

LONG CHURN CAVE – ALUM POT

We couldn't give a XXXX about the Station..

14th April 2007

People present - Mike Skyrme, Duncan Jones, Neil Heywood, Mike White, Claire Duxbury

Weather: Hot and sunny

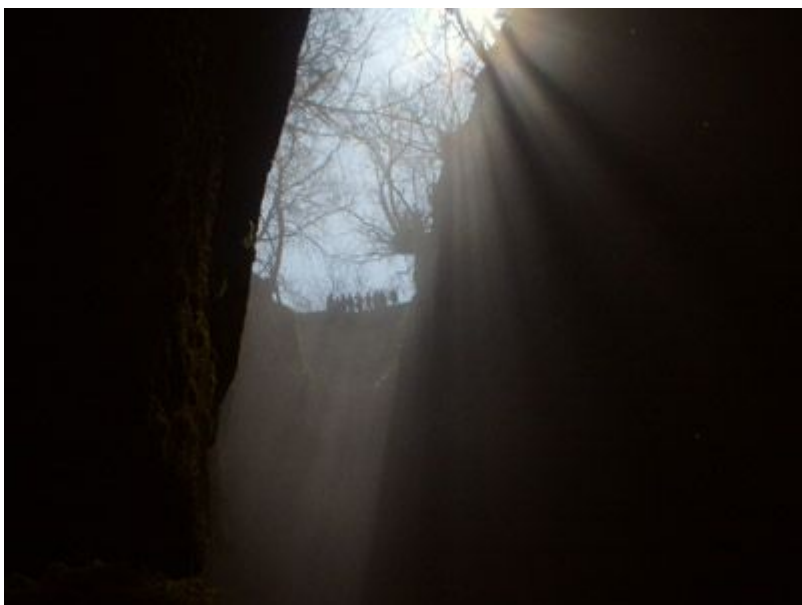
Cave: Quiet, sunny in the main shaft!

The original meet was labelled as a photography trip but with the need for a novice SRT trip it was changed to Long Churn/Alum, although strangely we did end up taking plenty of photographs in the end so we got two trips rolled into one!

I had picked up all the gear (or so I thought!) necessary for Alum Pot the previous weekend and had offered to start rigging and for Dunc to meet us underground. This allowed for an early start, which saw Neil at my house for 8.30am and Mike W collected in his “morning after the night before” state by 8.45am. A pleasant drive to Ingleton followed with the main topic of conversation being “fighting landlords” and “Jaws”!!!

For once I fell lucky and was able to park right outside Bernie's, whereupon, the car rapidly emptied and we all disappeared into Inglesport Café where I had arranged to meet Claire, a potential new member for the club. Once upstairs she wasn't hard to find as she was stood by the counter cradling a mug of tea and looking rather forlorn and lost in that strange “I haven't got the faintest idea of who I'm supposed to be meeting” kind of way!!!!

A quick hello broke the ice and she joined us at the table we had commandeered. Introductions were made as Neil and Mike W stuffed their faces with Tracy's excellent caver's breakfasts. Once fed, we nipped next door to Bernie's to purchase bits and bobs before heading off up to Selside.



Alum Pot lane was nice and quiet with just one minibus and a horde of kids well up the track to the Long Churns by the look of it. With gear handed out and suitably kitted up, we set off up the track by 11am. We entered Lower Long Churn via Diccan entrance and were soon down to chamber at the head of Dollytubs where we donned our SRT kits.

I opted for the alternative pitch from the alcove and the first part was rigged fairly quickly. As I began rigging the traverse, Dunc arrived and was able to sort out the others and send them down. The traverse

was ok but the rope meterage and hangers were a lot more than the rigging topo suggested, which resulted in me having to use the rope planned for the greasy slab to get us down the rest of the way.

I stayed at the final hang point and talked Claire, Mike W and Neil down, with Dunc acting as rear guard bringing the rest of the bags. Once down some pics were taken of the obligatory Alum Pot view before descending the greasy slab. A Bit of faff here as we had to use a hand line I had intended for the traverse to the Bridge, but hey – it served us well.

Using the new 60m rope, I sparingly rigged the traverse, bridge and left wall traverse down to the hang point in the south east corner. This rigged, the rebelay soon followed just over the lip of the drop. Once sorted, a quick descent was made (partly due to the greasiness of the new rope!!!) and once at the bottom, I dropped down the cascades to rig the final pitch.

Claire and Mike W soon joined me at the bottom of the last pitch and we dropped down the climbs to the sump pool – where some good photos were taken. Dunc arrived at the head of the last pitch in time to



sort Claire's return out and to relay the news that the "curse of the rebelay" had struck yet again as Neil had gotten somewhat tangled on the penultimate pitch and decided it would be safer to go back up – one day my friend, one day!!!.

The return journey offered ample opportunities for more pics as Dunc was tasked with derigging. I went up the Dollytubs pitch where I waited at the first hang point to provide assistance (and a good bit of verbal kicking – much to the amusement of some!!) for the others as they negotiated the traverse until Dunc arrived, whereby I progressed up the final part to join the others.

Once Dunc joined us, a play with the camera and flash ensued until we got a half reasonable group pic and a good silhouette shot of Dunc before we made our exit into the hot afternoon sun.

A good days caving only to be marred by the jumped up little Aussie twerp masquerading as the manager of the Station Inn at Ribbleshead, who effectively refused to serve us (or anyone for that matter) for a period of 15 minutes. The main issue being that when asked, he couldn't decide whether the 15 minutes had started or not!!! – t***er!!! However, such misfortune was followed by good fortune approximately 2 miles down the road at the Hill Inn, where a pleasant end to the day was had sat in the garden with a pint!

And what of the newcomer??? Claire appeared to have a great time on her first Black Rose trip and by the end of the day she was just like one of the team – is she the next member? – we would be happy to think so – take a bow young lady, you deserve it!

Mike Skyrme





Photos - Duncan Jones and Mike Skyrme

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