

OGOF LLYN PARC

Foreign fun and padlock fettlin!

Date : 14th August 2010

Present : Duncan Jones, Pete Brookdale, John Gardner, Graham Hilary, Adam, Barry
Our NWCC guide: Michael, plus other NWCC members helping out with the winch.

Weather : Cloudy and breezy

After a few attempts over the last few years we finally arranged a trip to this interesting sounding North Wales cave. The lure of being winched down a 300ft mine shaft with fixed ladders descending another 100ft or so tempted a number of people to put their names down.

The morning started drizzly but this was not a problem and I headed to foreign lands, meeting Pete en-route, who supplied some fine McDs coffee to enjoy. After not too long a drive we pulled up alongside some likely looking suspects, having confirmed they were NWCC we found a parking spot and waited for the arrival of others.

After a quick stroll to the shaft (short walks, I do like them!) and back the winch arrived, slowly but surely various bits of metal were carried and erected over the shaft, the winch was set-up and a quick try of the padlock. Whaaattt???? Resin? Oh joy, some complete and utter numpty with such a sad existence obviously decided it would be worthwhile shoving resin in the padlock. After some fettling with a penknife we gained ground, unfortunately just not enough so more serious methods of entry were required. How it took us back! Whilst this was taking place most people wandered off to examine a nearby dig.

With the padlock off we were ready for action, a quick discussion was had as to who was in Mikes group and who was in Heathers. As most of us wanted to be out in reasonable time we opted for Mikes group, although in the end time-wise it made no difference, just that our group did the round trip. Clipping a krab into the bottom of the weight and a cowstail above it we were lowered down the 300ft mine shaft, minding the walls as you go as there is some loose material in parts. After a quick descent you land on a platform (a few planks) on the level with the flooded continuation of the shaft below.



Peter Appleton, one of the original explorers, driving the winch

Once all down we were off along the mined level, quickly reaching a series of ladders descending another 100ft+, more mine level followed, this time with a wet section (thigh/waist deep). The water was a tad chilly, we knew this before we even reached it going on the oohs, eeks and other assorted comments filtering along the level. Nearing the end of the level is a shored route through a choke, through this emerges in more natural surroundings. Very quickly the large main stream is reached and near here are some miners inscriptions/names written on the walls, it has to be said, in quite elegant and stylish script.

Ambling down the fine stream passage, sizeable in places, we eventually reached B Block Passage, so named due to a big 'B' etched onto a large block! One wonders where 'A' might be? From here progress was mixed, with some large dry passages with occasional formations and some rather slippy sections – apparently it is not normally quite as muddy, some sediment shifting has obviously taken place depositing some mud just where you don't need it.

Highlights along the next section include a very fine phreatic ramp rising a fair distance upwards and Round Chamber, where a short clamber up gains a pleasing aven. A decorated section follows (shame I didn't have my camera, but due to the padlock incident we were rather short on time) and this leads to a large and impressive chamber, off to the side of this are yet more formations. With formations and some of the passage types and shapes this is a very interesting cave to visit.

After a brief rest we headed off along Master Passage which soon starts descending and with the mud covered slope it proved rather amusing. Caution was exercised further down to avoid sliding at speed over a drop, the final drop (slide!?) was assisted by an in-situ sling. The passage continues from here aiming towards further caverns not yet connected (maybe one day digging will allow exchange trips with Western Shaft, a fine trip to look forward to). Our route lay up a short rope climb, with all the mud we probably weighed twice as much, but a few shakes got rid of some of it. Once up we sat and waited whilst Graham enjoyed the climb, to get full enjoyment out of it he spent a bit longer on it than the rest of us..

Once all up the following passage was gravelly (which stuck to our mud covered oversuits) and very “sump-like” - not that I know what a sump is like, just felt like what it should be. After the longest stretch of crawling in the cave it relented and we had brief respite in a nice section of streamway before we arrived at an ominous looking slope.

Now, Mike told us there is usually steps cut into the mud slope, unluckily for us there had not been many trips before ours so the steps were gone. I was volunteered to go first and very quickly found myself struggling for grip on the rather slippy slope (it reminded me a bit of The Ramp in Sleets Gill). After much slipping and sliding and trying to boot a few steps in to assist others I finally made the top and impressive it was. Pete was next followed by everyone else, who by this time had found suitable sharp rocks to cut into the slope and thus make progress easier.

At the top we wandered along the passage to eventually rejoin our outward route back upstream to the miners name junction, the other group who had opted not to do the round trip had caught us up meaning potentially long queues at the winch. At this point John, Graham and Pete opted to exit whilst me, Adam, Barry with Mike took in a trip to the Quarry, a large passage with numerable (and some *very* sizeable) blocks littering the floor, we eventually stopped at a large hole that disappeared down a fair distance, apparently it ends a short distance further on.

All that was left now was to make our way out, the water didn't seem as cold in the mine level and the ladders soon passed. A short wait ensued as one by one we got winched up the shaft, minding the walls as you go.. 300ft of luxury! Worth waiting for.



Emerging from the 300 foot shaft

A very big thanks must go to the NWCC for turning out, bringing the winch and showing us round this cave, all that combined with fixed ladders makes for a relatively easy outing in this interesting and classic North Wales gem.

Duncan Jones

Photos – John Gardner

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