

Some organisations working with cavers

Natural England ...supports the scientific exploration of caves and work to discover new caves. Without this work we would have no information on the extent of caves nor understand as much as we do about how cave systems have developed. Knowledge from cavers undertaking trips down known cave systems is also invaluable in keeping us informed of the condition of cave systems and alerting us to problems. (See useful contacts and links)



Sediment sequence: Masson Cavern. Photo David Webb.

The Derbyshire Caving Association (DCA)...represents local caving organisations and individual members and strives to promote good relations between cavers, landowners, farmers and the general public. It also represents cavers' interests by liaising with government bodies such as Natural England. The DCA through its Conservation Team is dedicated to the conservation of caves and mines, (it will for example obtain supplies of suitable conservation materials), and works closely with other conservation interests in the region. The Association negotiates access agreements to caves and mines and helps protect the interests of farmers on whose land the caves and mines are situated. (See useful contacts and links)

The Environment Agency (EA)...is committed to working with cavers and with their help several sources of pollution have been successfully eliminated resulting in a cleaner underground environment. Please remember to inform them if you wish to undertake any dye tracing work or if you discover any other possible source of pollution. (See useful contacts and links).

The Cave Conservation Monitoring Scheme

It is the statutory duty of Natural England to ensure cave SSSIs remain in good condition. The Derbyshire SSSI Cave Monitoring Project was set up by Natural England to achieve this through regular monitoring of caves. This work is done with the valuable assistance of DCA and local cavers.

It is due to their commitment and hard work that the scheme has been successfully running in Derbyshire for nearly seven years and in recognition of this the DCA has been awarded two special conservation prizes. It has also been used as an example of best practice for other caving regions such as Yorkshire (CNCC), out of which has grown the Northern Caves Project.

Monitoring forms have been devised for each cave system and cavers are asked to complete these on return to the surface to provide information on the condition of the cave and the specified features in it.

Natural England stress that monitoring can only take place if it forms part of a normal caving trip.

On completion the form is sent via DCA's Conservation Officer to Natural England who are then able to make an overall assessment of the condition of the cave system. The scheme is ongoing and it is hoped to have a steady flow of forms throughout the year so the status of our caves can be assessed continuously. It also provides an opportunity for cavers to feedback any issues that Natural England should be aware of. If you would like further information on the project or would like to get involved please visit our website and download a form <http://www.peakcavemonitoring.org.uk>

Mineralisation: selenite crystals. Photo David Webb.



Useful contacts and links

Natural England

Peak District and Derbyshire Team
East Midlands Region, 'Endcliffe',
Deepdale Business Park
Ashford Road, Bakewell,
Derbyshire, DE45 1GT
t: 0300 060 2228
e: peak.derbys@naturalengland.org.uk
www.naturalengland.org.uk

Derbyshire Caving Association

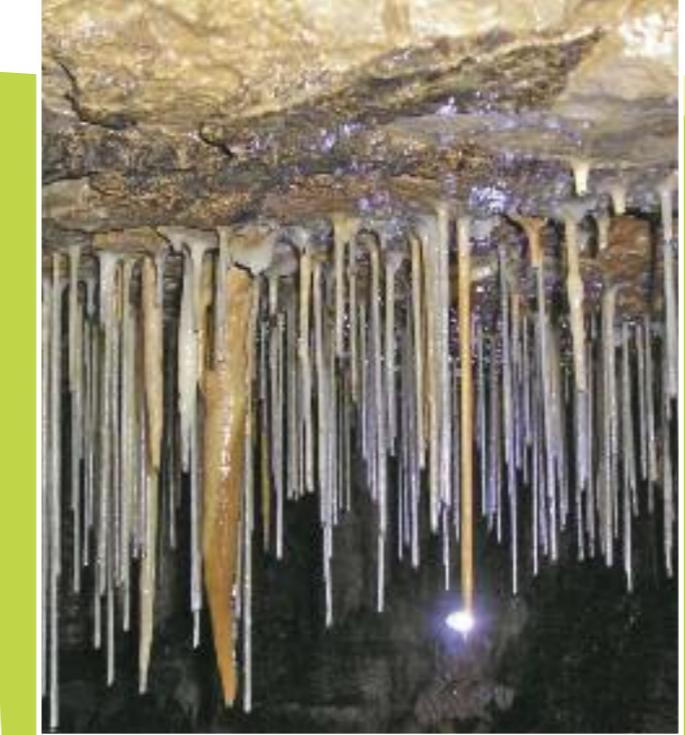
Conservation Team
e: conservation-off@thedca.org.uk
www.thedca.org.uk

Archaeology

Derbyshire County Council
County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG
t: 01629 539774
www.derbyshire.gov.uk

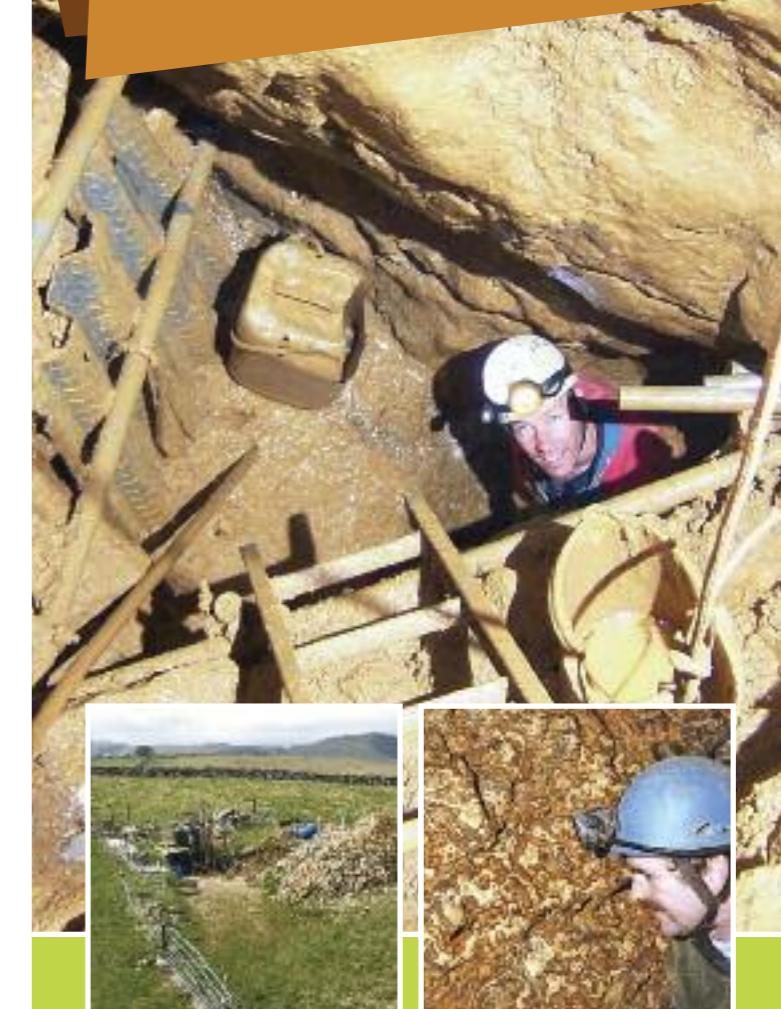
Cover photos:

Main image: Dave "Moose" Nixon in Western Extension dig -Titan, David Webb.
Small images: Left: Titan dig compound - Hurdlow, Peter Neville.
Right: Mineralisation: Rutland Cavern, David Webb.



Speleothems: Dreamtime roof decoration. Photo Ralph Johnson.

Cave Digging on SSSIs ? Before you start.... A Guide to Good Practice





Titan dig: Dave "Moose" Nixon in scaffolded boulder choke. Photo David Webb.



Cave Passage Morphology: Water Icicle Close Cavern. Photo Simon Brooks.



Taped pathway in Dreamtime. Photo Alan Keen.

CAVES...form a unique and vulnerable part of our natural and archaeological heritage as well as being a valuable scientific and recreational resource. There are, therefore, many reasons why they are protected and it is important that they are conserved for the benefit of future generations.

Archaeologists, in common with other disciplines with an interest in caves and mines, wish to work in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation. (See useful contacts and links).

SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST... (known as SSSIs) are important for their wildlife value or their geological interest, or in many cases both. Natural England is the Government's adviser on the natural environment providing practical advice, based on scientific understanding, on how best to safeguard England's natural wealth for the benefit of everyone. Its work includes notification and protection of SSSIs, providing advice and disseminating knowledge on nature conservation, landscape and related access issues.

ARCHAEOLOGY... Cave entrances sometimes provided shelter for man and animals from earliest times through to the medieval period, while prehistoric people sometimes made burials deep inside. Sediments with artefacts, bones and environmental material are a valuable resource for archaeological study. Care needs to be taken as these are very vulnerable to damage. Landowners may advise you of the presence of such sites on their land, (e.g. the Manifold Valley), but further checks should be made by contacting the County Council Archaeological staff or the DCA Conservation Team. If the dig is likely to disturb mining remains please contact the Cultural Heritage Team at the Peak District National Park Authority who will advise on any essential precautions that will need taking.

BATS... Digging for new cave can be viewed in a positive light as it creates new opportunities for bats.

However, if you suspect that bats have used your dig in the past, please ensure that their access is not blocked and that they are not unnecessarily disturbed by digging activities, particularly those that generate fumes. Members of the local bat group can help if you see or suspect that bats may be present in your dig. (See useful contacts and links).

CHECK OUT THE MAP... This leaflet shows all the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the White Peak Natural Area (including Derbyshire & North Staffs.).

SOME GUIDELINES FOR DIGGERS

Sometimes cave digging can inadvertently damage other features of special interest. For example the act of digging may remove valuable cave sediment sequences and the dumping of waste material may cover up cave formations, archaeology or sediment sequences. Please take great care when digging caves and follow the guidance provided in this leaflet.

BEFORE YOU START

Is the site in an SSSI? If it is the landowner will need consent from Natural England in order to give you permission to dig within a cave SSSI on their land. This process is not complicated but should you need help or assistance please contact either the DCA Conservation Officer or a Natural England adviser. Once Natural England is satisfied that there will be no damage to the scientific interest written consent can be issued to the landowner and you can then go ahead.

Natural England and the landowners have a statutory duty to protect the site and the important scientific features within it. The procedures described above are not onerous so with your help the current good relations between all parties can be maintained.

NEW PASSAGE

- If you are lucky enough to discover new passage within an SSSI please inform Natural England so that they can record any scientifically important features. DCA will assist in arranging for a supply of conservation materials such as tape and pegs that can help to protect delicate formations and sediments by creating pathways through vulnerable areas.
- Many new finds have been permanently damaged by later visitors who may not have the same respect for your hard-won discovery as you. Managing access initially may be necessary until appropriate conservation measures are in place.
- Mud and pristine calcite do not go together. Polythene sheeting, strong plastic overshoes, and clean lightweight coveralls can help keep the two separate.
- Sediment (formerly known as mud!) can be a valuable scientific resource that can demonstrate past climates and the nature of the land mass surrounding the cave millions of years ago.
- Record and photograph your dig as you go and let Natural England have a copy of your findings for their records.

List Of Caves Being Monitored

Please note that this is not a definitive list of caves within SSSIs. Visit www.peakcavemonitoring.org.uk for boundary maps.

Bradwell Dale and Bagshawe Cavern SSSI

Bossen Hole
Bagshawe Cavern
Bradwell Parish Caves
Dowse Hole
Durham Edge Swallet
Hazelbadge Cave
Outlands Head
Walker's Grotto

Hamps & Manifold Valleys SSSI

Darfar Pot
Darfar Ridge Cave
Elderbush Cave
Ladyside Pot
Redhurst Swallet
Waterways Swallet

Castleton SSSI

Sidetrack Cave
Blue John Cavern
Christmas Swallet
Dr Jackson's & Perryfoot Caves (P1)

Eldon Hole
Eldon Quarry Caves
Gautries Hole & Car Pot (P3)
Giants Hole / Oxlows Caves and
Maskhill Mine
Long Cliff Mine
Nettle Pot
Odin Cave
Odin Mine
Old Tor Mine
P5 Swallet

P7 Swallet
P8 (Jackpot)
Peak & Speedwell Caverns
Rowter Hole
Russet Well
Sheepwash Swallet
Suicide Cave
Treak Cliffe Cavern
Windy Knoll Cave
Winnats Head Cave

Poole's Cavern & Grin Low Wood SSSI

Poole's Cavern & Grinlow Wood

Upper Lathkill Dale SSSI

Knotlow Cavern & Hillocks Mine

Bage Mine SSSI

Bage Mine

Location of SSSIs with Cave / Mine Interest

The White Peak – Derbyshire and North Staffordshire
(see table for specific names of caves and mines)

