

TRAPDOOR POT

You're a fool if you dare

3rd May 2008

People present - Pete Dale, Rob Santus

Weather: - Bright and sunny

Picked up at the usual spot we sped off towards Ingleton for a brew before this classic trip. Finding a handy parking space outside Bernie's we popped in to see Dave at Inglesport to make sure that the cave was fitted with hangers as on the way up we had our doubts about this. Relieved to hear that it was we headed into Bernie's for a brew. 10mins later we headed off up to Cold Coates and parked up. After a quick change due to a rather chilly wind we were soon on the long trudge up the hill towards Dowlas moss. A lot of rest stops were taken by me and I swear one day I will drag Rob down to my fitness level! All too soon though the walk was over and now the fun of finding the entrance started. We looked at the primitive map we had and spying the large shake hole that was marked on it we headed towards it. According to our map Trap Door pot was some 60m to the North West of the large shake hole so we set off in the general direction and after looking in various shake holes for 10 min's we decided to find Boggarts and then use that as our reference for finding Trap Door. Walking down the hill from Boggarts we reached the shake holes we had looked at first and just past them a bit further down the hill was another shake hole which turned out to be the right one.

The entrance is rigged off a jammed block with a simple bowline and no back up, from the bottom of the 6m entrance pitch you climb down a short drop and then ease your legs under a ledge into the next small chamber and while flailing them around in thin air you wriggle under the ledge and somehow manage to climb down to the floor of the chamber. From the small chamber a hole in the right wall opens out into a rift with lots of jammed boulders for a floor. It was at this point that I took the lead and a quick look at the description I headed right in the rift to a 4m climb down with not much in the way of hand or foot holds. After this the first obstacle came into view a short squeeze called the 'Ripper' no more than a few inches long it was made more awkward by the fact that you had to climb up a few feet before entering the squeeze, easy enough but not when there are no foot holds to stand on. With the squeeze passed we put our srt kits back on and rigged the 2nd pitch 'That's Better' 15m in a large aven landing on a lovely loose boulder choke. The pitch made all the more difficult due to the fact we had packed a 16m rope for a 15m pitch when we should have had a 20m rope! From the bottom of the pitch a climb down some dubious looking shoring and a short climb down some scaffold deposited me at the top of the next pitch 'FTSE Choke'. Again minimal rigging with just a 'Y' hang but it was safe enough and we were soon at the bottom and a brief walk brought us to the next obstacle 'The Gripper' another awkward squeeze that wasn't a squeeze so to speak. After this a short section of crawling opened out at the top of the next pitch 'Ready to Roll', again in an aven but very loose at the top and once at the bottom Rob rained stones down with every movement he made. From the bottom of the pitch the passage continued as a narrow rift bending round to the left to the start of the blasted crawl which was no more than hands and knees to a short head first drop down followed by another narrow wriggle down to the head of millennium pitch. A short back and foot down the wall saved hand lining the pitch but we rigged a rope for the return journey. From the bottom of millennium pitch the passage returned to its narrowness again and the rift bent round to the right following the passage we climbed down and along to where the next challenge was awaiting us both.

Now the NTFH book states that a 2m vertical slide down the rift followed by an awkward manoeuvre in to a tight 2m sideways crawl 'The Stripper' the 2m vertical slide was no more than a climb down with plenty of ledges getting into the sideways crawl was interesting and yes it was tight but not difficult as I could push with my legs. At the other side of the stripper crawl you are

able to sit up in a small bell chamber above the next climb down hammerhead pot which used to be a pitch until the bottom was filled with blasted rock. From the bottom of hammerhead another short hands and knees crawl takes you to the top of electron pitch which is where the cave gets big! The top of electron is a bit of a scrabble but after the rebelay 2m down it opens up in to a huge aven landing on a large ledge with the last pitch 'Megatron' disappearing into the dark depths below. From the top of Megatron the bottom is well out of reach of our lights and Rob asks if he can rig the pitch. About 10m down Megatron, it opens out into tremendous proportions similar to jib tunnel in GG when you enter the main chamber. Unfortunately the bottom of the pitch is next to a mud slope with any way on that might be there blocked. The only way for us now was to exit the cave so off up I went only stopping when I reached the top of electron pitch. I climbed hammerhead first then hauled the bags up and then had a go at getting back through the stripper. My first attempt failed and I had to come back out by this time Rob had caught up and I rearranged myself and tried again only to get stuck in the same place I told Rob to push my shoulder with his foot to aid my progress as I was unable to move. Sure enough a good push helped and I was at the other side of the stripper. Rob passed the bags through and then I climbed up the slot pulling the bags up as and when required. We then made good progress all the way back to the first squeeze 'The Ripper' Rob went through first and then I followed but had to retreat and remove my SRT kit to allow me to get through with little effort. We then passed that last few bits of climbs and wriggles and as I made my way to the bottom of the entrance pitch Rob was free climbing his way up. When he was at the top I attached the bags and then to redeem myself I to free climbed the pitch.

Again NTFH states a time of 7-9 hours and we did it in 4hr <*The new anchors probably make a little bit of difference!*> also Rob would like me to make the note that he exited the entire cave with his SRT kit on (Skinny runt!) the only reason I removed my kit was to make life easier and not because I'm a fat b'stard!!

Pete Dale

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