

# CAVE CONSERVATION CODE

Caves are a special and rare environment, some more so than others, and parts of some more so than others.

Active stream passages and potholes with fast moving water may have very little that can be accidentally damaged by the passage of a caver. On the other hand, fossil cave passages where streams never flow are likely to contain all sorts of delicate remains that could be easily damaged by the passage of a single thoughtless caver.

Where there is a risk of accidental damage, whilst passing delicate straw stalactites, or sand banks, approaching close to a crystal pools, for example, you should slow down, look carefully around you and take extreme care. All these features are easily damaged and cannot be repaired.

The following is a carefully considered CODE intended to minimise damage to caves.  
Please read it and try to follow it whenever you go caving. Thank you.

## **1 CAVE WITH CAUTION and WITHIN YOUR OWN ABILITY and EXPERIENCE**

If you are the leader/organiser always be aware of the abilities/limitations of ALL of the members of the party. The 'Weakest Link' must dictate the speed and extent of your trip – not the strongest! Tired cavers will not only damage themselves, they will damage the cave as well!

## **2 KEEP PARTY SIZE** appropriate to the particular cave that you are visiting.

## **3 OBSERVE and KEEP TO TAPED ROUTES**

In taped-off sections follow the path and do not cross the tapes. They are there for good reason.

## **4 DO NOT TOUCH FORMATIONS OR OTHER DELICATE ITEMS**

These are easily broken or muddied – they must NEVER be touched.

## **5 KEEP AWAY FROM BATS OR OTHER LIFE**

Bats are endangered species – please keep away from all of them. You must not disturb them. All bats are protected by law.

## **6 NEVER DIG WITHOUT PROPER CONSENT**

Sand/mud banks are valuable sources of information about the cave and its surroundings, and might also contain archaeological remains. Do not dig or disturb without proper consent.

## **7 NEVER INTERFERE WITH SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT**

Dedicated cave scientists put a lot of time, funding and effort into their research. Never touch any such equipment that you find in a cave.

## **8 LEAVE NO LITTER OR POLLUTION**

Carbide lighting should be avoided and never used where bats are present. Where it is used take with you a suitable container for its safe removal from the cave.

## **9 TAKE NOTHING OUT OF A CAVE**

Do not remove anything from a cave except your own or others' rubbish.

## **10 TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS WITH CARE**

Do not be tempted to break any of these guidelines.

See [www.british-caving.org.uk](http://www.british-caving.org.uk) for details of Regional Councils and BCA Officers

Do You Have Permission to Visit The Cave? Caves and their entrances are all owned by somebody. The rights of the landowner should be observed at all times. If in doubt, ask!

**You are responsible for any damage you may do!**