

This annual meet went well and gave all the novices chances to improve their climbing and caving. For James it was his first experience of caving.

On Friday, Michael walked over Ingleborough and Simon Fell to check the water levels in the Alum pot area. They were rather too high after recent heavy rain. He saw the Ingleborough summit shelter's direction indicator being removed for refurbishment. It is still missing as the year draws to a close.

Saturday dawned with an excellent forecast for outdoor climbing. So, six went to Hutton Roof Crags where Fliss, James and Lucy climbed on natural rock picking up skills and applying them.

The routes were initially climbed by Richard facilitating various members of the party to follow with the safety of a top rope. Routes included:

Hanging Crack (D)

Wrinkled Slab (VD)

The Flake (VD)

and Pablo (S)

That last one was seconded by Michael followed by Lucy who got there after several attempts to surmount the crux.



Lucy on Pablo (S)

After this enjoyable session, hot, weary and with arms aching, we returned via Ingleton to enjoy delicious ice creams and buy waterproofs ready for caving on Sunday.

The Linford party arrived and (uncle) Alan provided basic instruction in climbing equipment and techniques ready for Sunday.

The Whalleys went up Whernside and Martyn went up Ingleborough.

On Saturday evening we enjoyed a fine meal prepared by Martyn.

Sunday, the water levels having had a chance to go down since the rain earlier in the week, Long Churn was chosen for the caving trip.

Richard, Fliss and Michael took James and Lucy over to Selside where they kitted-up in glorious sunshine before sweating their way up to Alum Pot. Taking great care on the narrow muddy ledges they peered into the abyss to find two surprises.

The cold waterfall meeting the hot moist air had filled the pothole with mist and the sun beaming over their left shoulders produced a Brocken spectre. The magical spectra-shrouded shadows were accompanied from a voice from the deep.



Michael and Fliss with James and Lucy

The message was not so magical though being a warning to watch our step and not knock pebbles on the potholders below.

Onward to the entrance to Lower Long Churn where a short excursion was made to check lamps and make sure all were happy being underground. Lacking any dissenters, the system was entered at Upper Long Churn and a handline used to assist the descent into Dr Bannister's Handbasin. Richard went first to offer a hand for the step right onto the ledge and avoid a dunking in the pool. Fliss followed but the water spout caught her legs while making the step and she swam across the pool. The others followed keeping pretty dry.

Making their way down the stream passage, they met a family who were later discovered to be CPC friends of John and Carol. They were assured that our handline was well secured and they used it to make their exit. Onward, bypassing the waterfall and the two pools without further dunkings, Yorkshire caving's best-known squeeze, the Cheesepress, was reached and wriggled through with only a few grunts.

From there the descent towards Dollytubs was protected and care taken to peer round towards the Bridge and daylight streaming in from Alum Pot. So, Lucy who had been in the system last year, had completed two new sections, James had thoroughly enjoyed his first encounter with caving and all were ready to return. The Cheesepress was bypassed and an exit made through the wet crawl of Diccan Pot with Richard making sure nobody ended up down its waterfall.

Wellies were emptied and socks wrung out on the warm grassy slope above before they trudged back to the car and a change of clothes.

A police officer was met by the cars, investigating reports of a dog distressed after being left in a locked van. The owner soon appeared and made his excuses and reassurances to her.

The Linford party having been fitted out with harnesses and some basic guidance at Lowstern on Saturday visited the Ingleton climbing wall where Isaac and Eli and their mum Debbie were introduced to indoor climbing safely belayed by Alan and Paul.

After a strenuous session it was time for lunch at Bernie's café. As they left, the caving party appeared ready for another round of ice creams.

The Booker-Smiths spent Sunday visiting Hardraw Force and then swimming in the pool of Stainforth Foss. On Monday they went up Pen-y-ghent.

Lowstern is an excellent location for the younger members of the party to enjoy the freedom it provides. Full advantage of this was taken at this meet especially with the warm sunny weather which was enjoyed by all.

Richard and Michael provided excellent tutorship and leading for James and Lucy and although they could have coped with up to four at a pinch it would mean less activity for each of them.

Thanks go to Martyn for the catering and to all who helped instruct and supervise the activities.

Attendees:

Paul Dover, James Dover-Sarakun (12) (G), Lucy Dover-Sarakun (10) (G), Adam Linford (G), Debbie Linford (G), Isaac Linford (12) (G), Eli Linford (6) (G), Martyn Trasler, Fiona Booker-Smith, Dave Booker-Smith, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Felicity Roberts

**All
except
Martyn
Trasler
who took
the
photograph.**



This club meet provides an important opportunity to introduce another generation to climbing and caving and also encourages families to attend. However, we are very reliant on volunteer belayers and caving supervisors attending and more would always be welcome.