

BOGGARTS ROARING HOLES

Alex Ritchie's series of unfortunate events.

7th February 2009

People present - Kate Duffus, Pete Dale, Alex Ritchie, Dominick Mennie, Chris Scaife, Dan Jackson

Weather: - cold but bright and clear upon exit

See Petes version of events further down.

Having recently forked out for club membership and gained access to the forum, I thought it was about time I organised a trip underground. Boggarts is a cave that should be doable in most weather conditions so I thought it would be a good bet. There was snow on Ingleborough, but on the day it was so cold there was no chance of any of it melting.

I suggested meeting in Inglesport at ten o'clock. Pete didn't like that idea and told everyone to meet in Bernies at nine. I turned up at ten and they were all still there. Well they had to be as I had all the ropes (except the two that Pete brought still covered in Titan mud!). The greasy empty plates showed that they had used the time well.



The slog up the hill was a steep unremitting grind and we all arrived at the shakehole very glad of Pete's unerring sense of direction. With the whole hillside covered in white, he took us directly to the hole, no messing.

Pitch one was a daylight rift, via a thorn bush onto a heap of mud. From here we had to take the least obvious of two ways on, which led immediately to Bone pitch. Next was a thrutchy crawl leading straight out over the top of Lost Persons pitch (who thinks up these names?). I made this more difficult than it needed to be by facing the wrong direction and ended up trying to rig off anchors behind me.

Then we found the sheep. This has obviously decayed somewhat since the last BRCC descent of Boggarts, fortunately to the point that there is no smell. It is, however, still recognisable as a sheep, or rather, bits of sheep. I climbed over it and then heard Dan squealing as he sat in it and smeared it all over the backside of his oversuit. Others might have said he screamed like a girl. It was funny though.

Fever pitch is reached after a short, head down, sideways crawl, with the Y hang bolts round the corner out of sight. The good book (NFTFH) describes this as narrow and awkward with difficult rigging. I guess the fixed anchors have made the rigging easier, but the approach didn't seem too bad.

After a short crawl, we shimmied over a blind pit to the fifth pitch, which landed us in Penguin Hall. I was a little anxious about the crawling to the next pitch. The description sounded horrible, involving building a dam to divert water – what water? It was dry, was I in the wrong place? I soon got to Punani passage, which was nothing like as bad as I had imagined and in no time at all we were at the top of Blind Mans Bluff Pitch.

After BMBP was the tightest bit of the cave, a very short flat out and grunting squeeze. Most of us managed this with SRT kit on and emerged head first over the top of Loose Tooth Pitch (good job we had a dentist with us!).

Two more pitches got us to the bottom of the cave where there was a little half hearted grovelling down a blind ending crawl so as to be able to tell Rob and Dunc that we had bottomed the cave and they hadn't.

Having calculated that we had four tackle bags and six people, I made my way up the cave closely followed by Chris. He overtook me at the fifth pitch in an attempt to get out before the urgent need to defecate filled his pants. I followed but was careful to heed his warning not to wander about near the entrance. We gave up on the idea of waiting for the others out on the hillside and returned to the cars for dry clothes.

I sat and waited, and waited, and waited until eventually there were lights coming down the hill. I understand the delay was caused by a combination of four bags between three people (Beryl had escaped (why is he called Beryl?)), awkward pitch heads, tackle bags catching on rebelay and little impromptu derigging along the way.

Suffice it to say that all six of us bottomed the cave. I was a little disappointed in the lack of pretties but all in all it was a good day out.

Kate Duffus

Petes version of events:

I arrived in Ingleton at 8:50am which was a little earlier than I would normally like to get there but due to circumstances at home an early start was a good idea. After sorting a light out Dan turned up and low and behold he bought a new pair of wellies! We then spotted Chris and Alex so made our way into Bernie's for a bite to eat and to wait for Kate and Dom. Kate soon turned up and then we waited and waited for Dom. When he did turn up we made a quick exit and sped off to the parking spot for Newby moss. A very brisk change was in order due to the cold wind and we were soon ready for the long slog uphill which was harder than the cave itself although some would disagree.

After a long up hill struggle we left the path and walked across the fell in search of the entrance shake hole, passing Trapdoor pot on the way. Soon enough though, we had arrived at the large hole of Boggarts. Kate set off rigging while the rest of us got our SRT kits on.

The horde of cavers slowly started disappearing down the entrance pitches, I was following Alex with Chris tight up my arse. The entrance pitch was rigged from a thread round a fallen rock and then two bolts at the pitch head giving a nice free hang to the bottom. The rigging for the first pitch is pretty bad and could do with another bolt halfway along the traverse to avoid a nasty fall if the 'Y' hang gave way. At the bottom of the first pitch the second pitch follows straight away with the added bonus of a short shuffle down some sloping boulders. Alex shouted rope free and I made my way down the next 5m pitch. From the bottom a narrow passage is followed to the next pitch 'Lost persons' an easy 10m descent ends in a small chamber with the passage heading off under the entrance pitches in a series of short climbs.

Now short climbs are all well and good but what made these more tricky than normal was the festering carcass of an animal of Ovine origin (Chris ;-)), anyway we knew that the sheep was going to be there but at least it didn't smell but somehow it had managed to become deposited along the



passage for the next 20ft, (Could it have been those girly screams we heard on the way down Dan?) after the sheep dodging climbs a short head first blasted section led to the top of Fever pitch, now I remember this as being awkward the last time I was down here but alas it was very easy so it must be the second pitch in Christmas pot that was tricky. Fever pitch passed easily and I was once again in a large chamber with the last glimpses of Alex's wellies shuffling off under the wall into a flat out crawl. Following Alex I scurried in and over the two pits and across to the right for the next pitch into Penguin hall.

Flash, followed by flash indicated the camera was out so we soon caught up and set off into the crawl to the start of Punani passage. Now last time I was down here the 3 ½ metre drop was a torrent of water and you had to climb down with it and into the passage half way down but alas today it was dry. The Dam was not required so crawling resumed to the 2m climb down at the start of Punani. No mars bars this time and it looked very different than before as considerable blasting had taken place but it seemed to have stopped a good few metres short of the pitch head of Blind Mans Bluff. NTFH said this pitch head was awkward but I found no problems at all with it so the author must have had a bad day when they did this trip. While waiting at the top for Dan to stop his faffing all we could hear was Kate moaning and grunting and such comments like "It's tight on my arse" and "Once you get your arm in it loosens up" what was going on is anyone's guess!

At the bottom of BMB the cause of the commotion was found to be a short squeeze that didn't look all that bad so as I waited my turn I found it strange that Alex was trying to find another way past the obstacle since obviously the original explorers wouldn't have looked for one?? Anyway Dan passed it and Alex had a go on his back even though everyone said not to (Just doesn't listen) anyway I had a go and realised it would be more difficult with SRT kit on so promptly removed such things I then slid through with ease. Alex came next and cried about the big drop down the next pitch... tsk!



Loose tooth pitch followed easy enough with a rebelay part way down to avoid rope rub but didn't and then you land on a pile of stacked deads. Frank's pitch followed immediately after another blasted section which was more like a few small climbs than a 24m pitch most of which is free climbable. At the bottom another short section of blasted passage takes you to the top of the last pitch to nowhere and beyond.

Well we had all made it to the bottom so the only way was up and out, Kate sped off with me close behind with her turning back here and there claiming some bits were hard and she wanted to see me struggle (Sorry to disappoint you!) now the top of Franks pitch was a tad small compared to others but it was easier on the way up than going down it but certain other members didn't think so apparently. Reaching the top of loose tooth Kate shouted back through the squeeze to give her a hand as she couldn't get a good foot hold to push off (Fat arse stopping her more like) so I sorted her out and then made my way through, again easier on the way out than in. Kate set off up BMB and I waited for the others to catch up.

Soon enough the faint smell of something that shouldn't be smelt came wafting itself my way and shortly after Chris appeared and slid through the squeeze to join me. He then sped off up BMB and was never seen again. Dom was next up and I asked him if he had a tackle bag for me "NO" was the reply so we both waited for Alex to see if he had one with him. Alex soon appeared and we asked for the tackle bag and he said he was bringing it up with him. A few minutes later Alex had still not got to the top and was complaining about the tackle bag and how the rope had got tangled up and Christ knows what else I mean how hard can it be to prussic up a rope with a bag? Time ticked away and after fruitless conversations with Alex we found out that the bag he was bringing up

didn't even have the ropes in. we asked him why he was bringing an empty bag up but got no sensible answer. I think at this point Dom was not happy and came through the squeeze and set off up BMB pitch. Dom said he would wait at the top and I waited at the bottom for the Ritchie to materialise.

A few moments later Alex started complaining about it being hard work to bring the empty bag up the pitch saying it was dragging the rope with it. (?????) Finally he got to the top and couldn't get off the rope saying he couldn't lift himself up. What the hell, what the fuck is going on I wondered to myself out loud. Then we heard Dan say that the rope was rubbing badly, then Alex said that he had the rebelay with him? What the fuck? It appears that the reason that it was hard work to prussic up the pitch was because he was pulling Dan up! All eventually sorted Alex got off the rope and Dan had to do a knot pass instead of the rebelay. Alex came through the squeeze and Dom set off out since there was still no bloody bag. Dan passed the bag through and I gave it to Alex and told him to get out. I then waited for Dan to pack the rope and come through the squeeze to join me. Once at the top of BMB Alex pulled the tackle bag up and then I heard "For fucks sake!" it would seem that the Ritchie had mistaken a 7m drop for an invisible ledge and carefully placed the tackle bag on it. He then spent a considerable amount of time trying to retrieve said bag from said invisible ledge much to mine and Dan's amusement. Eventually he got the bag back but then couldn't get it into the passage (Jesus!)

At last he was on his way so I then set off up and once there pulled the tackle bag up and waited in the passage for Dan to come up and de rig the pitch. We shuffled along Punani and climbed the climbs and after a bit more shuffling we popped out in Penguin hall to the sound of Alex yet again struggling with ropes and bags.

Omitted due to an insurmountable amount of expletives!

When I got to the top I could still hear Alex cursing and getting rather upset with the bag and himself and his hand jammer oh and the cave and many other things. I crawled over to him and sorted the bag out and sent him on his way. We all gathered at the base of Fever pitch and Alex set off up while Dan burst in to a chorus of 'Things can only get better!' once Alex was at the top I sped up the rope and then pulled the bags up, passed one to Alex and then followed him past the rotting sheep. With Dan following we passed the next two pitches with the ease and skill we should have had the entire trip. Soon enough we reached the surface and the clear night sky checking my phone I saw that it was 18:12 and a bit later than I had hoped for, never the less I grabbed another tackle bag and made my way down the hill to the car. The walk to the car was one of the nicest walks I have done in a long time, the sky was clear the moon was in full bloom and the ground was frosty and white with snow luuurvly!



Well the old boggs was bottomed by all and we all got out safely even if I was exhausted mentally from trying to get Alex to think you could use a saying here...Look before you leap!

Pete Dale

Photos - Dan Jackson