



DERBYSHIRE CAVING CLUB

BOOKABLE TRIPS

AT ALDERLEY EDGE, Cheshire

Frequently Asked Questions

The DCC provides trips for the public at various times of the year. Routinely, there will be one trip a month that can be booked in advance. Otherwise, group leaders will need to contact the Club to make their own arrangements for a trip. Unlike the arrangements for Open Weekends, there are no special demonstrations of the Club and all lighting underground is by use of caplamps provide by the DCC.

When are the next bookable trips?

Refer to our website via the link: <https://www.derbysc.org.uk/group-trips>.

When do the trips take place?

Most trips are in the evening and we usually ask for people to arrive by 7 pm. Daytime trips are sometimes possible but depend upon the availability of retired members of the Club to lead them. Saturday or Sunday trips to West Mine are also possible. West Mine trips are rarely run in the evening because of the time it takes to get to and from the mine and to see a reasonable amount underground.

How long do the trips last?

Trips usually take about an hour to an hour and a half, sometimes a bit less or a bit more depending on the size and ability of the group and the amount of interaction with the leader. You should always allow at least two hours between arriving at the mine and getting back to the car park if you are planning something else that evening.

Can I book in advance? If so, how?

Booking is essential. There is a booking form on our website which you can find by going to <https://www.derbysc.org.uk/group-trips>. We regret that telephone bookings cannot be taken. The booking form will be available on our website some months before the actual day. No bookings can be taken after the closing time which is shown on the booking page.

Can I telephone to make enquiries?

Unless you make special arrangements in advance with your leader, we cannot provide a telephone number for enquiries about bookable trips.

How do I pay for advance bookings?

You can pay in advance by following links from the booking pages to PayPal. Alternatively, you can pay in cash on the day. Card transactions are not possible for bookable trips except at Open Weekends.

How much will it cost?

The recommended donation per person (any age) is £7.50. [This will be reviewed at the end of 2019]. This charges apply to the normal trip in Wood Mine or Engine Vein. Any longer trips, such as down the Hough Level, lower levels of Wood Mine or West Mine, may incur a higher charge.

Can I bring my young child or parents with me?

We have taken many young visitors down the mine with the youngest being just weeks old. Young visitors usually thoroughly enjoy the experience although how much they remember depends upon their age and personality. Young visitors should each be accompanied by a responsible adult; trying to manage two or more children is a great deal easier with an adult for each child. Older visitors, some in their seventies and eighties can also enjoy the experience and we will happily provide a short trip on the level for anyone who is uncertain of their ability to do the whole trip. See restrictions below regarding visits to West Mine.

Can I bring my dog with me?

We also have no restriction on dogs in the mine although it is the owners' responsibility to look after the safety of their pets. Dogs must be kept on a short lead.

I've been down the mines before; will this trip be the same as last time?

Let your leader know that you have been before and he or she may be able to take you on a different route.

Can I visit West Mine?

West Mine trips will take much longer and are subject to having leaders available. For West Mine, we ask for a donation of £10. **You must be capable of climbing a number of steel ladders and have a good head for heights if you want to visit West Mine.**

What should I wear?

You should come prepared as if for gardening or a walk in the spring or autumn. You will need warm clothes but not winter-weight clothing. Wear clothes which will not be damaged by contact with sand and mud. Stout shoes or boots should be worn. We often find that the walk to the mine is muddier than the walk around the mine so we recommend walking boots or wellingtons. Again, be warned that footwear will get sandy and muddy: this is particularly so if you visit the Hough Level or the further reaches of Wood Mine.

Will the trip be affected by the weather?

The weather will not affect the experience underground. There is no risk of flooding and the mines change very little from season to season. The worst effect of rain is getting wet or muddy on the walk to the mines.

Will there be things to see and do without having to go into the mine?

There will be nothing to see on the surface although you can ask your leader to show you the museum before or after your trip.

Should I bring a torch or helmet?

We provide helmets and lights. Our helmets have a bracket to support the cap-lamp so unless you have a helmet that is designed for use in a cave or mine, please do not bring your own. You do not need a torch and we advise against having anything to carry in your hands when you are in the mine as you may need to climb a ladder on some trips.

Can I bring my camera?

You are welcome to bring a camera but BEWARE that the mines are dusty and damp. The DCC can take no responsibility for the safety of your camera underground. Remember too that the mines are very dark and the normal flash on modern cameras or phones is not powerful enough to light much more than an ordinary living room. You must bring a suitable case for your camera so that your hands are free at all times.

What facilities are there at the mine?

There are no toilets. During the daytime, you can make use of the ones in the Main Car Park before you set off for the mine. Also, we cannot offer refreshments but you have the choice of the Wizard inn, tea rooms and ice creams at the Main Car Park at appropriate times.

Do you sell any information booklets or souvenirs of the visit?

There is a full book about the mines with history, geology, plans, photographs and descriptions of the individual mines. The book costs £12 and is available on-line from the publisher or from Amazon.

Who organises these visits?

The Derbyshire Caving Club leases the Alderley Edge Copper Mines from the National Trust. We are a private Club with a great deal of experience in caving, mining and taking visitors down the mine. The National Trust acknowledges that the Club's members are the experts with regard to the mines at Alderley Edge.

Is the visit insured?

The Derbyshire Caving Club carries £5 million cover against accidents to visitors in the mine while visiting the mine under the Club's leadership. This does not cover any accidents on the surface.

Is it safe?

You need to wear head protection at all times in the mines. You should also be aware that there are steps in the mines and, for some trips, a ladder that has to be climbed so you would be advised to contact us in advance if you have limited mobility or special needs so that we can adapt the trip to suit your requirements. Risk assessments for public visits have been conducted and are available on request.

Does my state of health matter?

If you have a medical condition that might affect your mobility, it is wise to discuss this with the leader before the trip. **If you have a condition where medication might be needed urgently**, then you **MUST** prepare yourself for the possibility that it could take at least half an hour (or longer from West Mine) to fetch drugs from the Car Park and bring them back to you.

What should I do if I have to cancel or might be late?

Try and get in touch with the person you contacted about the trip. Trips booked on-line can be cancelled up to the closing time for bookings. Otherwise, the best option would be email group-trips@derbyscc.org.uk.

Where can I find out more about the history, geology and minerals?

For background information about the mines, refer to our website at www.DerbysCC.org.uk. If you want to read up about the mine before you come, look at the website or look for a copy of Chris Carlon's and Nigel Dibben's 2012 book "The Alderley Edge Mines" (visit www.dibben.org.uk/shop).

How can I find out more about Open Days and visits at other times in the year?

If you require any more information about Open Days or other trips, please contact the Club by e-mailing to AlderleyMines@derbyscc.org.uk. We also look forward to your comments on this information sheet as they help us to ensure that we tell our visitors what they need to know.

How do I find the meeting place?

Meet at the Main Car Park about 100m from the Wizard in the Macclesfield direction. If the main gates are closed, there will be another entrance open which you can get to by driving up the lane next to the Wizard. For those of you using SatNav, the postcode of the Wizard Inn is SK10 4UB. The location is on OS 1:50000 map number 118 at SJ 8595 7722. Lat/long is N 53.29186, W 2.21234.

