

# Welcome to Stump Cross Caverns!

Stump Cross Caverns is one of Britain's premier show caves, located in Nidderdale on the border of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. We are a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and is home to some amazing natural formations...



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# Information Guide

## Your school trip to Stump Cross Caverns



### On the day of your visit...

**Personal Introduction** – You will begin your trip with a child-friendly talk on the history of Stump Cross Caverns. This is tailored to the age and needs of the children, and will last 10-15 minutes.

**Film** – The children will watch a short film, which includes images of the cave and the story of how Stump Cross Caverns was found and developed. There are two films available, a 12 minute film for aged 4-10, and a 20 minute film for aged 11+.

**Health and Safety** – This is a mandatory talk prior to entering the cave, which states helmets must be worn at all times. For our health and safety policy we ask that there is a minimum of one adult per 10 children. There is a requirement to be in single file at times, as part of the cave can be quite narrow. The numbers for the cave tour are limited to 60 people at a time. Larger parties will be split in to two groups.

**Cave tour** – The cave tour lasts approximately 40-50 minutes, during which you will see the amazing Stalagmites and Stalactites, plus formations such as ‘The Cradle’ and ‘The Wedding Cake’. Your party will be met in Cathedral cave to hear about further information on the cave and answer any questions you may have. There is also the magical ‘Fairy Door Hunt’ available – a fun and informative activity whilst viewing the caves!



# Links to the National Curriculum

Stump Cross Caverns is a unique and exciting place for a school trip, where children have the rare opportunity to broaden their knowledge, in an unfamiliar environment. There are many links between the caves and the new National Curriculum that we can offer here at Stump Cross, so please take a look below!

## Key Stage One:

### Science:

#### *Living things and their Habitats:*

- Exploring and comparing the differences between things that are living, dead, and things that have never been alive.
- Habitats and suitability (including survival).

## Key Stage Two:

### Science:

#### *Rocks:*

- Describe how fossils are formed.
- Explore different kinds of rocks and soils, including those in the local environment.
- Exploring how rocks have changed over time.

#### *Light:*

- Know that we need light to see things, and that dark is the absence of light.

#### *Living things and their habitats:*

- Recognise that environments can change, and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.
- Work scientifically by observing and comparing animals around the world, and in prehistoric times. At Stump Cross Caverns, we have the remains of various prehistoric animals that were found in the caves. These include: Wolves, Wolverines, Bison and Reindeer.
- Adaptation to the environment.

#### *Evolution and inheritance:*

- Recognise that fossils provide information about living things that inhabited the Earth millions of years ago.

### Geography:

#### *Human and physical geography:*

- Describe and understand key aspects of physical geography, including climate zones.

#### *Tourism:*

- The local environment, AONB and the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

### History:

- The Ice-Age and the Stone Age.

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# Information about the cave

## Your school trip to Stump Cross Caverns

### How the caves were formed...

The formation of Stump Cross Caverns began millions of years ago, when the area -which is now the Yorkshire Dales- was covered by oceans. Sediment from the ocean floor would eventually form limestone, the basic material from which the caves are made. The caves themselves began to form as the limestone was eroded by weak acid rain, created when carbon dioxide from the atmosphere mixed with the precipitation to form carbonic acid.

Many years ago, underground streams found their way into the cracks and began to expand the cave system as more rock was worn away. Once the streams had gone from the upper levels of the valley the cave system was left behind, and the mineral structures that are present today slowly began to form as water dripped through the caverns.

### The discovery of the cave...

The caves at Stumps Cross were then discovered in 1860 by miners who looking for lead seams in the Yorkshire Dales. Although they didn't find any lead, they did find the natural caverns that you can see today. Miners often didn't see any commercial value in the caves, however a man named William Newbould had vision enough to see that they could be a profitable enterprise, and opened the caves to the public at a cost of 1 shilling per visit.

Remains of wolverines, a giant member of the weasel family have been discovered at Stump Cross. It is thought that these animals entered the caves looking for food such as reindeer and bison, the remains of which have also been found. The wolverine remains are on display in the visitor's centre, and some remains are displayed at the National History Museum in London.

### Record attempts...

Geoff Workman held the world record for the longest time spent underground, and this record attempt was completed at Stump Cross Caverns in 1963. Geoff spent 105 days underground in solitude as part of an investigation into the effect on the body of deprivation of the day and night cycle.

### Developments...

The cave system at Stump Cross extends well beyond the show caves, which are open to the public, to an overall length of approximately 6km. Many of the deeper caverns are only accessible to experienced cavers, but there is a possibility of further sections of the caverns being opened to the public in the future. Indeed, the impressive reindeer cavern was opened to the public in 2000 after debris was removed and the cave was made safe.

For more information on the cave and the natural rock formations, please see the guidebook or ring for more information.

# Making a booking

## Your school trip to Stump Cross Caverns

To book your trip, please arrange via phone, email or in writing. All days and evenings throughout the year are potentially available (except Christmas and Boxing Day!) We greatly advise that you book your trip in advance, so that we can make your trip as memorable as possible! Teachers are welcome to come for a visit prior to the trip, to discuss any more information and familiarise themselves with the amenities and the showcave.

### Group Prices:

Children 4 years – 13 years £4.20

13 years – 17 years £4.95

Adults £6.50

**1 free adult per 20 total party members**

Payment can either be made prior to your trip, or on the day.

**Please contact Richard or Lisa Bowerman on...**

01756 752780

[stumpcrosscaverns@gmail.com](mailto:stumpcrosscaverns@gmail.com)

[www.stumpcrosscaverns.co.uk](http://www.stumpcrosscaverns.co.uk)

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## Parking...



There are plenty of car parking spaces available, including space for large coaches and mini buses.

## Brrr!

The temperature of the cave is 7 degrees all year round, so make sure you wrap up warm! Wellies or walking boots are strongly advised.



## Gift Shop and Café...



There is a large gift shop at Stumps Cross, offering a variety of gifts and souvenirs to commemorate your visit to the caves. We also stock a wide variety of geological pieces including minerals, fossils and crystals.

The café serves hot and cold drinks, ice creams, aswell as homemade cakes and scones.

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# Risk Assessment

## Your school trip to Stump Cross Caverns

### Risk assessment for visitors to the showcave...

#### **General**

There are relatively few risks involved in a visit to the Show Cave, but those that are present have all be addressed, as set out below.

#### ***1. Knocks to the head.***

As there are a number of places in the cave where the roof is low, all visitors must wear a safety helmet. These are provided by the management and are collected and returned to their storage bins on the landing at the top of the entrance steps.

#### ***2. Falls.***

The entrance steps are fairly steep, as are a number of other shorter flights within the cave. Handrails have been installed where necessary to assist people on these and children, especially, are advised to use them.

With a high relative humidity in the cave it is inevitable that the floor is damp. Visitors are made aware of this and no-one is allowed to enter the cave wearing unsuitable footwear, i.e. flip-flops or similar. In particular, school parties and other children are advised to ensure their shoelaces are tied correctly. The pathway through the cave has a good surface and has been levelled in those places where potential for tripping existed. Nevertheless, all visitors are advised not to rush and children, especially, not to run.

#### ***3. Getting lost.***

There are a number of side passages branching off from the route taken through the Show Cave. These are all blocked by grilles to prevent unauthorised access and are unlit.

The floodlights throughout the Show Cave have been positioned to highlight areas of special interest and beauty, but also to ensure that visitors can see clearly along the route to be followed. In the event of a power failure emergency lights are switched on automatically, and provide sufficient lighting to enable a safe exit to be made from the cave.

At junctions along the route 'exit' signs point clearly towards the entrance.

#### ***4. Flooding.***

As the passages in the Show Cave have been abandoned by the streams which formed them (and now flow in passages some 30 metres below the Show Cave level) there is absolutely no risk of visitors being caught by flood waters. In fact, the only obvious effect of heavy rainfall is an increase in the drip rate from stalactites and various small joints in the roof.

#### ***5. Roof falls.***

Whilst rock falls are a part of the natural process of cave formation, the roof of the Show Cave consists of good, sound rock. However, periodic inspections are carried out by competent people to ensure that nothing has altered.

#### ***6. Temperature.***

The average temperature in the Show Cave, throughout the year, is only 9 degrees Celsius. Accordingly, visitors are advised to wear adequate clothing for their visit.