



RED ROSE CAVE AND POTHOLE CLUB

# ***NEWSLETTER***



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***Jim Newton***

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## ***Editor's Note***

I write this Newsletter after a busy conference in Miami. It's warm and sunny here, but I can't help feeling that I'm missing out on a cold wet caving trip this weekend (yes, really!). I think many people will be reflecting on their caving trips and events this weekend, after receiving the sad news of Jim Newton's passing. On behalf of the RRCPC, our thoughts go to Hazel and the rest of his family and friends.

Thank you to everyone who's contributed to this Newsletter. I know how difficult it can be to put pen to paper, but I have very much enjoyed reading what everyone has been up to underground...your reports have brightened (or should I say darkened?) my sunny days in Miami.

**Gwen Tawy**  
***Newsletter Editor***

## ***News***

### **Jim Newton: Celebration of Life Arrangements**

Dear Friends,

Please join us to celebrate Jim's life on **Thursday 8th DECEMBER 10:30 a.m.** at Lancaster Crematorium followed by a buffet lunch at 12 noon at The Lodge in Slyne (see both addresses below).

In lieu of flowers, there will be a collection box for donations to the Cave Rescue Organisation.

Please send me a quick email to confirm that you will be attending the buffet lunch so that we can make sure everyone is well fed! [hazelhewitt@hotmail.com](mailto:hazelhewitt@hotmail.com)

#### **10:30 a.m. Service:**

Lancaster and Morecambe Crematorium  
Powder House Lane  
Lancaster LA2 6AD

#### **12:00 noon buffet lunch** (we can arrive earlier for a drink). Parking is available.

The Lodge  
92 Main Road  
Slyne  
Lancaster  
LA2 6AZ

We hope to see you,

***Hazel and Family***

## **Boxing Day Walk**

This years' Boxing Day walk will again be held in the Yorkshire Dales.

We will this year be meeting on the **Dry Rigg Quarry** approach road situated half a mile along the Austwick road from Helwith Bridge (ample roadside parking) at **10:45am** for a prompt **11am prompt** start.

Hopefully weather dependent, we will walk via the quarry (interesting features) then towards Oxenber and Wharfe Woods, Pot Scar, then Smearsett Scar summit before returning to Helwith Bridge.

Afterwards we will retire to the Helwith Bridge Inn nearby, where both food and drink will be available.

Paul the landlord is again offering a full menu, details of which will be issued in early December.

However, food will be on a pre-order basis only, so I will need to collect your menu choices together with payment before the event.

Hope to see you there?

Dry Rigg Quarry Car Park approach road **Grid Ref: 804691**

***Sandra Wilkinson***

## **Roy Breakell Award**

The inaugural Roy Breakell Literary Award was judged by our Journal Editor, Mike Appleton. The 2022 winner is the late Jim Newton. Jim's diaries have adorned many a club Newsletter, and his writing has encouraged so many to put pen to paper. He has also been the subject of many articles and escapades over the years. We cannot think of a more fitting or deserving person to win this award.

Mike would also like to commend Ray Duffy for his erstwhile humorous articles over the last four issues (the sphagnum moss was a favourite), Mel Wilkinson for his editing skills, and Gwen Tawy for taking over. In the course of judging Mike also enjoyed articles by Hugh St. Lawrence, Dave Creedy and Bill Nix. Congratulations all!



### **The Award's Story**

When the idea of the literary award was first floated using a funds from Roy's estate, I started to think books, caving books...but how to combine books and caving other than in writing or photos? And who to make the pattern for the casting?

I approached Sue Osbourne (at that time a RRCPC member), who is a very skilled artist. I came up with the idea after a wee bit of pondering, to have a book representing the rolling hills of the caving areas. The scaffolding is meant to represent a shored-up cave entrance, of which the caver has climbed up and is glancing down into the book. The mostly blank page is deliberately left to allow the names of the recipients to be engraved.

This project led to the creation at my personal request to Sue, of a special pattern, for making a series of castings, to be given to various people (these are still in progress). It is hoped after the special ones are done, we will have some for sale.

The award involved several people: Sue Osbourne-artist and pattern creator; Bill Osbourne, for scaffolding construction; Bill Nix for casting, first fettling and original concept; Terry King from Westley Group for patternation and fettling and moulding guidance; Emma key for painting in the detail.

My thanks to all involved.

**Bill Nix**

## ***Nettle Pot***

**29<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

**Dinny Davies, Gwen Tawy**

Having recently been to Nettle Pot with another party, I was fairly confident about finding the entrance without any hassle. As we were setting off, Dinny asked if we should check the map one more time to make sure we knew where we were going. I poo-pooed this idea, offended by his lack of confidence in my abilities. Fifteen minutes later we had parted ways to start an elaborate manhunt for the entrance. After too many eye rolls from Dinny (which I couldn't actually see because he was so far away from me...it was more like a feeling), I reluctantly agreed to search the higher field, even though I was adamant the entrance was in the same field as Oxlow Caverns. He was right, of course.

I quickly started rigging the entrance shaft, and was pleasantly surprised in the Narrows, as they weren't as squeezey as I remembered. Our goal for this trip was Derbyshire Hall, as neither of us had visited it before. At the bottom of the entrance pitch, a slippery crawl along a ledge led to a pitch that we had to descend to a window. From here, an obvious passage skirted around Suicide Pot (hard-rigged for safety) to an upwards pitch. This marked the start of the mud-fest. After a short stint of belly-crawling in thick mud, we reached the final pitch. We knew that immediately beyond this was a difficult squeeze. I was pleasantly surprised to find the squeeze to be quite roomy, until I reached something that looked passable only to flatworms. Ah, this must be the squeeze. We both tried going in head-first then feet-first, and eventually decided the best way to go through was feet-first on our stomachs with our helmets off. After careful manoeuvring we both made it through.

Beyond was a dead straight passage with interesting grey and bright orange formations. Soon, the passage opened into Derbyshire Hall. My plan to trap Dinny in Derbyshire Hall by getting my barrel chest stuck in the squeeze had failed, so on the entrance pitch I made my last attempt to leave him behind by pulling the rope up behind me as I prusiked to the surface. He quickly noticed what was happening and insisted I lower the rope for him. Despite the large volume of mud on our gear at the end of the trip, it was a great day out.

***Gwen Tawy***



## ***Fairy Holes Weekend***

**3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**Emma Key, Bill Nix, John Worden (BPC/CPC)**

After a trip into Fairy Holes as far as Choir Chamber in 2020 I was keen to venture further, especially with the recent excitement of the extension of the cave beyond what was thought to be the sump.

A permit had been arranged for the club but unfortunately there didn't seem to be much interest, so Bill asked a few friends if they fancied joining us. John took us up on the offer. We decided that as it is quite a long drive we would make a weekend of it and booked a B&B in Alston.

Bill and I managed to leave a little bit early on Friday evening and made it to Alston with minutes to spare to treat ourselves to a chippy tea before exploring a couple of pubs. John made it just in time for last orders after leaving a bit later.

The next morning we had a good breakfast at the B&B and headed over to the quarry. The weather was a bit more pleasant than last time and getting changed wasn't too much of a battle. We walked up to the entrance and were amazed at how low the water levels were. Previously we had to perform a few acrobatics to climb in through the gate without getting too wet.



Looking up to Sarcophagus Chamber

Photo Credit: Bill Nix

I was again amazed at the beautiful shape of the zigzagging passage and the imposing dark shiny walls. We reached Vein Chamber where Bill huffed and puffed a bit making his way up the vertical squeeze into it. We seemed to be making quite slow progress and it felt a lot further than I remembered! Eventually we got to the impressive Choir Chamber which was our furthest point on the last trip. By now I was starting to get a bit concerned about time as

we had a table booked in the pub for tea and I was making swift calculations about how much further we would be able to go before we had to turn around. Unfortunately, it didn't

look like we'd make it to the "old" sump but if we got a move on should be able to get a couple of quick photos in the Sarcophagus.

We left the flask and picnic to lighten the load slightly to gain a bit of speed but as normal we were weighed down by Bill's photography kit. After the pleasant and relatively easy caving up to this point I was quite surprised that the passageway lowered to a flat-out awkward crawl followed by a section with annoying catchy rocks sticking out. Soon I was grumbling to myself and cursing the cave and the bag and life in general. At one point we had a bit of confusion with the route finding but after a bit of poking about found that the way on was a drop down and a slightly awkward udge around a corner.

As we were approaching turnaround time, we at last reached the Sarcophagus which is a really impressive chamber with some lovely formations. Bill quickly set up the flashes and took photographs looking up and down the chamber before we had to swiftly pack away again.



The Sarcophagus

Photo Credit: Bill Nix

Fortunately, John took my bag on the way out so I found the journey back to Choir Chamber far less arduous than on the way in and forgave the cave somewhat! Here we had a brief stop, scoffed the mini pork pies

I had brought in as sustenance and had some hot squash from the flask. Conscious that we were going to be late for tea at the pub we carried on out of the cave.

A quick change and we headed back to Alston, slightly mud smeared, for a delicious meal in the Cumberland Inn and a few pints.

The next morning we enjoyed another delicious breakfast at the B&B but enthusiasm for caving was low. Instead, we decided to explore Epiacum Roman Fort which is just down the road. We had a lovely few hours following the trail around the remains, reading all the information boards and learning about the history of the site. Then we visited the café for a bit of lunch and some ice cream before heading home.

It looks like I'll have to make another trip into Fairy Holes – especially if they keep extending it!

**Emma Key**



## ***Top Sink to County Pot***

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

**Dinny Davies, Jack Overhill, Gwen Tawy, Tarquin Wilton-Jones (MCC)**

Tarquin had mentioned wanting to visit Easter Grotto and Gypsum Caverns on his next visit to Yorkshire, which coincided well with Jack's plans to go to Top Sink on the same weekend. After the traditional faff at breakfast time, we set off to go caving. I'm not sure what it is about Top Sink, but I always forget how far up the gill it is! After the long walk, I was pleased to be meandering down the passage to Walrus Pot and later Penknife Pitch, which Jack rigged.

We climbed up from Limerick Passage into the higher level, where we crossed the Fairy Steps and Bridge of Sighs. The last time I had been here was with Toby on a photography trip, and I remember it being much more intimidating then. After this, we had a quick break in Nagasaki then trundled on to Easter Grotto.

We spent quite some time taking photos in Easter Grotto, as Tarquin hadn't been here before. Although, the main purpose of the trip was to visit Gypsum Caverns so that he could look for cryogenic cave calcite (CCC). After quickly ruling it out as a place that might have CCC, we made our way to the streamway. On the way to Stop Pot we took a quick detour into Straw Chamber. With plenty of time left, we decided to continue exploring County. We carried on in the streamway to Eureka Junction, then followed the usual route to Poetic Justice. From here we visited Razor Passage and Toadstool Junction. I don't know this area very well, so it was good to visit here again.

***Gwen Tawy***

## ***F'ing Hopeless***

**2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022**

**Dinny Davies, Jack Overhill, Gwen Tawy, Tarquin Wilton-Jones (MCC)**

When I heard the news that F'ing Hopeless had been anchored, I made sure to put it on my caving to-do list. Becka Lawson had arranged to go on Saturday, but I had already arranged to go to Top Sink. Between us, a plan was hatched that the Top Sink group would de-rig F'ing Hopeless on Sunday.

The walk to the entrance took around 20 minutes, and with some help from a device with GPS we found it quickly. While everyone was faffing I started making my way down the multi-levelled scaffolding. This was a bit awkward in places because of my short legs, but mostly fine. At the bottom of the scaffolding we turned left into a flat-out crawl to the first pitch.

The space around us increased substantially after the pitch, and a sloping passage led us to the next pitch. Suddenly there were straws everywhere, which meant you had to think

quite a bit before taking a step in any direction. The first memorable formations were the Apostles and Lady of the Lake; a calcite formation with beautiful crystal pools.

Following the passage, we eventually reached an up-pitch, immediately followed by an awkward handline climb into a tight crawl. This marked the start of the next set of pretties. At this point we removed our harnesses to avoid breaking any of the formations as we explored. We started in Eggshell Chamber, which featured a very impressive flowstone formation that glittered as our lights shone on its surface. If you ever visit, keep an eye out for a rise in the flowstone that looks like a seal peering at you above the water; I particularly liked that part of the Eggshell. Levelling-Up was next on our travels. This was filled with long delicate straws that made moving around very difficult. I even felt nervous breathing here! Our last destination was Speechless Grotto, which had even more long straws. To complete the trip, we descended a slippery ramp to the streamway. I was happy to de-rig on the way out as I'd cooled down quite a bit due to the sheer number of photographs that were taken. It was a truly outstanding trip; a place I hope all visitors treat with the utmost respect to preserve its delicate formations.

***Gwen Tawy***

## ***Raasay Ironstone Mine***

**10<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Oliver Beard, James Hutchins, Toby Speight**



A Window in Raasay Ironstone Mine

Photo Credit: Oliver Beard

This extensive Ironstone mine which closed in 1942 has two entrances which enables it to be well vented which is unusual for an Ironstone mine. We originally entered the main West portal to No 1 mine but a way in there was a collapse with high levels of water behind it. The air quality was also dropping. We entered under the gate on the North-East adit and we had a nice explore around some of the 8km of passages around the mine. In some places the roof had come down in sections. The Workings were inclined at an angle, and they extended some way into the hillside into both directions of the main drift. Unfortunately, I did not study the ferry timetable very well which resulted on me missing the last boat home. So, we had to spend the night on the Island.

***Oliver Beard***



Exploring Raasay Ironstone Mine

Photo Credit: Oliver Beard

## ***Ireby***

**16<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Dinny Davies, Gwen Tawy**

I have had Ireby on my list of places to visit for years, but somehow never gotten around to it. Some might say it's my fault for not taking the initiative to go, but my lazy excuse is that I was never in the right place at the right time. Thankfully, Dinny was offended enough by me not having this on my caving CV, so off we went.

I had heard complaints about a long walk to Ireby, but the weather was very pleasant, so the walk ended up being very enjoyable. I was first to make my way down the ladder and steps to the first pitch. The first two pitches were quickly passed, but I got strung up on Bell, because of the awkward way it had been rigged. After some huffing and puffing I made it to the bottom of the pitch, where we followed the streamway to the head of the next pitch. Before reaching the pitch-head we had to negotiate an awkward traverse (and by 'we', I mean 'I' because Dinny just glided across, overtaking me in the process), which was much wetter than expected. The bottom of this pitch and the next were separated by cascades, which were fun to stomp down. This continued to the final pitch – Rope, which we reached via a handline climb on the way in. I didn't particularly enjoy this because of the volume of water cascading down it, so avoided this on the return by choosing an alternate route.

I was surprised to find the streamway beyond Rope went on and on and on. There were some lovely formations to look at on the way; some of which I realised were not so lovely when they blocked the passage and forced us to get on our hands and knees in the cold water.

We eventually reached Duke Street, which was impressive in its size. This led to Sump 1, which we looked at before returning to the Whirl Pool. Here, we ascended a rope to a sandy crawl to Ireby 2. This crawl also went on for longer than anticipated, but it was quite a pleasant crawl because it was soft under our knees and dry. The only problem was that sometimes the ceiling would unexpectedly lower and catch the base of my spine, at which point I would yelp out in pain.

The passage ended in an awkward downclimb into a waist deep canyon. In the canyon we turned left, taking us to Duke Street II. This was equally as impressive in size as Duke Street, but we decided not to attempt any of the aven climbs into Jupiter Cavern as we were both starting to get tired. The return was pleasant until I reached Well and Pussy, which were extremely wet. Thankfully, the warm sun was still shining when we emerged. After a quick change we decided to have a picnic, feasting on the food that was rotting in the car (mainly beetroot). Great day out!

***Gwen Tawy***

## ***Shuttleworth Pot***

**5<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Mike Butcher (ULSA), Alice Shackley**

My first time at the farm for bonfire night and Friday night had kept both Mike and I up to moderately late hours, having much fun doing cave charades, discussing the practicality of knot passes underground and other general chats and bants.

For some reason we had been considering Quaking quite seriously but come the morning I consulted my wet weather caving list (the outlook was definitely wet) and we resettled on the more pleasant option of Shuttleworth as neither of us had previously visited. The walk was damp but being in thorough caving gear we were both warm and merry. Shuttleworth is quite far from the Farm and sits much farther down the beck than I have ever previously been. Rather than taking a left when we reached the stile (towards Mistral) we just carried on forward following the fence line till we got to a derelict building slightly above the beck on a meander. Getting through the ferns on the other side of the beck was challenging, but on the way back we found a path from the gate in the fence which was difficult to find on the way there.

With Mike's GPS cross-referenced against the map we eventually found the entrance which was (not in a shake hole) fairly obvious as a rectangular cover was visible on the surface. The plastic tube in has a ladder on it with a section cut out at the bottom to lead on down. I rigged the first pitch which beyond the tube, was a simple y-hang rebelay, a smallish entrance going about 10m down. It was fairly damp but getting to the next pitches wasn't much of consequence. A couple of small climbs, short small passage and one obvious right turn led to the head of the next pitch series. I struggle to remember the detail (so should have written this earlier) but it was straight forward, and the second pitch had a y-hang to a one bolt rebelay.

Coming down this second larger pitch was impressive but not 5 meters from the bottom I found we had run out of rope. This led to a highly amusing endeavour of a knot pass, the very point of discussion the night prior. Thankfully we had a spare rope with us as it happened, so I tied this on and carried on down into a slopy dripping chamber, House of the Rising Sump (I imagine it is normally much dryer).

Down the slope led to what should have been a chamber with beautiful stone bridge and waterfall but the water was so high this section was just one huge sump with a rather fast flow. We took some photos (oh the joy of modern waterproofing - it has honestly opened up cave photography to me again) and then turned back towards the pitch going to the other end of the chamber and continuing into the dry, pretty sections.

Some of the first sets of formations were so good we stopped to take photos. We continued on when we both got chilly but didn't massively warm up as we moved slowly to be careful of formations and to take them in. I can only describe it as very much worthwhile and some of the prettiest things I've seen in Yorkshire. The route is very well taped with only one small section in a crawl that has clearly been disturbed. Should anyone be visiting in the future it would be easily fixed with only a couple of meters of clean tape. (The stuff there is muddy and has been broken).



High water levels in Shuttleworth

Photo Credit: Alice Shackley





Alice admiring the view in Shuttleworth

Photo Credit: Alice Shackley

The sections varied between small crawls and big chambers. We enjoyed Painter's Alley and I marvelled at the mud formations in particular. The last sections led past the most impressive straws either of us had ever seen, making us agree it was a good day out. The return journey also gave us time to see the miniscule newt skeleton which we decided looked like a tiny tiny dragon. Cool.

Back on the surface the night was descending, and low cloud made seeing more than a few meters ahead impossible. At this point I was very glad of GPS. Given it was

a soggy forecast I think we made the most of the day. Thankfully there were clearer skies in the evening so the bonfire at the farm was still possible and it was a good time.

All in all, an enjoyable trip which I will have to repeat when the lower sections are not in flood.

P.S The photos have had the tape edited out. We obviously didn't remove the tape whilst there. Again, the marvels of modern technology.

### ***Alice Shackley***



Cross Passage, Lancaster Hole

Photo Credit: Bill Nix





Bonfire Night Celebrations

Photo Credit: Andy Hall

## ***Lost Johns'***

**6<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**James Carlisle, Tom Clayton, Emma Key, Jack Overhill, Bill Nix**

After a fun evening celebrating bonfire night at the farm a slightly tired and hung-over team met a little later than planned at Cowan Bridge for the club trip to Lost Johns'. As it had been quite wet we decided not to attempt Valhalla and just to do a Centipede – Dome exchange.

We drove up to a relatively mild Leck Fell (light drizzle and a gentle breeze rather than the normal arctic conditions) got changed, packed some ropes and made the short walk to the entrance. There was a bit of water flowing down the entrance, but levels weren't too high.

Quickly we reached the roof traverse where Bill and I continued to Hammer Pot while Jack, James & Tom descended towards Dome Junction. Despite his late night Bill quickly rigged the pitches while I followed on behind. Bill hadn't brought his camera, so with no photography stops to detain us, we soon reached the bottom of Dome Junction where we shouted up "hello" other group who weren't too far away. We carried on to rig Candle & Shistol so we could have a look at the start of Battle-axe Traverse. There was a fair roar of water below so decided Valhalla would probably have been very unpleasant!

Heading back up we met Jack, James & Tom at the top of Candle pitch and we continued on to Dome Junction as they nipped down to also have a look at Battle-axe. Bill had the fun of rigging I offered to derig. Having not done much SRT recently things didn't quite feel as slick as normal, but it was very enjoyable especially the little swing out of the window. We met Jack at the top of the pitch into the roof traverse and all made our way out together in just over 2 ½ hours.

It was a lovely little trip – perfect to blow away the cobwebs from the night before. Thanks everyone.

***Emma Key***

## ***Howgill***

**25<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**James Carlisle, Sam Lieberman, Hugh St.Lawrence, Paul Swire**

A small party visited this little known but extensive cave to familiarize new faces with the entrance series and hopefully push on beyond a short pitch into the main cave.

A little history: the cave was discovered in 1969 by the BSA and was explored over the next couple of years to a length of over 1 mile, with great formations and unfinished business at both upstream and downstream ends. The discovery was never published and never found its way into the Northern Caves guidebook, despite one of its authors being the chief explorer! It was apparently surveyed, but no one has ever seen the full survey.

I 'rediscovered' the cave in the mid 1980s, and with Jim Davis, Andy Hall and others made several visits confirming the extent and significance of the cave. Then we left it for other things. In the early 1990s two ULSA cavers 'rediscovered' the cave and confirmed our impressions of a lengthy and important cave. Then it lay fallow again until the summer of 2019 when, for the second time, I 'rediscovered' the cave - and it had to be dug open, the entrance was completely invisible.



Sam gets a soaking on the short pitch

Photo Credit: Hugh St.Lawrence

Over the next nine months Andy Hall, Bob Daunton and myself built a dam around the entrance to stop it getting choked...and to stop its location being lost again! Then Covid hit. But the dam eventually got finished and I made several solo trips to check that the entrance series was open. Finally, by September, with folk back from holidays and a spot of dry weather, we were ready to go....30 years since the last real visit!

We changed by the entrance which is only about 100m from the road, and James set off in front. A chimney down a rift for 5m opened up into roomy cave which descends past a decorated aven to a small slot into a shallow pool. This was a head-first wet wriggle around a 90° bend followed by flat out crawling in a tube full of cobbles before the way enlarged to stooping in clean washed rock and a 3m climb down. More clean crawling followed to a tight entry into a wide shingly bedding. A stream entered on the left here and made the bedding a trifle damp even under the dry conditions. I'd told James and Sam to look for a window in the right wall of the bedding, but they'd stuffed themselves

up a narrow muddy passage about halfway down the bedding! I recalled them and sailed to the front, turning right through the window and up into a roomy chamber about 12m wide 3m

high. A slot at the back of this led quickly across a short bedding into a canyon stream passage and 15m stroll to the top of the pitch.

Belays proved scarce but we eventually got the ladder rigged for the short 7m descent. Unfortunately, it was impossible to avoid the stream which shot off a ledge to completely drench the climber for the last few metres to the floor. Sam, James and I descended into the pitch chamber while Beardy opted to stay up top and bolt a more secure hang for the ladder.

From the chamber the stream ran off to the right for a few metres and into a sump. Just back from here was the start of the sump bypass, a low crawl which gradually opens up and leads to the main part of the cave. Unfortunately, it was choked. Years of neglect and the attritional build-up of sediment had once again reverted the bypass to the wet muddy wallow which the original explorers had dug out. James's single piece of neoprene, a hood, made him suitably dressed for the occasion, and he gave it a good go for fifteen minutes, using his characteristic 'bicycling' method of digging forward feet first in what quickly became a slurry fest – classic James territory!



James at the start of the sump bypass

Photo Credit: Hugh St.Lawrence

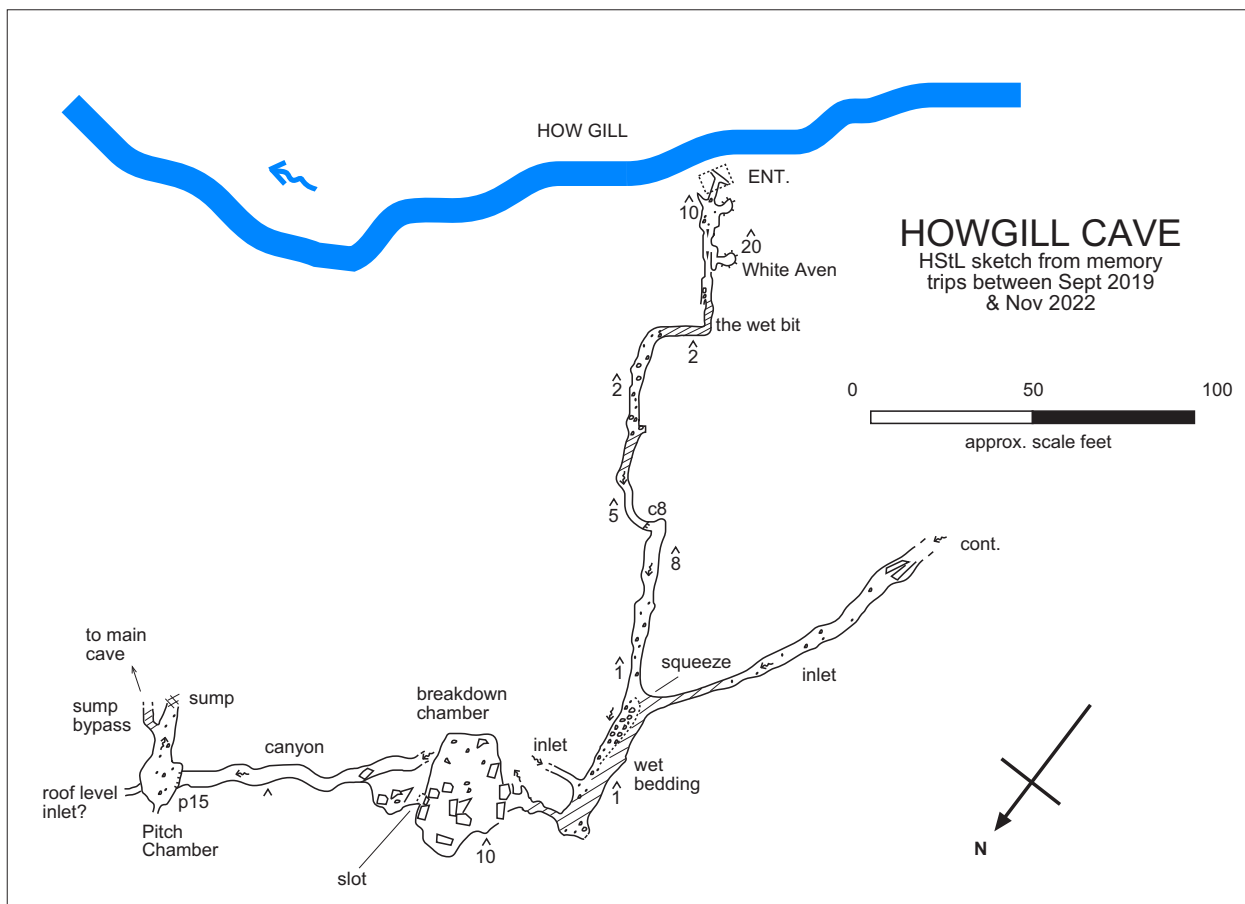
But he was pretty soon hypothermic, and an exit was the only option to get moving and warm up. Beardy had bolted a new hang for the ladder but it still didn't avoid the water, so everyone got a refresher on the way back up. We coiled the ladder and left it hanging on the bolt for the next visit. On the way back through the chamber there was a slight pause while Sam discovered a hidden chimney/aven which climbed up 12m or more and was still going when he left it. James had ploughed on ahead to warm up and Sam and I followed. On reaching the 3m climb I realized that the portliest member of the party was no longer with us. I waited for five minutes before he arrived admitting that the exit from the wet bedding had given him 'pause for thought'!

Safely back on the surface we got changed and had a walk up the gill to look at potential sinks for the inlet water which was making the pitch wet – a strong candidate is about 60m upstream of the entrance, but we walked up another ¼ mile to see the sights and continue the 'warm down'. A de-briefing was held at the Sun Inn where there was some alcohol inspired

enthusiasm for a return to vanquish the sump bypass - although this will require dry weather; the entrance is in the bottom of a large gill which often flows past the entrance and can submerge it in flood. Even in the dry conditions we descended, there was still enough water to make things interesting. The sink for the inlet water needs to be found and filled in.

Hopefully, when conditions allow, the re-exploration and re-survey of this significant cave can become a club project. It's a substantial, essentially unmapped cave system which has seen no pushing since 1972.

- Access – The cave is on private land, and we have negotiated limited access with the owner. Contact Hugh through club channels if you're interested. It's also very important to understand acceptable weather conditions – How Gill can turn from trifling to terrifying in short order!



**Hugh St.Lawrence**



## ***Casterton Pot – Recent Developments***

Casterton Pot lies to the north of the metalled road as you turn onto the Bullpot Farm track and a surprising number of people do not seem to know where it is, even though it is the nearest cave to the Farm. Go north through the gate at the end of the road for 100m to a large fenced off double shakehole, the southern part of the depression contains the entrances. The cave lies between Upstream Bull Pot and Aygill Caverns so could be an important link in the Three Counties System.



Casterton Pot entrance shakehole

Photo Credit: Andy Hall

Tip Pot as it was first called was the rubbish tip for Bullpot Farmhouse until 1950's, and was discovered in 1959 by Earby Pothole Club, who described it as about 100ft deep. It was mentioned in OUCC Proceedings 2 in 1963 and features in Northern Caves 3, then renamed Casterton Pot.

The OUCC description mentions a southern trending passage from the top of Guillotine Pot heading towards a passage that can be seen heading off at the top of an aven west of '49 Aven in Bull Pot near the upstream sump. The Northern Caves description refers to the final wet crawl ending a few metres short and about 10m above of the Precambrian Series in Aygill Cavern. There are several places near the end that can be dug. At some point in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century the floor of the shakehole collapsed and the original entrance became blocked. The alternative entrance was opened via an 8m pitch into the First Chamber. We have made an up-to-date survey using a DistoX but it has not been drawn up yet. The original survey is included here to help with the note below.

Numerous attempts have been made to extend the cave over the years without a great deal of success. From RRCPC Journal 10 it is clear that several attempts have been made to extend the south trending passage leading out of the second chamber above Guillotine Pot in the 1990's and early 2000's by among others Pete Hall, Hugh St Lawrence, Ray Duffy and Sam Lieberman. Also, the bottom of the cave has received attention on a number of occasions. The route on here has collapsed and needs clearing. Johnny Baker has recently been active in the lower reaches of the cave and made some progress along small drafting passages.

During 2022 after discussions with Hugh St Lawrence, Johnny Baker made almost weekly visits to six leads. A traverse over the top of Guillotine Pot led to a small crawl of a few metres



2m Climb

Photo Credit: Andy Hall

tending North. The roof of the crawl raised to loose blocks, and a crawl forwards could be seen, this was not pushed due to the loose nature of the roof, and SRT kit snagging in the crawl. This would probably be below the northern shakehole. A few metres down Guillotine Pot, a steep inlet was capped upwards for a couple of metres until it became very narrow and almost vertical.

At the sharp bend at the Fourth Chamber an inlet in the roof was capped wider and a 2m climb up led to standing sized passage for a couple of metres until it closed down to tiny proportions. A rock pedestal there was reminiscent of an anvil so the inlet was named 'The Forge'.

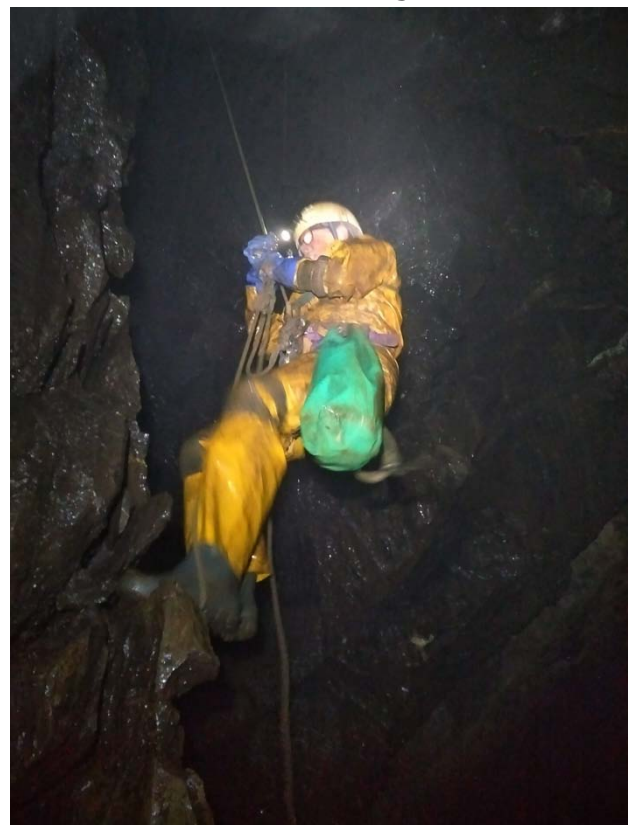
At the bottom of Guillotine Pot, a drop down led to an upwards passage seen by HSL in 1993. This was capped wider and a thrutch up led to a too-small crawl above a narrow rift. A dozen trips here progressed a few metres until the rift could be dropped into. This was too small but had a narrow slot in the floor. This would be roughly above

the duck in the lower reaches of the cave. A hole below The Forge was capped for a body length but showed no signs of getting large enough.

The current dig (November 2022) is a hole trending down northwest at the far northern end of the cave, a slight draught sometimes emanates and work continues. Running water can be heard in the bottom.

Throughout 2022 the way on beyond the Fourth Chamber had been blocked by run-in cobbles, work appears to be in progress to clear the main way on. All the ways on in the cave seem to draft outwards towards the entrance.

Over last winter and Spring Hugh and I continued work along the southern trending passage above Guillotine Pot with capping and snappers to make the passage larger and installed a drag tray. We got beyond a larger section of passage where you can turn around and the passage is now about 20 metres long. It drafts well in your face, and we even saw a bat disappear into the passage and it never returned. We stopped here as the passage became narrow and awkward and more interesting summer projects attracted our attention. We decided some more violent chemical persuasion was needed.



Guillotine Pitch

Photo Credit: Andy Hall



Recently after the extension in Rollerball there was renewed enthusiasm in Casterton Pot as the two caves are now only about 10 metres apart and a smoke test plus hammering in passages below Guillotine Pot had confirmed this. The route here is not obvious and the draft does strange things. Speak to Ray about this! It was decided to reopen the original entrance bypassing the 1st Pitch as it is a bit awkward and muddy at the top. This makes easier access to various projects in the cave. Several surface digging trips over October and November have opened up the old entrance with some excellent walling done by Sam Lieberman. A slope down through boulders leads to an awkward 2-meter climb down into the First Chamber. Care is needed as the route has loose rocks.



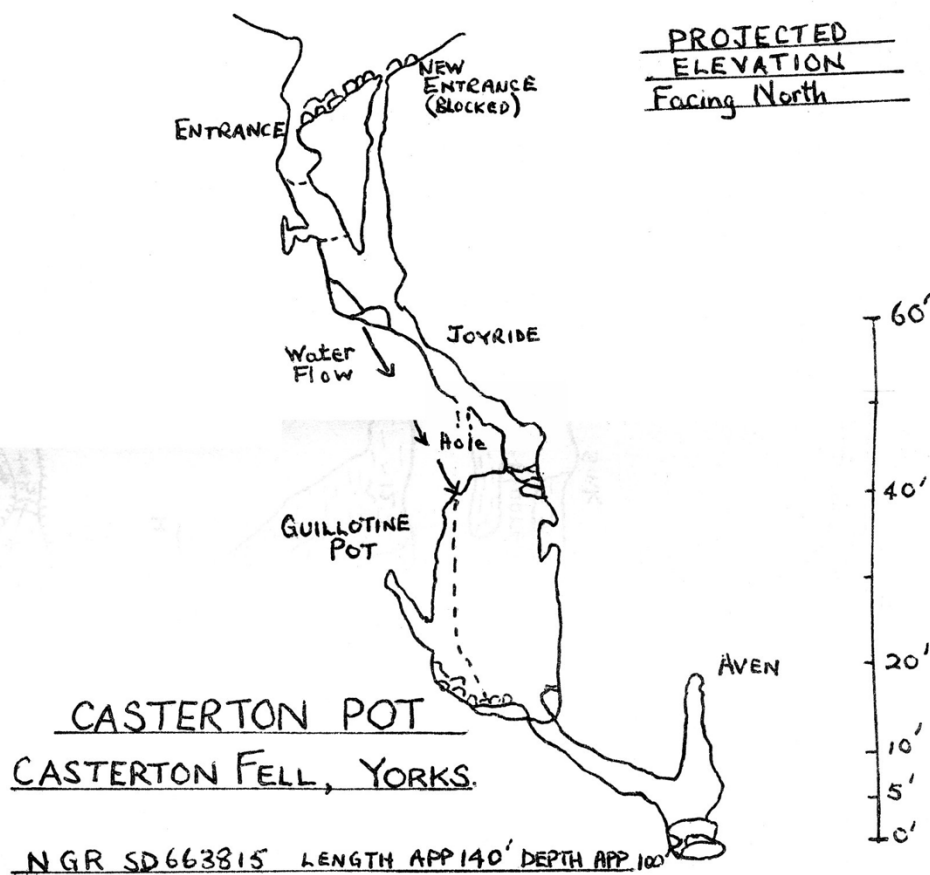
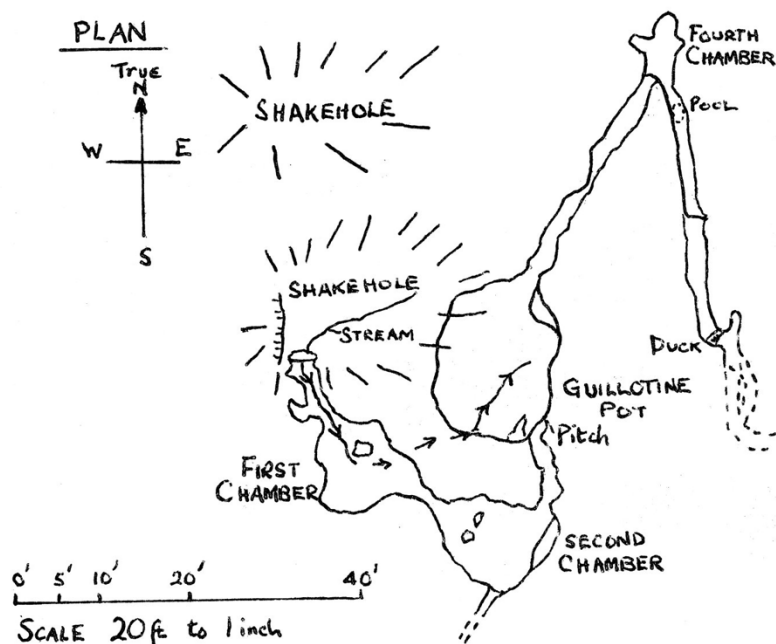
New Entrance

Photo Credit: Andy Hall

By mid-November Sam and Ray got the area inside the entrance cleared and all walled up fairly solidly. A large wobbly rock has been kicked back into the rift and is firmly wedged out of the way. Everything is pretty solid now but still needs a bit of care as everything settles into place. it's a new entrance so please take care not to thrash about and dislodge things. Some stabilising work is still needed at the top of the Joyride.

We have now laid a bang cable from here down the Joyride to the second chamber and into the southern trending passage ready for some banging work. This will be continued in early December. Meanwhile other projects below Guillotine Pot continue.

**Andy Hall** (with contributions from **Johnny Baker** and **Hugh St.Lawrence**)



Peter Morgan

EARBY POT HOLE CLUB SURVEY CRG Gde II & III

## ***To Cap it All***

'In the beginning, there was Boom'.

Well, the first attempts at capping weren't actually accompanied with a Boom, more like a little bang! To start with the 8mm drilled-out hole, usually only had one cap in a small rock, not surprising given the protection awarded the idiot firing it off. A small 1cm piece of sharpened 8mm threaded bar (similar to a small bullet) was inserted, pointy end first, onto the already loaded cap. Then another piece of 8mm bar was placed in the hole and a piece of wood, with a pre-drilled hole in it slotted over the rod and then the rod was hit with a hammer, hmmm! The small bullet (firing pin) was often lost in the mud and rubble requiring a number of replacements or lots of ferreting about in the spoil to find the damned illusive object. Obviously not many people participated in this exercise and certainly not many remained intact.

Moving on, the small boulder removal turned into passage enlargement and required more caps per hole. It was decided that maybe placing some 'fly-rock' protection around the bang site might be a sensible move, so tackle-sacks and bits of old carpet were incorporated but it was still fairly risky. Longer firing rods were the way to go and the threaded firing rod was attached to a metal bar, the wooden block was jettisoned in favour of large bits of carpet mat, but the pesky little firing pins still went AWOL.

Bring on the modern era and the birth of manufactured capping rods! Mine were specifically designed to fit in a large BDH drum along with all the assorted banging paraphernalia: goggles, earplugs, test tube brush (for hole cleaning), cap container, mole grips (for releasing stuck rods), rags, spanners and lump hammer. Fortunately, the 8mm threaded bullets and bar (which always bent), were replaced by a hardened piece of pointy-ended steel rod and the carpet by a large sheet of almost indestructible Angus Fire hose or conveyor belt. Many forms of these capping rods are now in use and the injuries less frequent but still available at Hilt.com, so take care (wish I had).

***Ray Duffy***

## ***Mini Conservation Festival: Bull Pot Farm & Casterton Fell***

### **3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022**

We held a mini conservation festival at Bull Pot Farm on 3<sup>rd</sup> September this year. 15 people took part in conservation tasks during the day, and the numbers swelled for a bit of food and some enjoyable talks in the evening.

#### Digging gear removal, Howgill Sink

Two volunteers removed old digging gear from Howgill Sink and carried it back to the farm. On the same trip they also undertook some footpath repair.

#### Tree Guard removal, Cow Pot Shakehole

Volunteers used snips and knives where necessary to carefully cut tree guards off established trees in the shakehole. Reusable cable ties were released where possible, and others were cut off. All the guards and cable ties were collected together and brought back to the farm.

The stone wall round the shakehole isn't sheep-proof. We will make repairs soon. But in the mean-time tree guards were left on trees that were thought small enough to be vulnerable to grazing.

Mike Appleton collected the tree guards from outside Bull Pot Farm and added them to many others which were sent for recycling by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.

#### Conservation tape replacement, Bull Pot of the Witches

On a recent visit the conservation tape around the gour pools in Bull Pot of the Witches was found to have split and degraded so that it could not be retied. Volunteers replaced the tape during the conservation weekend. The old tape was tied on to a stalagmite and around some small rocks, rather than to stakes drilled into the calcite, and we replicated this with the new tape. We found that calcite had formed over some of the tape where it lies against a flowstone slope. We have replaced like-for-like for now, and we are thinking of what we can do differently to try to make sure it doesn't happen again.

During this trip we took photos and recorded the condition of SSSI features, where we could find them. Two of us managed to squeeze up to the flowstone chamber where the Angel's wing is, but we didn't go high enough up the pristine flowstone to see it. If anyone has a recent photo, they could share it would be really good to have a photo and condition description of it for the SSSI records.

#### Graffiti and litter removal, Bull Pot of the Witches

Some graffiti had been scratched into some calcite not far into the cave. We tried to disguise it with Araldite mixed with calcite dust. We did a test piece and it looked good, so we mixed up a bigger batch and tried to hide the scratched letters. However, we must have got the second mix wrong because it was more obvious than before. So, we returned the next day, flaked the Araldite off, and then tried a variety of methods to abrade the graffiti away.

We found the most effective method to be very gently scraping with a penknife or caving knife, with the blade held almost flat to the surface. The resulting knife scratches can be polished out with abrasive paper or a metal scourer, or similar. The graffiti is more or less gone now. Collecting all the tiny bits of rubbish was challenging.

We also brought out quite a bit of rubbish that had been washed into the cave, such as baler twine, bits of metal, plastic sacks, etc.

#### Water bottle and other litter removal, Lancaster Hole & high-level route

Rob Watson, Dinny Davies and others have been removing water bottles that have been stashed in Lancaster Hole and the high-level route. Volunteers found and removed the last of these as well as doing a general litter pick.

#### Aardvark Country Dig Stabilisation, Cow Pot

A couple of teams went to have a look at the shored dig near the top of Aardvark Country in Cow Pot. Someone on the UK caving forum had reported that it probably needed some work. We have videos and photos and a general idea of what might be done, but we need a team and a team leader so volunteers would be welcome! (This will not take priority over the Wretched Rabbit work which is ongoing.)

#### Evening talks

Andy Walsh – Experiences of cleaning up and naturalising digs and entrances

Stu Weston – Experiences of conservation above and below ground in the Dales, including removal of paint graffiti using alcohol hand gel

Ian Walker & Sam Lieberman – Dig stabilisation and walling in Crescent Pot, DUSA's adopted cave

A huge thanks to everyone who was involved!

**Hannah Walker**

## ***Tree Removal from Bull Pot and Barbon Pot***

Winter storms of 21/22 brought down the coppice of fir trees around Barbon Pot in Barbondale. This had completely blocked the open pot making a descent virtually impossible and certainly unsafe. Ash dieback has killed the large ash tree used as belay point for the open daylight entrance pitch to Bull Pot of the Witches at the south end. It was decided to make both entrances safe. A team from Red



Barbon Pot as we started

Photo Credit: Andy Hall



Rose CPC acting on behalf of CNCC and Natural England and with member Martin Holroyd acting as tree surgeon visited both sites on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Team consisted of Martin, Steve Gray, Hugh St Lawrence, Andy Hall, Colin Jones and Rob Stevens.



Making a start at Barbon Pot

Photo Credit: Andy Hall

Barbon Pot was visited in the morning, and we found that at least 6 trees had fallen across each other over the open shaft. The root balls sticking up in the air were reduced in size and some time was spent with chainsaws and other kit pruning back the brash from the trees so the smaller lighter ones could be hauled away from the shaft. Eventually the site was made safe so that it is now possible to descend safely. It might need some new rigging to do this as the original tree

belays are no longer available. A return will be needed to winch out the remaining tree trunks that are bridged across the shaft. The fence on the south side was also given a temporary repair but needs further attention to make fully stock proof. Our world was briefly interrupted by a party of beaters and dogs and the game keeper asking us what we were doing but Martin tactfully explained that we had permission from the estate to do the work.



Left: Martin nearly finishing; Right: Finishing at Barbon Pot

Photo Credit: Andy Hall



In the afternoon four of us went to Bull Pot and with care removed the dead ash tree in sections. This was used as a belay point for the SRT descent of the entrance. Most of the wood was removed away from the pot but one large rotten piece did fall down the shaft. This will be assessed later. Using the remaining tree stump is no longer a safe method of descent. The area might need re-bolting and there is loose rock. Better to use the path round the south slope and a handline into the small passage leading to the 7m descent into South Chamber.



Left: Making a start at BPOW; Centre: Removing the biggest bit; Right: BPOW tree removed

Photo Credit: Andy Hall

**Andy Hall**

## ***An Account from the 2022 CUCC Expedition***

### **August 2022**

I had always planned to go on the Red Rose trip to Italy this Summer, so was at a bit of a loose end when it was cancelled. I was at the Farm one Saturday evening in mid-July and Mike Butcher was trying to get people to join him in his car, to drive out to the CUCC Austria expo.

I was a little hesitant, as I'm not a huge fan of big pitches, poor rigging, and prolonged misery, but I did know lots of people planning to go, and before long, Mike and Rob Watson had persuaded me that I should go, all I needed to do was sort out a lift back. The following day, Rob and I were planning to climb Engineer's Slabs on Great Gable, so as I drove us up to the Lakes, Rob Watson acted as my expo agent. No lift back coincided with Mike's planned trip, but Rachel Turnbull seemed amenable to giving me a lift out and back, a couple of weeks later on in the expo. It later transpired that meant four people and kit in a Ford Fiesta, but by then I was committed. Becka Lawson came to the rescue by kindly agreeing to take two of our bags in her vehicle.

The journey down was surprisingly comfortable, we even stopped for a swim in a lake and a bit of diving practice. The first week passed quickly, a trip up to Top Camp, a bit of prospecting, the Expo meal. At the meal, myself and Gwen were subjected to a cruel scam, whereby we were persuaded to avoid the delicious Apfel Strudel and have a much more expensive Germknödel. It was basically a tasteless lump of dough, with a small amount of bland jam in the middle, with a bit of melted butter dribbled over the top - we were not impressed! Other highlights were frequent swims, the development of a synchronised diving team (myself, Rachel & Gwen), one or two ice-creams, and even a Beethoven concert (lying outside the backdoor of the church, while the paying listeners were inside). Turns out that caving expeditions weren't as bad as I'd thought they might be.



It's a hard life

Photo Credit: Gwen Tawy

expeditions weren't as bad as I'd thought they might be.

I did feel duty bound to try and do something vaguely useful and caving related, so then headed back up to Top Camp for a few days. I had a short detackling trip in Fish Face, a trip into Hiltiplenty, which involved a fair amount of unnecessary delays. A prospecting trip on the plateau, then a fairly hard, yet efficient detackling trip, down Hiltiplenty again. At this point I thought that the most additional caving that I was likely to do was detackling at the top of Balcony, so I took my padded gilet, pacamac, buff and posh Raumer braking krab back down to Basecamp.



The following day, I had a couple of swims in the lake, more synchronised diving, washed some ropes in the river, then in the evening, I then walked back up to Top Camp, with Gwen, for my last time on the hill. Gwen was due to go on a pushing trip in Fish Face the next day, as so far she hadn't had the chance to be on an exciting pushing trip, I thought I'd probably end up shuttling full tacklebags back from Balcony.

We arrived at Top Camp at about 20:00, just as dusk was falling, and were surprised to find it completely empty, with three teams all down Balcony, each team with a callout of 21:00. It was completely clear to us that the callout times (for the last two groups), showed incompetence of the highest order, and that they would all no doubt just be queuing on the entrance pitches, however we could not rule out the infinitesimal chance that a rope had broken on the first person, trapping all the others in the cave. We resignedly called Rachel at Base Camp, to let her know that we would start to get our caving kit together, and then head towards Balcony with a large rope. At that very point, our prayers were answered, and we saw a couple of lights just cresting the col, high above camp. Saved, we could now just relax and lie on the limestone, looking out for shooting stars. Over the next few hours everyone filtered safely back into camp again.

I was up early the next morning, as I'd bivied out and been woken irritatingly early, by the buzzing of large hover flies. Becka and Gwen were up before too long and were raring to go and rig a large undescended pitch in Fish Face. No one else was too keen, as they had all had long trips the day before, all the tackle had been carried back from Balcony the night before, so I was rather lacking in excuses, other than the 70m pitch in Fish Face, as I'm really not a fan of big pitches. Before I knew what was happening, I found myself agreeing to act as cook/porter for their trip. The only problem was that it would clearly involve a lot of waiting around and most of my extra warm kit was at Base Camp. Fortunately, I persuaded Hannah Collins (ULSA)



Sunset from Top Camp

Photo Credit: Gwen Tawy

to lend me her Wizards cloak (she owed me, as I'd ferried her expo meal to her, while she had Covid). Nathaniel Dalton agreed to lend me his nice padded jacket (it meant that he could sunbathe instead). Gwen had a spare Buff, and even more fortuitously a spare Raumer braking krab, as I certainly didn't fancy any big pitches with just my old steel snap link braking krab!

Before I could protest, Becka had filled my formerly pleasantly light tackle bag with a ridiculous amount of curries, and we were on our way to the entrance. It's quite hard going on the plateau, lots of sharp limestone, and lots of snaking up, over and round obstacles. It was about 45 mins to the entrance, during which time Becka gave Gwen some really useful tips

on bolting, as it was her first time bolting on expo. I was very glad that I was just the cook, a 120m plus shaft did not seem like a place that I would pick to start bolting my first pitch!

I'd tried out a few options with my Raumer in the past, but none seemed great. Gwen told me that she had heard it was best to attach it straight to your descender krab, via the little bit of wiry metal that it comes with. So off we went, Becka suggested that Gwen went first, with herself next, with me bringing up the rear.

A few metres down the first pitch, it was obvious that having the Raumer in that configuration meant that it had absolutely no braking effect whatsoever (*Editor note: I have never actually used my Raumer before...so that's why I assumed that what I had heard from someone else was correct!*). I shouted to Becka that I needed to put it directly on to my D ring, and that obviously took two or three minutes. Gwen was miles ahead by this point, and every so often I'd glimpse an exasperated Becka, who would spit out some more terse directions, then rush off to try and catch Gwen up.

Eventually we were all more or less together again, and I had to admit, that it was actually quite a pleasant cave, by now even Becka was only rolling her eyes at our slow speed, though at one point she did liken us both to slugs.

The 70m pitch arrived before too long, all against the wall, three nice two bolt rebelay, it didn't really bother me at all, perhaps I could actually enjoy some of these deeper foreign caves?

Becka had waited at the bottom of the 70m and looked somewhat disappointed at my calmness, I suspect that she may have been hoping for the odd tear? She tried to make up for the lack of them by explaining that the boulders at the bottom of the chamber were most likely just a loose plug over a 120m shaft. I'm afraid that I disappointed her again, as I was much happier standing on them, as opposed to being suspended high above them on just a thin rope.



Caving in Austria

Photo Credit: Gwen Tawy

One more short pitch, and we were there, to the left, the undescended pitch, to the right the lightweight camp, now known as 'Becka's Noodle Bar'. Becka rushed us along the horizontal passage for a few hundred feet to a small streamway and water source. I then had a quick slash, while Becka and Gwen headed back to the camp/kitchen. Once I got back, Becka went off to the shaft to do something or other with the rigging (we didn't need to know what), leaving us very specific instructions to get the bolts & drill ready, cook our noodles, then have her special hot ones ready for her return. Before doing any cooking, I

took off my oversuit, added a thermal, Nat's coat, Gwen's buff, put the oversuit back on, then put on Hannah's Wizard's Sleeve (I found it quite stylish, but somewhat lacking in draft proof/thermal qualities). I was now pretty warm, and dutifully began to cook...

Gwen and I sorted out the bolts and drill, shared a pan of noodles, then we got Becka's noodles ready, in time for her return. Becka soon arrived, quickly scoffed the noodles, then once Gwen had clipped the drill and bolts to herself, ushered her off to the head of the pitch. The shaft was initially named 'Big Bastard', and had been left undescended during the initial explorations, which says a lot about how appealing it was. It had then been partially descended and rigged by Nat and Becka a few days earlier and renamed 'Perseid'.

Gwen's first job was to add a second deviation bolt about 20m down the shaft, then to add a bolt to make a Y hang, instead of the existing single bolt rebelay.

Gwen soon bravely set off down the shaft, as I briefly glanced down it with some distaste, and then quickly moved to a far comfier and safer spot at the other end of the initial traverse.

Before long there were sounds of drilling, Gwen was clearly getting the hang of it! As I relaxed at the top of the pitch, Becka searched incessantly for useful things to do, even re-tying both of her cowstail knots, though she wasn't sure how to tie a stopper knot and looked extremely sceptical when I did. After a while Gwen announced that the deviation was in place, and that she was coming back up, as her leg was stiff from the awkward bolting position, ten seconds later she had changed her mind, and had started on the next rebelay bolt. Sadly, after a fair amount of drilling and hammering, it appeared that the end of the bolt was threaded, so all to no avail. Gwen headed back to the top at this point, where Becka quickly stripped her of the drill, bolts, rigging gear and eagerly headed back down the pitch. I wandered back along the horizontal passage, collected some more water, had another wee, then joined Gwen at the pitch head. I was just 'off warm' by this point, so we got the group shelter out, and sat in it, listening to the sounds of Becka drilling and hammering. Before too long she called for Gwen to rejoin her on a ledge. I sat in the shelter, daydreaming and listening to the sound of hammering, bolting and muffled conversation, all of which got slowly further away.



Gwen on the Plateau

Photo Credit: Dinny Davies

I wandered back along the horizontal passage, collected some more water, had another wee, then joined Gwen at the pitch head. I was just 'off warm' by this point, so we got the group shelter out, and sat in it, listening to the sounds of Becka drilling and hammering. Before too long she called for Gwen to rejoin her on a ledge. I sat in the shelter, daydreaming and listening to the sound of hammering, bolting and muffled conversation, all of which got slowly further away.

At one point it seemed to get quieter for a while, so I wondered whether they had reached the bottom and found some horizontal passage. For their sake, I hoped it was extensive, but on the other hand, surveying it could take a while... My legs were getting stiff now, and even with all the extra clothing, I was still 'off warm', so I went for another wander along the



horizontal passage. Then back to daydreaming in my shelter, I could now hear really faint drilling and hammering again, which was strange as I knew that they couldn't have much rope left, and I was using the only spare bit as a cushion, I quietly hoped they wouldn't soon come back up for that! Eventually I could hear them re-ascending the shaft, slowly the shouts of 'rope free' got nearer, then I could actually see that the rope was loaded. Before I could see Gwen she shouted up 'get the curries on'. Excellent, something useful to do at last, I got out of the shelter and hobbled toward the kitchen, trying to wake up my stiff legs. Gwen joined me before too long, then Becka, (who, I was relieved to see, had not just grabbed the spare rope and headed straight back down). I was surprised to hear that they still had not reached the bottom of the shaft, though they had much improved the existing rigging, and bolted a new Y hang at the bottom. It must be far deeper than 120m! Once we had eaten the curries, Becka suggested that Gwen and I should head out first, Gwen headed off towards the 70m pitch whilst I stripped off all my extra clothing and re-packed it in the tackle sack. Becka then announced that she would follow in a while, once she had made a full inventory of camp, I looked around quizzically, there was not much there, she clearly just thought that she'd have to wait for ages for the two slugs, and was giving us a head start, how rude!



The Newt

Photo Credit: Dinny Davies

Still, it was nice to be moving again, Gwen was about halfway up the 70m, as I started slowly prussicking. We then steadily headed out, generally within speaking distance, the reflectors meant that there were no issues with route finding, and there were only a couple of junctions anyway. As we got nearer to the entrance, still no sign of Becka, this was rather strange, I began to think that we had a fair chance of getting out before she caught us up, that really would irritate her! It was dark but mild when we got out, Gwen and I quickly changed, still no sign of Becka. Now we were actually starting to worry that we'd have to get changed again and go and find her, eventually (after about 15mins), Becka emerged, telling us that she had presumed that we must have got lost at one of the junctions, as that was the only logical explanation for not having caught us up. We commiserated with her for no longer being fit enough to even keep up with two slugs, prompting her to suggest that somehow the slugs had evolved into butterflies. We then packed up our bags and headed back to Top Camp, after a trip of about 11 hours. The

long trudge back was broken up when we spotted a black salamander in the grass, but before too long we were back at a deserted Top Camp, time for more curry after a grand day out!

It was drizzling in the morning, but we found a short weather window and headed back down the hill, with heavy bags. The next day, I'd be heading back to Blighty. It turned out that Expo wasn't that miserable after all, perhaps I'll even return?

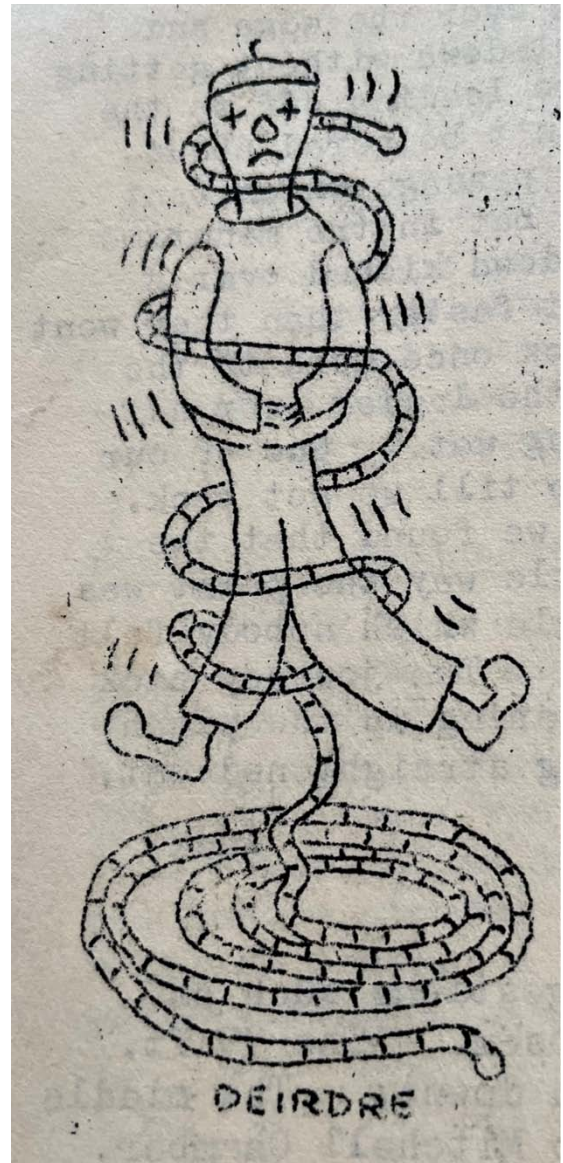
**Dinny Davies**



## ***A James Henry Newton Blast from the Past***

Hidden in the depths of Jim's garage languished a rich collection of ancient manuscripts that were recently unearthed by Hazel. Among them was the RRCPC Journal No. 1, published in May 1962 and printed by M. Wilkinson. The following comprises edited excerpts (thanks go to Dave Creedy) from an article written by Jim about his first trip to the bottom of Juniper Gulf.

Eight intrepid members arrived at Crummack in spite of the keen types being held up with a puncture at Austwick. We were ready, once and for all to bottom Juniper Gulf. He had reached the top of the last pitch on a previous visit and, as it was dry at that time, decided not to use an exposure suit on this trip. As usual, everybody disappeared underground leaving the last man to carry the tackle. Not yet accustomed to this method, I found myself catching the others at the second pitch bedecked with ladders, ropes and "Deirdre." (a very long and unwieldy rope for big pitches). This abominable pitch was bestrewn with bods who were unable to pass a wailing 'Pres' (Jim Eyre) who had arrived at a deep pool at the bottom. Just to please him we filled the pool with ladders and the way was now clear to crash on to the eighty-foot pitch. Leaving Pete with malingerers' cramp and Mick to lifeline, we descend "en masse" (French trip member). When we had reached the last pitch, things came to a halt. However, after much deliberation and pushing, Tom descended promising to shout up what the water was like. "Light rain"; replied the bell-like tones. So, down I went to get drowned, closely followed by Dave. A quick trip to the sump followed, and then came the long journey back. I will always remember the climb back up the 150-foot pitch, those murmured words of encouragement, those URGENT tugs on the lifeline, those ..... Eventually, we were soon out to darkness and rain, but by dexterous use of the compass and "keeping the wind in one's right ear 'ole'" we reached Crummack. Finally, we made The Shoes' in time for a pint [to successfully reach the pub while it is still serving is Jim's measure of a good trip].



Deirdre

Illustration Credit: Dave Creedy

***Dave Creedy***

## ***Library Additions: September – November 2022***

### **Journals:**

BCRA: CREG: Journal: Issue 119. *(September 2022)*  
Transactions: Vol. 49 No. 2. *(August 2022)*  
BCRA Review: Annual review for 2021  
Bristol Exploration Club: Belfry Bulletin Nos. 581. *(Summer 2022)*  
British Speleological Association:  
Bulletin Nos. 3, 4, 12, 13, 18, 25, 28, 38, 44, 46, 64, 65, *(1946-65)*  
Cave Science: Nos. 9, 16, 17, 18, 22. *(1949-1953)*  
Caves and Caving: Vol. 1 No. 2 *(1937)*  
Cave Diving Group: Newsletter No. 225 *(October 2022)*  
Cave Research Group of Great Britain: Publication No. 1 (part 1) Cave Fauna  
Craven Pothole Club: Record: Nos. 147-148 *(July-October 2022)*  
Derbyshire Caving Association: Newsletter No. 156 *(Summer 2022)*  
Descent: No. 288. *(2022)*  
Grampian Speleological Group: Bulletin: Fifth Series Vol. 4 No. 3 *(October 2022)*  
Caves of Assynt *Tim J. Lawson & Peter N.F. Dowswell*  
*(2022)*  
RRCPC: News-sheet: No. 387.

### **Other Publications:**

The Craven and North-West Yorkshire Highlands, *Harry Speight (1989)*  
The Falls and Caves of Ingleton. *John L. Hamer (1949)*

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