

NOTTS II - CUPCAKE

Chocolate covered cavers..

Date : 14th December 2011

Present : Peter Dale, Alex Ritchie

Weather : Dry, snowing, raining and windy with clear skies

The plan was to do Craftsman's pot but at short notice Chris cried off and Alex started winging. I called Alex and left a message as he was still in bed, a short while later he phoned. We met in Inglesport were i unleashed my alternate trip on Alex. Notts II to lost johns, we ate breakfast and then had a chat to Mr Ramsay about it, and somehow we ended up doing Notts II to The Cupcake entrance. Dave described the route to us and suggested that we pull through on the two pitches from the Notts II side but we would have to drop a rope down Cupcake so we could get out. Reaching the parking spot on Leck fell we kitted up ready for the trip.

Alex was ready quicker than normal and we walked over to Cupcake to rig the means of our escape. While I was doing that, Alex checked a local shake hole for the water levels in the horse trough. We then walked over to Committee pot to begin our trip, the climb down went without fuss and we were soon stomping upstream to the rope climb up to Sir Digby Spode's inlet. We soon found the rope and Alex was sent up first. A few pitches up and we reached the start of the connection to Cupcake. From the top of the pitches a short traverse followed by a short rift passage led us to a 3m climb up which was very slippy. At the top we were faced with two ways on but the correct way was another short traverse back over were we had just come from the passage then degenerated to a crawl through a pool and a short squeeze to more crawling and a wriggle past a stal column.

Once past the column the best way to move along is on your back and just push with your feet (great fun!) All too soon this ends at a sharp turn to the right followed by a sharp turn to the left, hands and knees then resumes until you reach the Horse trough, a formidable obstacle to say the least even if it looks tame. More hands and knees and occasional upright progress to the start of a rift which has been capped to enlarge it, this slopes down hill and has a tight section half way (inverse superman squeeze) so named as you go through it like superman I presume? After that fun you climb up the rift and up a slippy slope to the tightest squeeze which really isn't that tight, awkward more than anything else and nowhere near as bad as anything in Pippikin Pot. The 'U' tube is next and is

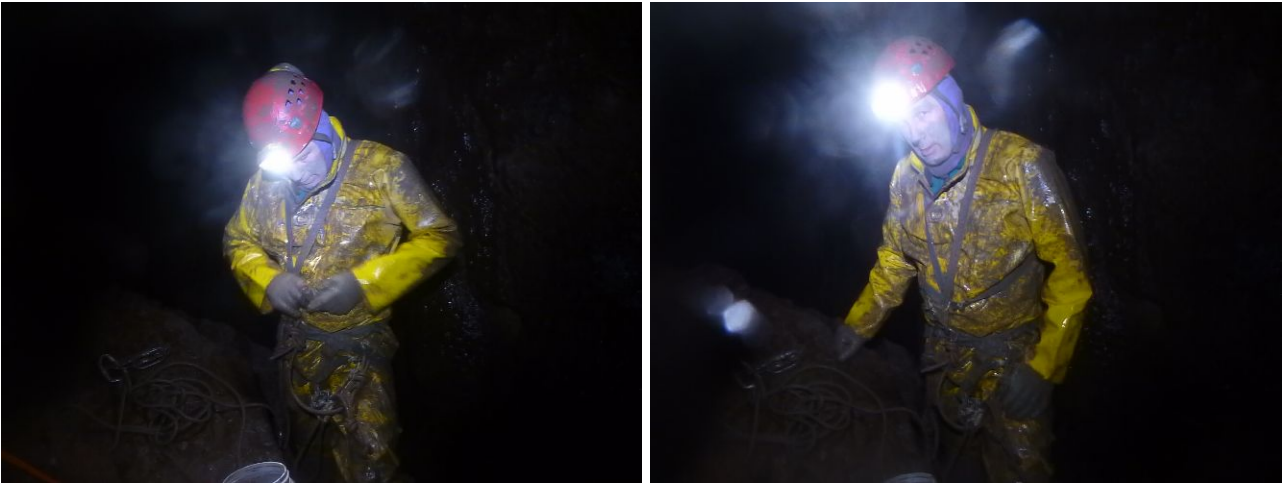


just that a sharp drop down followed by a wriggle to the left and back up again to a pleasant crawl to the pitch. The pitch was rigged and is an easy drop down the rift possible free climbable if needed, Alex headed to the next pitch and said it was way more than the 5m it should be but a short backtrack round a corner led to a climb down a wobbly boulder and the top of a short pitch into Hubert Carstairs I. From the bottom we made our way round in some impressive passages and took time to admire the mud formations (pictures) Climbing down and up and down we found Bendall's Dilemma, a climb up flowstone that was made slippy from all the mud and water, glad to have a rope in situ to aid the way up.

At the top a squeeze into the rift led on around a corner and climb down to an aven. We were told to stay at the same level by Dave but we didn't know whether this meant we climb down then up or up then down so Alex climbed up a god awful looking thing into the rift and a minute later he informed me it was not the way on. I then climbed down the rift with the in situ rope and traversed round to the right and squeezed up and down to a climb up on a corner, from the top of this I emerged into another aven with a few ways on. I looked down the obvious route which led to a couple of climbs up to a roof tube so I returned back to the aven. Alex had a look at the roof tube and he said it just went to a dodgy climb down into a small chamber with no visible way on. We both returned to the aven and realised that the rope that should have been there was not there and after convincing Alex it was not possible to free climb to the top we headed back out the way we

came pausing in the stream way of Notts II to wash off all the mud. The climb up committee pot was as cold as ever but once on the surface I soon warmed up, we then walked over to Cupcake to de-rig the rope.

A great trip which should have taken us 3-4hrs but ended up taking the best part of 7hrs, I will be going back as it's unfinished business and after all it's a challenge is it not?



Pete Brookdale

Photos – Alex Ritchie

A Black Rose Caving Club trip report.