

COUNTY POT

To Wretched via Easter Grotto and Spiral Staircase

8th November 2008

People present - Peter Dale, Rob Santus, Mike Skyrme, Alex Ritchie, Mike White, Roz Pilling, Liz Higham and Gus Kristmanns & Neil Heywood (In the Wheatsheaf)

Weather: Overcast and cool

Mike S was early, so he headed to County Pot to install a ladder whilst we were kitting out Liz and Gus in Ingleton. After getting geared up and a quick bite, we headed to Bull Pot Farm. We quickly changed as it was cold then trudged across to the entrance. Alex literally jumped in, demonstrating his new found eagerness and Pete took the rear. We all made quick progress down the pitch and into Broadway. I expected to see Mike et al in this area, but he was awol, so we decided to recce down to Platypus Junction and back up Spout Hall. Me and Pete were trying to concoct evil plans for the other 3 patsies; this involved a little visit through Manchester Bypass. I foolishly had to prove that I could fit through Cono Crawl which states very tight on the survey: it is. Don't try it until well after your post-xmas diet has kicked in. Alex gambled by following but failed. Fair play to the lad for trying. In the Manchester Bypass, Liz was leading and decided to go low down in the passage which was a foolish error and caused her much anxiety, which we all laughed at.

Once we reached Mainline Terminus, we made easy progress down to Stop pot. We debated Depot 1.5 for a demon exercising mission for Alex but decided against it. Instead, went upstream to Holbeck Junction. En route we encountered Mike W and Roz who looked cosy and seemed to be quite enjoying their leisurely jaunt through County. Pete and I had other ideas. We dragged them all up to Easter Grotto which was fun. The climb up was very interesting with everyone trying a different route. Pete myself and Liz decided to try the ridiculous upward squeeze but it took Mike S and me an age to drag Liz out of said squeeze. The poor girl was getting knackered. Once we'd all clambered into the grotto, we met another small group. Pete offered to go and fetch their tackle bags as they didn't know it was a through route, so I went and helped him. That's poor Pete who thought he'd broken his rib tripping up in the main streamway.

Anyway, their tackle retrieved, we made our way through Easter Grotto and through the bedding on the other side. The group following us bottled it and turned back. Thanks lads, but no thanks. Exiting provided me with Skyrmy's hefty boot to my right eye, followed by landing on my head and dragging me to the floor. He's a fair weight when he lands on top of you! As a result, we guided the rest down, apart from Pete of course who gave a lesson in caving to the un-initiated.

From here we headed back to Holbeck and back out of Spiral Staircase. No real event except I went too far and ended up in Pool Sink. The exit out Wretched Rabbit provided more fun and games as per usual. The good news for anyone who cares: Alex actually made it out without any screaming! Yes, stop the press. Liz and Roz were a bit bugged getting out and Pete was howling with his potentially broken ribcage, but all got out in the end without too much trouble.

After the usual slog back, we changed and met Marie and Jo (Mike S and W's wives respectively) in the Wheatsheaf which, I'm happy to say, has improved its beer situation no end.

Rob Santus