

## Obituary

### David G Allsop

Dave Allsop will be remembered by many as the warden of Poole's Cavern and Buxton Country Park from its re-opening in 1977 by Buxton Civic Association.



*Dave Allsop (L) with Jean Pendlebury and two of her young grandchildren in Grin Low Wood in 1993*

Dave's interest in exploring caves started when he and a group of friends at Buxton Youth club armed with old clothes, bicycle lamps and ex-army helmets set off to explore the caverns and old lead mines of the Peak District. It was with these friends that Dave became a founder member of the Eldon Pothole Club in 1957, which still thrives to this day.

During the late 1950s Dave became an active member of Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation and following the tragic and highly publicised loss of a young caver in

Peak Cavern was instrumental in the re-formation of the team. He was an enthusiastic promoter and fundraiser and controller of the central team of DCRO from 1964 until 1998, only retiring in 2000 after more than 40 years. He co-wrote the first definitive guide book to the caves and mines of Derbyshire in 1964, a caver's bible now in its 4th updated reprint.

By profession Dave was an electrician and was commissioned in 1976 to install electric lighting in Poole's Cavern for the re-opening as a visitor attraction by BCA. Working alone underground for several months, the cavern was magnificently illuminated for the official opening in 1977. Dave was appointed as Warden with duties to manage the Country Park woodlands too, as a keen and knowledgeable naturalist, birdwatcher and expert photographer there could have been no one more qualified for that post.

Working alongside Dave was never a dull moment. He could be a hard task master and always demanded dedication to duty and respect. He was a superb wit and raconteur and would regale both visitors and cave guides with epic tales of underground adventures and 'derring do'. He inspired me and many others to enjoy the world of cave exploration and the unique camaraderie and bond that exists between cavers and mountaineers.

Dave's drive and enthusiasm helped build Poole's Cavern in to a modern popular visitor attraction. He developed exhibitions for the visitor centre, worked with outside agencies to gain financial assistance for the regeneration of the country park woodlands and worked tirelessly repairing walls, planting trees and clearing glades. He wrote two visitor guides for the cavern and instigated the formation of the British Association of Show caves to jointly promote education and conservation. He also featured in a number of television documentaries and news items covering Buxton and Poole's Cavern.

When Solomon's Temple was declared unsafe and condemned by Derbyshire County Council it was Dave who stepped forward to organise fundraising events and rallied the people of Buxton to lobby councillors to save to tower.

In later life Dave trekked to Mount Everest base camp, a lifelong ambition, despite crippling arthritis and knee injuries he remained active hill climbing and walking with his dog. Dave retired from Poole's Cavern in 1997 and enjoyed long holidays at his caravan overlooking the Llyn peninsula.

Dave leaves his wife Brenda, children Carol and Ian and granddaughters, our thoughts and sympathies are with them.

Alan Walker

## Buxton Civic Association

General Manager: Alan Walker at Poole's Cavern, 01298 26978

### Board Members

Chair:	Paul Dinsdale	Woodlands:	Peter Phillipson
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Registered charity number in England and Wales 258163



## The Good Hobbits of Burbage



### Every Cloud...

When the new High Peak Local Consultation plans were released for housing site options an unexpected gem emerged hidden from view just below the boundary of the Country Park. Fortunately one of our eagle eyed members informed the local planners and site B15 was successfully removed – they had overlooked grade II listed buildings!

### The Limehouses of Burbage

The spoil heaps that make up the mysterious, sculptured landscape of the Country Park and especially the area known by BCA members as 'The Glade' were once the homes of lime burners, little caves or ash houses made in the small hillocks left from lime burning. Built in the late 18th century from quarried lime refuse they are simple rectangular structures, open at the front with an overhanging roof.

These limehouses are a unique record of life from 1780s onwards. A description of 1797 records them as often having three or four rooms and being built next to the limekiln. (A Jewitt's "History of

Buxton" 1811). These limehouses are a unique record of life from 1780s onwards.

The dwellings around Grin Low were abandoned when the Duke of Devonshire's agent, Mr Wilmot, provided the occupants with cottages at Poole's Cavern and some lovely old cottages still remain. Slowly the lime tips were colonised by lime loving species of herbaceous plants and grasses such as Northern Marsh Orchid, Burnet Saxifrage, Globe flower, Mountain Everlasting, Creeping willow and Juniper creating a unique habitat.

The remaining limehouses can be found in Burbage and are well worth a visit. Traces of manmade stone walls can be seen, used to make these lime caves more homely. Now that they have been rediscovered let's hope they will be preserved so that we can all see at first hand the way we used to live.

More details and a map can be found on the English Heritage website see the summary and following grid reference:

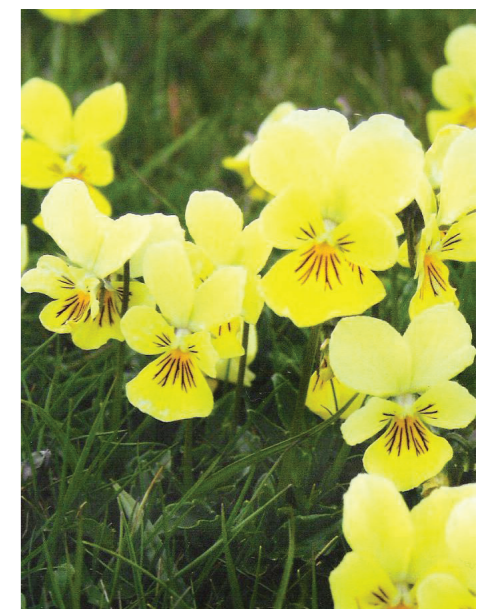
**List entry summary** This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

**Location** LIMEHOUSE AT NGR SK 04150 72620, MACCLESFIELD OLD ROAD BURBAGE SK17 SXT  
**Grade:** II Listed  
**Date first listed:** 31-Jan-1997

## Flowers For Summer

In late spring take a walk up to Solomon's Temple. Growing in the short turf you will see the lovely mountain pansies. They are almost always yellow, but occasionally a blue one might be found. The blue mountain pansies are usually found further north.

June and Lyn Noble from their Guide to the Wild Flowers of Grin Low Country Park available from Poole's Cavern.



## Can Skating Make A Come Back?

By Olive Middleton

Another cold, snowy and icy winter made many older members think back to early days in Buxton when locals and visitors alike waited to see if the big boating lake in the Pavilion Gardens would freeze over enough to tempt out the skaters!

The Victorians were the first to popularise the sport of curling and a neighbour told me – when the former John Duncan School building called Wye House on Corbar Road was standing derelict – that Buxton's first curling rink was in its garden. He took me up to see it. There was a lawn about 50 yards square surrounded by the remains of a hedge and iron fence, with an iron gate hanging from it on one hinge at the entrance. It must have been created for the residents of the

Asylum for 'gentle-folk' for which Wye House was originally built in its distinctive 'chateau' style.

The rink or more correctly in the 'curling pond', is now beneath the top set of flats to the right (east) of the main house. There was also an early curling pond near the Octagon in the Gardens, later just used for skating. When winter came, the water from the Wye flowing into the former boating lake was diverted into a channel around the north edge of the lake so that the remaining shallow water in the lake would freeze easily.

### Skating Comes Full Circle

Skating and winter sports generally seem to be popular again: why especially in London?

Somerset House, the huge quadrangle of offices which once housed government offices and civil servants, is now freely open to all. On The Strand it now boasts an array of fountains in the summer in its beautiful central square. In winter it is transformed into a skating rink with refreshments on sale and complete with fairy lights and decorations. This amazing space used to be a car park all day, closed to the public.

It is now so popular that there are one or two hour slots which have to be booked in advance. The idea has spread and there are rinks and refreshments not only in the moat at the Tower of London but at the Natural History Museum garden and between John Lewis and Canary Wharf tower – why not here in Buxton?

## Cavern News

### Alterations to Our Café: An Interview with Paula



need for change and to respond to a healthier lifestyle as well as knowing customers need to pop in for a good value breakfast and a great welcome after a healthy walk in the Country Park.

Paula says visitors really appreciate the 'country kitchen feel' of the café with enough space for buggies and wheelchairs. She uses only locally sourced ham and bacon from Mycocks in Buxton. She is pleased that her customers will now settle down and enjoy the wonderful picture window, watching the wildlife in all seasons with good hot coffee from the new bean to cup machine.

### What Would She Recommend?

Paula says, "Why not come and sample homemade soup, homemade vegetable or beef chilli.

Children really enjoy their soup in a cup with toast soldiers. We're here for all the family. With ample parking it's a great place to meet up.

Parts of the cave are accessible to everyone and waiting in the café is great - we have the best view in the house!"

Proposals to make changes to the café are necessary due to the increasing popularity of this facility. There will be new menu boards and bigger plans include a conservatory and a new play area. Low energy light bulbs will help conserve electricity and a plan to collect rainwater for reusing within the building show that we are aware of the importance of conserving our environment.

Remember the café can be hired for events.

Paula has done a great job looking for locally sourced food and is justifiably proud of the new menu.

The emphasis on healthy eating can be seen in the new menus – all a huge change from catering from the Portakabin here in 2007.

She's the first to acknowledge the

## Members' News & Events

### Marie Hurlston: 1935 – 2013

Marie was born in Stafford and read English and Geography at Keele University. She taught English for many years at the Cavendish Girls' School in Buxton and stayed on as a familiar and friendly figure about town in her retirement.

Marie was a Life Member of Buxton Civic Association, an active member of the volunteer group helping Alan in the woods every month, a member of the Woodlands Subcommittee, and a very knowledgeable member of the U3A Botany Group. Though a quiet and very private lady she would speak up firmly when she saw a matter of principle was involved. She was devoted to our woodlands, to wild flowers and to animal welfare.

It was a privilege to have known her and she will be much missed: Buxton Civic Association has lost a loyal friend and supporter.

Trevor Donald

### Congratulations to Jean Pendlebury - 'Action Woman'

BCA member Jean Pendlebury (pictured back page) has been justly honoured for her tireless work as a fundraiser for our community. As secretary and Poole's Cavern administrator she was instrumental in the purchase of the cave and original visitor centre, which continue to enable us to pay for the maintenance of our woodland. How wonderful that such commitment has been recognised with an honour. Well done and thank you Jean Pendlebury MBE.

### New Staff

We are looking to appoint a new business manager/qualified ranger. The advertisement has appeared in the local press.

### 50th Anniversary

What do members think about a new wood to mark BCA's 50th anniversary in 2017?

We seem to be losing so many of our trees in the town and with plans for more new housing developments wouldn't it be great to insist on more trees too?

### Woodlands Update

Members will be pleased to see the improvements to the drainage of paths in Corbar woods and wheel-chair users have been able to access the new paths. Hogshaw wood has, for the time being, been cleared of litter but please be vigilant and report anything to Alan at Poole's Cavern. If you have become aware of any obstructions on the Ring of Trees walk please contact Alan.

We have had nine regular volunteers who have helped in the woodlands each month. This winter they have also helped Alan with planting 50 new trees and the making and installing of bird boxes too.

We have also had volunteers from the University of Derby Conservation group who are interested in conservation work in BCA woods.



### Dates For Your Diary

**AGM** - to be held at Poole's Cavern Visitor Centre on 17 June 2013 at 7.30pm. Notices to be issued by Thursday 23 May 2013.

### Buxton Festival Fringe Events 2013

**Hamlet in Poole's Cavern** Following last year's award-winning, sell-out hit A Midsummer Night's Dream, Butterfly Theatre will return to Poole's Cavern to produce a unique hour-long version of Shakespeare's tragedy Hamlet in this unique space. See Fringe programme for details. Tickets to be booked through the Opera House.

**Time Travel** The 160th anniversary of the 1853 opening of the Poole's Cavern show cave will be celebrated with a dramatic Victorian tour of the cave by Martin Beard. See Fringe programme for details.

## BCA and the Environment

Protecting and enhancing the local environment is central to BCA and as a responsible organisation we also need to recognise that we have to respond to wider environmental concerns.

These are splendid sentiments with which few would disagree – but how do we put them into effect?

Organisations of all types from voluntary bodies such as the National Trust to commercial companies accept that to be effective in this area clear environmental policies are required, tailored to the organisation and regularly monitored.

So in 2009 BCA introduced a formal Environmental Policy and decided to carry out periodic Environmental Audits. This first audit sought to identify our main environmental impacts and to minimise them. We looked at ways we are enhancing the local environment and what steps could be taken to improve the existing situation. Although we had never formalised our environmental policy and programme we discovered excellent practice already in place thanks to well informed and committed management.

### Results of the Audit

Our impact on the environment is both positive and negative.

On the positive side by preserving and enhancing our ten woodlands and Poole's Cavern we provide a positive experience for all our visitors and education for many groups of young visitors. Over 25 items to commend were noted; these included the high standard of care of the woods, careful supervision of contractors, recycling and composting bins and the use of environmentally friendly office equipment.

On the negative side the visitor centre uses substantial quantities of energy and water and generates additional traffic.

### Recommendations for Improvement

24 improvement targets were agreed covering the woods and cave, the café, the shop and general management. For example the preparation of an improved information leaflet and exhibition in the in the school room about the woods and making the food on offer in the café healthier and more environmentally sound.

### Follow up Audit

A follow up to the initial audit was carried out in 2011 and presented at the AGM. The majority of the targets had been met constituting substantial progress in the time since the first audit. One striking example is the success in reducing our 'carbon footprint' – especially through the new low energy lighting in the cave. Improvements to the paths continue to enhance visitor satisfaction.

### The Future

But we can't rest on our laurels so a new set of even more ambitious tasks have been agreed for the next period. They include looking at a new water harvesting system, further reducing energy use in the shop and café and further improvements to paths in the woods as well as the installation of bird and bat boxes.

We constantly seek to improve on our already excellent environmental standards. If any member reading this has suggestions we would be delighted to consider them.

Mike Monaghan, Director responsible for Environment

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## Latest Advice on Ash Die-Back

Signs of the ash die-back disease will only be noticed when the ash come into leaf. There is a procedure of notification on the Natural England website.

It is hoped that English ash trees will prove more resistant than continental ashes. We must be vigilant for signs of the disease following advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Information on their websites is comprehensive and well worth a look.

Let's hope the long, cold, frosty winter has killed off any foreign

pathogens and these beautiful trees that are such an integral part of our treasured landscape will survive.



*A tree infected with Chalara fraxinea, or ash dieback disease.*

## Remember Stick & Flick

Once again let us remind you of the advantages of 'stick and flick'.

This is much more preferable than decorating our woodland with small plastic bags that cannot biodegrade, especially if they are swinging in the trees.

Regular dog walkers are very welcome and are likely to see new litter and vandalism and report this at Poole's Cavern.

Dogs are welcome at the café and we have new, improved complimentary dog biscuits!

## Dear Editor... Contributions from Members on Icons of Buxton

We are still collecting images sent to us for our competition – Icons of Buxton. Please continue to send them in and we will include as many as we can either in the newsletter or on the new BCA members notice board, which will put up in the café as part of the new planned alterations. We will give more details about the competition when we re-launch the website.

### An Alternative View

Hi Alyson. I've just received issue 23 of the BCA Newsletter and enjoyed the images of Solomon's Temple. May I offer an alternative view?



This was created for grandchildren who complained about being dragged up such a steep slope.

What's it for? What's up there anyway? Well up there might just be an ice cream van. Grandparents are allowed to lie, oops, exaggerate. There might be strange beasts to find, chase and maybe be chased by and possibly eaten

by. They might just discover the real purpose of Solomon's Temple – as a flying saucer landing pad. Or has anyone got a better suggestion?

Dave Hale

### The last laugh

Dear Editor. We carry out voluntary woodland management and glade conservation tasks with Alan Walker. During our most recent visit last Monday, we picked up a copy of the Civic Association newsletter where we noticed the request for suggestions about 'Icons of Buxton' and the need to safeguard them. We would like to suggest the grave of John Kane in St Anne's churchyard.

As a famous comedian, we absolutely love his "last laugh" – that of having his grave face the opposite way to everyone else's in the graveyard!! However, today the grave is in need of care and attention – a task we're very happy to undertake with the relevant permission and under the umbrella of a Civic Association scheme. It is a shame that John's life story, written around the outer edge of the grave fencing lies hidden by overgrown vegetation.

Sue and David Carlisle

BCA is now in discussion with the churchwarden and English Heritage as the grave is a listed monument.



### So who was the mysterious John Kane?

As a travelling actor and comedian of "considerable distinction" it seems his final visit to Buxton was in 1799 where he was thought to have mistakenly eaten hemlock while fulfilling an engagement at the Opera House ... he died.

Read more in Wikipedia – it's a fascinating entry although he couldn't have performed at THE Opera House because it opened in 1903. There were theatres in the Assembly Rooms and the Courthouse and as the town became more popular the need for a proper theatre grew. More importantly where did poor old John Kane partake of the beef and 'horseradish sauce' what 'done him in'!

Next time we will include a piece on Fellow Morton – an intriguing local figure, and closely connected with BCA so please feel free to contribute by email.

## What Can I Do To Help?

Buying cards – we have a fantastic choice of local views and artwork at Poole's Cavern shop ... and don't forget to try out the new coffee and snacks.

Woodlands Group – get fit and help maintain our woodlands. Meets at 9.30am at Poole's Cavern on the last Monday of each month.

Gardening Group – meets on occasional Fridays at Poole's Cavern from 9.30am–12noon. New members welcome. Call 01298 26978 if you'd like to volunteer.

Tell your friends about us. Remember copies of the newsletter are available on our website too.

Guided walks from the Cavern. Do any members have time to organise walks for pleasure or as a fundraiser whilst the festival season is in full swing?

Do you have any good quality books you could donate to our book swapping scheme? Please bring your books to the café and choose one of our pre-owned books to read.

We now have a Membership and Community Committee. The next meeting is at the café at Poole's Cavern on 29 April at 10.30am.