

MISTRAL HOLE

I'm muddy loving it I tell you!

14th September 2008

People present - Duncan Jones

Weather - mix of sun and cloud.



The weather forecasts for the week ahead were once again, not promising! I came up with a fine selection of trips in the Dales and Peak to allow for the weather, but alas nobody was available on the day due to having been caving the day before in Notts2 or mountain biking or moving house, etc etc. I started planning for a solo adventure and decided Mistral Hole into Pippikin would make a suitable choice, mainly due to it's weather proof nature.

A plan was formed that once in I figured a look at the Dinnertime Series and then Canyon and Far Streamways would make a short but

acceptable trip for me. I had been to Canyon and Far Streamways before, but this was back in 1998 and it was one of my first proper caving trips (that is wearing old clothes, oversuit and having a light and helmet for the first time rather than old waterproofs and a headtorch!), so figured a 10th birthday re-visit was in order!

The day started early (this is proper caving, none of this midday day stuff) and the drive to the Dales was fast and uneventful. Pulling in near Bull Pot Farm I was soon changed and quickly crammed various oddments of gear into a bag and set off, stopping to put my name down on the board - the first of the day, no queuing in the cave then!

After a pleasant stroll over the fell and along the dry beck I arrived at a different looking entrance. It seems someone has taken the time to build a curved stone wall around the hole, thus negating the need for those planks, some of which were no doubt past their best. Fettling with clothes and lights at the entrance, as you do, the cool draught emitting from the cave was most welcoming. Leaving the quietness of the valley behind I was soon into crawling mode, making steady progress to The Hobbit. In this chamber I had a poke around and found what I assume would be the start of Bargain Passage, I didn't follow it and instead pressed onwards to where the climbs up are into the Dinnertime Series. Examining the climb I suddenly remembered why I hadn't been up before, so I shuffled forwards to the next of the climbs, again I figured today was not the day due to the nature of the climb. Had I had company I would have tried it but being on my own I was wary of attempting the climb so gave it up as a bad idea and took some photos instead.

Just back from the climbs is a slope down that leads to Canyon Streamway, crawling at first and a few side passages that don't do much before it pops out by a stal-column in the nicely formed Canyon Streamway. A quick visit was made to some side passage that were not overly inspiring, so I retreated to take a few photos in various different places with a few different flash arrangements. Once I was satisfied with



my photographic efforts (or should that read once I was fed up with taking photos and failing to get the desired results!) I set off along the passage, which is mixed going until the stream disappears. Again I had a scrat about in some side passages before continuing.

The next section of passage is muddy, bouldery and involves more crawling, interspersed with a few spots where you can stand. Eventually the passage debouches into the Far Streamway and some easier going. Walking along past some respectable formations (respectable for this cave) the passage enlarges for a short distance before the stream disappears under boulders, a bit further forward the passage size diminishes, still walking size, and turns left into a delightful muddy trod, very similar in consistency to that of Hall of the Mountain King!

Satisfied with my short days outing I turned round and headed out, stopping to take a couple of extra photos on the way. On the walk back I passed quite a few people out walking, nothing unusual you would say, but it's more people than I've seen over the past few years and then to top it all off a large group of walkers had decided to take lunch right by my car - now do I be kind and wait for them to bugger off or just get changed and bare all just as they were tuckin into a peach....

It might only be a short trip and a muddy one at that, but it's a worthy trip, especially when the weather is a bit dodgy and other places are off limits..



Duncan Jones

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