

# COUNTY POT

## To an unplanned Wretched!

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Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2013

People present: Alex (HoleyMoley) Ritchie, Dan Jackson, Chris Sharman, Don Miller.

Weather: wet!

At the almost the last minute we managed to grab a permit for County as no one could think of anything better to do in the wet weather. Down the entrance pitch We first headed off down a rather sporting wet stream way towards Platypus junction but rather than following the stream, we took an obscure high level flat out passage, thinking a boulder choke blocked the way. After some rigging around boulders we re-located the water and reached Platypus. We turned left, up stream up Razor passage, however we were soon in familiar passage, as we had managed a mini round trip, so we returned to Platypus junction again.

We downstream and found it got a little too low and scary with an unknown amount of water that was probably on the way so we turned around. I don't recall exactly how we went up stream again and some how got into different passage to reach Spout Hall. The spout was good fun as it always is with lots of water issuing from it. I decided to head to Battle of Britain chamber and on up the fixed ladder as I knew the way. That and a bit of crawling led us to a decorated passage that emerged at the start of monster cavern. Instead of carrying on to stop pot, (as we had now decided to exit via Wretched) I led the intrepid crew uphill into what seemed like a dead end. However it did not close and instead, developed into a rift before opening out into large sandy floored and highly decorated passage (Carrot chamber/passage). I can't believe that I never visited this place in the 10 or so trips I have been in here. Next time I will bring my camera. After about 10 minutes it ended at a very flat out crawl which carried on but my patience for it did not, though I was forced on until it was wide enough for me to turn around.

Back in Monster Cavern, I then got everyone to come with me down a hole in the main passage which led to what looked like bottomless a slippery climb, were with use of ledges lower down allowed us to traverse off. A further climb down led into large passage, which unfortunately choked in boulders after about 50 meters, with the roar of water heard. I poked about in the very loose boulders and probably crawled into a place no man had been before (or would want to) down a crack, but could not reach the source of the rumbling as the passage choked in mud and rock.

Gingerly I returned to the top of the boulder choke and still in the large passage I spotted what seemed like a dead-end passage under the right hand wall. Yet hidden behind some shingles it continued, on and on it went on in reasonable sized dimensions but still all crawling, I was on my own as the wimps did not follow me. After about 100 metres or so I entered another boulder choke (far more stable than the last) and climbed down through small chambers. At the bottom there was horizontal slit with ongoing passage. I inserted my self into said slit and entered what looked to be completely untouched muddy passage which unfortunately after another 50 meters or so it ended at a further boulder choke. There was a way on under the right-hand wall but it was half filled with mud but diggable by hand, if the others were not waiting for me. Not wanting to hang around as I had also spotting lots of flood debris on my way in I headed out. I got a bit lost in the boulder choke whilst spotting a tide mark 20 foot above the slot I crawled through earlier.

Eventually I found my way out before the others got too worried and we carried on out.

We exited via Wretched which was fine except we had left our SRT kits at the bottom of County. Thankfully we thought about this and sent Dan on an Italian hitch to collect the SRT kits. It hadn't actually rained much while we were down which was why Wretched seemed to have dried up back to normal levels.

A good fun day out with lots of holes in Ease Gill suitably poked in!

*Alex Ritchie*

*A Black Rose Caving Club trip report.*