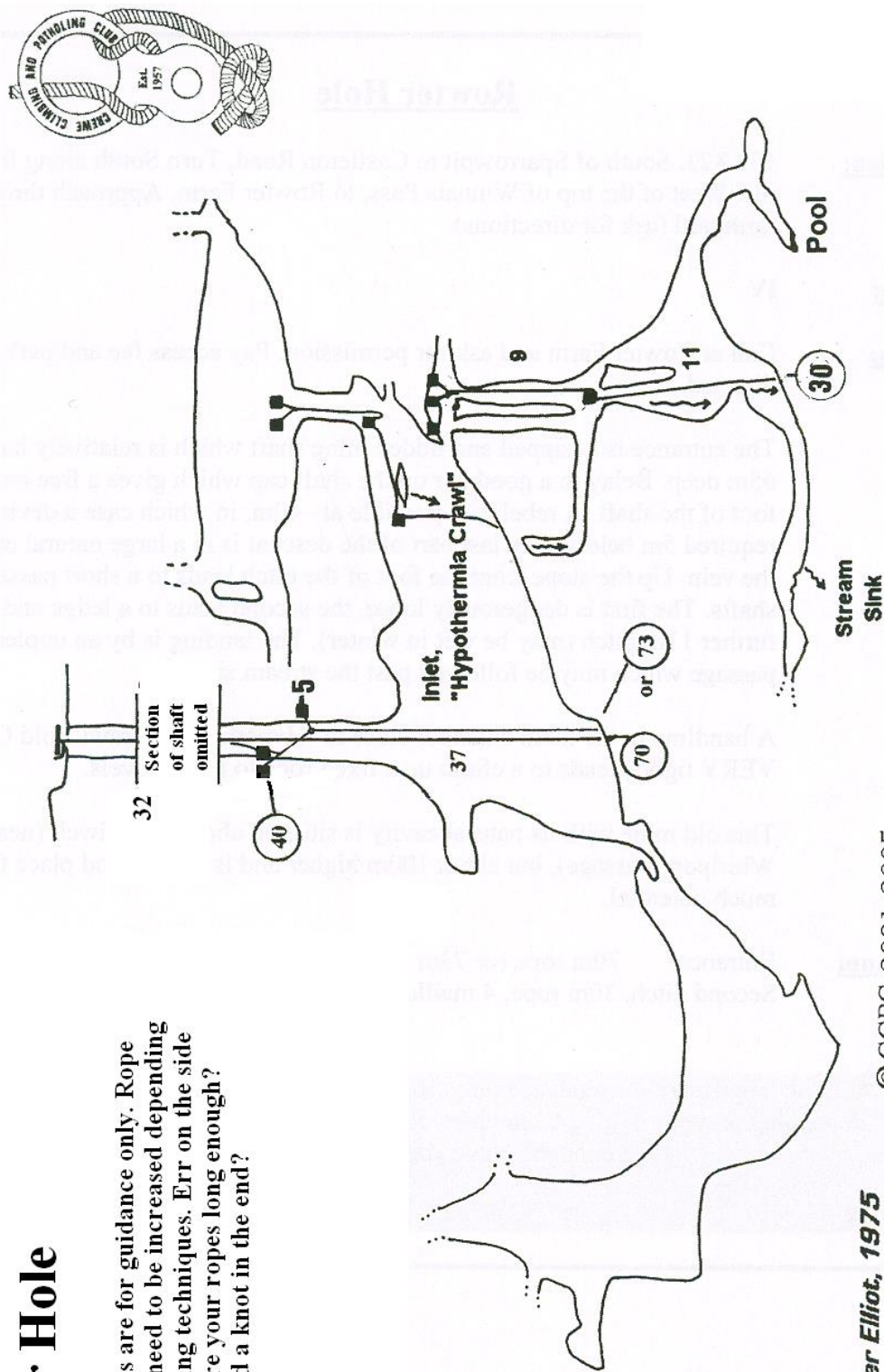
Ben was responsible for many extensions and discoveries in the Peak District, and became something of a legend. I only caved with him twice, and found him to be a little ‘difficult’ at times, but highly motivated, and capable.

Sadly, Ben died of Cancer on 26th August 2005.

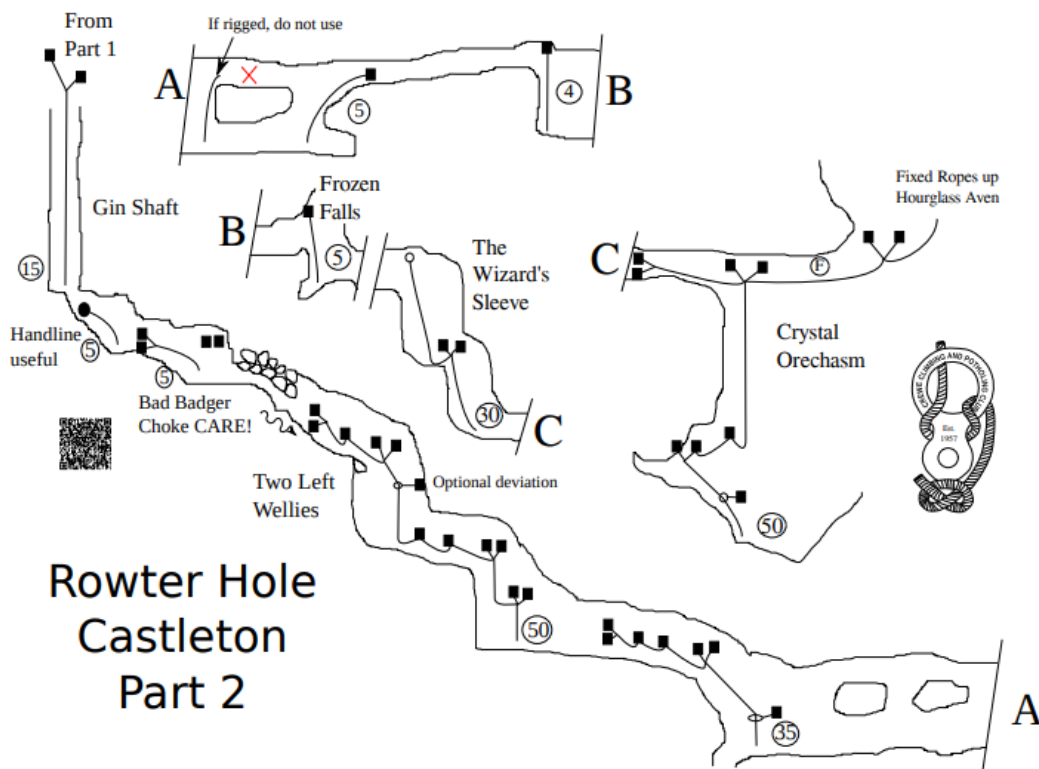
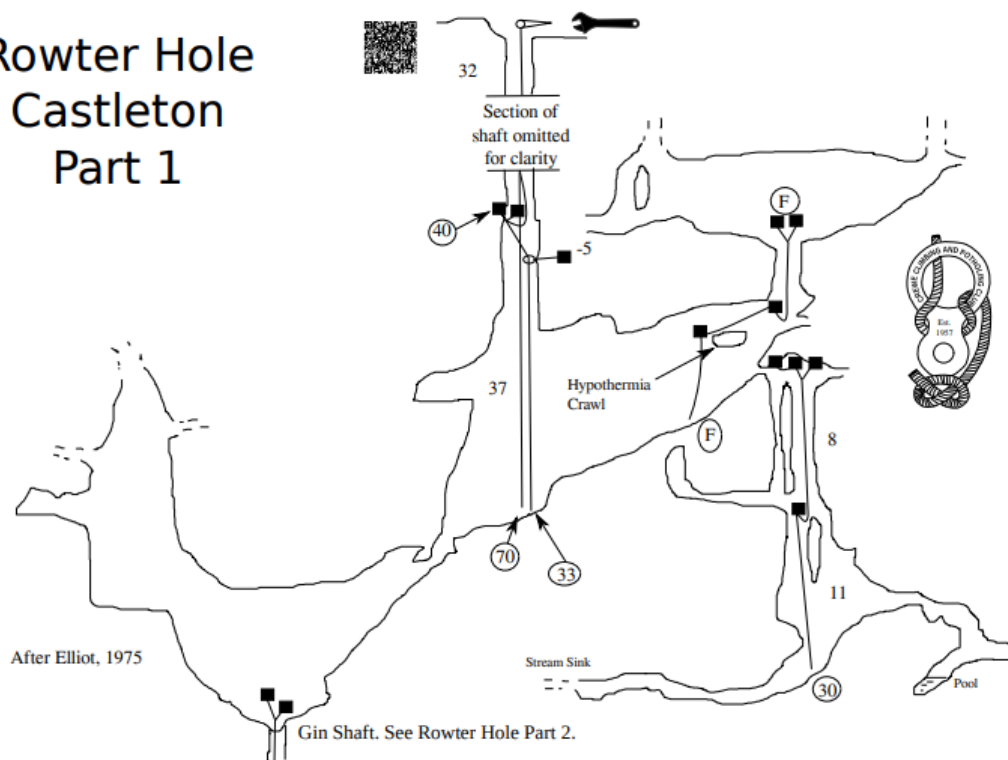
The original (pre-extensions) rigging topo produced by C.C.P.C. – 2001-2005, using some information from Dave Elliott – 1975, followed by the current topo.

Rowter Hole

Pitch Lengths are for guidance only. Rope lengths may need to be increased depending on your rigging techniques. Err on the side of caution; are your ropes long enough? Have you tied a knot in the end?



Rowter Hole Castleton Part 1



Rigging Topos are included to show the position of Hypothermia Crawl. The events described in Stan's account took place before the Gin Shaft extensions were discovered.

Publications Donated by Stan Kowalik:

Descent Magazine, Original Small Format:

12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39.

Descent Magazine, Current Large Format:

40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 51, 59, 61, 78, 80.

Caves and Caving:

3 (1979), 5 (1979), 21(1983), 32(1986).

Derbyshire Caving Association Newsletters:

23, 24, 25, 27, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46.

ULSA Review 13 (November 1974).

Kendal Caving Club No. 8 (1974).

Northern Caving Club Journal:

Volume 2, no. 1 (1974).

Volume 3, (1975).

B.S.A. 'The P8 Cave, Castleton (1973).

South Wales Caving Club - Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (1969).

Caves of Northern Derbyshire :-
By Dave Elliott (1975)

Part 1 - Eldon Hill.
Part 2 - Giants _ Oxlow.
Part 3 - Perryfoot / Coalpithole Rake.
Part 4 - Rushup Edge Swallets.
Part 5 - Treak Cliff Hill.

British Caves & Potholes - 96p. - by Deakin & Gill - Hardback - 1975.

Caves - 239p. - by Tony Waltham - Hardback - 1974.

Improvised Techniques in Mountain Rescue - 94p. - by Bill Marsh - undated.

Warplane Wrecks of South Wales and The Marches - by Durham & Jones - (1982).

Survey of Leck Fell Cave Systems (incomplete).

Survey of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

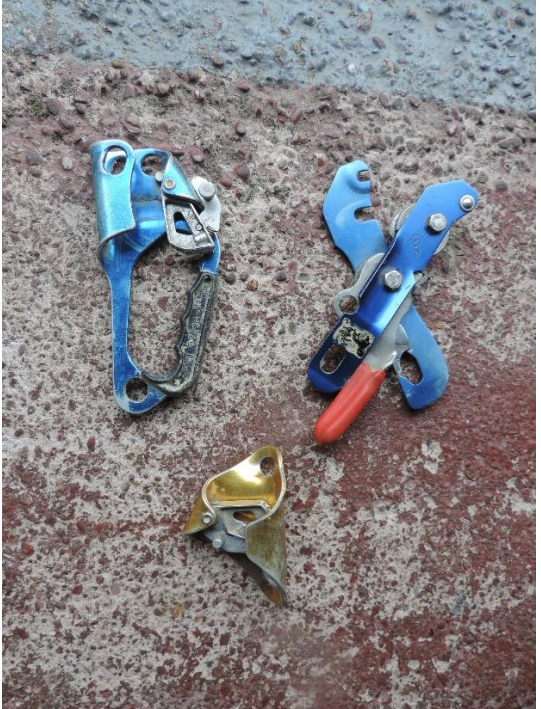
All of these items have now been added to the amazing collection of caving literature held at the 'British Caving Library', at Glutton Bridge, between Longnor and Earl Sterndale, in the Peak District. The library holds many duplicate items which are available to anyone. No doubt, further donations (and cash ?) will be very welcome.

The volunteers running the library deserve a huge thankyou for their amazing work. If planning a visit, check online for opening times and availability before travelling.

'Phoning first is probably best.

Steve Knox

The items shown have become surplus to use by their previous owner, but may still have some use for others. The ropes are really just too good to throw into a skip, and may be of use for digging, re-rigging traverse lines, etc., or for boating activities. If anyone can make use of anything, just let me know, and perhaps make a small donation to DCRO [minimum £1, maximum £..... ? (- I can pass donations on)].

These items are all looking for new homes/uses, and will otherwise become landfill. With no knowledge of past use, NO GUARANTEE OF SAFETY is offered or implied.	
	
85 metres of 11 mm. static rope – ‘as new’ condition. Manufacturing date and previous use unknown. (Bag is split !)	20 metres of 9 mm. static rope – ‘new’ condition. Manufacturing date and previous use (if any) unknown.
	
Petzl Handled ascender; Petzl ‘Croll’, chest ascender; Petzl ‘Stop’ descender. All in ‘used’ condition but apparently still fully serviceable – user must check before use !	‘Meander’ PVC oversuit, size large (estimated). In ‘good, used’ condition, but perfectly serviceable with no obvious holes or tears.

	
Assorted bits of hardware: hangers, spanners, karabiners -possibly useful for digs ? The Rack bars were so worn they have already been skipped.	Dynamic Rope. Length ? Manufacturing date and previous use unknown. Useful for boating ?
	I seem to have a garage full of bits and pieces that need to be sorted out for scrapping, donating, or otherwise being made to vanish. Any offers will be welcome, including £0 ! (any funds go to D.C.R.O.) Ed.
This is a strange item (to me) but may be of interest to a collector of mining memorabilia. It is an EDISON Model K1-PMX, with headset, and with attached Methane level detector.	

FINALLY:

There has been a gap of twenty months since the last CCPC Newsletter, No. 158, which was issued in December 2024, but, with the exception of Jenny Drake, there has been no apparent interest from Members in keeping the sequence going.

The earliest CCPC Newsletter that I have, was circulated in February 1975, and since then there have been 27 issues in the 'old series', followed by a further 158 issues from July 1983 to number 159 in August 2026, making a total of **185 issues**.

Reading through old issues brings back memories of past trips, and past Members, and is a window into caving practices and techniques now superseded – perhaps a good thing in some respects !

I am convinced that a club newsletter has value, both now, and in the future, and I hope it can be re-established, but that can only happen if **Members (a) want it, and (b) are willing to contribute to its contents** occasionally.

Please give this some consideration, and make your feelings known.

Best Wishes, Steve Knox. Editor.

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