

Woodland News



Ring of Trees

Whichever road you take to enter Buxton, you pass by or through woodlands. The crowded trees lining the A6 from Bakewell and the broader woodland vistas as you come over the crest of the Leek road or along Long Hill from Whaley Bridge. Wherever in Buxton you stand and have a view, upward and outward, you will see woods and trees. Buxton is a town surrounded by green, by a ring of trees.

Most of these woods were planted by the Duke of Devonshire in the 1820s to conceal and restore land and vistas desecrated by industrial lime working and quarrying. In the last 30 years, they have been transferred to the Buxton Civic Association, to maintain, manage and regenerate for the Buxton community and the many visitors who come to explore and enjoy the town and its surroundings.

Some woods are well known and well trodden, particularly Grin Woods

adjoining Poole's Cavern, which the Civic Association also runs. Some have a high profile, like Corbar Woods leading up to the Corbar Cross viewpoint. Others are favourites for local dog walkers, joggers or exploring children. Some are rarely visited hidden gems.

Even where individual woods are regularly used, there is little to tell users of the story of the wood – its history, geology, industrial and social heritage or its flora and fauna. To begin to fill these gaps, enthusiasts in the BCA started to run regular guided walks exploring individual woods, as well as bat walks, dawn chorus walks, flora walks and fungi searches.

The idea then developed that there should be a way of helping anyone to explore the BCA woods, as a whole or individually, at times that suited them, so they could learn more about the woods and delight in what they had to offer.

Corbar Wood

Thanks to a grant of £2,000 from High Peak Borough Council, and the generous gift of 60 tonnes of aggregate from Tarmac, kindly delivered from Tunstead Quarry to Corbar Wood Lane, the new path leading up through this lovely wood is now complete.

Originally laid out as the Swiss Walks by Joseph Paxton, there is still much more work to do in Corbar, but do go and see the progress for yourself.



This resulted in the creation of the "Ring of Trees Walks", a 10 mile (16 km) walk around Buxton passing through many of the woodlands that surround the town. The walk is divided in to three sections: Grin Woods (Poole's Cavern) to Ashwood Dale (3.1 miles/5km); Ashwood Dale to Gadley Wood (2.8 miles/4.5km); Gadley Wood to Grin Woods (4.1 miles/6.5km).

Work is on course to produce a fully fledged guide with maps and photographs, a simple description of the route will be available free from Poole's Cavern in March. We hope many of you will try the walk and provide feedback.

John Boardman

Volunteer Groups



The Woodwatch Volunteers have been very active in our woods, you only have to take a walk to see the evidence. In Grin Low the main glades have been cleared of ash saplings and raked free of decaying vegetation, ready to welcome the rich variety of Spring wild flowers. New paths have been made using available materials.

Under Alan's cheerful guidance, volunteers have also been busy in our other woods. Brambles have been cleared from Gadley; obsolete tree guards removed from Wye Head and literally tons of rubbish collected from Sherbrook.

"Our volunteers' hard work is extremely effective and very much appreciated," says Cavern and Country Park manager, Alan Walker. "Angela Wills and her team do a tremendous job but need more able bodied volunteers." Angela agrees that new muscle would be very welcome. "Certain members like myself have been on 'light duties' owing to injuries. We could make even more of an impact if there were more of us. We all really enjoy what we do and, whatever the weather, at 9.30 on the last Monday of the month, there is always a willing group of volunteers in Poole's Cavern car park. Why not join us?"

Angela Wills 01298 23236

The Gardening Group started in 2004 with the aim of maintaining and enhancing the gardens at Poole's Cavern. We meet during spring, summer and autumn to plant prune and weed. Our work augments

the routine jobs of mowing, clipping hedges and tree maintenance, which are carried out by the cavern staff.

Plants are acquired from our own and friends' gardens. An appeal for plants at the start of the group elicited an excellent response. Among the many donations were some lovely hardy geraniums and superb hostas were ideal for the garden's many shaded areas. Recently the gardens were given a boost when the Board funded the purchase of shrubs and ground cover for the official opening of the new Visitors' Centre.

We welcome new volunteers to our small friendly group. We meet at 9.30 on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month and work for a couple of hours with a welcome coffee break in the middle. Volunteers often choose to do their own favoured activity, whether it be pruning, planting or weeding.

Paula Hobdey 01298 71035

The High Peak Volunteer

Rangers, under the auspices of The Groundwork Trust, specialise in community projects and will work in the woods with our general manager Alan Walker.

The group meets every Friday morning at 9.30 in the car park at Poole's Cavern, working on the maintenance of footpaths, steps and stiles and walling. Anyone who would like to give a hand will be warmly welcomed.

Alan Walker 01298 26978

Members' Events

Mountain Rescue and How it Works

Thursday 19 March 7.30 pm

Ian Hurst, chairman of Buxton Mountain Rescue team, composed entirely of volunteers, has kindly agreed to give an illustrated talk on the work of this experienced and highly skilled group. Ian has collaborated with his colleague, Roger Bennett in producing a new book, recently published, copies of which will be available at the meeting (see our review below).

"Lost Buxton" - Part Two

Thursday 23 April 7.30 pm

Tony Swain, chairman of Buxton Archaeological, Local & Natural History Society, whose popular talk, "Lost Buxton" (Part One) caused such a stir just over two years ago, has now completed the second part of his research which covers Corbar Road, Manchester Road, the Pavilion Gardens, St John's Road, Burbage and Green Lane.

Diary Date for a May Morning!

Sunday 10 May 5.00am

Difficult as it may be to think of spring time now, make a note that Richard Kniseley-Marpole has agreed to lead the popular Dawn Chorus Walk in Grin Woods again. Meet at 5.00am in Poole's Cavern car park.

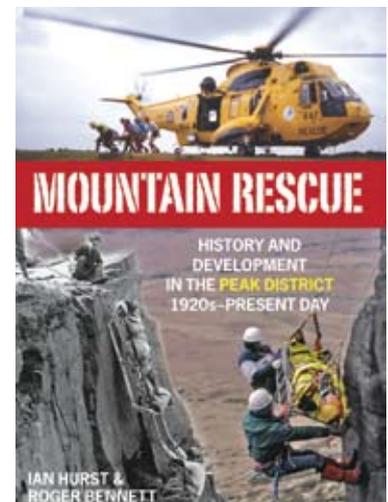
The walk will be followed by a cooked breakfast (veggie option) in the café £3.50. Numbers are limited to 20 places: call 01298 26978 to book.

Book Review

"Mountain Rescue: history and development in the Peak District 1920s-present day" by Ian Hurst and Roger Bennett, £12.99

Though there are no 'mountains' in the Peak District, its peat bogs, thick mists and winter blizzards can be very hazardous for the many walkers and climbers who come to the most visited British National Park. This excellent book traces the origins of the voluntary rescue services from the 1920s when many more inexperienced walkers discovered the delights of the countryside within easy reach of the industrial towns and sometimes got into serious difficulties.

During the Second World War, over 250 aircraft crashed in the Peak District and their crews were rescued from a base in Harpur Hill. There are now seven Mountain Rescue Teams covering the Peak District and they respond to more than 200 rescue calls every year. The annual cost of the rescue services of each team is between £25,000 and £35,000, most of which they have to raise themselves. If you want to know more, Google 'Mountain Rescue'.



Transition Buxton

"The Transition movement is about local communities coming together to face the twin challenges oil shortage and climate change", explained Susan Birchenough. "BCA through Alan kindly allowed us to plant a traditional variety of fruit tree at Poole's Cavern and to hold a plant sale of similar kinds, as a first step towards the aim of producing more of our food locally."

There are now more than 100 transition towns in the UK and abroad, three of them in Derbyshire. Information on free film screenings, events, talks and workshops: phone Sue 01298 214516

Who's Who at Buxton Civic Association?

Board Member: Mark Sisson

Mark spent the early part of his career working in the mining and tunnelling industry, initially working for the Hawker Siddeley Group in the UK and eventually spending five years in Virginia, USA.

“When I returned to the UK”, Mark told us, “I joined Business Link Southern Derbyshire as a Business Adviser and later became part of the senior management team. Then in 2002 I joined the Greater Nottingham Partnership, looking after an annual budget of over £6 million. The money was used to develop business support schemes and new community facilities.”

While at the Greater Nottingham Partnership, Mark became increasingly interested in community and voluntary work. He was a trustee of four different charities and a director of four social enterprises. Now, as well as serving on the Board of Buxton Civic Association, he is chair of the East Midlands School for Social Entrepreneurs, a Governor of Buxton Infant School and Director of Junior Rugby at Buxton RFC. He is married to a local GP and has lived in Buxton for four years.

Mark says: “Over the last few years I have got to know a number of other BCA board members and have been impressed by their commitment and their achievements, particularly in the recent re-development of the Visitor Centre at Poole’s Cavern. I feel that my past experience

in both the private and public sectors will allow me to make a contribution to the future success of BCA. The association is a vital custodian of much of the countryside around Buxton and the town’s future prosperity as a centre for enterprise and tourism.

“The association is now in a strong position to build a healthy future, while our current priority is to ensure that we trade profitably. This is essential in order to ensure that we generate sufficient funds to carry out the wider work of the charity.”



Buxton Civic Association at Poole’s Cavern

01298 26978 General Manager: Alan Walker

Board Members

Chairman:	Paul Dinsdale	Peter Phillipson
Vice chair:	Hilary Lawrence	Bill Preece
Secretary:	Martin Wragg	Steve Robinson
Finance:	John Boardman	Mark Sisson
	Mike Bryant	Ken Smith
	Paula Hobdey	Arthur Tomlinson
	Mike Monaghan	

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