

OLD RIFT POT

A rolling stone gathers no cavers!

9th February 2008

People present - Pete Dale, Rob Santus

Weather: - Bright and sunny

The planned trip was to bottom Alum pot via Dollytubs route but since me and Rob had been down Alum a few weeks ago we decided to do another cave. A few options were suggested by me including Long Kin East, Old Rift Pot and Meregill. We decided to do Old Rift Pot as we didn't trust the weather to do Meregill or Long Kin East.

Arriving in Ingleton we met up with the others in Inglesport café (Why they like it I do not know always full of Uni muppets!) I then had a quick brew and we parted ways. We parked up at Crummack dale and sorted the gear out after having a chat with an old caver who stopped caving just as SRT was becoming the norm! He said that he used to use rope ladders!! Once the ropes were packed we kitted up and set off on the long trudge up hill to the cave which wasn't that bad to be honest plus the view was excellent.

Arriving at the entrance, with out going the wrong way for a change boosted Robs cave locating morale and I spent a few minutes pointing out the various entrances in the area. We then set about bottoming Rift Pot.

A scramble down the south end of the rift brings you to the start of the first pitch which handily is fitted with DMM hangers. A superb 30m free hang drops you into a huge chamber and sure enough Rob went the wrong way while looking for the next pitch. The 2nd pitch and all the rest below it are rigged using spits, 17 in fact which was a pity since we only had 15 plate hangers!

The 2nd pitch is a straight forward drop of 7m to a ledge littered with boulders; the 3rd pitch follows straight on from the bottom of the 2nd with an awkward take off requiring lots of upper body strength. Four metres lower down you land on a small balcony over looking bridge chamber, the way on is back under the previous pitch but the last time I was down here (without a rigging guide) I went across bridge chamber and through a rift in the far wall. Knowing we had to save a couple of hangers we decided to use a natural instead of the spit so looking around various hangs were tried but the best one being just to the side of the spit and with a sling over the column of rock Rob gave a good tug at it and deemed it as safe. He then rigged the rope up and started to attach his descender. While he was doing this I thought I saw the rock the rope was belayed to move telling Rob to check it again and he said it must be my eyes as it was solid. He was just about to set off down and I saw the rock move quite a bit so I told Rob again and he gave another tug and sure enough it moved! Quickly getting out of the way and stood on solid ground Rob decided that it was not a good belay for the rope and derigged it. I then thought it was best to remove the rock since we were going to be descending beneath it and I would rather it be below me than above so with some gentle persuasion Rob tugged and tugged and with an almighty crash the great column of rock broke into several pieces and fell down into the depths below.

We decided the spit should be used and we would have to miss a few out lower down. With the rope re-rigged I set off down taking over the rigging at this point and made my way to the edge of the next pitch. One spit and a 4m drop down to another large balcony littered with rocks overlooking the next pitch of 8m. Locating the spits was not that easy since the places where I would have put them was not the places they were and in some instances very awkward to rig. Luckily after the 8m pitch the rigging changed to a more normal style with the spits located in the correct places. At the bottom of the 8m pitch another single spit gave way to a 6m pitch which dropped you into a rift with solid walls and not a sight of loose shattered rock. A 'Y' hang of 5m down to another 'Y' hang at the top of the last pitch of 18m which lands in the upper end of the main shaft not far from the

Long Kin East waterfall.

Shouting rope free I made my way down and followed the water through an oxbow and some nice passages, Rob had soon caught up and we both went to the sump then made our way back out with Rob de-rigging what I had rigged and me de rigging what he had rigged. I set off up the ropes and was soon near the top so I sat down and waited for Rob to catch up. While relaxing with my light off I could hear Rob down below jingling and a jangling about and the all of a sudden there was an almighty crash and booming from falling rocks which sounded like they had hit the bottom. Once the booming had stopped silence is all I could hear! I shouted to Rob but got no reply. I thought to myself that I had heard no screams or shouts so he must have dislodged some rocks on the way up (thank god I was above him!) sure enough I soon heard the familiar jangle of an SRT kit. Once Rob was within talking distance he told me that at the top of the 5m pitch he knocked a rock and a great avalanche of rocks went plummeting to the bottom!

Everything de-rigged with just the entrance pitch to go Rob set off up and no sooner had I attached the bags to the rope I heard rope free so I then made my way up, stopping at a ledge half way up and pulling the bags up to it, to make it easier from the top. Reaching the top we retrieved the bags and then made our way across the fell to find the entrance to Long Kin East. A quick look in this cave as far as the first pitches and Rob doing the through trip to the stream sink. Rob met another group while on the surface they were doing a Long Kin East to Rift exchange trip.

A pleasant walk back to the car and then a drive home via Bentham for a change saw me back at home by 16:45. We are going to have to do more challenging trips in future!

Pete Dale

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

