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**THENORTHERNER  
BLOG**

## The giant of the Dales is best public artwork of the year

You can view it, walk through it, look out of it at either a vast quarry or glorious Nidderdale, and then go have tea in Pateley Bridge



The Long Man of Wilmington close up? No it's Andrew Sabin's Coldstones Cut from the air. Photograph: Paul Harris

The north maintains its reputation as the home of vast artworks with an accolade for the remarkable Coldstones Cut near Pateley Bridge in Nidderdale.

Part art, part tribute to the quarrying industry which devours the Dales but also employs the Dalesfolk, the mammoth construction by Andrew Sabin has won the PMSA-Marsh Award for the best public sculpture of the year.

The PMSA is the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association and competition for their blessing is usually fierce.

Michael Paraskos, artist, critic and distinguished friend of the Northerner, has this to say about it in a piece for the [Epoch Times](#):

Only by taking to the air is it possible to gain a view of the whole thing, but the point of the sculpture is not to provide a single visual experience. It is to offer a series of ground level encounters that stimulate the senses. Entering the site you are led down a series of stone clad tunnels and corridors, which inevitably bring to mind ancient earthworks and temples, such as Jarlshof in the Shetland Islands or Mycenae in Greece. These open out into ante chambers and ultimately the viewing area over the quarry itself. And like many prehistoric sites, the remoteness of Coldstones Cut adds to its sense of almost sacred mystery.

Despite these obvious associations, one of the refreshing things about Coldstones Cut is the general reluctance to force people to see the work as some kind of tree hugging (or in this case rock hugging) new age experience. It is genuinely pluralistic in its willingness to allow people to take from it what they want. For some it is no more than a stage post on a long distance ramble, while for others it will be an adventure playground for children. And some will undoubtedly see it as an emblem of rebirth and the earth mother as the tunnels take them partially underground and then back into the open air. Whether people see these things or not, for everyone the intention has been to create an aesthetic experience, in the true sense of the word "aesthetic", meaning a sensory experience.

The area up above the Cut, riddled with mineral workings and the odd bleak looking farm, is somewhat spooky. No wonder many who pass that way dive underground into the [Stump Cross Caverns](#) labyrinth. It never surprised me that the late neo-Nazi [Colin Jordan](#) retired there to live in gloomy seclusion.

This year's other PMSA/Marsh winner is [Harlow Sculpture Town](#) initiative, in far-away Essex (although I did my eight-week block release journalism training there in 1974, from the Bath Evening Chronicle, and it was very nice).

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