

GRANGE RIGG POT

With a fresh coat of blue paint, children cover your ears!

Date: 28th September 2008

People present: Alex Ritchie, Duncan Jones, Pete Dale

Weather: Fine and sunny

The day started off foggy as I drove up to meet Pete at the usual place but the weather soon improved as we headed up to Ingleton to pick up some gear, well I guess that means it will be a sweaty sweaty walk up the hill.

We met Dunc a little later than originally planned, as I insisted on a good hearty breakfast before heading out. We got changed in the public eye near the tunnels and decided to walk up a different route to the cave (well Dunc decided and we followed). This route on the other side of the valley was a lot worse than the normal route up Ingleborough because not only was it steep, you go down almost as far as you came up to go back down again. *(Ed: Admittedly it was a bit up and down near Clapham Bottoms, made a pleasant change to the usual trod).*

Reaching the cave Dunc and Pete made like superman in getting changed into his costume and headed on in before I had even put my SRT belt on fully, and yes my SRT belt does fit me now, shows you how quick they are.

I scrambled on in. Shortly after a little bit of stooping passage in the cave I came to a 2-3 metre climb, I saw no handholds so I simply wedged my self in and slid my way down, "hmm that would be awkward to get back up I thought". I remember the guide saying there is a small drop before the pitch so I thought this must be it. Shortly afterwards I reached another "climb" this time just over 3 metres long and I thought hmm they must have forgot to mention this in the guide or something so I shimmied my way down this climb again thinking that's gonna be bloody hard to get back up that. I turned a sharp corner...

"Oh S%^£ I said as my left foot was now dangling over a 40ft drop! the water I had displaced was now smashing itself on the floor of the pitch below. It appears I had managed to miss the traverse (No ropes at the beginning bit to give me any clue to go that way) and had free-climbed the first 3rd of the pitch. Dunc at this point had heard me shout and was bemused with where I was. On my request he de-rigged half the traverse and lowered the rope down to where I was and I descended the last 2 thirds of the pitch.

Well with that over with onto the rest of the cave, a crawl was followed by an easy pitch with which I helped rig, more crawling and some minor climbing followed, then a squeeze through a calcite tube which then abruptly ended in a small 2 legged pitch. It was tight at the top very tight in fact *(Ed: Eh? It's only as tight as your mind allows it to be! It's not as bad as say Langstroths second pitch)*, believe me it is tighter on the way out, that part of the passage is now blue in colour! We didn't bother to descend the first part and instead free-climbed the first part of pitch but a rope was rigged to help going out.

Shortly beyond that comes the 4th pitch an easy run of the mill 11 metre free hang down a shaft (Was not as tight at the top as the guide suggested). More crawling was had next and a nice tight bit known as the "letter box", Any large packages would have to be left on the doormat for this one. With that squeezed through we reached the long crawl/traverse *(Ed: Anemolite Crawl - with lots of helictites to gaze at)*. I originally thought about doing the crawl in the stream-way but instead was persuaded to do the traverse, which did look easier. The traverse was not that difficult, it was more a crawl than anything, just got to be careful not to get your SRT kit or your leg for that matter stuck in the crack below.

At the end of the traverse an awkward climb was reached (awkward going back up) which dropped us back into the stream-way at the start of Battleship passage. What ensued then was some scrambling over high boulders to then be dropped back into the stream-way then followed a squeeze between the boulders and the cave wall, which emerged under the bottom of the Christmas pot's pitch.

More climbing and an easy pitch/climb later we reached the final pitch. This pitch was awkward to rig for Dunc as it involved a very long lean over the pitch head to reach the bolt on the far wall, until a ledge was spotted that is. This pitch was passed with the minimum of fuss except I needed to use my hand jammer as I swung out with my long cow's tail still on the rope doh! We then reached a boulder squeeze under a loose boulder slope that neither Dunc or Pete could fit through, we could only assume that the rocks have shifted and had blocked the passage. *(Ed: The squeeze on the left was far too tight, there was another short squeeze through boulders on the right, which we could have fitted through but didn't bother trying. We saved a dash of time, as time was money today, by leaving the Drainpipe and sump chamber to add some entertainment when we do Pay Sank...)*

So we started to head out, where Pete and Dunc decided to continue on my course from Yordas on de-rigging, which on the first pitch out made things easier as I could simply swing across now that I had undone the Karabiner on the far wall.

We reached the squeeze between the rocks and well from here on things didn't exactly go my way. First off I got stuck in the squeeze because I tackled it completely wrong by trying to squirm through it rather than sliding vertically through it which exhausted me and started my swearing at the cave with quotes like "What f&%\$£ designed this cave?" looking back on it I think I will blame the Labour government.

This squeeze was followed shortly by that awkward climb back up to the traverse where I couldn't pull my self up those last couple of inches as my arms had not recovered from the squeeze yet, so I had to find an interesting alternative way of climbing it, by climbing up somewhere else and then "sky diving" my way across the gap 3 ft gap 15ft above the stream below. Then my foot ascender kept bugging me tying it self to every rock I passed yanking on me like a dirty big rockwhiler. And then well then it was the now re-named Blue Pitch (third) where I simply could not get off the top of the bugger (it was really awkward you practically had to lie down over the pitch to fit into the crawling passage at the top). Primal screams were made here as well as language that will make Roy Chubby Brown Blush.

I was ready for kicking off with this cave I was going to kick its rocks in! Thankfully by the time I reached the entrance pitch I had calmed down and was shown how to de-rig a major pitch with traverses on it by Dunc, it was a good learning pitch as the traverse and pitch head had nice wide ledges on it. I traversed over the climbs I climbed down by mistake earlier and made an exit, which was made easier by the promise of Jellybabies left at the entrance.

Well that's my third NTFH trip, for me an annoying little cave but other than me getting stuck and going green like the hulk and almost walking off the first pitch head it was a successful trip as we made it to the bottom and back and without me falling off anything for a start. *(Ed: Fine trip, took us about 4hours.)*

Alex Ritchie

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