

LANGSTROTH POT

Hel Ics Tite or the Number Two trip

6th October 2007

People present - Rob Santus, Pete Dale, Duncan Jones

Weather: Dry, sunny

Cave: Impressive, not too wet

After Pete had nagged for 8 years to go back to this pothole (the first time he was there he bottled it at the top of the 2nd pitch), we eventually decided to go back. Dunc did his level best to drag us up to Ease Gill, but we were having none of it. Thank God we didn't listen to him; what was in store was a real treat.

On a fine early autumn day, you wouldn't find a better place to be than Langstrothdale in the Dales. After kitting up, we trudged up the hill to Langstroth Pot, which is on the opposite fell to Yockenthwaite Pot. After 5 minutes of looking, we arrived at the entrance. Pete, having been the only one to visit this pot before, decided to go in first. The entrance pitch is an easy 3 metre climb where the sides are a little sharp – watch the suit. This is immediately followed by the entrance crawls; this involves quite a few squeezes, sideways crawling, semi-canals and a supposed duck. Moving tackle is a little awkward and perhaps a little strenuous but not too bad. After about 45 minutes of this, a small chamber is reached where it suggests in NFTFH that SRT kits can put on – the 2nd pitch follows very quickly after.

After Pete had been so bold going first at the start, he again lost his bottle (still fearful after his first sight of the 2nd pitch), and sent me first to have a look and rig it. At first sight it does look daunting, but once you're in the squeeze and you find the right section, it isn't too bad. But of course there are no p-anchors, so the difficulty lies in trying to find the spits. Once found and with a nice new spanner with a ratchet on one end, rigging is far easier in these situations. Then it was Pete's turn. After I told him that it wasn't too bad he grew in confidence and slipped through like a jellied eel, soon landing at the bottom with a boastful cheer; he'd cracked the dreaded 2nd pitch. Dunc was next – no problems either.

I went forward and rigged the 3rd pitch, with slight adjustments needed to avoid abrasion as this pitch is a complete free hang after 4 metres. Once down, Pete snatched a bag and hot-footed it downstream towards the 4th pitch. This takes about 20 minutes with the first section being a twisting canyon, with some amazing helictites. The passage eventually results in stooping and then crawling until the 4th pitch. Nice and safe rigging here – one tape belay – nowt else to rig off and down you go, nice and fast. The same can be said about the 5th pitch. The 6th is a free climb which I suppose could be awkward if it was wet and this is immediately followed by the 7th. This is a slightly exposed pitch head with no back up or traverse line possible (unless you've got a much longer rope) and 2 dodgy looking bolts in the right hand wall. I undid one of the in-situ bolts and put in one of our own – this looked far prettier. With a Y-hang of sorts, down we went, landing if not careful, in a very deep pool. Carefully avoiding a swim, by edging along, further passage (knee depth water) leads quickly to the 8th pitch. This is an attractive pitch, easily rigged from 2 bolts, especially when using Dunc's new Spelenium Gold rope. (Dodgy knots those B on Bs)

Once at the bottom, we all had a quick look at the sumps, which looked fairly inviting as far as sumps go and after a quick look at the watch (2 ³/₄ hours) we made for the exit. The pitches were all scaled without incident and de-rigged, but secretly I think Pete and Dunc had their minds on escaping the clutches of the 2nd pitch. Dunc went first after he elected me to de-rig it. There were

noises up there and shuffling and some complaining. Dunc has slightly misread it; he had to withdraw and mount a second challenge. Once he worked out the exact space to squeeze through, he was out. Pete was asking for advice, but didn't really need it once he established where the exact space was as well. I came up last and de-rigged, then slipped up and out to pack up the last bag. Srt kits off again in the chamber and the last challenge – the entrance crawls. Pete was complaining about tired arms (energy sapped after using up strength coming through the 2nd pitch head), but we all managed to exit fairly easily. Pleased with our days efforts – the sumps and back in 4 ¾ hours, we made our way back down to get changed and retire to Sedbergh for a pint of ale.

Rob Santus

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