

PROVIDENCE POT – DOW CAVE

The end of the year extravaganza!

Date: 27th December 2008

People present: Rob Santus, Pete Dale

Weather: Cold but sunny and dry

It was Rick's post on the forum suggesting a Providence Pot to Dow Cave trip - well done mate. The weather was kind to us over Christmas so that's what we decided to do. Pete's genius idea was to park at Park Rash and walk straight over the hill to Providence thus saving us a stupidly long walk from Dow back to Kettlewell. Parking by a garage, (in the middle of nowhere) we got changed and after Pete had mended his underfleece, we headed off. On route we met 2 blokes carrying birds of prey, which had just caught a rabbit each; these birds then seemed to take a fancy to us 2 rabbits in yellow suits, well that's what the blokes said anyway!

Within no time we arrived at Providence Pot. An easy 7 metre climb down the scaffolded entrance leads to a short crawl through to a small chamber. From here it's easy caving following the well worn route to the blasted crawl which is muddy and wet, but again, well worn so not difficult. Another chamber is next (The Palace) followed by a drop into the Dungeon. After another short distance, you reach Dowber Gill passage at Stalagmite Corner.

Dowber Gill passage is an impressive place, continuing virtually the rest of the trip to Dow Cave. There are options for the route: stream level or traversing in the rift. We decided to do a mixture of both, even though the traverse is more difficult, we couldn't resist the tempting Narrows to see if Christmas had added any extra meat to our bones. We continued by traversing to Bridge Cavern, where the passage is wide and again to 800 yards chamber. Basically the traverse has some easy sections but also some awkward bits to test your abdomen, grip and arm strength. 800 yards chamber is apparently the half way point of the trip where people have a rest etc., but we thought bugger that, let's get on with it. Traversing once more, this time in a narrow rift high up, on we went. Pete went first and ballsed up. He went the wrong way down a dead end and had to back-track to catch me up. After yet more traversing, we eventually were forced down to the Brew Chamber boulder choke. There's a squeeze through here which I attempted. At first I thought "bloody hell", I need to contort my body to get through there, trying it facing both walls (it had a dog-leg entrance). I then realized that I needed to go another metre higher to the correct squeeze which is easy, taking you into Brew Chamber. This is where we descended to the stream to sample the Narrows. As the name suggests, this is a bit narrow, but only very briefly. I went through with Pete following, but he wouldn't fit. He decided to go feet first and remove his boost bar from his top pocket. This time he made it, feeling pleased with himself for not bottling it.

By following the stream, through delightful passage, we passed the Rock Window walking in quite deep, freezing water until you reach a duck. The cop out here is to climb up into Gypsum Traverse and down again into Syphon Chamber, then up again, by-passing Hardy's Horror, then down again into deep water beyond. I was a little disappointed we didn't do Hardy's Horror because I took a look at it and it didn't look bad at all (save it for next time). From here there is easy caving through to Dow Cave, passing the impressive Buddhist's Temple, until, in no time at all, you arrive at Dow Cave and bid farewell to Dowber Gill passage. Once in Dow, we had a quick look upstream at the ominous looking Hobson's Choice boulder choke before heading out into the cold and view the pretty Dow Cave entrance. It was at this point where we congratulated ourselves for parking so close and the fact that it was still very light indicating a quick trip; on arrival at the van, we realized that we had done it in about 3 hours. A stop off at the Bluebell Inn in Kettlewell for a lovely pint of Golden Pippin was reward for a commendable day's caving and finish off the year in style.

Rob Santus

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