

## Sidetrack Cave, Eldon Hill Quarry, Castleton.

Grid Ref: SK 11680 81521

Alt: 388m

Length: 479m.

Access: There is no access arrangement in place at the time of publication.

### Introduction

Sidetrack Cave lies in the now abandoned Eldon Hill Quarry. It's a long crawl that intersects a much larger, and finely decorated passage. A highly significant cave in a somewhat "blank" area of hill. The existence of a cave at this location has been known about since 1994. Blasting revealed a large 4m dia. section of passage, named Alsop's Cave (after the quarryman who found it). This was explored at the time and a short period of digging managed to push over the mud floor to a point where long term digging tactics would have been required. A smaller passage left the main route to the right. Although it was smaller, this looked promising, again mud filled with an airspace but it had a draught. This was named "The Escape Route" as it was hoped it might escape the confines of the quarry. Eldon Hill was still a working and time would not allow for further exploration. Over the next few years the rock face was worked back as far as was possible, to a point only a few meters from the Eldon Hill track. Once operations ceased the site was "investigated" again. Alsop's cave was still obvious, with the entrance worked back to a point close to the limit of the 1994 exploration, well beyond the point where "The Escape Route" had branched off. A careful search of the terrace to the left revealed the clay sediment filled cross section of a passage 40m away. The Escape Route was still there. In August 2002 a short period of digging revealed an airspace, a draught, and soon after, a gap above the mud large enough to squeeze over.....

### The Cave

The entrance lies on the upper terrace on the northern side of the quarry just below the Eldon Hill track. There are two entrances on this terrace, 20m from the Western end is the large 4m dia. fossil phreatic passage of Alsop's Cave, choked a few meters in, and 40m further along, is the smaller entrance to Sidetrack, 1.8m wide by 1.3m high.

From the face 6m of stooping reaches a raised mud floor marking the start of a flat-out crawl. This is confined for the first 11m but then widens, with the continuing passage still flat out but roomier. 10m on there's a small

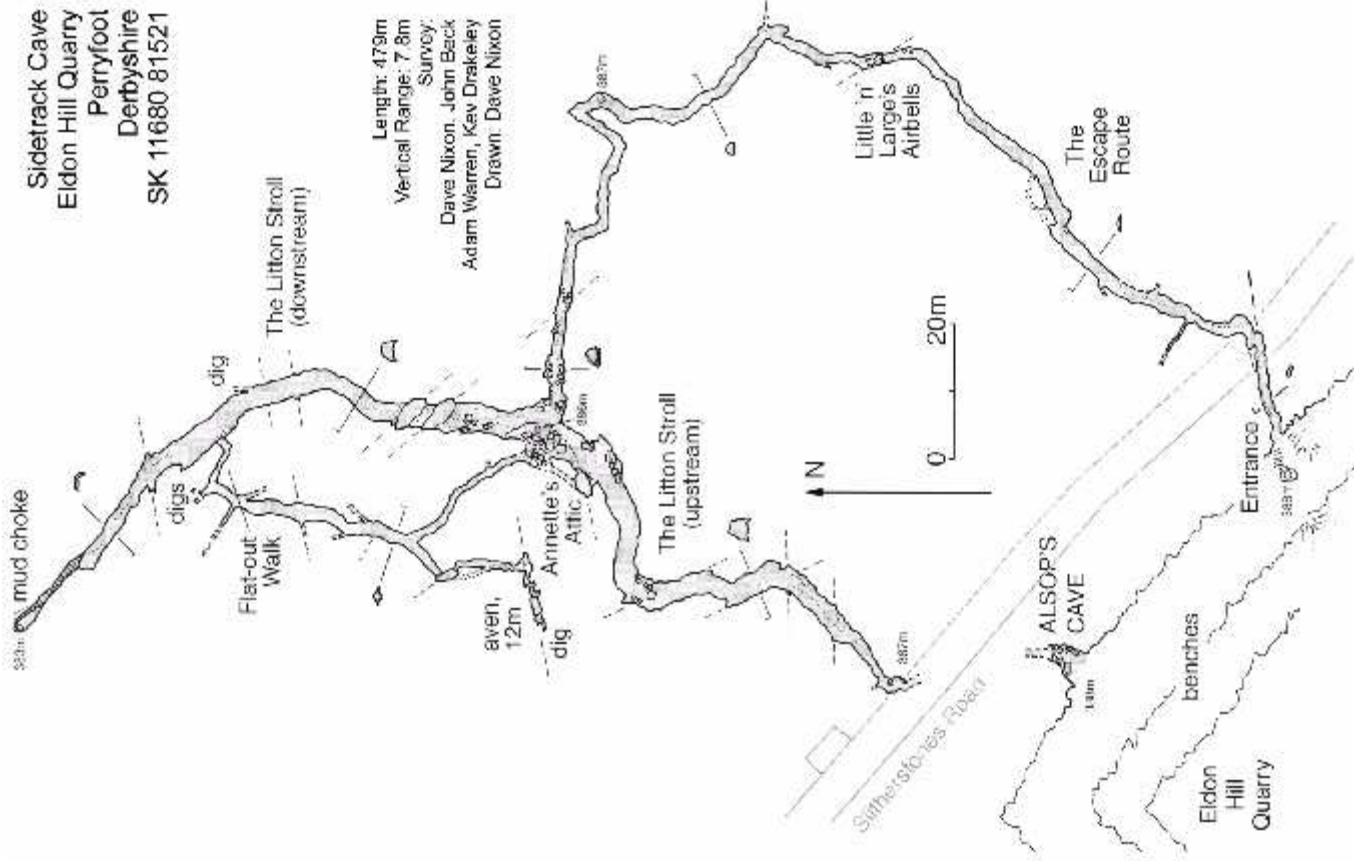
passage on the left but this is nothing more than a landmark, marking a point 27m from the entrance. After another 62m, still flat out, the next landmark is reached, "Little & Large's Airbells", 89m in. Here, you can stand up, you won't be going anywhere if you do but at least you can! 16m Beyond (105m from the entrance) a junction is met, right is a dig while left is the way on. The dig fills with water completely in wet weather. From the junction, the crawl becomes roomier and continues for another 82m to emerge in the side of a much larger passage, The Litton Stroll, 187m from the entrance.

This can be explored left and right with a total length of around 170m. Left, downstream, 55m of walking, stooping and crawling through fine formations (care!) leads to a crawl terminating at a mud and stal choke 75m from the junction. This point is approximately 20m from the limit of exploration in Alsop's Cave. Had the dig in Alsop's Cave continued this would have been the breakthrough point.

Back at the junction, right heads upstream, again stooping and walking, for 50m to a junction with a small passage at floor level on the left, The Flat Out Walk. Continuing along the main passage a 9m high aven is reached after another 12m. Beyond 16m of crawling leads to a narrowing where the passage takes the right hand wall to end 17m on in a mud choke, 95m from the junction.

The Flat-out Walk constitutes around 100m of passage, mostly crawling in squalid mud. 45m in a junction is reached (Tigs and Togs). Left leads to a choke after 20m, very close to Anette's Attic in the Litton Stroll. Right reaches a small unstable aven after 16m where, to the right, a tricky, narrow and tight section of passage reaches a 12m high aven and a bouldery dig.

Sidetrack Cave  
Eldon Hill Quarry  
Perryfoot  
Derbyshire  
SK 11680 81521



### Description Notes:

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### Surveys:

Descent magazine #124 (p10) Jun./Jul. 1995 (Alsop's Cave).  
[http://w01-0504.web.dircon.net/surveys/cave\\_survey\\_sidetrack\\_cave.jpg](http://w01-0504.web.dircon.net/surveys/cave_survey_sidetrack_cave.jpg)

### Entries in Descent Magazine:

#122 (p9) Feb./Mar. 1995 (Alsop's Cave).  
#123 (p13) Apr./May. 1995 (Alsop's Cave).  
#124 (p10) Jun./Jul. 1995 (Alsop's Cave).  
#168 (p11) Oct./Nov. 2002 (Alsop's Cave).  
#169 (p15) Dec./Jan. 2002/3 (Alsop's Cave).  
#169 (p26-27) Dec./Jan. 2002/3 (Sidetrack Cave).

### Amendments:

Amendments and additions can be sent to:-  
[caveguides@peakdistrictcaving.info](mailto:caveguides@peakdistrictcaving.info) (any information regarding access or safety issues is automatically passed on the Derbyshire Caving Association).

## WARNING!

Caving can be dangerous and fatal accidents can happen, especially if you are not sufficiently trained.

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