

SPECTACLE POT

Stone cold? Probably..

21st March 2009

People present - Chris Scaife, Pete Dale, Rob Santus, Daniel Jackson, Bruce Stone

Weather - warm and fairly clear

See below for Petes version of events

According to Not for the Faint-Hearted, "Although it is one of the shorter trips in this guide, Spectacle Pot on East Kingsdale still has plenty of variety." Yes, I agree.

We had a hot, sunny walk up to the cave and then spent a while looking for the spit for the entrance pitch. Eventually we found it buried under some quite deep moss, so either this cave hasn't been done recently or everyone else who does it is really gnarly and doesn't need bolts. Anyway, the 1st pitch is short and a few free-climbs through a surprisingly large number of dead sheep leads to Splutter Crawl.

Rob stopped here for a while and had a good look at this crawl. It's not the widest of places and a few of the early efforts to get through were halted. Eventually Rob had his harness and helmet off and slowly managed to force his way through. Anyone who has been caving with Rob before will know that watching him struggle is not good for confidence. Pete was next but bottled it after a pathetic attempt and asked me to give it a try. I went in on my side for the 1st few metres, exactly as Rob had done, then just before the tightest bit, went flat-out. It's not actually particularly tight, but it is awkward as you really need your arms right out in front and only small movements are possible. There was water there too, so plenty of spluttering all round.

Pete had a rope, tied to his ankle, which was attached to a tackle sack and everybody's SRT kits, so once he was through, he pulled all the gear through. Poor old Bruce, who hadn't been caving in 9 years and had been very much thrown back in at the deep end by his 'friend' Pete, didn't want to do the crawl, but as he now had no SRT kit, he had to sit at the foot of a 6m pitch alone for several hours while we did the rest of the cave.

At the end of Splutter Crawl is an iron ladder down a slot, which I think we all tackled head-first. There is then the easy 6m 2nd pitch. After this pitch, a short crawl leads to an aven. Rob was a fair way ahead of me at this point, and Pete and Dan quite far behind. At a not-particularly-tight squeeze leading into Wet Crawl, I got into a bizarre position with my right leg twisted beneath me and caught up in the tackle sack, and my hips wedged against the roof. At first I thought I'd be fine so just tried to push myself through, but then I realised I was genuinely stuck. I knew that I could get out easily if somebody moved my right leg for me, but any attempts I made to move myself were futile and quite painful, so, not expecting Pete to catch up for a while, and really not very comfortable in that position, I shouted for Rob to turn around and help me out. Had I known what the passage was like ahead, I might have been more patient and waited for Pete, but soon enough Rob came back and coincidentally at that exact moment I felt a hand on my arse, which sadly turned out to be Pete. Without much effort, and far less painfully than I had imagined, my leg was freed and, but for the looks of disbelief at the ridiculous nature of my entanglement, we were ready to face Wet Crawl, a first for some, an unhappy second visit for Rob.

Wet Crawl is aptly named. It is mostly flat-out crawling in shallow water with no real room to turn around. Again, there's not really anything tight here, but I'm glad the water levels were no higher. Just after the wet crawl Pete managed to get his foot stuck somewhere ridiculous and I had to free it for him! At the end of the crawl is the 37m Dodd's Pitch, named after Jed Dodd from the Black Rose Pothole Club. The top of the pitch looked awkward at first, but there is a tremendous ledge to stand on for the rebelay, which is at more or less the same height as the Y-hang. There is a tape

deviation half way down this pitch.

From the foot of Dodd's Pitch, it is not far to the 4th pitch, which starts as a loose slope and then traverses out across the wall to a reblay. I think everyone knocked a few rocks down this pitch to add to the Great Rubble Heap. The Great Rubble Heap itself is a frighteningly loose slope, leading down to a short 5th pitch. Only Rob descended this pitch, which is immediately followed by the sump. It looked pretty narrow to me, and Rob was very much of the opinion that none of us should bother with it. So we began our return journey.

More rocks were dislodged on the Great Rubble Heap and the 4th pitch, but Wet Crawl seemed a lot shorter on the way out. We used the same rope-around-the-ankle technique for dragging gear through Splutter Crawl and Dan, who had confidently boasted throughout the trip that Splutter Crawl was easy and he would keep his SRT kit on, took his SRT kit off once again. At the other end we found Poor old Bruce, who must have had a really really boring day. I can't think of many things more frustrating than spending all day at the foot of a short pitch, surrounded by ovine skeletal remains, looking out into sunlight, but not able to get out. Once we were out, we all headed for the Marton Arms, except Dan, who probably had a hot date.

Chris Scaife

"In at the Deep End"

Having read Chris's report I thought I had better write a correct summary of what really happened down Spectacle pot.

Having got back in touch with one of my old friends I had asked if he wanted to go caving one day and what a surprise it was that he should phone up about caving today, down Spectacle pot of all places. I had informed him that there would be a few squeezes but nothing he wasn't capable of 9 years ago (hmmm) anyway I met Rob at the usual Saturday morning and then surprised him by offering to drive. Rob seemed nervous about this trip for some reason maybe because it is a grade V cave and he isn't up to such trips or it was his skiing injury nagging him? Anyway we got to Ingletonia and made our way to Bernie's to await the arrival of the gang. A short while later Chris and Dan had both turned up and were troughing themselves with various fatty foods and numerous trips to the toilet for a shit.

Well we were ready but no Bruce? As we left Bernie's I spotted him in his car over the road so went over and got him sorted for the tip with a new harness and a light. We then made our way over to Kingsdale. Parking up we got changed, packed the ropes the way we have always done and headed off up the track to East Kingsdale with Rob getting permission on the way past. We located the entrance with ease and then Rob set about rigging the entrance pitch while we all kitted up. When Rob finally found the spit we set off down. The entrance pitch is about 15ft and lands on a large ledge of jammed boulders with a short climb down to a large pile of bones no doubt Dan sat in the dead sheep as he always does but I didn't wait around to find out.

With Rob and Chris in front and then me, Bruce and Dan coming up his rear we set off in search of some spluttering. From the pile of bones a short climb of 2m followed by a crawl, to a head first drop of another few feet into a rather spacious chamber followed by another crawl to a letterbox type drop to the start of splutter crawl. Having caught Rob and Chris up at this point I was a bit dubious about Rob asking me to take a look at splutter to see what the best way of tackling it was, unusual for Rob I have to admit. Anyway Rob had a go at it and got stuck and had to back out he then took his SRT kit off and had another go and backed out again! On his third attempt he had sorted himself out and was off down the crawl. I then set about having a look at the crawl to see if Chris and Bruce would be able to do it and having had a rummage around in the tightest bit I reversed out of the crawl and sent Chris off into it. With Chris in front I was then able to talk him through it and assist him if need be. I then followed dragging the rope with me to haul the tackle

through once at the other end. Bruce clipped the gear onto the rope and I hauled away passing the kit to Chris as I got it. Bruce then entered the crawl but was unable to persuade himself to do it at present so Dan went in front and came through stating that Splutter was easy and he would not be taking his SRT kit off on the way back.

With Chris out of the way I squeezed through the rift head first onto the handy ladder and dropped down to the floor and the top of the 2nd pitch. As I kitted up for the pitch Dan arrived and we heard Bruce saying he was going to have another go at it but alas his nerves got the better of him so he had to wait since his SRT kit had been pulled through splutter and there was no easy way to get it back to him and Dan would not lend him his. The 2nd pitch has a slightly awkward pitch head and then a straight drop of 6m to the floor. Rob said to take SRT kits off for the next bit but I couldn't see why so left it on and set off along the crawling/stooping passage. Reaching Moorhouse aven I was amazed by what I saw in front of me. Just ahead was Chris's arse wedged in a hole leading to the wet crawl. I could hear Rob on the other side of Chris trying to calm him down as he was quite hysterical by now as he was stuck fast. Anyway after we had calmed him down and finished laughing at him we pushed and pulled various bits of him till he came free and with him now moaning that his hip was hurting he set off along the wet crawl to Dodd's pitch. Dan had caught me up by now so I tied the tackle bag to my ankle and set off along the crawl with Dan freeing the bag as and when required. Well the wet crawl is wet as there are a few pools to go through and a mouth in water low bit to start you off but it soon passed and all too soon you stand up in Dryden chamber with the way to Dodd's pitch a short climb and crawl away.

Climbing up and crawling through to the pitch head sounds easy but trust me it isn't as one wrong move and you're stuck. To highlight this fact I purposely got my foot stuck to show the others how easy it was to do. With them now aware of the dangers in the cave I freed my foot and crawled over to Rob. Rob had soon got the pitch rigged and set off down and upon hearing "rope free" I set about re-rigging the pitch to avoid the rope rub! Dodd's pitch is a nice free hang of 35m with a deviation half way down. The base of the pitch is at the top end of the great rubble heap and requires a short loose pitch not rigged off very much to reach the looseness of the heap proper. With everyone down Dodd's and the scratty pitch all that was left to do was to see the sump. Rob rigged the pitch and set off down complaining about the lack of space. Once he was at the bottom he said the sump was 6ft away so we all looked down the pitch at the sump and made a hasty retreat as it was a tad chilly but not before we watched him struggle back up the pitch!

The exit out of the cave passed with relative ease and even splutter seemed easier on the way out, Bruce was found and was ok so we kitted back up at the entrance pitch and made our way back on to the surface. Once we had got back to the cars and changed we headed for the Marton for a well earned pint, well all apart from Dan who had a hot date with some fella he met the previous night.

Pete Dale

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