# 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

Start in the woods and watch, Turn by the oldest tree, gnarled and

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,



Her stone hat balanced above her toothless smile,

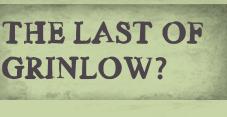
She will trade you good luck in your travels, For a bootlace to tie pebbles into her hair.

Trust the water and It will bring you to your goal With the waterfall that spills over a stone-troll's nose

To fill a moss-green bowl with wonder, And at the last, find the bridge of a single

Where the Violet Girl waits for the posy of promises

That will light her face into joy And open a moment's doorway And the way into Grinlow's world.



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 troupe, but they couldn't reach go on forever and the children the hole. 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. children who stopped to drink the Heads and hands and feet were falling water, complained of feeling counted. They were alive! They unwell, that their tummies were were all alive! But the hole above heavy. Then their legs felt tired. them was way out of reach. Then they couldn't go on any more. They shouted. They screamed. Then they sat down and before They tried their mobiles. No signal. their friends' horrified eyes, the No-one. Nothing. They tried to children turned to stone just like a climb the craggy walls of this cave bird's nest in a petrifying well. But they were in but the walls were wet 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 The cave was wide and deep as the umbrellas got heavier and and cold with a stream running heavier until they reached an even across the far side of it. The water larger cavern. Here, the stone was ran on down a passageway and, white as snow and ice, folded into thinking that this might be the curtains or rippled into waves. The river that ran through Poole's river ran on, through the middle Cavern, they set off along it. The of the cave and disappeared into caves were marvellous. Glittering the smallest tunnel they had yet walls reflected back their torchlight seen in the far wall. The wall was like eyes and crystals. Stalactites a rockfall, an ancient tumble of dripped. Stalagmites grew in boulders closing the cave almost forests of spikes like teeth. Stone completely. The river seemed dragons and trees, skulls and to have burrowed itself a thin giants and muffins surrounded wormhole through the rocks: just them. But as they walked through wide enough for a child, too small another shower of cave-rain, five for grown-ups.

and slippery. They tried to make a

tower of children, balancing one

on top of each other like a circus

fell? Or to swim? To jump into the freezing cold water? As they wondered and watched

> 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

They stopped. To wait? To wait and balance two children in each be caught next time the stone rain 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 the water, they realised they were 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.

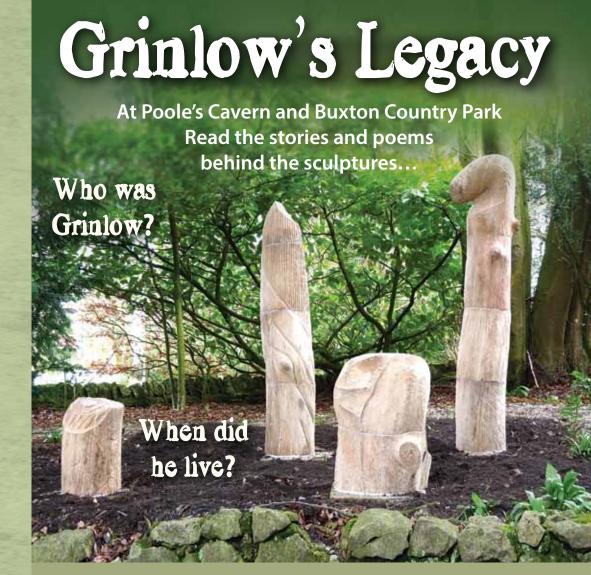
"It is too late for me. I am already almost stone. Give my love to the sunlight and the friends who wait for me in the moonlight."

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



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.

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

This parliament Ancient and all Still but never stagnant

# CARVING

Who sleeps inside the wood Or do we build our own ideas And find the wood smoother. Rougher to rough, o a dense, silken skin

Silken wood under tracing fingers

Cracked crocodile bark.

Smoother.

#### GRINLOW'S LEGACY Are we digging out

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

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

the bats' wings were there.

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

### 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.

These sculptures and stories were created as part of Project eARTh.

Participants worked together with sculptor Sarah Fiander and storyteller

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

The project also involved Year 5 children from Burbage Primary School

who visited the cave and woods, and added to our stories.

and writer Creeping Toad (Gordon MacLellan) in 17 weekly workshops,

For more information, call Alison on 01663 744516. Email alison@highpeakarts.org or go to www.highpeakarts.org

Many thanks to Buxton Civic Association for all their help, support and encouragement during this project.

# 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

### Stretching up, Reaching down, Dripping down, Growing up, Curving,

River

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

Guardian -

By night or by day,

Leading you astray,

Leading you away,

To the centre of the story

The eye is,

The Woodland Eye

A path opening in the leaf mould

Peering out through moss and toadstools.



Corbar Woods.



Derbyshire Healthcare NHS

NHS Foundation Trust

















Voices of grating rocks and dripping water,

Peaceful