

CRYSTAL CAVE – DOG HOLE – BUCKET ON THE HEAD

“A trip of a lifetime” - Pete Dale!

Date : 28th July 2012

Present : Pete Dale, Mike Skyrme, Darren Jarvis, Chris Sharman

Weather : Damp with dry patches.

Part one: Crystal Cave

After saying this was a trip I was keen to complete on the forum it was on, Pete promised me the trip of a lifetime and he was not kidding. Meeting early doors in Inglesport for the usual breakfast and specially made porridge for me (thanks), we were off.

We entered Crystal with the clouds ominously looming and entered the nice first passages to the first duck, which was fairly low, spirits were high and the trip was running smoothly so far. Following up was the second, slightly wetter duck. Beyond, the passage soon lowers to a sump, just back from here a side passage leads to the two waterfall climbs, the top of which reveals a low continuation.

From the top of these easy climbs the passage soon degenerates to a sandy flat out crawl and some shuffles leading, after this was passed with no problems, to Monsoon chamber and Dog Hole.

Part two: Dog Hole

Next up on the agenda was Dog Hole, near this area was where I got completely lost and headed upstream before quickly returning to my fellow cavers. We then crossed the Watershed and its ducks with no problems, the deck duck was a low narrow one, Chris went first and did some digging but to no avail, after some minor excavation Pete and Mike were through, quickly followed my myself and Chris.

We then came to an unexpected traverse, which was lovely, this soon closed to a breakdown chamber with a lovely formation and a climb up. Which everyone squeezed through with no problems... except me. Managing to get my leg wedged several times and knocking some heavy sounding lumps down, after struggling for some time Pete came back down to do some leg leading and I was through, however there has now been some major movement which has made this squeeze “Easier but more unstable” according to Pete **CAUTION IN THIS VERY LOOSE AREA!** Once up we carried on to a tight sideways passage which I again got minor wedged due to my helmet falling off (oh dear), we all got through shortly after.

Part three: Bucket on the Head

Onwards and upwards through some nice varied bits of passage, we reached the wet series. In this area and three ducks, two of which look menacing but you can almost walk through them with how deep the water is. The way on is to leave the stream through some

easy hands and knees crawling to the fourth Bucket duck. Some nice passage leads to the final slump which is not overly unpleasant.

A sizable chamber is reached where the obvious climb leads to the entrance series, this was all passed slowly but with no problems except me over-complicating and easy climb and managing to slow myself down. Up a ladder and out we were into a nice (for about ten minutes) day before rain and hail hit.

Summary

An excellent return to caving trip for me with some fun, wet, annoying and pretty bits thrown in. Awesome trip which would be good to do again in a year or so and see if I cannot get stuck anywhere

Darren Jarvis

A Black Rose Caving Club trip report.