

JEAN POT

Over the hill and far away..

Date: 8th December 2007

People present: Pete Dale, Rob Santus, Rick Pinches

Weather: Very cold, Snow, rain and wind

Having suggested Jean pot a bit back due to its ability to be do able in wet weather it was a perfect choice after a week of downpours and flooding so upon meeting Rob at the usual we headed off up to Ingleton to get a couple of new tackle bags and to collect Robs speleo gold rope!! (Sex on a rope I'll tell you!!) After a quick brew and bite to eat we set off for the cave, now after reading 'Not for the faint Hearted' I had got it into my head that the best way to walk up to the cave was from south house farm, it said "25 minute walk to hangman's hole on flat ground" so by my reckoning it was only a few hundred metres to Jean Pot on relatively flat ground from there so it should be an easy walk, how wrong I was!

We arrived at South House Farm to be greeted with snow and not only snow it was horizontal snow to boot, added to that the wind chill factor and we were all for giving up and going home even Rob was contemplating it! Anyway after a few ums and ahhs we were all changed and ready for the trip, we set off up the track against the wind and hands chilled to the bone. Soon we were walking on 2" of snow but with our hands warming up things where looking up morale was boosted and we soon got to the sign post signalling our turn up the scar to Nick Pot and then left at the wall onto the Allotment. Rob was concerned that we were going the wrong way but I knew where I was and after a good hour's walk (2.8 miles!!!) we found the entrance to Jean Pot!

SRT kits on we were ready for off so without wasting a moment Rob was volunteered to rig so he set off down with me and Rik close behind, 'Rope free!' came echoing from below so I slid down the entrance rift which was smooth and dry (relevant bit) the rigging consisted of a block on the surface to a re-belay off a knob of rock at the pitch head using a sling. A nice short abseil of about 15ft landed me in a spacious dry circular chamber with the way on snaking its way off to the right. Rob set off and I waited for Rik to join us, after a bit of moaning Rik had got down the short first pitch and we both set off after Rob. Following the rift round the corner it lowered slightly and then took a sharp right into a descending sideways crawl not particularly tight but it did require me to rearrange my Stop and battery, once I reached the bottom it was time for the 'Hard Times crawl' the name suggested squalor and tightness but it was no more than a hands and knees crawl over blasted rock fragments easy really! Reaching the end a short climb down into another descending rift to a 3m climb down over a few chock stones I could hear Rik moaning so I knew he wasn't far behind.

Passing the bag to Rob he set about rigging the second pitch '5m' and only finding 1 spit that would have to do! (minimal rigging is the way forward) as I started to descend the pitch Rik had caught us up and started to show signs of quitting, I took the bag off of him and abed down the pitch to supply rob with rope for the third pitch '4m' Rik did not follow, saying he had had enough and wanted to go. After a few minutes of trying to convince him that it wasn't that bad we failed so we made sure he was ok and let him go out on his own (only 10 minutes from the entrance pitch anyway!) so we were now down to two, so with Rik legging it across the fell to his car with his tail between his legs we carried on with the trip.

With the third pitch rigged Rob went down and I followed, more of a climb than a pitch but we had the rope so used it (wise choice!) immediately after followed the fourth pitch '9m' tight at the top and with a trickle of water to run down your arm as you gingerly squeezed past the choked boulders. At the bottom you land on a slope of loose rocks with the water splashing down from above, (The chamber of false promises) there are several ways on from here, one looks very inviting down to the left but the only real way on is a quick dash under the water and a short climb down a

few muddy rocks into a chamber were a climb up into a rift and down to the left and under pops you out into a muddy rift which turns sharply to the right and a short hands and knees crawl brings you to the start of the UGC crawl. Now the 'Not for the Faint Hearted' book suggests the crawl to be flat out and take 6-8 minutes but alas it over exaggerates as usual and the even though there are a few low sections they are not what I would call flat out, so after two muddy pools each about half a metre long and 2" deep at the most you take another sharp right and through another pool and up and over some calcite followed by a head dive over a 10ft drop onto a muddy traverse, to the start of the dangerous slippy traverse. The traverse is rigged to make it safe and while doing so you have time to admire the many straws overhead.

With both of us across a sandy tube takes a U turn to the left with a right angled corner akin to the one in Marble Sink entrance which spits you out into a cross joint similar to the Minarets in Ease gill caverns. Only a few metres along there I saw opening under the right wall which marks the start of the fifth pitch, occasionally free climbed according to NFTFH. So in true BRCC spirit we climbed it. An easy climb down and we were at the top of the sixth pitch which had an old rope ladder rigged on it. Rob decided to risk climbing down the ladder to avoid using the Gold rope but, after a look at the dubious rigging and rusting wire he soon changed his mind which was just as well since the ladder was a few metres short of the bottom. Another chamber with a loose rock floor and the way on again down a rift to the top of the seventh pitch.

Rob rigged the last pitch and abed down I decided to kit up for the return trip since I was very cold and not feeling all that well and besides all that was at the bottom was a blasted crawl to nothing. With me making my exit Rob soon caught I up and we made steady progress past the traverse and UGC crawl then through the rift and to the bottom of the muddy boulder climb up into the Chamber of false promises. Now it was at this point I mentioned how that I did not remember the water being so loud on the way in and once up into the chamber my suspicions were right the once small dribble of water coming down the fourth pitch was now a dam sight heavier than it had been, and I even dare say that if there had been any more water coming down the pitch due to the tight bit at the top we would not have been able to exit the cave. Anyway we had to get out so off up I went with Rob holding me clear of the water, a waste of time really since I got soaked at the top anyway!

Both of us up Rob derigged while I made my ascent of the next two pitches, both exceedingly wet compared to on the way in. I was a little concerned as there was a lot of water coming out of the climb up to 'Hard Times crawl' luckily though the water was under the crawl so a quick exit was made to the entrance pitch which was very wet as well, but the way in which it was rigged meant you didn't get wet until you crawled out and up the entrance rift. Now I say wet in fact I would say I have been down caves a lot wetter than what this one was, but due to it being almost bone dry up on entering it was a nasty shock to be greeted with a flood pulse from the snow thaw outside.

Anyway both of us safely on the surface the next challenge was to walk back to the car in freezing temperatures. Luckily for us the wind had dropped and it had stopped raining/snowing so a fairly easy walk back was had more or less with the occasional slip and fall, but as with anything the nearer we got to the car the windier it got and just as we reached the road again the heavens opened and a monsoon developed! The wind had changed direction so now we had no shelter from the car so a speedy change was had. Both changed and all gear back in the car we set off to the nearest pub with an open fire. Unfortunately the Hill Inn was shut so off to the Fenwick Arms for a drink.

Arriving home I found my tea to be ready and a hot bath was waiting, ahhh women, they are good aren't they? As I lay in the bath I recalled the days events, I thought about the trip and what a good trip it was, I was also chuffed with myself for not abandoning the trip and shocked at Rob for suggesting such things, and the thing that was on my mind the most was the fact that the cave was a grade 4 and the walk to the cave and back was a grade 6!!!

Pete Dale

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