

HAGG GILL POT

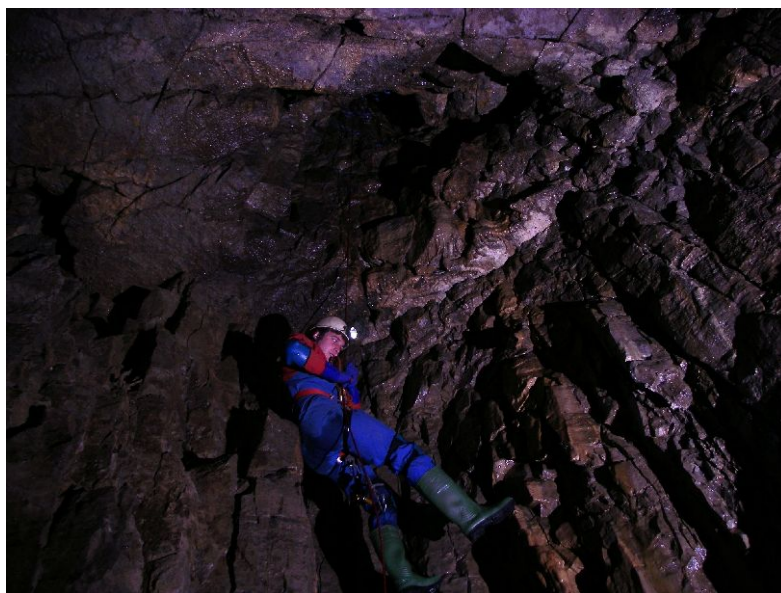
Date: Saturday 15th October 2011

Cavers: Alex Ritchie, Chris Kelly, Chris Scaife, Mike Skyrme, Rick Pinches.

Weather: Bright sunshine, but it had rained not long before.

We met by the side of the road between Deepdale and Yockenthwaite in bright sunshine. An elderly couple stopped us and the lady asked if we were sure we would be safe caving with all the recent rain. Perhaps she thought she could intervene and save our lives, or that we'd ignore her advice and die in the cave; then she could see out the rest of her days enthralled audiences with the story of the day those people died and she was the last to see them all alive. This thought was quickly replaced in our minds with something yet more dreadful, when she said to her companion, 'Come on Dad'. They looked the same age. It's possible of course that she was merely younger than she looked. However, it's far more likely that they have a kinky relationship based on mock-incest.

We found the cave after a pleasant stroll across the hillside and lifted the lid to reveal some scaffolding leading down to a 15m entrance pitch. This was rigged with some thin thin rope and we left our SRT kits at the foot of the pitch. First, we headed upstream through some helictite-lined passages, with occasional crawls and climbs, to a climb up flowstone into the impressive festival of straws in White Rose Chamber. Mike launched himself into the duck leading through into the Mayday Series and his beaming smile on his return was enough to convince Alex and me to



explore it ourselves. My light switched itself off as I lay on my back in the low-air-space duck, which was nice. The Mayday Series is a worthwhile extension, with a narrow rift, some crawling and some good formations.

Next we went back past the entrance pitch (Shatter Pot) to the downstream sump, which was a good place to wash our kit until Mike went and pissed in it. A thrutchy rope climb above the sump reaches the ironically titled Pleasant Passage, a flat-out muddy crawl that goes nowhere. Jumping, sliding and bouncing back down the rope, we headed upstream via several small cascades to an upstream sump, then retraced our steps a little to a crawl into Neat Petite, which soon opens out into the gigantic passage known as Rumpty Tumpty. All the king's horses and all the king's men would have fitted easily into this passage with room to spare. There are some incredible flowstone formations and huge stalactites. Rick and Mike stopped here to model and take photographs respectively and the rest of us followed the rift to the end.

The caving beyond is frankly awesome. A rift passage is followed, with tremendous formations all around. We varied our heights in the passage, with Alex right up in the gods for most of the way. Chris Kelly and I danced around from stream-level to stratosphere, over fallen blocks, through squeezes, up, down, traversing, crawling. At the end of this was The Thin White Line, a dazzling display of straws, and then the delights of a return journey to double the fun and try out my brand new Pantin.

This vastly underrated cave has some of the best decorations in Yorkshire and surely has something to satisfy every caver.

Chris Scaife

Photos – Mike Skyrme

