

THE PATH  
THROUGH THE  
WOOD

There is a path  
That will bring you here  
To the waking woods  
And the ringing cave.  
You can find it  
If you look  
With the eyes of your heart, not your  
head.

Start in the woods and watch,  
Turn by the oldest tree, gnarled and  
knotted  
As boulders, and carry a twig of that tree  
Along the path;  
Past boulders as furry as bears.  
Slip over the old bridge  
Where the water no longer runs,  
Leave a smile for a goblin in the  
shadows.  
Through the ruins in daylight,  
only daylight,  
Sliding under ancient arches,  
Before the Bone Giants wake  
To hunt you through the darkwoods.

Listen as you go, and hope,  
A pile of leaves and twigs may heave,  
Dripping moss and mice, and waking  
Into Mimsy the woodwitch,



THE LAST OF  
GRINLOW?

They were taking too long!  
On this exciting night of a full lunar  
eclipse, the children's teachers were  
lingering in the Café at the Visitor  
Centre drinking hot chocolate and  
eating cake while the moon sailed  
smoothly to its meeting with the  
shadow of the sun.

Frustrated, the children set off  
themselves, boldly, following  
the path up through the woods  
towards Solomon's Temple  
and the hilltop. They had come  
equipped for a nocturnal school  
trip. Some were wearing wellies,  
others walking boots. They had  
jackets and raincoats, woolly hats  
and hoodies. Three children were  
even wearing snugly onesies  
while someone else had brought  
their Teddy Bear. Everyone had  
laughed at the four girls who  
brought umbrellas on this cold and  
cloudless night.

The woods were full of noises.  
Leaves rustled, owls hooted, a fox  
barked in the distance. A small  
stone rolled down towards them  
from somewhere near the old tree  
and the shadows under its twisted  
roots. As they climbed, however,  
the woods became quieter. All  
sounds slowly stopped until the  
silence was huge and empty and  
it felt like the whole night was  
holding its breath.

The path up the hill seemed to  
go on forever and the children  
stopped for a rest. Some climbed  
onto a huge log and sat there  
nibbling their snacks. As the  
others watched, the log slowly  
began to roll over, turning in slow  
motion like the first moment of an  
avalanche. Shouting, the others  
rushed to grab their friends but  
even as they reached out, the log  
rolled right over and the log and  
the children on it slid down into a  
great dark hole. Reaching out to  
help, the other children couldn't  
stop and they slipped and toppled  
and went shouting into the  
darkness.

Torches came out of pockets.  
Heads and hands and feet were  
counted. They were alive! They  
were all alive! But the hole above  
them was way out of reach.  
They shouted. They screamed.  
They tried their mobiles. No signal.  
No-one. Nothing. They tried to  
climb the craggy walls of this cave  
they were in but the walls were wet  
and slippery. They tried to make a  
tower of children, balancing one  
on top of each other like a circus  
troupe, but they couldn't reach  
the hole.

The cave was wide and deep  
and cold with a stream running  
across the far side of it. The water  
ran on down a passageway and,  
thinking that this might be the  
river that ran through Poole's  
Cavern, they set off along it. The  
caves were marvellous. Glittering  
walls reflected back their torchlight  
like eyes and crystals. Stalactites  
dripped. Stalagmites grew in  
forests of spikes like teeth. Stone  
dragons and trees, skulls and  
giants and muffins surrounded  
them. But as they walked through  
another shower of cave-rain, five

children who stopped to drink the  
falling water, complained of feeling  
unwell, that their tummies were  
heavy. Then their legs felt tired.  
Then they couldn't go on any more.  
Then they sat down and before  
their friends' horrified eyes, the  
children turned to stone just like a  
bird's nest in a petrifying well. But  
so much faster.

Frightened at last, the children  
crowded under the umbrellas,  
teasing those girls no more but  
squeezing close for safety. They  
hurried through the petrifying rain  
as the umbrellas got heavier and  
heavier until they reached an even  
larger cavern. Here, the stone was  
white as snow and ice, folded into  
curtains or rippled into waves. The  
river ran on, through the middle  
of the cave and disappeared into  
the smallest tunnel they had yet  
seen in the far wall. The wall was  
a rockfall, an ancient tumble of  
boulders closing the cave almost  
completely. The river seemed  
to have burrowed itself a thin  
wormhole through the rocks: just  
wide enough for a child, too small  
for grown-ups.

They stopped. To wait? To wait and  
be caught next time the stone rain  
fell? Or to swim? To jump into the  
freezing cold water?

As they wondered and watched  
the water, they realised they were  
not alone. An old man was sitting  
on a ledge high up on the cave wall  
watching them. He almost looked  
like he was made of stone himself  
wrapped up in hair and a beard like  
mist and moss and cobwebs. On  
stick-thin legs he picked his way  
down to them. His clothes were all  
knitted. They looked like they had  
been made from his own hair. He  
smiled and nodded and touched  
them as if making sure they were  
real. His eyes were as dark as the  
cave-river and his smile glittered  
like the rock crystal.

The strange old man helped them  
shake the rock off the umbrellas.  
He helped them tie their coats  
together to make a long thin  
canoe, tying and threading with  
plaits from his beard. He showed  
them how to lie beside each  
other to turn themselves into a  
boat-frame. Then he helped them

balance two children in each  
upside down umbrella, and fit  
everyone else onto the coat-rafts.  
As he pushed them off into the  
cold water, they called on him  
to come with them. They waved  
and shouted but the old man  
only smiled his crystal smile. As  
they were sucked down into the  
river tunnel they heard his voice  
echoing into the darkness.

"It is too late for me. I am already  
almost stone. Give my love to the  
sunlight and the friends who wait  
for me in the moonlight."

Then the river swept them away  
and the children had to stay still  
and low as they were bounced  
along, round rocks, over rocks,  
under arches, rushing, racing,  
squeezing, shrieking until suddenly  
they popped out into the electric  
lights and the camera flashes of  
a very surprised search party in  
Poole's Cavern.



high peak community arts  
Project eARTH  
In partnership with Buxton Civic Association

Grinlow's Legacy

At Poole's Cavern and Buxton Country Park  
Read the stories and poems  
behind the sculptures...

Who was  
Grinlow?



When did  
he live?

Imagine you were the last cave dweller in Derbyshire...

how lonely would you be?



# THE CAVERN

There are stories here,  
Here in the cold and the dark,  
Stories waiting to be told.

Voices of grating rocks and dripping water,  
A convocation of stalactites,  
An amphitheatre of stalagmites,  
Watchful, listening, patient,  
Waiting for the dark to return  
when we go away,  
Poised on the edge,  
Guarding their own,  
Still,  
Peaceful,  
Hidden  
World.

This parliament of stones  
Ancient and alive,  
Still but never stagnant

# CARVING

Are we digging out  
Who sleeps inside the wood  
Or do we build our own ideas?  
Delve deeper  
And find the wood smoother,  
Rougher to rough,  
To cold, to damp,  
To a dense, silken skin

Peel back,  
Dig down,  
Shark skin,  
Snake scale,  
Cracked crocodile bark.  
Deeper,

Colder,  
Darker,  
Smoother,  
Silken wood under tracing fingers



# GRINLOW'S LEGACY

He had lived there in the cave under the hill for so long that even he had forgotten when he had arrived there. Once, there had been a whole tribe of them down among the stalactites, the stone waterfalls and giant cauliflower boulders but one by one they had faded away, sinking quietly into stone until now there was only himself, only Grinlow, left, with only bats for company; the last of the cave-tribes of the Peaks.

Grinlow was lonely. He missed his family, his laughing children, his lovely wife. He even missed grumpy old Granny One-leg who used to sit on a high ledge at the back of the cave breaking off knitting-needle stalactites while she knitted the family's hair into jumpers for the bats. He was lonely and he was clever: a magician with a thousand years of knowledge behind him

Grinlow set out to carve himself a new family - or at least some friends - to share his life underground with. He started working on heavy stalagmites but the hard stone resisted his

strongest efforts. So he went out into the woods that covered the hills and there found three tree stumps that were so perfect they could have been waiting for him. His stone tools, his flint-edged gouge and crystal chisel, bit into the wood and as the chips began to fly, he felt shapes, ideas and excitements flow from his heart and into the wood turning beneath his hands. Chips flew, flakes fell and shavings curled like piglet tails to the forest floor. Grinlow sang as he worked, putting all his love of family and friends and stone into his work. He had lived so long underground that at first all the shapes he thought were of stone and cavern shapes. Into the growing carvings went the stream that runs through the cave, the long ripples of ridges on limestone, the lumps and drips of stalagmites. Even the bats' wings were there.

Chisel and mallet, gouge and flake  
With these words, the wood I wake

He carved for a day and a night, and another day became a week, and another week became a month. Birds sang to him from the trees as he worked, flowers turned their faces to watch, squirrels dropped nuts for him to chew. And the woodland crept into the carving too: the curve of a seed, the line of a twig, the breath of the wind.

He finished.

Grinlow looked at the family he had carved into the wood and he thought of the cold darkness of the cave that awaited them. He couldn't do it. He couldn't take these carvings of warm wood down into the damp and the dark. They had grown here in the wind, among the trees, touched by sunshine and moonlight and he knew that

dragging them down into the cavern would be the wrong thing to do.

So he left them there among the trees and they drew him out of the darkness of the cave. While he still lived in his beloved darkness, now there was a reason to come out and friends to find when he did so. Grinlow visited the carven family daily. Until one day he didn't. No-one saw him. The bats flew

through the cave searching, badgers burrowed, but Grinlow was gone and neither the cave, nor the wood has heard of him since.

But the wooden family remained standing under the trees where Grinlow had carved them. Without Grinlow to care for the carvings, the woodland itself became concerned and the trees grew for themselves an

eye. Sprouting through the leafmould like a toadstool, a single eye opened. An eye that all the woodland from tree to flower to mouse in its hole and robin in its nest could see through and keep a protective watch on the carvings and keep safe Grinlow's legacy.

These sculptures and stories were created as part of Project eARTH. Participants worked together with sculptor Sarah Fiander and storyteller and writer Creeping Toad (Gordon MacLellan) in 17 weekly workshops, based at Poole's Cavern. Participants drew inspiration from an initial tour of the cave. From this they sketched ideas before starting to carve, and create stories as they did so. The wood came from a fallen beech tree in Corbar Woods.

The project also involved Year 5 children from Burbage Primary School who visited the cave and woods, and added to our stories.

Project eARTH (environmental arts and health) is a partnership between High Peak Community Arts, High Peak Community Mental Health Team, Glossop Mental Health Team and High Peak CVS. It is funded by the BIG Lottery. Two groups - in New Mills and Buxton - meet each week to work on exciting arts projects. The project is aimed at people experiencing mental distress or with other long term conditions.

**For more information, call Alison on 01663 744516.**  
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# THE FAMILY

## Grinlow

Bird's beak,  
Dragon's claw,  
Pirate's hook,  
Viking prow,  
Sleeping crow,  
The sharp curve softens,  
Becomes the lump of a  
Friendly troll's nose  
But it still pierces  
To become a cheerful  
Harpoon in your heart



## River

Stretching up,  
Reaching down,  
Dripping down,  
Growing up,  
Curving,  
Twisting,  
A pillar wrapped in,  
A spiral of smoke,  
Graceful strength,  
A carven river,  
Running round knots like rocks  
Flowing,  
Hopeful



## Cave

A solid weight,  
Stone walking,  
A hollow mouth calling,  
Grumbling into daylight,  
Wrapped in bats wings,  
The mouth closes,  
The awareness spreads.  
Bulldog,  
Watchful toad.



What wakes the wood?  
What opens the eye?  
The eye that watches,  
The eye among the trees,  
The eye in the cave,  
The eye that guards  
Both wood and stone

