

PAY SANK

Reign stops play, then it's bonjour P5, Blue Pigs and A..

Date : 4th June 2012

Present : Duncan Jones, Alex Ritchie, Chris Sharman

Weather : Not overly warm, a bit cloudy, spots of rain later.

Keen to take advantage of the long weekend courtesy of Her Majesty we originally had this trip planned for the Sunday, but the extremely changeable forecasting eventually suggested rain for a reasonable part of the day and this rang true, so the trip was shifted to the Monday. In retrospect the decision was perhaps hasty as water levels on Monday appeared low!

We all gathered at Newby Cote and bags were quickly packed (not too much rope needed, 3 and 5 ropes depending how and what you rig) and the walk began, now, it's not a bad walk, but the grumbling in the camp was! It was like having kids in tow, "are we there yet".

After a while we arrived at a sizeable dig, where we stopped for a breather, before pressing onwards. Not long before we reached the P5 shakehole Chris suddenly realised he was no longer carrying a bag, having left it at the aforementioned dig, back he went! Whilst Chris was doing his fell-walking me and Alex found an open hole to investigate, Blue Pig Pot, a short shuffle and few metres of a climb before the continuation proved too small, a short but interesting diversion. We also found, left carelessly dumped in the entrance slope, a modern lighting solution; tie a clump of grass together and set fire to it, although judging by the black parts of the grass the burn-time was somewhat limited in scope.

Not far away was Pay Sank, P5 and finally P5a which we investigated, again, still waiting for Chris to finish his fell walking – two caves down and after making a start getting kitted up Chris arrived. At this point Alex had just climbed the entrance shaft of Pay Sank to confirm we could save ourselves one piece of rigging.

The entrance climb is a little loose in places so caution is advised, once at the bottom a short crawl leads to a chamber, with a climb down to a loose looking chamber with some formations at the far side. A scaffold shaft was our way on, a little snug at the bottom, which drops in to a small passage leading to the first pitch proper. The rigging was started by Alex, as he was at the initial bolt, and myself perched at the pitch head. The continuation from this 3m drop is a short dribbly tube to a further 4m drop into more spacious surroundings. The first drop needed two anchors whilst the second was rigged, by Chris, off a small lump of rock on the left (as you emerge from the tube.)



From here the cave gains size and becomes a handsome stream passage before it plunges down ~20m into Pinnacle Hall. With Alex on the rigging, Chris watching and/or assisting, I started faffing trying to grab a few photos of them and the stream passage, both with limited results. The pitch, rigged from 4 anchors (one hanger, for backup, in-situ on our visit) descends via a deviation (hanger

and sling in place on our visit) into the spacious and particularly fine Pinnacle Hall, definitely one of the finer pitches to be found, despite its modest depth.



At the bottom a short 6m drop with two waterfalls was rigged from hangers and a further hanger provides a deviation, this lands in a very large passage which quickly cuts down via two climbs, the last one being well-watered, or at least it could be, luckily levels were low for us so it wasn't too bad. The in-situ tat assisted me a little near the top but was otherwise worthless.

The large passage soon deteriorates and crawls lead to a chamber, from here a few crawls emerge in further chambers, there's a few climbs around and a fair bit of digging related gear was encountered (pipes to drain water, drag trays etc)

We weren't entirely sure where we were at this point and having no idea of where the connection to Grange Rigg was (the route to the Drainpipe). After the trip, at home, surveys and descriptions were consulted and it turned out we had entered the Grange Rigg Sump Chamber, so were very close to the connection – Chris did investigate a crawl low down and it didn't inspire, perhaps this was the way on? With various grovels examined and nobody wanting to climb down a 4m shaft to nowhere there was only one thing left to do - head out and nip to Clapham for a well earned drink!

The rigging for future reference:

Entrance pitch: can be climbed, but is loose in places.

Two pitches separated by tube: 2 hangers, 1 short sling, ~15m rope.

Pinnacle Hall pitch: 4-5 hangers, (sling for deviation, was in-situ), ~40m rope (we used a 50 and had a fair bit spare.)

Short drop at bottom of PH pitch: 2-3 hangers, sling for deviation, use PH rope.

Final drop: In-situ tat tied round thread to assist climb, longer rope could be belayed higher up.



Duncan Jones

Photos: Duncan Jones & Alex Ritchie

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