

YOCKENTHWAITE POT & LANGSTROTH CAVE

A.K.A Yuckenthwaite Pot

31st March 2007

People present - Rob Santus, Mike Skyrme, Duncan Jones

Weather: Dry and sunny with a cool wind

Cave: Nice, then grim then pleasant



A bright sunny day saw us travel up into Langstrothdale via Wharfedale - not an area we venture to that often. We met up with Mike in Hubberholme then headed for a suitable parking space on the roadside near Yockenthwaite pot. After a short debate, we decided we were in the right place.

Once changed, we trudged up the steep hill, puffing and sweating profusely until we eventually reached the fenced off area enclosing the pot. The shaft looked inviting with plenty of foliage and tree trunks twisting around the edges and the view is one of the most picturesque you'll see anywhere. A great location to get some

pictures of the surface and descending/ascending the pitch.

Mike was the first to be kitted up and ready, so he headed off to rig the entrance pitch. This included searching for a thread bolt on the far wall for a re-belay point – nothing was obvious. Once Mike was down, he shouted up that there were several dead creatures at the bottom and plenty of other debris; so I duly followed down the pitch. At the bottom I stood in something soft, which turned out to be a mouse or vole or some other moggie. There were in fact a few to choose from just where the rope ended.

The “Not for the faint hearted” book indicates that the way on from here is a hole in the bottom corner which “may require some excavation”. This was blatantly obvious once we had a look - the whole area turned out to be a graveyard. The hole was completely blocked with a dead sheep! We shouted to Dunc to get his ass down to help assess our next move but he didn't want anything to do with it, so it was left to Mike and I to somehow remove the stinking carcass whilst Dunc just took pictures of us toiling away.

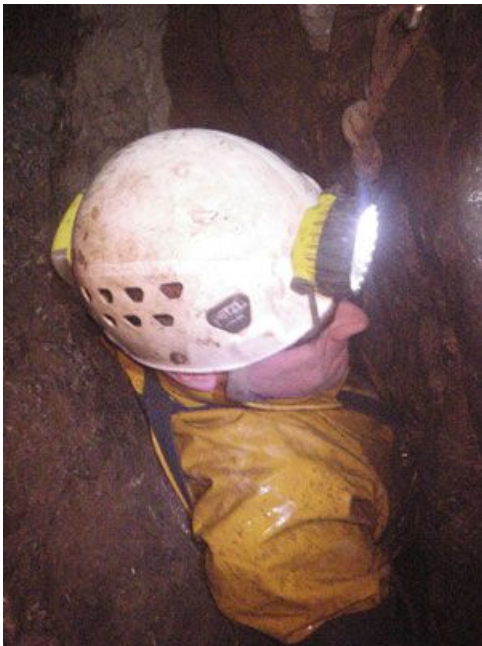
After 15 minutes of sheer misery removing all kinds of animal remains, which almost made Mike gag, a body size hole was made. But in order to squeeze through, we had to face a load more remains on the other side including a couple of sheep skulls. God knows how many animals had died down there.



Once we were all through, we made our way into a little chamber where we heard the sound of running water, which was music to our ears; we proceeded to wash any remains of animal from our gloves and boots.

From here the second and third pitches were quickly rigged, removing skin from my right knuckle in the process trying to tighten a stiff bolt. This led us into a little chamber ahead of the fourth pitch.

The passage is a little tight leading to the pitch head – apparently it has been widened through blasting. After messing about for a while, Dunc and I managed to get it rigged. I then suggested to Dunc that he try to go down. After trying for a couple of minutes, he didn't fancy it, so I swapped places with him. It is a little awkward because you have to squeeze up a bit before you can go down and your SRT kit gets in the way as well, but it wasn't too difficult.



Once through the squeeze, the shaft opens up and the way on is through a bedding plane 4 metres down on the right. I waited here for the others to follow. Mike had a go next, even though he was like a block of ice after waiting in a cold chamber for 20 minutes for us two to rig. He squirmed and wriggled for a bit, then decided he didn't want to do it, mainly due to concerns about trying to get out again. So next for Dunc's second effort. This time, after a quick wriggle, he was through and into the bedding plane. We re-belayed from a natural down the next part of the pitch which is dry and descended to the bottom. Once here, I had a wander through various nooks and crannies where I got even dirtier than before; having established that there wasn't much to see, we decided to make our exit. I went first up through the awkward fourth pitch head, to see what the best way to tackle it was. As it turned out, neither of us thought it was that bad. We quickly de-rigged and headed for the surface where Mike was ready for more photos.

Having de-rigged and packed up, Dunc suddenly realised that he had left his SRT kit bag at the top of the second pitch with his jelly babies inside. I volunteered to make the retrieval in exchange for a pint. This was quickly done, via the necessary dead sheep squeeze, and I was up the rope again. But then I couldn't find the spanner, so I had to descend the pitch again to locate the dropped item. Eventually we were packed up and ready for the descent to the cars in the beautiful afternoon sunshine.

Once down, Dunc and I decided to have a quick look at Langstroth cave whilst Mike got changed. We quickly made our way to the entrance and headed upstream on hands and knees. At the junction of the higher entrance the passage became larger until we reached the bottom sump/freedive of Langstroth Pot. After a quick look, we made our way out through the higher entrance and back to the car.

After the sheep fiasco, we then spent half an hour thoroughly washing every single piece of equipment and rope in the River Wharfe before nipping in the Buck Inn in Buckden for a deserved pint of Copper Dragon.

Rob Santus

Photos - Duncan Jones and Mike Skyrme

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