

BAR POT

Damp December delights

Date: 1st December 2007

People present: Chris Scaife, Dom Mennie, Alex Ritchie

Weather: Clear but windy heading in, Dark and stormy heading out.

An alternative view on this trip can be found in Alex's write up below..

We had this Saturday down as something gnarly, but driving down past the Ribblehead Viaduct, which had its own series of cascades coming from the top, the water levels were quite obviously too high to do almost everything. What would be perfect to do then would be a nice dry entrance taking us down into an enormous chamber made even more impressive by the huge water flow....

So Beryl suggested Bar Pot, which turned out to be a good choice. After the 5 hour walk in, I rigged the 1st pitch, 15m and fairly narrow at the top. This leads down into a small chamber where I sat and waited for the others. A torrent of huffing, puffing and expletives suggested Alex was coming next, and for some reason he decided to use someone else's rope, there being 2 other parties already in the cave. From the foot of this pitch a short slide down a slab with an in situ handline leads into another chamber and then down into a bit of crawling to the 2nd, 30m pitch.

From the foot of the pitch, we headed along to a section that, although easy caving, has a 40m drop if anything goes wrong. For this reason a handline was put in place, although if anything was to go wrong it would almost certainly have been while stretching down across the chasm to tie a figure of eight around the precariously poised scaffold poles. At the end of this line Bez chose the manly free-climb, while Alex and I went for the more cowardly crawl. Both end up in the same place and soon rewarded us with the piece de resistance - Gaping Gill Main Chamber.

There was certainly lots of water coming down the shaft and this was probably the most impressive underground scene I have ever witnessed. We stayed in the main chamber for quite a while trying to glimpse the surface from every possible angle, with spray in our faces and roaring in our ears.

Eventually we decided to head out. Judging by the industrial language coming from Alex's lips he found the 1st pitch no more pleasant on the way up. On the surface it was cold and wet, and rapidly becoming dark, so we were glad to get back to Bezza's car and into our warm clothes.

Chris Scaife

Alternative report, by Alex

A short SRT trip down Bar pot one of the few caves that was still dry. A one and a half hour walk lead us down a picture's walk to the cave from Clapham. The first pitch was tight at the top making descending and ascending awkward but fun. The second pitch was not awkward at all, though there was one little bit before the pitch where you have to pass another pitch head un-rope that makes things more interesting.

After those pitch's and a hand-line traverse plus some crawling the main chamber was reached, Now we knew that there would be a lot of water least of which because of the amount of wind going though the tunnel but I cannot describe the amount of water coming down it was tremendous!, the force of the water was so great that when you looked up the shaft you can see the water bouncing off the walls from the top of the falls which was almost horizontal.

Coming back up the main pitch with Dom de-rigging, a crab got stuck and would not undo and again this time with Chris de-rigging at the top of the first pitch where we all spent around a total of half an hour trying to free it, gloves, rocks and anything we could put our hands were used to try and free but with no luck.

Alex Ritchie

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