

NOTTS II

The cave strikes back.

17th November 2007

People present - Alex Ritchie, Mike Skyrme, Stuart Alexander, Andrew Alexander

Weather – Cold, damp and drizzly

A dark and dreary day is what I awoke to that morning, daylight barely breaking the horizon. I dragged my self out of bed scooped up my stuff and headed off to Ingleton where I arrived at the still asleep village at around half eight.

I then met up with Mike who brought two novice cavers with him, a father and son team named Stuart and Andrew. Wondering where Rick was Mike showed us the message he was not going to come after all, he was full of a cold awwwww.

After getting the novices kitted up at good old Bernie's we set off through the dank drizzle at just before ten in the morning to the cave. Thankfully this cave was only a very short walk from the cars unlike Tatham Wife Hole last week.

Now before I got in the cave I was under the wrong impression this would be a nice easy relaxing cave like Robinson's Pot, oh how wrong I was. After opening the hatch to this wonderland I was faced a platform overlooking a combined drop much larger than Lancaster except this time we wont be using any rope!. Our nerves were certainly not steadied with the words from Mike "Now if you mess this up you will fall on us and nowt will stop us from bouncing right to the bottom".

The best way to describe this shaft was like, is to use a film reference, if anyone has seen the film daylight where those people get stuck in a flooding New York tunnel and the adventure guy decides to climb the shaft there, that's what this one was like except a lot more stable.

After the heart in the throat climb down some fifty meters or so consisting of ladders, scaffold poles and breeze blocks with holes in them (I would hate to be the person who lugged all this down here, hats off to who ever constructed this) We finally reached the bottom of the shaft and after a few small climbs we reached the ladder pitch. Mike set up his descender to act as a pulley system and lowered us down the ladder without any problems.

Finally in the main cave Mike's photographer side came out and promptly started sending us off in different directions holding up camera flashes to light up the cave from different angles, photographs made harder with all the condensation in the air.

We decided rather than to follow the main passage down to the stream way instead to have a tackle at the crawl that was not even on the survey, we slithered our way in unfortunately Stuart decided he would rather put his "Family Jewels" in a blender rather than go through there and turned back as it would get even tighter was probably a good idea. After taking some more photos of the formations in the next chamber Mike went out the way we came in, to take Stuart through the main stream way route. Leaving me and



Andrew to tackle the rest of the crawl which got quite tight (the way I like it) and up hill before emerging at a large mud bank overlooking the stream way below us.

After meeting up with the other two again we began to progress up stream taking photos along the way of nice black and white calcites that looked like a bird with its wings half folded and a calcite column that seemed to be holding the roof up. We headed for Daylight Aven and a look at the upstream sump beyond. Stuart found a nice rock to fall over and promptly submerged himself in the water.

Now the water was getting deeper first past my legs, ouch that's cold! then to my chest hang on how deep is this going to get? The water got so deep we had to swim in places swimming with wellies on in that cold dank possibly bottomless water was no easy feat finally finding some dry land, we took a little breather before Mike sent me off to the sump which I had a good go at following the little string until swimming got too tiring and turned back as no one else had followed me, wimps, or maybe they just have more sense than me (more like it MS!!).

Swimming and wading our way out I was amazed to how good this under suit works within 5 minutes I was warm again wow. I wonder why I never bought one before? We headed up to Inlet 5 to look at new section of recently excavated cave. We proceeded through a muddy crawl and a climb that if you slipped on you will no longer be able to have children! Mike sent me off through the next crawl to have a look at the new passage and how they drained it, eventually he came as well and took some nice photos of the formations while the other two waited outside.

The final photographic stop of the day, I am now feeling like a glorified tourist was Curry Inlet where someone had set up a small Buddhist shrine. Had we gone that far underground and we are now coming out in China? Mike again sent me off with the new title as the Clubs Crawler up the next muddy crawl beyond the shrine which quickly led to an impassable muddy climb despite me trying my best to get up it. It was a vertical mud wall where any feet and hand holds quickly fell away when you attempted to use them I might as well tried to climb treacle.

We then set off out down the main stream way and after a few refreshments, (every tour needs its refreshments) we headed up the climbs to climb out of china and back to England.

Now the climbs out where not technical but they just kept going and going and when your heart is going like a rock bands drum solo as you think what you would hit on the way down should you slip made it even more arduous. Painfully yet strangely enjoyable I made my way out through this giant climbing frame freeing the bag every now and then as it got hooked onto the various things impeding the journey, to emerge finally out of breath on the surface now. I pushed off the scaffold when I reach the top I popped out like a wine cork and landed in the mud outside the cave but who cares I was already plastered head to toe in mud anyway.

I was shortly followed by Andrew, Mike and a few other cavers from Bradford Pothole Club and after a short breather Stuart emerged. We took one last photo and headed off down to the pub, all in all a successful trip with no problems.

Alex Ritchie



Photos - Mike Skyrme

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