

# PIKEDAW CALAMINE CAVERNS

Mine's a solo venture...

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Date : 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Present : Alex, just Alex

Weather : Forecast was for heavy showers and thunderstorms, however on the day it changed to partly cloudy and no rain whatsoever after lunch time. (Ground dry on way in and out)

With everyone crying off due to the non-existent rain and to buy shower curtains or work on a car, I decided to go caving. Just in-case it changed again I picked somewhere all weather and was local for a quick trip. After getting my hair cut at a nice little walk in place in Skipton I headed up to Malham and found a place to park near the upper foot path.

Unfortunately I still had to ascend 200m to travel for about 30 minutes to reach the cave. The track was drivable but I don't have a 4x4 and I have heard you're not supposed to drive up there. Still if anything happened any rescue would be easier in that the land rovers could be driven right to the entrance. Anyway nothing was going to go wrong, after rigging the entrance under the watchful eyes of some inquisitive scouts I was down.

I headed north sticking my head in every crevice I could. The first crawl I explored near the "Great Shake" led down a steep and thankfully non-slippery mud slope to a small hand-line climb which further dropped into a small chamber with plenty of wet mud. I did not descend the second drop, as there was no rope on this bit and it looked very slippery, apparently its normally a sump. The second crawl I chose to follow took me into the roof before ending abruptly at a big chamber (Mitchell's Cavern) only issue was I was 20ft above the floor and there was no way to climb down, back tracked again.



I guessed there was another way around so I traversed over a wide pit (8ft pitch), and took a left and followed a slope down and entered Mitchell's Cavern again, this time at ground level. Unfortunately this was the final chamber, the passage ended at a large boulder choke. I poked about for a while and found a few small holes in the floor which I slithered through, but despite two of them having on-going small passage it was too dangerous for me to continue, as the roof looked like it was held up by wishful thinking. It would need some shoring me

thinks. I found a solid roofed side passage to the right of the choke but after a few bends it was looking decidedly more and more dismal and this was not on the survey, I knew I could not turn around and would have to reverse what I had done, so backed up before it got too bad, nevertheless it did continue. Something to return to me thinks.

I left myself a shortish call out time so I started to make an exit, though I still had some time to spare so I did a little exploration of the lower levels that I liken to a dwarfen mine, very interesting. I followed the stooping height shored passage before I popped up between boulders main passage on the correct side of the pit.

Overall it was an interesting solo trip good fun on your own and it only requires a small amount of gear. The main passage make for a good novice cave and the entrance pitch is one of the easiest pitch heads in the Dales owing the ladder at the top.

*Alex Ritchie*



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