

# BARBONDALE CAVING BASH

Barbon, no we were Barkin (mad)

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Date: 7th July 2008

People present: Duncan Jones, Pete Dale, Daniel Jackson, Chris Scaife

Weather - raining!

The weather forecast for the weekend was one of dampness, so we hatched some plans for some 'dry' trips. Peterson Pot was mentioned and plans were partially made to do the through trip to Mistral. Having been here previously and knowing what it was like I was not 100% keen and when Pete lost interest after his Knacker Trapper trip other ideas were considered.

After a quick bite to eat and a drink (non-alcoholic!) in Ingleton we had decided upon Barbon Pot. None of us had been before so it seemed a reasonable option. The description sounded like it wasn't flood prone and had a bit of variety with a 50ft pitch, crawling, walking and maybe some pretties! Admittedly the bit about dumping of dead sheep in the entrance didn't sound overly inspiring but what's a dead sheep to us..

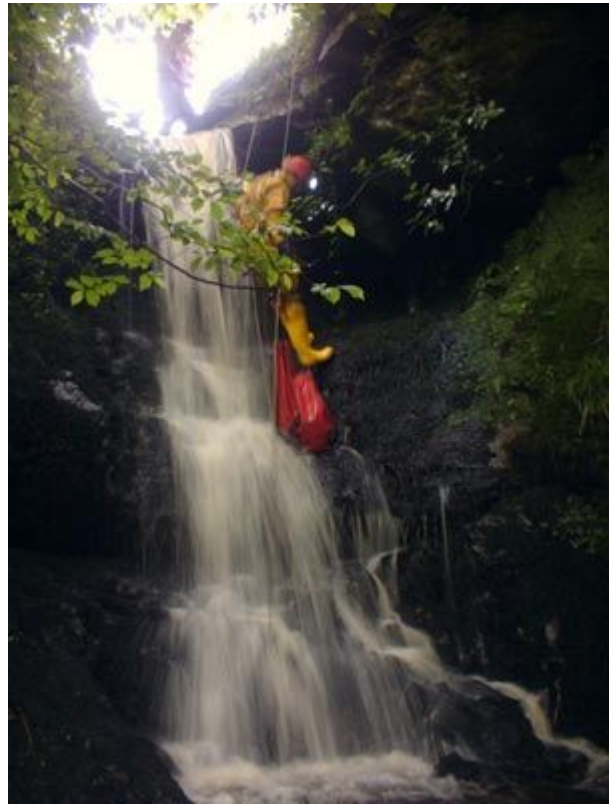
Arriving at Barbondale we parked up, got changed in the light rain and setting off we found a convenient culvert under the road that offered a short through trip. Once through we followed the gill upwards, mostly dry but further up we encountered the stream. It has to be said it was a fairly enjoyable scramble up the gill and made a pleasant change to trudging across a fell. At the top we plodded over the fern covered fell in the direction of some shakeholes. A few were passed until we found a promising looking one, which was dismissed as being crappy and full of rubbish. A short walk later and we returned to this hole.



The crappy rubbish pit was actually Barbon Pot! Joy of joy, we sent down a disposable member to assess the situation, bit iffy so I rigged a quick handline and threw it down to Pete who quickly rigged the short climb but left someone else to go down it! With apathy infecting everyone it was left to me to be brave (or is that foolish?) and descend into the magnificent depths. As my back scraped on the tin sheeting I began to think Peterson wasn't such a bad idea after all.

AGHGH, the colour rapidly drained from my face as I turned round and saw what that tin was resting on and what I was abseliing next to. I did my best to make as little noise as possible as I edged down the 4m drop to land on the muddy slope leading to the ~15m pitch. I looked up and down at the teetering pile of twisted evil rusty metal that can perhaps best be described as a 4m high pile of rusty hanging death and the pleasure was all mine. Gingerly I shuffled forward to peer down the pitch, although I didn't see much as the pitch-head appeared to consist of loose mud, I booted a loose piece down and listened to it bounce down. Not spotting anything useful to rig off I figured a retreat was in order. I turned and ever so slightly scraped a piece of metal, I held my breath as colour now drained from my toes as a horrible clattering noise was made by some bits of rusty metal dropping in the 'choke'. The movement stopped, I didn't and beat a hasty but very careful retreat. That is one nasty little place. How on earth all that crap ended up there defies belief and how anyone can be allowed to get away with it is another! It needs some serious cleaning to make it an acceptable little pot again.

Emerging into the rain I offered everyone else a chance to sample this classic, nobody took the opportunity, can't understand why..? After a quick spot of de-rigging we trudged over towards the gill with the view to having a nosey in Dog Hole. As we set off down the other gill we found a couple of waterfalls which were rigged up for a pull-through, just for the hell of it. Dan chose to walk round but the rest of us did the midge-seiling. At the bottom of one waterfall was a cave entrance taking a reasonable amount of water, not knowing what it was we sent Dan to investigate. Reports of passage continuing meant we all had to climb down this well watered hole. A short bit of passage brings you to a hole in the floor, traversing over this the continuing passage gets too low, but may repay further attention (Alex?) Returning to the hole we found the climb was easy and spacious, unfortunately all routes become too low, tight, etc. We headed out, taking a quick look at a side passage, all interesting stuff. Later investigation revealed this short but enjoyable hole as Barkin Cave.



Back out in the rain we trudged down gill and then over fell to Crystal Cave, which certainly had a little more water flowing out of it than on my last visit. I wasn't convinced we would get far and sure enough at the first duck / low crawl 30m in it was very wet, not quite sumped though. We headed back to the entrance for a quick play and photo session in the mini-duck right by the entrance and we had a quick choccy bar break..



The rain beckoned and we followed the stream down, assuming there would be a walkable culvert, just like the other gill. No such luck, this was a small round tube, which offered a more interesting through trip! There was nearly enough water to push you along if you were to lie down on your back, bloody cold water though. A plan was soon hatched to utilise the tackle sacks to form a temporary dam to hold back some water to give us more push through the tube.



This made for a slightly more entertaining slide through and hopefully it shows up ok on the little video. After some playtime had been had and numerous strange looks from passing motorists we called it a day, an enjoyable day at that!

The drive home provided us with some fine views of some very black clouds, these later deposited a load of rain on us when we reached the motorway, even had a dash of thunder and lightening thrown in for good measure. The strangeness continued after I had dropped Pete off, continuing south I reached slow traffic, whereupon I cursed the rubber-neckers as there was obviously something happening on the northbound carriageway, I soon found myself taking a second glance to see a cow trotting up the motorway, at least it was in the slow lane!

*Duncan Jones*

*A [Black Rose Caving Club](#) trip report.*