

HENSLERS POT

To Bar Pot/SM (via Main Chamber), Marilyn, Corkys Pot (via Pool Traverse, Main Chamber)

People Present: Peter Dale, Rob Santus, Daniel Jackson, Alex Ritchie, Darren Jarvis (Daz of) & Duncan Jones

Also the BPC who kindly allow usage of their ropes on the many pre-rigged entrances.

Weather: Partly cloudy and cool.

Grade: no idea what the official grade is but I rate it on the easier side 4.

The day started with a disaster for me on the walk up. I had managed to loose my caving camera, hence why there is no video trip report and you have to put with my bad grammar.

Hensler's it self was not a difficult affair so I will not bore you with the details, it was just crawling pitch, crawling pitch not much more to say nothing difficult until after "Haigh's Bottom", which is where I will start.

At the bottom of the pitch yet more crawling led to tight rift. Pete at this point tried to squeeze down a hole that was smaller than him. This provided us with some entertainment. We removed our SRT Kits and proceeded with the "Thrutching".

Beyond the rift I spent what seemed like ages putting my kit back on as I was having issues turning my 'D' ring around. I thought I had better get a move on. However this rush had the opposite effect once I reached "Burnley" pitch, as it was here where I made a silly mistake in my haste which ultimately cost more time. I lowered my self down onto the pitch head however I had completely forgot to move my cows tails onto the Y hang, maybe I thought they would magically stay in place or something. Of course they did not and consequently as I lowered my self onto my descender they slid down the traverse rope pulling me into the rift under the traverse as the cows tails slipped down the loop. What followed was tugs of war between my cow's tails and my descender both trying pull me in different directions. I used my hand jammer to sort my self out and after pulling what seemed loads of rope through my descender I managed to win the tug of war put my cows tails where they should be.

I descended the pitch where the next pitch soon followed, my bad luck continued as my bag got wedged at the top and entangled me when I freed it. Once I sorted that out and got to the bottom it seems that Rob and Dunc could not be bothered waiting and had disappeared off. Of those who remained Dan and Pete said they were going to head straight out via Marilyn but I wanted to do more after making the effort to get there.

Pete & Dan had a wander down Henslers Master Cave before heading out via Dis / Marilyn.

*Dunc & Rob did New Henslers, Pool Traverse before heading out of Corkys Pot ** see below for a brief report on that part of the trip ***

Dan showed me and Daz part of the way to where the crawl lowered. This was the wet and muddy "New Henslers Passage". We only took one wrong turn along the way. We emerged under the "South East Aven". We continued along passing "Bar Pot" and "Flood Pot" Avens followed the crawls after an accidental brief diversion to "Sand Cavern" we arrived in the nicely lit Gaping Gill for a bite to eat.

We set out, out of the cave. We intended to exit via Bar Pot, however when we got there we realised we would be in for a long wait. We headed up the Alternative pitch in "South East Aven" instead. A straightforward and impressive pitch led us onto a nice little traverse at the top. The traverse included a short down pitch over a big hole before going up another short up pitch over another big hole, quite exposed. After the traverse a short and slightly tight rift section leads out onto an exposed ledge overlooking the main "Bar Pot" pitch. (*The entrance is on the left as you face into the chamber when heading down*)

I came through first and shouted to Daz at least twice to clip his cows tails in before coming out of the rift, so what does he do? You guessed it, he comes storming out of the rift with no cow's tails on and almost kamikazes off the ledge down "Bar Pot", scaring him self and spectators.

One of the team going down (A Mendips club) decided to turn back, her name was something that sounds like "Caron" but it was not "Caron". Being gentleman we agreed to guide her out. I led her up the boulder slope and then the hand line climb, before being stopped to wait for others at the Bar Pot pitch. Caron went first as the other two gentlemen who had just exited were supposed to help her out at the top, only they didn't and she well got stuck by going too low.

Daz and me must have been waiting down there for at least 20 minutes before I decided to do something. While I was waiting for others earlier I had already attempted to find the Small Mammal Pot exit after being told it was rigged. I failed the first time but this time I was more determined than ever.

Daz continued to wait at the bottom of the pitch to reassure Caron and I set off in search again the illusive Small Mammal. I spotted a turn off to the right in the flat out bedding had I explored earlier to the north of the chamber (over the rope climb). Following the crawl I came across calcified rift and then a climb down. I scrambled up a boulder slope at the other side, took a left before finding the rope leading to my freedom.

The pitch is a good 20 metres or so and again quite impressive. At the top I spotted daylight, so I made a quick exit over the short traverse. I quickly headed down the slope that enters Bar Pot to find Caron still there completely drained of strength but very calm none the less.

Luckly I could reach her chest harness and after pulling with all my might I yanked her out through the narrow bit off the pitch head. Daz and a few others that had gathered at the bottom soon exited the cave.

I was just glad I found my way out that way or it could have been a long wait until someone else descended the pot. All in all it was a fun day out I got to go down a new entrance for me and up two new for me pitches. The day was only soured by the fact I lost my camera on the walk up.

Alex Ritchie

Dunc and Robs - Henslers / New Henslers / Pool Traverse / Corkys Pot trip..

I won't go over details of Henslers too much as Alex has already covered it above. The duck proved to be a mere wriggle in a dribble of water (we have had a lengthy dry spell though), the passages and pitches proved to be reasonably easy going with only minor awkward bits, including the thrutchy bits, although I guess with tackle it might be more fatty. After reaching the bottom of Henslers High Aven (a very fine pitch indeed) we waited for some time before there was any sight of Alex or Daz, starting to get chilly and being short on time (as ever) we decided we were going to make a move. Pete & Dan had decided to exit via Marilyn so just me & Rob were off on our adventure.

Passing through New Henslers and past Bar / Flood we were soon into that most annoyingly awkward of passages – too high to crawl, too low to walk, so much stooping ensued, until relief came at the junction. Our destination lay along easier walking passage to Pool Chamber, where the Pool Traverse starts, a more challenging way of reaching Main Chamber!

After examining our options a notable line seemed the likely route of ascent, it begins at the start of the rift, a crack on the left (looking into the passage) provides the starting point before you cross to the other side with numerous hand/foot-holds. The climb is a touch exposed so caution was exercised, once up a short easy traverse brings you to the traverse proper. It starts off OK, then as you progress places for hands and feet become less and the rift gets wider, all good fun as various body parts are pushed against the wall on the vaguest of holds! Just after the worst bit it comes to an end, an easy stroll brings you to a rope climb, which swings back under to a drop and short ladder. From here easy progress brings you to a fine view point overlooking the Main Chamber.

We ambled across the chamber to the climb up to South Passage, our aim was exiting via Stream Passage, but realising we needed to sign out at the tent and having never exited (only entered) via

Corkys Pot we decided to go that way. Up the slope, along Old East Passage and to the large Mud Hall where we traversed on the right to reach the rope dangling down Vindication Pitch.

Progress was made at a reasonable speed up this (although our lack of recent SRT trips was showing slightly) and the next pitch and along the crawl, the short pitch that followed was for some reason the only one with a ladder.. We shuffled our way along Nemesis Crawl, part way along I heard voices, hoping that they were somewhere more spacious than we were we pressed on. Luckily they were on their way down Prelim Pitch so passing was no problem. After a brief chat with the WSG lads we carried on up the remaining pitches, which were partly climbed as it was easier than going for the SRT option.

We emerged into a pleasant afternoon and had a short stroll to the tent to sign out and for Rob to wash off in the stream, at some point the weather changed and became cool and windy so we didn't hang around too long. Back to the cars we found Dan had gone and Pete was waiting (he had no choice being in Robs car!)

We finished off the day in the New Inn for a well earned drink.

Trip time for us was a respectable 4 hours.

Duncan Jones

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