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RED ROSE CAVE AND POTHOLE CLUB



# NEWSLETTER



Vol. 57 No.1

January 2020

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*Aillee Cascade - Doolin River Cave*

*Photo: Bill Nix*

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## **FORTHCOMING CLUB MEETS**

### **Club Meets:**

**Sun. 2<sup>nd</sup> February:** Swinsto pot. Classic, wet SRT through trip. Or down and up.

*If you would like to attend any club trips or have any suggestions for trips then contact Emma Wilson or Tom Clayton.*

### **Casterton & Leck Fell Permits:**

Permits for 2020 will be displayed on the club web site as soon as they are finalised. If you wish to lead a trip in these areas please contact:-

Caving Secretary: Tom Clayton at [caving@rrcpc.org.uk](mailto:caving@rrcpc.org.uk)

Permits should be booked through our Permit Secretary Emma Wilson [permits@rrcpc.org.uk](mailto:permits@rrcpc.org.uk)

### ***Social Events:***

**Annual Photographic Competition:** The club's annual photo competition will be held on **1st February 2020**, at Bullpot Farm, which means there's still time to get out there with your cameras if you've not managed to get that perfect shot yet! We look forward to seeing what everyone's been up to. Categories include: UK underground, UK above ground, Abroad underground, Abroad above ground, Humorous and Pocket camera prints.

The best overall photo (Giles Barker Award) will be decided by public vote on the night. The winner gets to judge next year competition.

The overall winner last year was Alex Anderson. It is hoped he will be able to judge this year and present a portfolio of his recent photos. If you enter the competition please put your name on the back of each entry. There will also be a chance to show your photos from the last year's holiday or caving trip on the big screen after the end of the competition. Please supply your presentation on a USB stick and make sure it lasts no longer than 10 minutes.



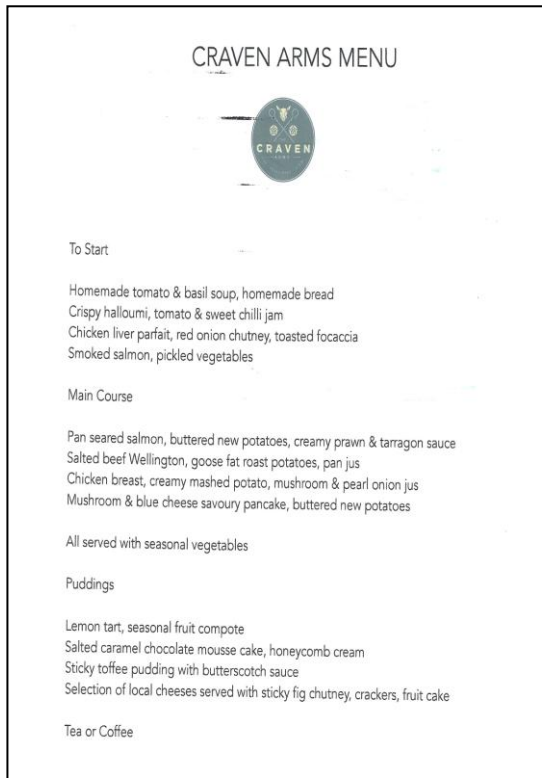
**We are pleased to make  
available for Sale  
this postcard of a painting of  
Bullpot Farm  
produced by John Conway.**

**Available for sale now in the  
Club Library.**

**Price £1 each  
with envelope.**

**All Proceeds to Club Funds**

## 2020 Annual Dinner



The clubs Annual Dinner will be held on **Saturday 21st. March** at the Craven Arms, Giggleswick. Please send your reservation to Martin Fagan (Social Secretary) together with Menu choices by the end of February.

Preferably Transfer your money (£25 each) to the club account (contact Martin for other options if this is not possible)

to:

*HSBC: Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club,  
A/c No. 31807927, Sort Code 40-27-02  
Add Reference: Dinner + your surname*

**2020 AGM** The 2020 AGM will be held at Bullpot Farm on the following day **Sunday 22nd. March** at 11am. Items for the Agenda or changes to the constitution should be sent to the secretary at least 4 weeks prior to the AGM (22nd. February)

**News.** The club has recently received a sum of money via the Bendrigg Trust to help provide disabled access facilities in our changing room. This follows last year's successful descent of Lancaster Hole by Jason Liversidge, which the club arranged and assisted with to make it possible. Thanks are due to Jason for raising this money.

**2020 Subscriptions:** As the Membership Secretary I'd like to remind all members that the renewal date for your 2020 membership is **1st January 2020**

All members pay £28 (£24 for caving students and under 18 years) for club membership and then it is a matter of what level of membership you require: **Caving Membership** is an extra £17 for BCA insurance making a total of **£45**. **Non Caving Membership** is an extra £6 for BCA insurance making a total of **£34**. **Caving Students and those under 18 years** pay £8 for BCA insurance making a total of **£32**. Those affiliated to **another club** with whom they are insured pay **£28** only, but you must tell us who you are insured with. Those who have **Direct Individual Membership (DIM)** of BCA also pay only **£28**. The easiest way to pay your subscription is by Bank Transfer to the Red Rose Bank account at: **HSBC** Account Name: **Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club**. Sort Code: **40-27-02** Account Number: **31807927**

Please add "**your name**" and "**2020 subs**" as a reference (This is to identify what the payment is for and who from). If you have moved or changed email address and think you may not have let the club know please drop me an email so I can ensure our records (and the BCAs) are correct. *Thank you – Emma Key (Membership Secretary)*

[membership@rrcpc.org.uk](mailto:membership@rrcpc.org.uk)

## ***Rift Pot - Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December***

*Party:- Emma Key, Bill Nix, Jack Overhill, Dave Ottewell, Marcus Evans, Emma Wilson, Tom Clayton & Sudeep Subrahmanya (from India)*

As a bit of a last minute decision Bill and I decided to join the club trip to Long Kin East & Rift Pot. We met Jack Overhill in Inglesport for a hearty breakfast and a couple of cups of tea to fortify us for the day. The main team were heading up from South House Farm but Bill preferred to set off from Crummack so we had arranged to meet them at the cave.

We made our way up the lane, parked up, sorted out the obligatory camera gear and got our caving gear on. The weather was pretty grim so map and compass were essential to make sure we didn't lose ourselves or the cave on the fell. Bill and Jack (with his newly acquired ML qualification we were in safe hands!) handled the navigation and after a not entirely unpleasant wander up the hill in the rain and wind we found ourselves perfectly placed at the gate in the wall to The Allotment. We continued on along the limestone pavement to find Long Kin East but with no cavers in sight we carried on to Rift Pot where Emma W was about to descend the first pitch. Due to the wet conditions they had decided to give Long Kin East a miss.

We kitted up and Jack and Bill descended into the cave. I came down last abseiling slowly so Bill could take some photographs. It was my first visit to Rift Pot and I was pleasantly surprised at the impressive dimensions of the pitch, from the name I'd expected it to be small and narrow. When I reached the bottom Bill moved the flashes and he took a few more snaps of the chamber which gave the advanced party time to rig the cave ahead of us.

After a slurp of hot Ribena we packed up and carried on into the cave negotiating the pitches. It was nice to be swinging about on ropes again after doing a fair bit of caving in South Wales and Mendip over the last few months. Bill disappeared down the final pitch and called rope free but as I was about to unclip my cows tails to follow him I heard a shout telling me to go back up. The advanced party were getting cold hanging about and wanted to head back out. I swapped to my jammers and started prussiking out.

As I got to the top re-belay Jack gave me a surprise by appearing behind me! I hadn't realised that there was another rope rigged. With him being a keen young thing I let him pass me so I could carry on at a more leisurely pace (I was feeling out of shape after all the southern caving!)

Bill caught up with me as I waited in the entrance chamber followed shortly by Dave; I plodded my way up cursing my lack of SRT fitness! After Bill had exited we scooted off to find Long Kin East cave and did a mini through trip which was well worth it. The streamway is very interesting and there were some pretty formations.

We had a quick butty and more hot Ribena then made our way down to the cars and gratefully changed into warm dry clothes. On our way past we nipped into the Game Cock for a warm by the fire and I indulged in a glass of their festive mulled wine (with a wee mince pie).

I felt a bit of a freeloader for not helping with the rope carrying, rigging or de-rigging so thank you very much to the rigging pixies that I didn't actually even see!

I'm looking forward to a return trip to Rift Pot at some point so I can reach the bottom – another cave for the unfinished business list!

***Emma Key***

***We're at the farm and got nothing planned ..well you have now!***

Here are a few things, that over the years of surveying and prospecting, I should have gone back to look at but never quite got around to doing. There may be a winning dig in some of these ventures but you don't know until you try.

1. In the C.R.G. Extensions at the bottom of Top Sink there is a climb up a loose and steep slope that leads eventually to Cobweb Chamber. At the top of the slope, a climb up and traverse back over the slope, is the way to Cobweb but straight ahead at the top of the slope is a sandy bedding. This looks as if it may have seen some action in the past but could yield to a better digging effort and a tray. To the left of this bedding is a small passage, in a small broken rift that leads to a small sandy chamber with a sandy pit in the floor. The pit looks as though it could collapse on you if descended, burying you and leaving no way out. This pit is close to Danish Passage (may be only 10m away and 4m down) and may give up its secrets if some kind of walling project could be done, there's lots of rubble nearby. You're welcome to have a go as I've got lots of other projects.
2. Pool Sink has seen a lot of prospecting in the past but there's one place we didn't get very far pushing but to find it takes some effort. The Fourth Pitch Bypass Series has a passage leading off to the left just before it drops into Upper Green and Smelly. This passage is mainly crawling but there's a 5m pit down (can be bypassed by an easy climb) to a lower passage and that's where the interest lies. There's lots of stal down the hole but it may be possible to 'cap' it to increase the size of it? Further along the upper passage gets small but may give up its secrets with a bit of persuasion and it's only about 6m from another passage.
3. We never did finish digging at the far end of Mottershead Chamber, I guess we thought it wasn't worth spending the time or maybe we were just wimps and gave up! Could it be a way through to Dry Dock, avoiding the horrible boulders down to Eccles Bypass and the flood-prone crawl? It might only be 14m away if you can believe the survey and at about the same height,
4. Speaking of Borehole, there's a passage on the true right, just downstream of the big pitch that Johnny entered and tried to push on his own. It'll probably need crowbar and 'capping' gear but it's definitely going somewhere. It heads upstream toward the main streamway upstream of the pitch, but is nearly 30m lower than Ease Gill itself so maybe it's from an entrance we don't know about yet????
5. On the surface there's a real possibility of dropping into the Baby Feeder Series via the small shake hole one passes just before dropping down to Pool Sink entrance. It's right next to the broken fence on the true right bank. I reckon a few metres of digging and walling and you'd be into the upstream passage. This ends on the inside at a tight climb up into boulders so these are probably the bottom of the shake hole or not? The end of the climb is almost level with the entrance to Pool Sink itself so it can't be far below the surface if you believe surveys! (You'd have to stock-proof the shake hole dig.)
6. A fairly concerted effort was made in the passage at the top of Cannuck Climb, not the one leading toward Brew chamber but in the opposite direction. It's heading back toward the old part of the system and at the same level as Bridge Hall. Careful stacking of debris and a strong team might gain some unknown passage.

7. In the past I've tried to level out the dip at the end of the passage beyond the Colonnades as this proved a bit of a stumbling block to digging in the small extension further on. Hugh and I definitely thought there was a build up of CO<sub>2</sub> that pooled in the dip when we were digging out boulders, not a nice prospect having to crawl through CO<sub>2</sub>. If the roof was 'capped' off a bit then it wouldn't be a problem. Stacking the rocks would have to be carefully done as there's not much spare room but the passage seems to drop down a bit, so???
8. No final conclusion was reached in the Bob's Pit dig off Bridge Hall as the diggers just gave up and moved onto pastures new. (Sorry Steve and Andy)
9. Does the dig at the end of the right hand branch of Diamond Hall connect to the dig on the left at Maple Leaf, who knows?
10. With a huge effort the spoil at the end of the Cambridge dig off the right-hand end of Oakes Cavern could be removed and the dig continued. Where would that be going to?
11. If you're traversing out of Wretched Rabbit from the bottom, there's a step back down into the stream that then sinks on the right. Beyond the passage is tight and winding, passing the high entrance to Dreamweaver. Just beyond a stal blockage forces you down to hands and knees. Somewhere up above this point is a high bedding (easy climb up) that leads through to a squeeze into a chamber. The chamber contains a rope hanging down from a high small passage but as I didn't fit through the squeeze the rope has not been ascended for years and years. Where does it lead? The safest thing would be to use the rope and put in concrete bolts and hangers on the way up and rig another rope for backup. Interesting project, yes?
12. By the way, nobody has yet connected Montague South to Hemmingway Hall, now there's a really tantalising prospect for the skinny people and they should only be about 10m apart, at most. Roof 'capping' may be the way forward and probably better to approach from the Hemmingway end unless you like getting really wet.

That's enough for now to keep most of the club busy for ages but there's more. **Ray Duffy**

### ***From the Log Book 1 - Gale Garth***

*5/9 Gale Garth - Sam + Hugh*

Went down with some rope and Sam lined me across the slightly dodgy crossing over Octopus Chamber, muddy and loose! Passage beyond OK for 20ft but then v. solid choke of large gritstone cobbles overhung by a variety of guillotine limestone flakes - a rather hopeless proposition. So, no easy way into the southern continuation of GG main passage, and we'll have to plough on with Paddling Pool. Also looked at climb up tall aven just before the rope climb up the sandbank - got to a ledge 20ft up and looks very open and beckoning above, couple of bolts needed for the next 10ft. section. It's underneath the shake hole adjacent to GG with the tree in it, so might just go to the surface - but who knows. Finally had a root in the floor corner below the rope climb - needs digging out but possibility of enlargement beyond. Could be something here as all the water which once washed out of the sand fill must have drained off somewhere. Could do with a bucket, but how to get down the GG entrance and crawls! Got out at 10.30 ish to find I'd left one of Sam's slings behind. Doh... **Hugh**



## Annecy 2019

"Ahh, No problem, you must never be rude to Frenchmen even if they are bad idiots" said the Gendarme. Before I'd even arrived, Steve Gray had been proving the entente was not so cordiale and been the subject of his first international incident...

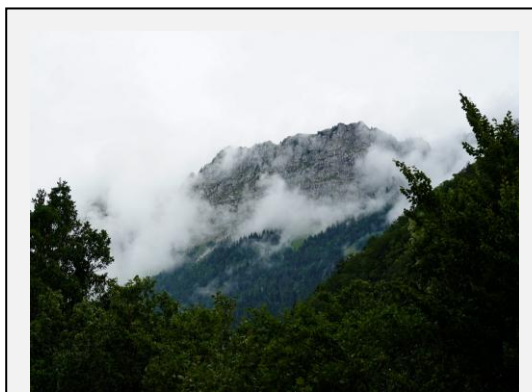
Following the last couple of blockbuster trips to France with the Gouffre Berger and Pierre St Martin the plan was to go for a more relaxed and family oriented jolly. The Annecy area had been selected with the Trois Betas to Grotte de la Diau through trip on offer to keep the hardened speleophyles sane.

Steve and family had driven through the night and had time, whilst us others were still on our way, for a trip to Annecy for a spot of gear shopping. Disappointed with the lack of stock, a grumpy Steve was heading out of town when the traffic was halted by a pair of cars blocking the road at a set of road works.



*Lake Annecy*

One Frenchmen was chasing another, dressed in yellow, around the cars but Steve being on a slight rise before the scene appeared to the one who was blocking the road. Getting out of his car, Steve was now the target of the irate drivers in the growing queue "Hey, yeou Eengleesh tosseur..." began the nearest one ... Steve pointed to the manic pair on the road ahead and suggested that perhaps he should phone the police rather than abusing the tourists. At this point the arguing pair united against the common enemy and, despite Steve's polite suggestions that they move out of the way, started hurling abuse his way. Steve put his best angry face on and yelling "I'll teach you how to surrender you yellow tosser" made motions towards, whereupon they proved him right by fleeing behind the vehicles. It was now that the police arrived, rapidly ascertaining the situation and despite the feuding pair attempting to blame Steve, escorted Steve past the incident before returning to allow the mad drivers to help them with their enquiries.



*Morning at the campsite*

Meanwhile Rowena and I had been making our way South, Settle, Overnight stop at mum's near Cambridge, Harwich, Hook of Holland, Camping South of Brussels, Luxembourg (cheap diesel), FLASH! speed camera:- (barstewards), Jura, We'd had a text from Steve to avoid Annecy as there was a massive firework festival and as luck would have it the Sat Nav must have known given the obscure single track roads it found for us. Anyway, we arrived at Camping L'Horizon in Talloires (or Tallywacker as Steve had recalled for the nice policeman) in time for a beer on the evening of Sat 3rd August.

The next day was fine with magnificent views of the castellated peaks above the village and after setting up camp I went for a stroll down to the lake. The path down was so STEEP that I knew that Ro wasn't going to be able to get down the hill on her mobility scooter which was a shame. The lakeside was magnificent in the sunshine and I skirted around towards a wooded area. A steeply ascending path led me to a small cave entrance - I could feel a cool draught rolling out but it narrowed rapidly and some kind soul had left some shitty toilet paper on the floor.



Luckily they'd also left a lighter there so at least I could incinerate the offending item and test the airflow to boot. Further investigation was going to require some more suitable attire so on I went. The path carried on up with amazing views down the lake and as the sun descended I circled back around to the campsite in time to meet my paragliding friend, Bruce, who owns an apartment a few kilometres up the hill.

I'd arranged to meet Bruce the next day in Drossard at the southern end of the lake where he parked his scooter at the municipal centre and landing field for those lunatics that like to throw themselves off a perfectly stable landscape. The plan was to go and do a via ferrata at Thones then drop him round at the top of the hill for an afternoon flight back down to Drossard. The via ferrata was cracking with a wobbly wire bridge near the start to keep the riff-raff out. It continues steeply up with modest strenuous overhangs and sphincter clenching exposure looking down at the town. A wire branched off to the left over a boulder, I clipped on, but then found out this was just a bit of wire holding the boulder on to the cliff face - perhaps we'll go the other way! Anyway, the climb saves the best to last with three options for finishing - a killer overhang, an outward facing steel ladder and the ordinary mortals easy way out. Bruce and I arrived to find a group of French folk contemplating the options.



*Bruce on Via Ferrata*

No.1 went for the overhang - SUCCESS! No2. - FAIL. No.3-No.6 exit stage right off the traverse. Bruce then ambled up the overhang making it look easy so then No.7 tried and made a complete dogs dinner of it - FAIL. I'd been sitting down soaking up the sun until it was my turn and spotted a lizard a couple of meters away. It skittered right past my feet, up the vertical cliff wall and in to a tiny solution hole in the limestone, poking its head out occasionally to see if I'd gone. So now it was my turn - the hardest bit was not the climb itself but having to stop and hang on with one arm to move the karabiners on to the next loop of wire. Bruce had come back down the ladder and was snapping away like a mad paparazzi with my camera so there's a few good shots of me hanging on for grim death. A magnificent little climb though in the glare of the sun I'd advise bringing something to drink.

Tuesday 6th, most people had arrived and settled in to the campsite and Mr Ottewell was getting itchy wellies so the morning was spent measuring and marking the ropes. For the afternoon we all set off for the municipal beach (complementary tickets with the campsite). Talloires was heaving and the scene was set for Steve's 2nd international incident... "Two French idiots had blocked me in. I sent the family on a walk and settled in to wait. Jim [Davis] turned up and as he was jumping on the front car to set the alarm off, a family turned up. I very politely told them they were inconsiderate and they drove off quickly (They did have kids - hence POLITE)." Meanwhile... Sam & Ro after driving round in circles had found what looked like a sensible parking space but came back to find a little printed note indicating we would be receiving a parking fine direct to our home address. [Unlike the speeding fine, this has never materialized.] Despite all this a smashing time was had by all with swimming, snorkeling and loafing in the sun.

The weather turned that evening with big thunderstorms rumbling around and galloons of rain, most of the tents didn't leak this year!

The next day we were thwarted by the continuing rain so, after bolstering the RRCPC Shanty with tarps and bits of string, some went to find a Decathlon for gear shopping. Steve & family went to the show caves & waterfalls in Seythenix (like Ingleton on steroids).

Ro & I got bored at the campsite so went for an afternoon drive the other side of the lake and found sunshine and the most magnificent chocolatier and ice cream shop near Lescharaines, one to remember as there's canyons nearby too.

That evening we got the sad news about Chris Kinghorn "Louder, Faster, Harder" The world is a duller place now that you've moved on.



*Trois Betas entrance*

Thursday 8th - Rigging day at Trois Betas. Dave Ottewell, Marcus Evans, Sam Lieberman. Aspirations of an early start evaporated in the morning sun, but we were away by 10:20. Random navigation got us to Aviernois where you turn off up the hill on a hairpin infested road that degenerates to a track eventually landing at the pig restaurant (Chalet Hotel C. Dunaut). A slog up the hill then across undulating plateau and limestone razors with over heavy bags we reached the entrance marked by a blue slalom pole after about an hour.

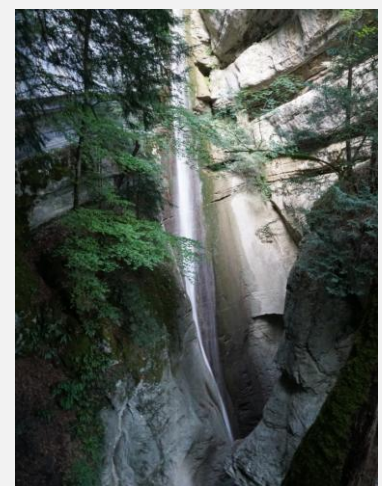
Giant ants complemented the shady trees as we got changed and Dave set off rigging followed by Marcus and then my good self for moral support. Rigging was slow and steady, with Marcus supplying entertainment with death defying stunts at the flying deviation trapeze, until one of the small pitches below the main 88m pitch where the rope didn't reach the bottom. Some faff ensued and after re-rigging with a longer rope we were off once more and soon down to the penultimate 25m pitch. We'd only got one 72m rope left so after a recce of the traverse to the last pitch it was determined we'd not be getting to the bottom today and a return with two 30m ropes would be required. I fared better than I'd hoped prussiking back out, tweaking the rigging as we went, and we were on the surface by 17:30. Leaving some of the gear there we had significantly lighter bags for the walk back and were met at the restaurant by some cold beers, Steve, Jim and Helen and the three little pigs (literally) along with an entourage of flies. Two vehicle disasters occurred with Jim's van springing a leak on the way up and Dave's car suffering one way terminal brake lock on the way back (traced to the rotten back plate jamming itself in the calipers).

The next day Dave and Marcus were itching to go and finish the job as a bunch of weekend cavers were due to be arriving that evening for a through trip. Steve & family, Rowena and I headed up to the Col de Forclaz (heaving with tourists and paragliding types) so we retreated down the hill to find the local rope park. Ro snoozed in the van whilst the rest of us had varying degrees of wire guided fun amongst the trees - only two falls and one refusal.

That evening Steve and I scouted out the Angon Falls, a couple of miles from the campsite, and found a cracking quarry climbing area and fantastic path cut in to the cliff approaching the falls. Obvious signs of canyoning paraphernalia were everywhere and a return visit with wetsuits and descenders planned for later the next week.

Later on, freeloaders Dave Foxton & partner, Mike Bottomley, Steph Dwyer & Shane McKinley arrived ready for a weekend of pre-rigged fun and frolicks underground (some of them anyway).

**Next time at a news-sheet near you:** Canyoning the good the bad and the downright ugly? Trois Betas through trips and how not to do it? An Alpine wonderland, and will Steve have any more international incidents (what do you think!).



*Angon Falls*

Cheers for now, **Sam Lieberman.**

***The Discovery of Lancaster Hole - Original account by Wilf Taylor***

*Much has been said about the discovery of Lancaster Hole, but the recent transfer of the Red Rose library to Bullpot Farm gave our librarian and her helper (me) the opportunity to look through boxes and boxes of archive material. Amongst these boxes were hand written descriptions written by Wilf Taylor of his memories of this occasion. Here below is a transcript from the original, which makes very interesting reading and hopefully fills in some of the gaps in the story.*

*Mel Wilkinson*

## **Introduction**

In Dec 1946 the press announced to the public the news of a big cave discovery. Actually "Lancaster Hole" was discovered on Sunday the 29th. of Sept 1946. But owing to secrecy of the B.S.A. the caving world only possessed rumours of its existence and whereabouts until the press publications. In fact nothing was known about its secrets until the British Speleological Association published a short account by R.W. Taylor in its publication of "Cave Science". Later the B.S.A. published a plan of the near series and two descriptions, one by Mr E. Simpson and another by F. Atkinson but even so after 4 years no one outside the B.S.A. have true knowledge or information of Lancaster and its discovery and exploration.

So I will endeavour to enlighten people interested in caves to the best of my abilities in the following pages. This information is not second hand and my relation to the discovery I will explain fully.

On being de-mobbed from the services in Feb 1946 I soon got down to my previous sport, being a member of the British Speleological Association of Settle Yorks.

Three new members who I hadn't met, Mr G. Cornes, Mr W. Oakes and L. Kitchen had at that time been given the job of attempting to open up Rough Pot near Lost Johns on Leck Fell. Mr E. Simpson the Hon. recorder had explained its possibilities and the three set forth on the 22nd. of Dec. to try their luck. But being three very obstinate men, would go their own way and approached Rough Pot by a roundabout way. In fact they've never arrived there yet. Approaching Leck via Bull Pot Lane, Casterton Fell, the three men stumbled on a new hole. This hole lies west of the derelict farmstead of Gale Garth just off the track leading from Bull Pot Farm to Hellot Scales Barn. To find it the best way would be to approach from Gale Garth until a lime kiln will be noticed below the wall on the opposite side of the valley from Gale Garth.

Just over the wall directly about the kiln, Hellot Pot will be found. This hole they worked on and got down approx 40ft and worked stopped at a narrow fissure following. By the week I'd been introduced and joined their team, and so began work with the team I'd not had pleasure of working with.

*W. Taylor - Hon. Sec. Red Rose Cave & Pothole Club. Lancaster Jan 6th. 1950*

## **Lancaster Hole**

To write of the first day would I think be impudent being new to the team so I will write the following extract from the diary of R.W. Taylor of Burrow, Nr. Kirkby Lonsdale.

### *The discovery 29th. of Sept 1946*

*We set off across the moor laden with tackle, compasses, maps, helmets fitted with headlamps, rope ladders and food, in fact practically everything that might be needed for the exploration of a newly found hole, and which could be carried 200ft up the Pennines by a small car and a motorcycle. We had discovered the pothole the previous week, a recent subsidence had exposed its mouth, and after a little digging we had been able to descend to a point about 40ft below ground, where we were stopped by a sharp constriction of the fissure.*



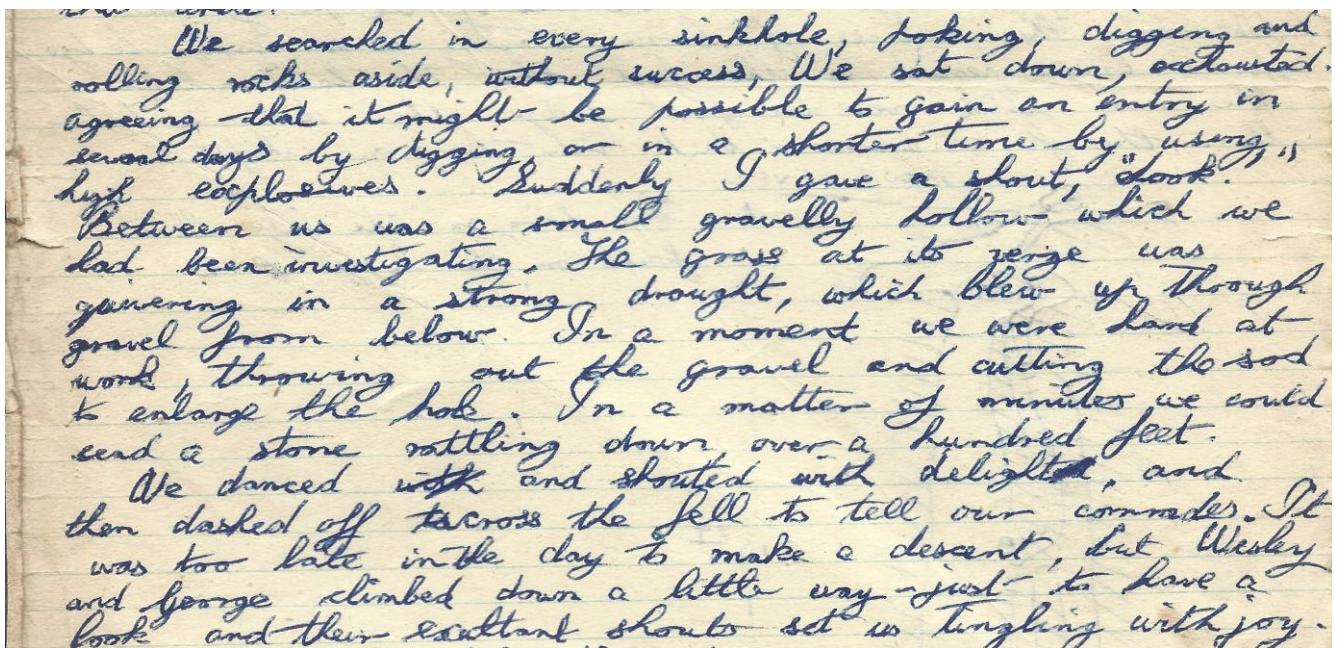
This morning it was decided that George Cornes and I should go down again armed with a hammer and chisel, attempt to force our way through, while Wesley, Oakes and Leslie Kitchen scouted around on the moor looking for fresh holes.

The place was too restricted to allow both of us to work at once, so we took turns with the hammer while. George and I made a thorough exploration of the pot as far as we had come. The first 20ft. the hole was quite vertical, roughly circular and about 4feet across. From the foot of this pitch one might descend the steeply sloping floor of a vertical fissure towards the sounds of hammer blows and strange grunts or step aside into a high fissure which tapered away to the right and left.

At its broadest point this cave was about 5 feet wide and its tapered roof must have reached nearly to the grass roots. There were a few straw stalactites, one group hung from a limestone buttress, some of them joining themselves onto the projecting walls 3 feet below.

At dinner time Wilf Taylor arrived. He was hailed with enthusiasm as the most penetrating of potholers - he is very slim! So Wesley and Lesley agreed to wield the hammer while Wilf stood by to descend and George and I prospected on the moor.

We set out to look at the "rising" where the Leck Beck a lusty stream gushes up out of the earth. On the way however we were attracted by a shallow valley containing limestone outcrops and scores of shake holes - conical depressions caused by the soil subsiding into caverns. Obviously there was a considerable system of caves in this area.

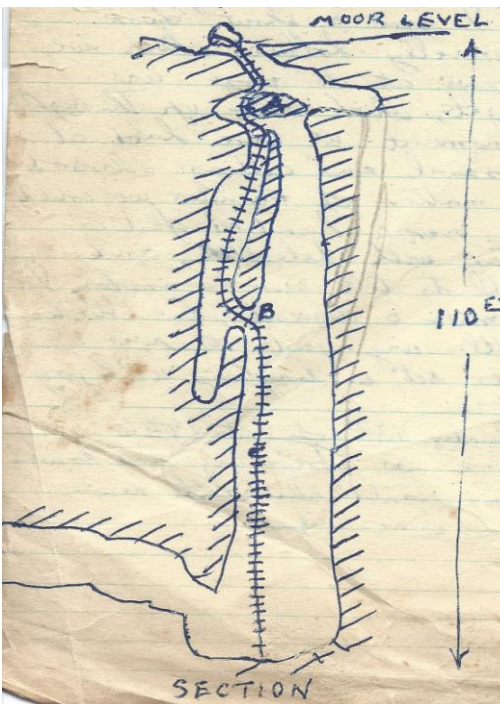


Part of the original hand written manuscript in the Red Rose library

We searched in every shake hole, poking, digging and rolling rocks aside without success. We sat down exhausted agreeing that it might be possible to gain an entry in several days by digging, or in a shorter time by using high explosives. Suddenly I gave a shout "Look" Between us was a small, gravelly hollow which we had been investigating. The grass at its verge was quivering in the strong draught which blew up through gravel from below. In a moment we were hard at work throwing out the gravel and cutting the sod to enlarge the hole. In a matter of minutes we could send a stone rattling down over a hundred feet. We danced and shouted with delight and then dashed off across the fell to tell our comrades. It was too late in the day to make a descent but Wesley and George climbed down a little way - just to have a look and their excellent shouts set us tingling with joy.

## The Descent - Sunday 13th. Oct 1946

The day had dawned at last and with high spirits we left Lancaster for them there hills. By 9-30 am we were all up on the moor and enjoying a hearty meal near the stream. This time our party which had swelled in numbers, consisted of Mr Taylor who was to take charge of the surface lifeline, his son R.W. Taylor, G. Cornes, W. Oakes, L. Kitchen, self and our two surveyors A. Gemmel and L. Barker. Unrolling our rope ladders we slid them down the hole and belayed to a convenient outcrop of limestone. Oakes roped up and descended while we played out the lifeline slowly. On reaching the second ledge Oakes unroped and we pulled up the line. Next L. Kitchen followed by Bill Taylor to the ledge. I followed next and stayed on the first ledge until Oakes reached the bottom, then I joined Bill and Kitchen on the second. We all then descended my place being filled by George Cornes who stayed on the ledge until the rest of the party had descended. This instance of Cornes staying on a damp ledge for a long period is the fact that the ladder leaves the main pitch over the first ledge, then down a "Tub" then through a window back to the main shaft. This being so the lifeline fouls on the ledges A. B.



*Believed to be the first ever survey of Lancaster Hole entrance shaft. (circa 1946)*

On reaching the bottom I looked up and saw an impressive sight. The ladder streaked down from the dimly lit shaft and a small amount of water fell from the opposite side. The entrance looked like a tiny pin point of light. Truly an unforgettable sight to an explorer. But with virgin caverns ahead not forgetting, Oakes Bill, Kitchen, I hurried up hurried up the cavern to catch up with them. Oakes and Kitchen I found poking down an eyehole in the floor. As for Bill he'd disappeared into regions unknown leaving Oakes and Kitchen. I scrambled up the rock strewn slope and stopped suddenly. Before me spread out was a large chamber strewn with large boulders. Climbing gingerly down the steep slope I soon reached the bottom. Shining my head lamp round the chamber I saw its roof must be anything from 40 to 80 feet high and its length approx 100ft. Searching round for fresh fields of conquest I noticed a passage leading off. This I decided to explore and was soon proceeding along it. After a few yards the passage narrowed down and I had to get down on hands and knees. After a few feet I encountered thick sticky mud.

I was prepared of course for mud or anything but being spoiled for choice I retraced my steps back to the chamber,

On reaching it I was hailed by Bill Taylor from a point well up in the roof at the farthest point of the chamber. I climbed towards his light and after a tricky bit over loose rock reached a passage which led off

from the roof of the chamber. Bill had by this time gone on so I set off after him. This passage although low and dirty in parts contained some beautiful encrustations. In fact one grotto is very beautiful indeed. Continuing on I soon reached a chamber. The sight that met me eyes was a potholers dream come true. I gasped with surprise and babbled away

*Ed: Here the manuscript suddenly ends mid page, one can only guess what he had seen for the first time .... The Colonnades?*

## ***Library Additions: October 2019 - January 2020***

### **Journals:**

BCRA	- CREG: Journal Issue. 108
	- Cave and Karst Science Vol. 46 No. 3
	- Review 2018
Cave Diving Group	- Newsletter No. 213
Derbyshire Caving Association	- Newsletter No. 152
Descent	- No. 271.
Grampian S. G.	- Bulletin Fifth Series Vol. 3 No. 2.
RRCPC	- News-Sheet No. 354
	- Newsletter Vol. 56 No. 3.
South Wales Caving Club	- Newsletter No. 136.
Societa Speleologica Italiana	- Speleologia No. 81.
Wessex C.C.	- Journal Nos. 329, 333-340 (by donation), 351-352.
White Rose Pothole Club	- Newsletter Vol 38 Issue 3

### **Recent Book Additions:**

The Cave - about Thailand cave rescue.  
Caves of Mid West Ireland (2019)

### **Recent Surveys Additions:**

Ogof Draenan (1995), Quaking Pot (1983), Birks Fell Cave (1969/70),  
Goatchurch Cavern (undated), Swildon's Hole (1995),  
Gaping Gill System including Ingleborough Cave (undated)  
Witches Cave with Shuttleworth Pot entrance (2012)

The club has also received a number of older publications from the librarian of the Craven Pothole club which will fill in several of our missing items. Our thanks to them.

*The librarian has now transferred most of the clubs library - Books, Journals, DVD's and Archive material to the new library room at Bullpot Farm.*

*Members wishing to use the library please contact any committee member who hold a key. The library is an excellent reference facility, please respect it - but above all please use it.*

### **Reciprocal Rights:**

**The Club has now formally agreed reciprocal rights for RRCPC members when staying at the Orpheus Caving Club hut in Derbyshire**  
**Full details in next News-Sheet**

### **Christmas Cards**

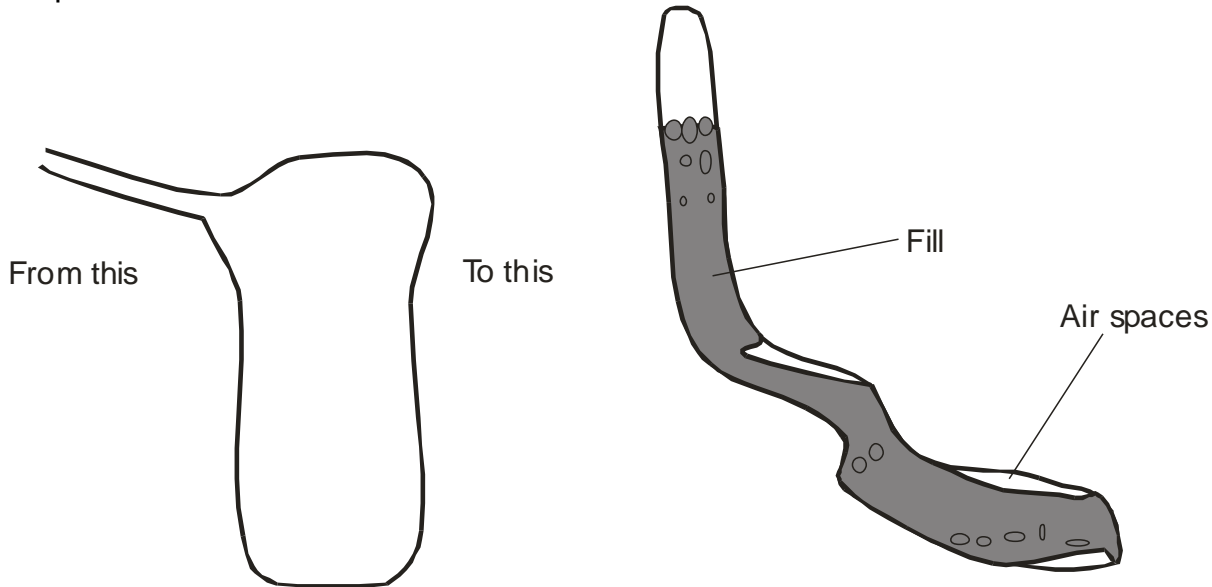
**Thanks to all who purchased Christmas Cards this last year**

**Our thanks are due to Sue Osborne for producing these.**



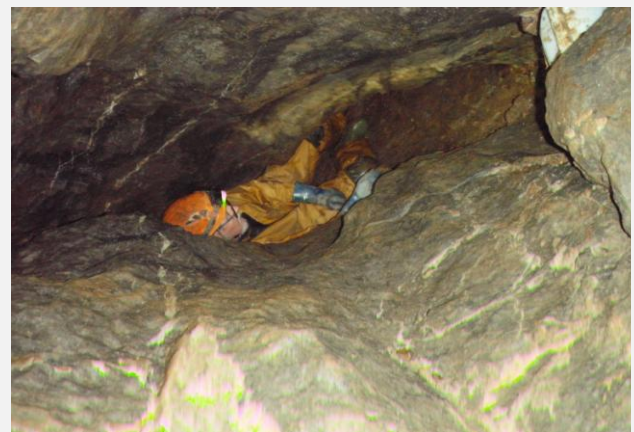
## ***Trials and Tribulations - Rollerball***

After the big dig session in summer, us Rollerballers were hoping to romp into the bigger stuff with ease, not so. Having cleaned up the end and dug down in the floor we found the standing room passage to have changed shape and become even more difficult to work. It's now this shape.....



We started 'capping' the bulge on the left of the almost bedding to make it large enough to excavate the bedding. Sam's third cap hole swallowed the capping rod and wouldn't let go of it. We couldn't believe it was only in about 10 cm but would it come out, no! We hammered and belted it but eventually I had to set off a couple of caps next to the hole to blow the offending rock to bits and release the end piece of the banging rods.

The bedding bit of the face is filled with multi-layered sediments of clay, calcite, gravel and small cobbles with spaces appearing beyond. The vertical piece of the passage is clear of fill and very clean at the top but is only about 10cm wide, this is where most of the draught appears to emanate. There's still a little water at the foot of the passage but it isn't a problem at the moment as there are a few large capped blocks keeping our feet out of the poo. Although it looks like the progress is going to be slower, as we'll have to bang a lot more rock out of the way, it'll be a lot more pleasant as there'll be lovely clean



*Andy Hall at the Dig Face*

rock rather than masses of bags of clay and mud. Well that's what we're hoping for and as it is Christmas, you never know what Santa will bring. Are we going to drop into the Pre-Cambrian series of Aygill, who knows? At the present time the end is about 25 metres above the highest point in the Pre-Cambrian and 15 metres away from it horizontally, so maybe a pitch would sort it?

***Ray Duffy***

## **Boxing Day walk - Penyghent**

*Party:- Andrew & Jane Dewhurst, Tim & Heather Eastwood, Dalek, Andy Hall, Pete, Sarah, Matthew and Ellie Hall, Bob Johnston and Ros Berry, Sam Lieberman, Carol Makin, Bill & Sue Osborne, Steve Round, Alan & Mavis Speight, Malcolm Starkings, Helen Titchmarsh & Katherine, Paul, Sammy, Sandra and Mel Wilkinson.*

After a beautiful calm Christmas Day the forecast for Boxing Day was dire - high winds and rain in the middle part of the day. Did that put anyone off? not a bit, the Red Rose was out in force!! It was a bit nippy, well absolutely Baltic, even when putting on our gear in the car park. Come eleven o'clock we were off, as is traditional - to stay any longer could have invited frostbite - no time for faffing. I must admit it was a tad too fast for me, as when I reached the gate at the top of the lane near Brackenbottom I could see the column of walkers half way up the fell - so much for being leader!

The wind was strong and some of the party decided to go down when they reached the gate by the rocky climb to the summit and headed down the ridge towards Helwith Bridge and then back along the river. The rest of the group I never caught up, Carol and I had our lunch with Mel (who had waited for us) on the summit together with two new members Seb and Mark. Seb was carrying an ice axe and crampons (I felt he was on the wrong walk) and offered us all a tot of whisky. I was told later that the swift party had their lunch at Hunt Pot (see Sam Lieberman's great photos)

After all the buffeting, and straining against the wind, once over the summit it was calm and quite mild - what a difference. We met Andy Hall, Sam Lieberman and Pete Hall at Hull pot where we sat with them for tea and more offers of whisky listening to Andy regaling his hospital procedures. On the lane, descending back to Horton we were joined by a fell runner - it was Richard Timms who put on extra layers so he could accompany us down, telling us that Bill and Linda Sherrington were also behind doing the same walk.

So how many were we? - about thirty, yes thirty Red Rose members, it must be a record. Well done to all. And so to the pub. Again although I thought it was a little early it didn't seem to bother those early arrivals, everyone seemed to be happy and the food was good. WE were joined later by Simon and Sue our fiends friends from the Earby, when much quaffing of ale and whisky was enjoyed.

Sadly Stuart and Linda Johnson's car had broken down on their way over from Foxfield and phoned me to say that they would not be able to make it - hopefully next year.

Thanks all for coming - see you all next year.

**Sandra Wilkinson**

## **From the Log Book 2 - Rowton Pot**

*Monday 30th. Dec. Rowton Pot*

Toby, Gwen & Ian arrived to find NPC ropes already rigged. While we were standing around wondering where to go instead their de-rigging team (Clive & Dave) arrived and invited us to join their trip. So we went down on their ropes and did their de-rigging which seemed a fair exchange. The cave was nice and weather okay. Finished off nicely with beer and chips in the Marton Arms.

**Toby**

## 2019 Conservation Works

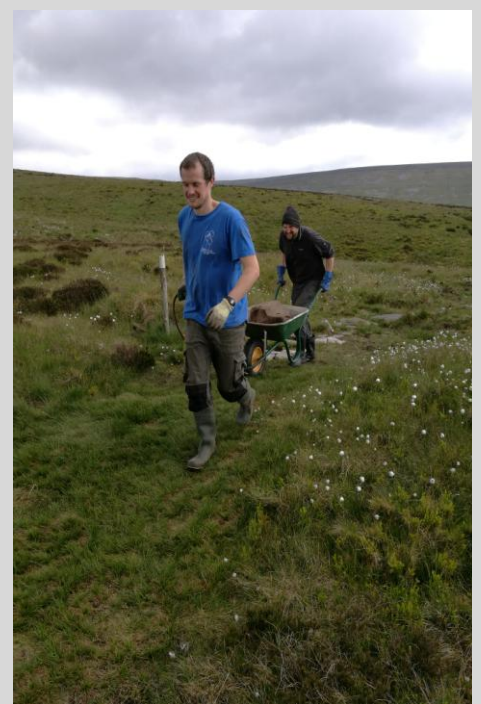
Last year there were two RRCPC conservation events, the first was dedicated to surface works in May and the second was an underground event during November. Both events were well attended by RRCPC members and friends.

### Surface works:

The ground was really dry and there were a lot of able bodies in attendance, so the focus was to move suitable stones and rock to locations along the County Pot path where remedial work was needed. Due to the amount of people in attendance and the hard work put in by all, we also managed to undertake remedial work with the stone moved. There are still piles of rock along the path ready for use but



*Sam and Julia fixing the footpath:*



*Noel and Tom moving stone:*

the majority of it got used up! We clearly made the work look fun as we even managed to coax in two further helpers who were on their way back from a caving trip!



*Some of the team enjoying a well earned break:*



*Emma Heron (CDG), Sam Allshorn (ULSA) and Dinny moving rock:*

*Photos taken by Holly Bradley*



## Underground works:

10 people attended these works, which was a mix of RRCPC members and members from other clubs responding to advertising by the CNCC on UK Caving. We divided into three teams to undertake stal cleaning and tape fixing in Slugworld, the Colonnades and Bob's Boss. There had been a lot of impact from visiting cavers in both Slugworld and the Colonnades, with a lot of mud on formations in Slugworld and footprints beyond the tape in the Colonnades.

A report was provided to the CNCC on this and an article was posted on the CNCC website, which can be found at:- <https://cncc.org.uk/news/20191203-lancaster-hole-cleanup>



*Sam Lieberman, Lisa Wootton (YSS) and Jason Clements (Kendal) cleaning Stal in Slugworld*

*Photo taken by Hugh Parker.....*

A big thanks to all those who helped on the day. You're all stars. It also makes for a good opportunity to catch up with you all.

**Holly Bradley**

## From the Log Book - 3

*Tues. 31st Dec 2019*

*Ray, Sam - Wretched Rabbit.*

*A short trip to stretch our legs and try out my new(ish) camera gear. 1st. job was to unblock the toilet in the changing room so Ray found some spare gloves in the lost property bin and set to. Job done we fought for a bit of space in the changing room and got changed.*

*A fabulous sunny walk over and then the fun began. At first I couldn't get the flash to fire but after some random faffing (and changing of batteries) it started to work. We took turns going down the big rift and both agreed the perfect shot wasn't possible due to the slight curve in the rift.*

*Anyway a successful 1st. outing with my new gear, just need to work out why the flashes wouldn't work with the camera on manual. Fantastic views and a sunset on the walk back. ( and some path mending )*

*Sam*

*With apologies to our esteemed President*

## **Twelve Moans of Duffy**

*Twelve Smashed Glasses  
Eleven Unruly Students  
Ten Empty Bottles  
Nine Crumb Filled Toasters  
Eight Freshers Spewing  
Seven Forks in the Knife Drawer  
Six Dead Mice  
Five Chained Ropes  
Four Dirty Pans  
Three Bust Chairs  
Two Shitty Suits  
and Vomit on all the New Seats*

**Anon.**

## ***Back in those days ... when we went caving!***

*What's so interesting here then?*

*An old photo from the early days. (circa 1966?) Yes it's your editor when he did go caving, accompanied by future wife Sandra - wondering what Jim Newton had inside that exposure suit that was so interesting.*

*Eccles (Ian Carruthers) in the background.*



## ***Blast from the past! - Jim's Memories***

***Diary dated February 21st 1965***

***Elbolton Cave and Pot, Elbolton West and Escoe House Hole***

*Team: Jim Newton, Ian Carruthers, Mel Wilkinson, Duncan Baldwin and Sandra Kilburn*

A cold day with snow on the tops. We asked permission to enter the caves from the farmer at Thorpe and then proceeded to the first hole. Elbolton cave seems to be part of a mine: true of most of these holes. The entrance is a short drop of about 15 feet which we laddered and descended into a fair-sized chamber. From there we clambered down a short pitch, through a large formation and slid along a chute to a deep pool, which I believe has been dived. We then retraced our steps to Elbolton pot, a 50 foot mine shaft on the very top of the hill. The shaft led into a chamber containing 5 or 6 passages; this proved quite entertaining and we explored every passage.

The next hole, Elbolton West, was merely a 70 foot shaft leading to 3 large chambers. We were soon above ground again and went on to the final hole, Escoe House Hole. This is an open shaft of about 20 feet straddled by a bridge. We descended and made our way through a low crawl and climbed a short pitch where we felt a strong draught blowing through jammed boulders. This was the end of the hole and the end of caving for the day: a light hearted pot holing trip.

***Illusion Pot - 3rd. November 2019***

*Party:- Martin, Matt, Christian, Tom, Jane.*

As I can't cave much due to a bad back, I was pleased to see a club trip advertised that I was confident that I could do. Six of us met up in Kingsdale on a chilly, damp November day. Booted and spurred we plodded up the rough field that leads to the footpath from Twistleton to Braida Garth and, after a bit of guesswork hit the right depression for Illusion Pot. The entrance is a concrete pipe entrance and then fixed ladders taking you down 3 short pitches into a crawl. Soon you meet a small streamway with mixed going, crawling and stooping with a few pretties in places. This eventually leads to a duck/sump. Nowadays it is usually sumped because not many people go through. Back when this route was being used for exploration, more traffic meant that you could often go through without the need to bail it. But it took us around half an hour of bailing to lower the water level enough to get through. The team rose to the occasion. There are plenty of tubs and buckets at the entrance to the duck which meant a lively bucket chain made fairly light work of the job. The duck is fed from an inlet that runs in wet weather from the outside of the sump. So if you want to go down in poor weather be aware of this. The inner end which debouches in the Expressway is only likely to have water running into it in extreme conditions. But it is this far end that is more constricted, so it is well to bail a bit more than just enough so when it comes to getting out, you don't have problems. There is a rope through the whole thing.

Anyway, after a couple of checks and a bit more bailing, we were through into the impressive Expressway. This is a big passage full of mounds of mud deposits going left and right from the slope up from the duck. Impressed mutterings came from those who hadn't been here before. There's quite a lot to see in the Expressway. Helpfully someone had a Scurrion which illuminated the big aven above our heads. We went off to see the pretties which are at the end of the left branch of the Expressway. One thing that is lovely about Illusion is that many of the formations have a pinky, orangey colour. The Expressway ends in a beautiful grotto of straws and stal, but a shimmy down a hole in the floor brings you to a blocked chamber at the other side of the grotto. I didn't go down, not being confident in my climbing abilities anymore, but it was lovely to see the lights of the others through the grotto backlighting the formations.

We then moved on in the other direction. The whole Expressway has been partially blocked by fill and you make easy progress over its muddy, hummocky floor. It ends in a muddy choke. Not long before this is a sandy slide down into the top of Rushton's chamber. This means you come in at roof level to a vista of straws and the chamber dipping away below you. We went down to the top of the traverse leading to the Dale Barn Sump. I have been across this in the past and know it's now beyond my capabilities, so I waited whilst the more intrepid members of the team went across to visit the sump. There is a line on the traverse but bear in mind it will have been there for a long time if you decide to use it.

We decided to give Perfidia a miss. It's a long flat out crawl leading from to top of Rushton's chamber to a dig. So we trundled back out and slithered our way back down the hill to get changed. The company on the trip was very friendly and congenial and I had a really great time having the chance to get underground again. So thanks to Tom and Emma for organising it.

I was involved to a small extent in the original excavation of Illusion Pot and thought it might be of interest to some to know a bit more of its history.

The system itself is part of Dale Barn Cave in Chapel le Dale and runs right under Scales Moor to Kingsdale. The description of Illusion is in the Dale Barn description in Northern Caves.



It was explored and pushed by divers back in the early 1990s. Not much new passage has been found in Illusion since they explored it to my knowledge.

Sadly, nowadays it is not possible to go into Dale Barn as the entrance has been blocked. I visited it some years ago, and unless you knew exactly where it had been it would be impossible to spot. In the 1990s, divers were keen to get a dry way in to the far reaches as it is a tough trip to get there through Dale Barn. With the help of Bob Mackin, they radio located the end of the passage leading out of the Expressway to what is now Illusion Pot. With permission, Bob and others then dug down the present entrance to Illusion and connected it to Dale Barn. I was very privileged to be one of the first to go down the new connection with Bob Mackin in 1993. The cave has changed little since then. The muddy crawls have got bigger and easier through passage of people, and sadly some of the cracked mud floor in the Expressway has been trodden on. But most is still the same.

My husband, Toby got a brief claim to fame as the NCC's "Secret Weapon" as a series called "Cutting Edge" was doing a documentary on the CRO and filmed him near the bottom of the entrance ladders in Illusion where he had taken to push a particularly tight and nasty little inlet. I have had the dubious delight of going to the end of Perfidia. Diggers thought that this might be dry way into the rest of Dale Barn, so were putting some effort into excavating the end. I have a lovely friend who came to caving at the ripe old age of 50. She is majorly enthusiastic and for her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday trip did Lancaster to Wretched Rabbit! Anyway, I took her down Illusion sometime in the mid-90s and suggested to her that we might go a short way down Perfidia because there are some nice orange formations not far in. Off we went, and I kept asking her if she'd had enough. "Oh no," she said, "this is wonderful, it's so relaxing to the muscles". She's built like a racing snake, unlike me, and so gritting my teeth, we crawled and crawled and crawled. All of Perfidia is pretty much flat out on mud, with brief respite from what people have dubbed "German Helmets". These are solution pockets in the roof which look like First World War German helmets. The crawl goes on hundreds of feet. The highlight for my friend came when she spied a pair of wellies at the dig attached to the legs of Andy Walsh who was digging there with Phil Pappard. "Are those really Andy Walsh's legs?" she enthused, "how marvellous". After a brief chat with the diggers, who pretty much took the same dim view that I did about the crawl, we set off back. But all in all, I'm glad I did it just the once. I think the dig petered out, but don't know whether it was the off putting crawl or an obstacle at the far end that stopped it.

If I was going to dig in Illusion, I would take a good look at the place, back before the duck where water sinks in the floor. Even after bailing the duck, this sink happily takes all the water and when the inlet before the duck runs, what doesn't top up the duck must run down here and away. It isn't anything to do with the Expressway. The water disappears between boulders. Some persuasion would be needed to enlarge this hole for a look. It's not far into the cave, just before the choice of climbing a mud bank or crawling under boulders which take you shortly to the duck. So far I don't think it's had any takers. Maybe someone will have a look someday.

***Jane Chilton.***

## ***Cavern 32 Extension Extension***

Hugh St Lawrence and I have had a few trips into Cavern 32 area of Bullpot of the Witches. This is a large chamber accessed from South Chamber in the entrance area via a muddy pool and crawl. The chamber is boulder filled with several holes in the floor and a way on in the roof at the far end. A loose climb up here leads to a way down to the left through boulders and following the left wall through a vertical squeeze and 2 metre drop to a hands and knees passage heading south with holes in the floor and water entering from the roof. This is the water from Hidden Pot and the way through 19. w blocked. Straight on along the awkward hands and knees crawl leads to a low passage and the sound of water ahead. We became interested in the area as the passages around here are at the same level as those in Gale Garth Pot and end of Casserole Pot. Perhaps we could force a connection.



*Survey Station Cavern 32*

We made several return trips to the end of the passage as it has a draft. We first returned with capping gear and managed to cap the two holes in the floor. The first was blind at the bottom and rather loose. The second one lead down a 2 metre climb down to water and loose rocks. We later connected this to the end of Crystal Palace Passage mentioned below. Capping at the end of the main crawl proved rather awkward as we had to negotiate a dogleg in the passage at the end but we could see into a low continuation.

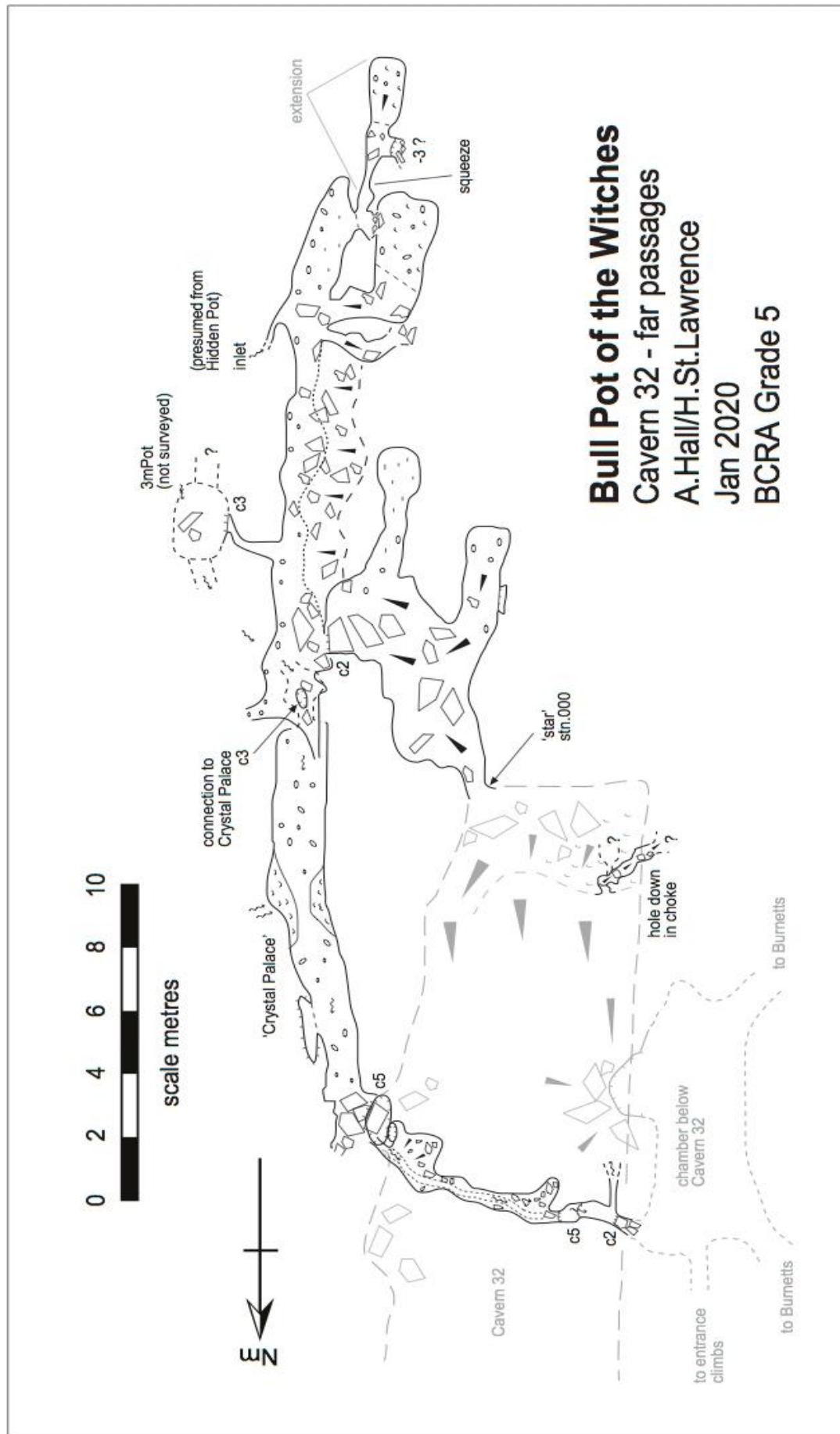
We returned on another trip with a snapper and more capping gear. We managed to get the capping rods jammed, lots of swearing and left being chased out by the snapper fumes! On a third trip we were joined by Bill Sherrington but he could not get past the squeeze and vertical drop. I ended up with two bags and had a sense of humour failure! However the snapper had done its job and with a bit more hammering and snappering

Hugh was able to squeeze forward into about 5metres of passage to another choke of boulders with no obvious way on but still a draft.

The next trip saw us surveying in this area. Back at the middle of Cavern 32 under the left wall is a 2 metre climb down to a large flat block. Two ways on are possible from here. To the right the climb down continues to a walking stream-way past a strange calcite area known as the Crystal Palace with a roof inlet. It eventually gets too low upstream but at the end there is a connection up now through boulders to the upper passage mentioned above that we had previously capped.



*Crystal Palace*





Downstream from Crystal Palace is an awkward squeeze through calcite teeth to a continuation of the streamway. This is more easily reached by squeezing down the left side of the flat block mentioned above for about 4 metres to a boulder filled chamber. This is much easier to ascend on the return. The way on is down two 2 metre cascades. At the foot of the second is a 3 metre climb up to emerge at the top of the boulder slope and a slippery exposed climb up back to Cavern 32, while continuing the rift leads on into other parts of the cave and still needs surveying.

We also investigated some holes at the far end of Cavern 32 at the top of the loose climb which still needs looking at. Capping needed here. A return is planned for surveying and capping.

**Andy Hall**

## **More Jim's Memories**

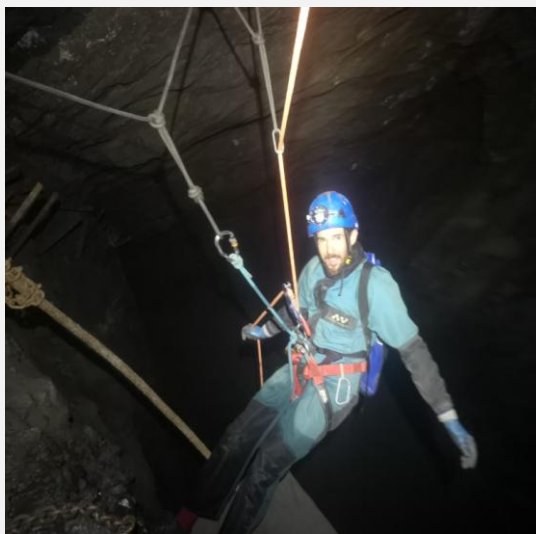
**Diary dated May 16th, 1965     Nettle Pot, Derbyshire**

*Team: Jim Newton, Jim Eyre, John Frankland, Ian Carruthers, Duncan Baldwin and David Hodgson*

We stayed in the Eldon Club Hostel on the Saturday night and met John at the hole the next morning. The initial pitch of 180 feet was tight for the first 80 feet but then improved. Jim Eyre, Duncan and myself descended with some difficulty lowering tackle to the bottom of the pitch. Next came a 25 foot pitch and a traverse over a deep hole to the old winch and the 180 foot "Elizabeth" shaft. It was a glorious descent, free for most of the way. At the bottom was a small shaft of about 30 feet, which was choked.

The winch provided a good pull back up Elizabeth shaft and Jim and I soon changed places with the others after considerable thrutching in the tight bits! We then had a long wait until at last Duncan appeared followed by the stacks of tackle and various sweaty cavers. A good trip.

**Jim Newton**



### **BEEN CAVING RECENTLY?**

**Well your editor would be very grateful if you would put pen to paper and send him an account of your adventure - Any photos? They would be most welcome.**

**Here is one sent in by Jack Overhill of James Hutchins, RRCP member descending a pitch in Cwmorthin**

**Send to  
[m.wilkinson@btinternet.com](mailto:m.wilkinson@btinternet.com)**

## ***Dentdale Progress: Dye Tests and New Caves Explored***

Hugh and I have spent some time over the last few months doing dye tests and looking for caves in Dentdale. This was initiated by Hugh and I discussing the reopening of How Gill Cave (Harry Long's Secret Dentdale Cave). This cave was discovered by Harry Long and Ian Plant back in 1969/70 and is reputed to be a mile long and well decorated. I reported in this in the last Newsletter. (*Red Rose Newsletter Vol. 56 No.3 October 2019*)

The survey and description has never been published due to access issues and the fact that it is flood prone and extremely well decorated. Red Rose members including myself and Hugh rediscovered it in 1983 and I did some positive dye testing in the area and realized its full potential, possibly the longest cave in Dentdale. How Gill Cave goes to one of the risings at The Kelds in Dentdale about 70m lower than the entrance.(see Appendix) We have been searching the area for other possible sinks for the system. Hugh St Lawrence has negotiated access to this cave with the new landowners, who were very keen to help provided it does not get lots of visitors. We have constructed a sturdy scaffold frame and wooden lid over the 4m entrance shaft of this flood prone cave to keep access open over the winter, as it is easily blocked by flood debris. We hope to resurvey it in the spring in drier weather.

*See: Limestones and Caves of North West England (p.233) Jan 1974 by Tony Waltham (Editor)*

In October and November with the help of Bob Daunton we have done more work on the entrance area to try to protect it from flooding using cemented dam and capping obstructing boulders in the main stream bed. Hugh has been in the cave as far as the short pitch about 15 minutes from the entrance. This needs bolting to give a dry hang for the ladder and that will be our next objective. We have also dye tested another sink via an inlet to the same rising. See Dye Test 1 below.



*Hugh exits How Gill Cave after trip to top of pitch*

More recently we have been investigating the hydrology on the south side of Dentdale between the lower section of Deepdale Beck to the area west of Dent village. There are a number of sinks on or below the Great Scar Limestone boundary along the southern slopes of Dentdale. There are also sinks and risings higher up in the Hardraw Scar Limestone bed. Besides How Gill the other main stream coming off the south side of Dentdale in this area is Yellow Gill and two small caves are known along its length, Yellow Gill Pot and Yellow Gill Sink.

I dye tested Yellow Gill Sink to one of The Keld Risings (see list in Appendix below) some years ago. Yellow Gill Pot is listed in the "Northern Caves Three Counties" guide book but the exact location had been lost and only six figure grid reference is given.

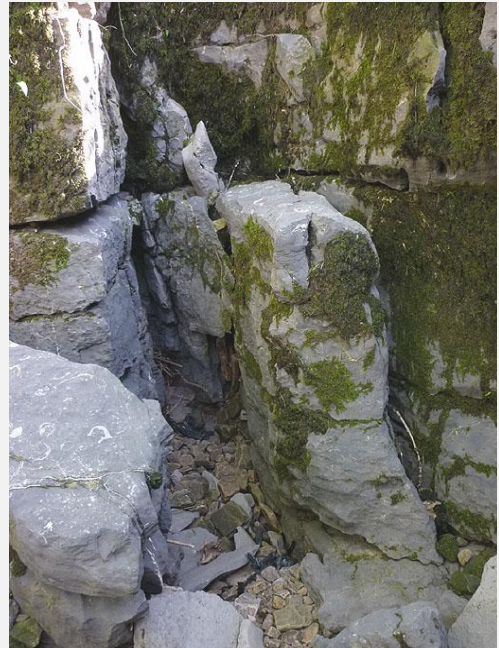
It was discovered by Lancashire Caving and Climbing Club in 1983. It is supposed to be 200m long and 15m deep. Hugh and I had a bit of a search for the entrance without success. I decided to do a bit of research.

I did a Google search for photos of Yellow Gill Pot and came up with a picture of the entrance on the Geograph website. <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/5369982> It was taken by Karl



Lunt (LCCC), who I remembered from years ago and I got in touch with him but he has been unable to find the survey they did at the time. We have been to the entrance using the photo to locate it and pulled out some flood debris and we will be back with more digging gear on a dry day when the gill is not running to reopen the cave and hopefully do a survey. It does sound rather tight but we can always sort that out!

During our recent investigations in Yellow Gill we have found three small caves which may on further exploration lead to the Yellow Gill system that lies between Yellow Gill Sink (228m OD) and the resurgence at The Kelds (140m OD). This sink was dye tested to Rising 7 at The Kelds back in 1983. While talking to the farmer at Green Well house he mentioned a shaft entrance that had recently fallen in on his land. We went to look at this in early November. It is located directly under a dry stone wall next to the lower part of Yellow Gill. We spent some time making the entrance safe with scaffolding as it had a lot of overhanging boulders. We also rebuilt the drystone wall. It is about 6 meters deep to a small stream passage at the bottom. An added problem was that an inlet spout flowed into the shaft about 1 meter down filling the shaft with a jet of water making digging at the bottom extremely unpleasant. On a following trip in early December we took a length of



*Yellow Gill Pot Entrance*

plastic pipe to contain the water spout down one side of the shaft and Hugh was able to get near to the bottom but it is rather narrow and we need to wait for drier weather, when hopefully the water spout will dry up. We tried dye testing this water from Smorthwaite Gill but no success. Where does the spout inlet come from and where does it resurgence. We called it Puzzle Pot and we will be back. Another dye test needed here. Hugh had a poke around with a



*Puzzle Pot Scaffold*

bar in Yellow Gill either side of the road where Yellow Gill crosses it by the lime kiln. He found a couple of shafts. The one below the bridge looked very promising so we spent some time with hammer and chisel and capping gear to open up a narrow slot at the side of the dry gill. We were able to climb down a 2.5m drop to a ledge to another 2.5m drop to a stream passage.



*Garlic Wood Cave*

The initial excitement was short lived as the stream passage at the bottom was only about two body lengths long. The water came out of a sump and disappeared into a low wet bedding but there was a draft. Again we will have to come back in drier weather! We called it Garlic Wood Cave after the wood it is in. Does this water connect with Puzzle Pot?



The other hole above the road (Borehole Pot) is on the opposite bank to the obvious capped borehole shaft near the road was even narrower and had hanging rocks above a 5m drop, too narrow at the bottom. This looks a less interesting site but it does take a reasonable stream in wet weather. What all this does show is that there is some sort of cave system below Yellow Gill and we need to reopen and hopefully survey Yellow Gill Pot.

After Hugh's failed test from Smorthwaite Gill (Dye Test 2) we decided to repeat it but insert detectors at Barth Bridge Risings this time. (Dye Test 3). It has been thought in the past that this rising takes water from the area around Gawthrop and Oliver Gill, which runs through Gawthrop. Indeed that is what is published in the latest CDG Sump Index (p.8). We searched for sinks in Oliver Gill but none were found.



*Dye being inserted at Smorthwaite Gill sink*

The test from Smorthwaite Gill proved positive and this means that there must be a cave system under Dent village. More tests will be carried out on other sinks in the area. Mill Beck Sink Cave is the only known cave in this area but does not appear to have been dye tested. In the CDG Sump Index (p260) it states that the destination of the water flowing into the sumps in the cave is unknown although it is suspected to flow to Barth Bridge Risings or some unknown rising in the bed of the River Dee.

We have found no evidence of such a rising in the river bed. So that is another test we need to do. At present there is no access to Mill Beck Sink Cave as the entrance has a sturdy welded grid over the entrance and no permission will be given.

Our attention was also drawn to the area higher up the fell side south of How Gill. From a study of the geological map a tributary of How Gill appeared to resurge at the base of the Hardraw Scar Limestone bed at Nun House Rising (SD 7167 8528). This is the source of Lang Rick Beck. Hugh setup another dye test (Test 4 below) and this showed that the line of sinks to the south of Nun House were the source of the water. The water must run along the strike of the Hardraw Limestone bed.



*Mill Beck Sink Cave.  
No way in here!*

The most interesting of these is at SD 7193 8490 (Bursock High Sink) in Bursock Gill just below a waterfall formed by the Hardraw Scar Limestone bed. Here all the water disappears underground even though the map shows a stream all the way down to the road. On investigation the way on seemed to be blocked by a large rock and an old milk churn. We had a chat with the farmer and he gave us the go ahead to have a dig.

*Bursock High Sink*

On a sunny day in early January 2020 Bob Daunton and I staggered up the hill with scaffolding bars, planks and capping gear to see if we could make any progress. Hugh joined us at lunch with more bars and clamps, by which time we had capped and removed the large boulder and a considerable amount of loose material from around the milk churn. The afternoon was spent emptying out the churn and surrounding debris, adding scaffold frame, shoring and then dragging out the churn. At the bottom of the rift was a continuing passage but we were unable to enter as more shoring was needed and the ongoing passage looked rather wet. We will be back here again as well.

*Milk Churn in Hole*

That is all for now in Dentdale. We still have plenty to do in the area and more exploration to come. If anyone wants to give us a hand just let Hugh or I know. We often go on a Tuesday during the week or on weekends.

**Andy Hall**

*The Milk churn is out!*

## **Appendix:**

### **Recent Dye Test Results using Optical Brightening Agent (Leucaphor)**

#### **DYE TEST 1.**

#### **29/10/2019 0.5 litre OBA Inserted**

Sink in small stream at SD 71409 85997 approx 200m NW of Howgill Cave

Detectors placed at four sites at Keld Risings as below:

- 1 SD 7131 8666 In trees to North of No.2. **POSITIVE. Collected 05/11/19**
- 2 SD 7129 8665 Next to track. NEG
- 3 SD 7114 8673 In corner of field near fence. NEG
- 4 Left hand inlet in entrance series of Howgill Cave. **POSITIVE Collected 03/12/19**

The rising next to the track was completely dry on 03/12/19 after a week of quite dry weather.



## **DYE TEST 2.**

Smorthwaite Gill dye test SD 7073 8654 0.5 litre OBA  
Negative at all risings at the The Keld, not even the faintest trace.  
Where does it go? Repeated as below.

## **DYE TEST 3.**

Smorthwaite Gill Sink repeat test SD 7073 8654 on 18/12/2019  
0.5l in sink and detectors in at Barth Bridge and just downstream of confluence of all The Keld risings.  
Detectors collected by HSL on 21/12/19. Both detectors +ve at Barth Bridge Risings. Nothing from The Keld.

## **DYE TEST 4.**

Hardraw Scar sink (Dockle Sike Sink) positive to Nun House Rising, (SD 716 852) 1.2 km approx and 40m drop.

## **The Keld Risings** (all around 140m OD)

**There are 7 springs recorded by the British Geological Survey ID: 2619  
Ref SD78NW19. British Nat Grid: 371300,486630**

Keld Springs No. 1-7 numbered East to West

- 1 SD 71427 86759 possible rising for lower Deepdale Beck sinks. Needs dye test in drier weather
- 2 SD 71380 86738 possible rising for lower Deepdale Beck sinks. Needs dye test in drier weather
- 3 SD 71316 86726
- 4 SD 71320 86660 Under Trees (pheasant plantation). Rising for Howgill Cave.
- 5 SD 71301 86626 Next to track (flood rising, dries up in dry weather)
- 6 SD 71241 86674 Muddy boggy area
- 7 SD 71139 86744 By fence to the West of the others. Rising for Yellow Gill Sink

## **Chemical measurements taken on 03/12/19. Weather quite dry**

- 1 Not measured
- 2 pH=5.9 7.4°C 118 ppm
- 3 pH=5.9 7.5°C 118 ppm
- 4 pH=5.9 7.0°C 121 ppm
- 5 No water, very dry day
- 6 Not measured
- 7 pH=5.9 7.5°C 120 ppm

The relatively low Calcium ppm concentration and acidic pH suggest rapid through put of the waters from the sinks.

## **Barth Bridge Risings** (Alt:128m OD)

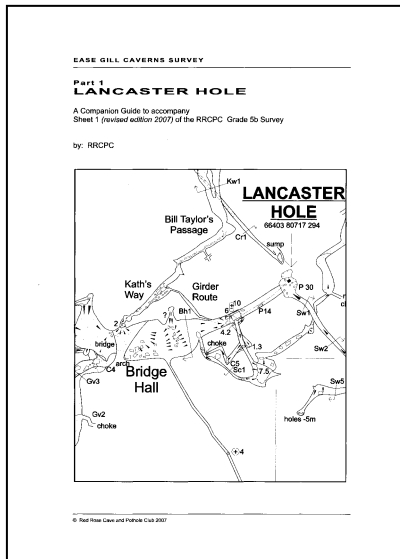
Twin risings south bank of the River Dee 100 m south-east of Barth Bridge to West of Dent village (SD 6956 8785). A considerable amount of water resurges but the area is blocked by rocks and boulder clay and digging prospects look unpromising. Clear water and the measurements taken below suggest the water is partly percolation water but the test above from Smorthwaite Gill suggests that there is dry cave passage between the risings and Dent village area. More tests from other sinks required.

Chemical test on 18/12/19: pH=7.0 8.9°C. 213ppm



## Publications for Sale

### Easegill Caverns Survey



**Sheet 1 – Lancaster Hole Area (2<sup>nd</sup>. Edition 2007)**  
with accompanying guide, covers the Lancaster Hole area and eastwards to Stake Pot.

**Sheet 2 – Stake Pot to Snail Cavern Area (2<sup>nd</sup>. Edition 2011)**  
with accompanying guide, covers most of the Stake Pot Inlet series (Earby Series) and the main drain and high level routes eastwards to Oxbow Corner

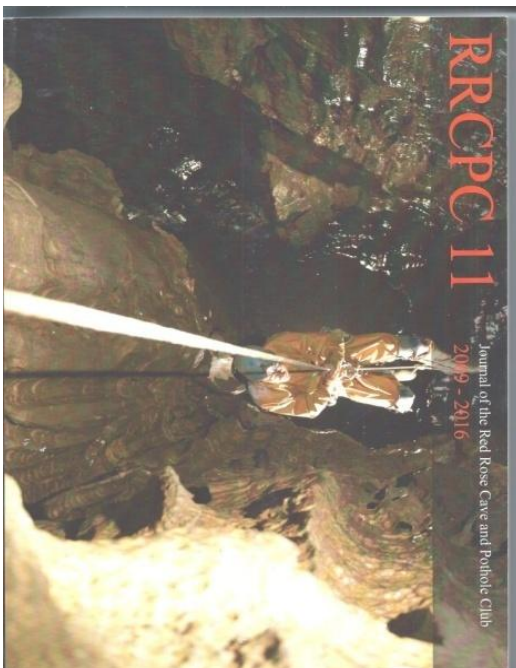
**Sheet 3 – Snail Cavern Area to Holbeck Junction**  
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