

# VESPER POT

## The return!

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Friday - 25th January 2008

People present - Pete Dale, Rob Santus

Weather: - Overcast and gusty

Eight and a half years ago me and Dunc ventured into Vesper pot on a Friday afternoon and failed to bottom it so a return trip had always been there and now it was time to cross this cave off my list.

Rob had other plans this sat so it was decided last minute to do a mid-week (more of an end of week) trip. He/we had decided upon Vesper pot as a suitable place to go, with Rob having been to the bottom with Dunc last year it seemed only right for me to make it to the bottom as well. By Wednesday things were not looking too good as I didn't feel well at all and the thought of starting work Friday at 2am didn't help either but, I somehow managed to convince myself it was a good idea and by the time Friday had arrived I was wide awake but still feeling rough!

Getting home at 12.30pm Friday I was still up for the trip so packed the gear ready and downed a few pain killers and set off to meet Rob at the usual. Rob was on time and we were soon on our way up to the dales. As we drove down Kingsdale we looked up at the hill and remembered the steep walk to the top with the only advantage being that the top was the top! The ropes were already packed in the bags so we just had to kit up and walk to the entrance. 20 minutes later we were stood looking into Vesper pot Rob entered first and I followed with bad memories from my previous trip. Strangely it didn't seem half as bad as I remember it being so quick progress saw us at the first pitch in no time at all and with me rigging and dropping the Krabs gave me the opportunity to grovel around in a waste deep pool at the bottom of the pitch looking for them!

Both of us safely down the 1st pitch Rob set off along the windy passage to the 2nd pitch, now from what I remember about this passage it was tight awkward and very twisty. Now as I proceeded along it only two out of three things I remembered correctly, twisty and awkward but never tight. We soon reached the 2nd pitch and Rob set about roping it up with me hot on his heels i.e. Rob shouts rope free only to find me right behind him!

I think what made it easier than last time was the 'P' hangers placed by the CNCC although the places they have put them seemed overkill as in a traverse and a 'Y' hang as opposed to just a 'Y' hang. The next couple of pitches flew by and we were soon at the end point of my previous trip and yet again I could see the spits but had no idea of how to reach them until Rob gave the secret away in the form of a natural hang off a spike which put the rope in such a position that you could lean across the shaft in safety. Rob said that it was right for me to rig the last pitch to vanquish my past demons so I nervously leaned out across the abyss to reach the spits on the far wall. In doing so I found that I could just straddle the gap easily and rig the pitch up! (Why did it seem so hard all those years ago?) With the pitch rigged I made my way down to look for the rebelay that was apparently -18m. Carefully scouring the wall I found the spit and also found that it was totally knackered as well! Luckily a bit lower down there was a handy spike so I chucked a sling around it and put in a deviation then I made my way down the very impressive canyon and waited for Rob to join me.

Now Rob wanted to go down the next section so he could say that he had been to the very bottom of the pot I on the other hand had no interest other than getting out and warm (think the pain killers were wearing off.) needless to say he looked down the drop and with no means of rigging it decided it was a bad idea and told me to set off out which I duly did. Now whether it was due to the gold rope or my fitness level getting better I made it to the top of the last pitch without stopping giving Rob a shock with the time it took me! Both of us back at the top I packed the rope in the bag and set off out with Rob de-rigging. I waited at the top of the 4th pitch and then took the bag and made my

way out. At the top of the 2nd pitch I was faced with the twisty stream passage and again it never posed any problems and I was soon at the bottom of the 1st pitch. Hearing Rob in the distance I made my way to the top and squeezed into the passage, made my way to a larger section and waited for Rob to appear. He was soon with me and we packed the ropes up and headed for the entrance.

Climbing out into the darkness felt good I don't know why but whenever exiting a cave in the dark it always feels better than when you exit into daylight. Maybe it makes you feel like you have BEEN CAVING! Anyway we made our way back to the van got changed and headed home.

Well over eight years had passed since I was last down Vesper and compared to what I remembered about the trip it was nowhere near as bad, maybe we where not as fit back then or maybe we just hadn't done many hard caves but one thing is for sure food is essential and so is being fit and healthy, I also think that most of the time it's a mental thing stopping you caving and not physical. Either way all I know is that I had been up since 2am done 10 hours driving didn't feel well and even been to the bottom and back of a grade 4 cave in less than 3 ½ hours all in one day! I guess I am just a Cavegod!

*Pete Dale*

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