

CRESCENT POT

Recce to top of 7th / and the duck

Date : 10th July 2011

Present : Rob Santus, Alex Ritchie

Weather : dry but showers a distinct possibility.

After much indecision, we opted for the original plan which was Crescent. The unsettled weather was bothering us but we decided that a recce to the bottom of the 6th pitch would be ok.

Crescent Pot is notoriously difficult to find so we worked out a marker for a subsequent trip. As NFTFH says, you walk to the north end of the scar and then approx. 180 metres east. Around here and about 130 metres from the north wall, the pot is almost opposite the right hand of the broken section of wall as you look at it. There is a second shakehole next to it with a load of wooden stakes lying in it and we put a small stake in the ground for an extra mark.

Having got all the gear ready the day before, Alex sent me a text late on that it was rigged by Ian, one of his YSS colleagues who gave us permission to use his ropes (thanks Ian). This helps a bit on the walk up that steep hill.



The entrance is a series of smallish pitches which is small at the top but opens up further down, arriving quickly at a chamber with a shored excavation. It must have taken a lot of digging to get that lot out, akin to spiral staircase but not as pretty. Someone has put some home-made ladders down it for extra protection.

This leads to a bedding crawl in a small stream with a short squeeze in the middle which we did with SRT kits on, followed by muddy, rocky crawling until you reach another squeeze. I opted to take my kit off because it seemed tight, but I had my gear on on the return, although it is tight, but only for half a metre.

This drops into another stream which winds down to the main streamway. At this point you have now got 3 streams running into the pot, hence the reason why Crescent is quite wet on the pitches and further down.

A short stroll in the stream brings you to a sideways crawl on the left. This is awkward rather than tight and is assisted by a handline and a nice space in the middle to haul tackle. We both kept full gear on both ways which is useful on the way down as the 4th pitch immediately follows. This is a short pitch which could possibly be free climbed but it would be exposed (maybe half climbed with cows tails and hand jammer).

The 5th pitch quickly follows which is awkward at the top but not that tight (not as bad as Langstroth 2nd or the Executioner) but opens up to reveal a fairly big chamber and pitch with a lot of water beating down. The bottom is slippy and caution is needed.. After another short crawl, you reach the 6th pitch which again is wet (very wet when we were there) and is inclined all the way down.



This was supposed to be our limit because of weather concerns, but we carried on a bit further. Alex stopped at the top of the 7th pitch, I went down and carried on crawling in the very sharp floored crawl to a small climb and the duck. I decided to turn back here (the threat of a flood pulse down here was bothering me not to mention very recent evidence of flooding to the roof) and caught up with Alex at the top of the 5th, both of us considerably wetter after the 6th pitch prussic.

Progress was swiftly made out from here, through the sideways rift (note of caution: the handline is threadbare at the 4th pitch head and urgently needs replacing) and out through the other squeeze to the shored chamber, with several photos en route to amuse ourselves later.

On the way out, the sun was pouring down the entrance pitch which gave it an ethereal appearance and provided some more good photo opportunities.

I look forward to returning see the sump, duck and other passages when the weather is a little kinder.

Rob Santus

Photos – Alex Ritchie & Rob Santus

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