

# DOW CAVE to PROVIDENCE POT

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Date: Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2011

People present: Chris Scaife, Alex Ritchie, Dan Jackson, Darren "75%" Jarvis.

Weather: warm but drizzling

We met in Kettlewell on a wet Sunday morning in the middle of a mini heat wave and sat down in a lovely little tea room to discuss our plans for the day. The natural choice, given the weather, was Dowbergill Passage, going in the opposite direction to the way we'd done it nearly three years ago. So, armed with some pages photocopied from Not For the Faint Hearted and the ability to read backwards we headed up the hill to Dow Cave and launched ourselves head first into one of Yorkshire's finest through trips.

The trip begins with a romp through the main passage in Dow Cave, then into the 20m-high Dowbergill Passage. We followed the stream quite a bit at the start, barely noticing Hansler's Screaming Nightmare (or Hardy's Horror), then up a straightforward in situ rope to the Gypsum Traverse. We were then back in the stream for a bit to a Rock Window, and some walking at stream level led to the Narrows.

Mr Jarvis has asked to describe this part himself;

*"Doesn't look too bad" Said I, little did I know I was about to regret saying that. The squeeze itself is a sideways wriggle right at stream level and involves a committing downwards wriggle to get to it, Alex and Dan got through easily and I followed, managing to get wedged above a boulder in the tightest section. Looking back I think it was general poor strategy and my belay belt with a crab on it getting stuck, Chris helped by pushing my feet forward and received a couple of accidental kicks for his trouble (sorry Chris), anyway after about 20 very sideways minutes with me moving about a foot Alex came to the rescue. Tying some rope to my belay I managed to eventually pull myself through and up to freedom.*

*Unfortunately this knackered me for the next climb and needed some assistance, once at the top it was time for a Mars bar and some chances to redeem myself on the long journey out.*

Some short climbs, traverses and squeezes then took us from Brew Chamber to Bridge Cavern, which is a large passage with lots of slippery blocks and the perfect place for a Queen medley. Our Bonnie Tyler medley was very short-lived as we only know one of her songs and even then, basically only the chorus. Bridge Cavern was followed to Stalagmite Corner, by which time we were onto Fat Bottomed Girls and, frankly, my voice was getting hoarse. The pages from NFTFH were now a soggy, unreadable mess and we wandered around for a while, exploring as far as the upstream sump. It was all starting to seem as if we might be in trouble, but suddenly from nowhere Alex revealed a faultless memory of the trip that had been embedded in his head since January 2009 and, like a St Bernard dog carrying brandy to wounded mountaineers, his remarkable mind led us through the labyrinth with such efficiency that even Theseus would have turned green with envy.

With a bit more muddy crawling than I remembered from last time (but memory is hardly my special skill) we exited through Providence Pot, via a putrid ovine corpse and back into the World. The rain continued for our walk back to Kettlewell and we ate in the highly recommended Blue Bell Inn.

*Chris Scaife (with the italicised bit by Darren Jarvis)*

*There was a rumour that Dan had taken pictures, but no evidence has yet been found of this..*

*A Black Rose Caving Club trip report.*