

Caves of the Peak District, 7th ed. compiled by Iain Barker and John S Beck. Hucklow Publishing, Great Hucklow. 2010. ISBN 978-0-9563473-2-9. Softback 316 pages. £20.00.

The seventh edition of *Caves of the Peak District* has finally been produced, a mere nineteen years after the last imprint. The two things that stand out about this book are that it is very well laid out and that, bizarrely, it does not have an index.

It is arranged by catchment areas and maps of these are included at the start and (more usefully) on the back cover. The caves are then listed alphabetically with a coloured information box listing the important details in the margins (difficulty grade, length, depth and grid reference, etc.). This summary box is what makes the book stand out for me and it's easy to flick through the book, glancing at them to get an idea about the caves. The full-colour printing helps with this too: warnings in bold red, colour maps adding clarity and full-colour photographs rounding it off.

Not having a copy of the preceding book, I can only take peoples' word that the descriptions are mainly those of the 6th edition but with updates for developments and new discoveries. Some of the extensions made over the past few years have not made it in, however as a general guidebook, there's plenty to go on and find without these; the keen caver can always check back issues of *Descent* magazine or ask around in Derbyshire if they want the most current information. Indeed references to information published elsewhere, usually in *Descent*, are given, so if surveys are not included, they can always be found.

The quality of the surveys and maps in the book is very high and they are clear to read. I like surveys over descriptions and this is a big plus. It's certainly where other caving guide books are a let down for me. The maps show good detail too and I expect that they will be invaluable to those unfamiliar with the area. The descriptions seem good and importantly the required tackle is printed in bold at the end, saving the reader the bother of working it out. Despite all this, I would recommend that anyone embarking on vertical trips also buys the Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club (CCPC) *Peak District Rigging Guide* as the surveys show no rigging.

Accompanying the surveys and maps are a lot of photographs – and good ones at that. Many of these have been taken by Rob Eavis and Robbie Shone and so they are of a high quality as well as adding interest and piquing the reader's curiosity.

However, the main problem with the book is its lack of index. This makes it difficult to find the right cave if one doesn't know the catchment area and it does detract from the quality of the book. Annoying as it may be, there *is* a fix. Tim Webber, a well-known name in the Peak District, has produced an index and made it available for free on the Derbyshire Cave Association (DCA) website; some outdoor shops also stock it, Hitch'n'Hike in Bamford, the local caving shop, certainly stocks it.

Associated with the lack of index is the fact that the catchment area is written on the

spine-side of the pages, making it difficult to see which area one is looking at when flicking through. This is a minor issue however it compounds the index error because the book is hard to navigate through.

The third problem which I found with the book is that the grid references are prefixed by 'NGR' (national grid reference) and not the appropriate map sheet code. Of course, if one already has the maps, it is possible to locate the correct area by using the nearby towns and then using the published grid reference. Overall, the 7th edition of *Caves of the Peak District* is a very good little guidebook despite its niggles, although I would recommend buying the CCPC *Peak Rigging Guide* first.

Edd Willatts