

# KNACKER TRAPPER HOLE

**Knacker Trapper Rock Smasher.**

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**People Present:** Daniel Jackson & Alex Ritchie

**Date:** 23/01/2010

**Weather:** Overcast and freezing fog in places

**Grade:** Guide 3, Our grade 4-5. (We think the grade 3 must be miss print). Its tight, all natural belays, has exposed climbs and is very, very loose.

It was decided to do Knacker as me and Dan had not done many decent trips for a while, Dan even less so. So with everyone else tied down with their spouse's or other problems we had to do a trip on our own, and therefore a trip that does not require much gear. Knacker Trapper fitted the criteria. We did not have the tackle to bottom the pot so a side trip excursion to beyond the third pitch to photo some pretties was on the cards instead.

Finding the cave was not much of an issue; you simply just follow the wall to your left after the third style off the normal route to Sunset. We got there and opened the lid to the entrance and the trip almost ended there! There was a veritable waterfall cascading down the entrance climb. It looked really unpleasant. I took a look and came back out, I was soaked head to toe. Dan went in and went a little bit further on and saw it did let up once you were in the crawl. We had a quick discussion on what to do, we knew there was no rain forecast and it was an overcast and cold day so not much chance of more snow melt so we would see how far we could get, before water forced a retreat.

Thankfully after the entrance climb the water soon left us, where a rocky crawl over cobbles brought us to a small junction. The obvious way looked like to continue the rocky crawl however that was not to be the case and the narrow rift to the left was the way on. A bit of thrutching through this saw us to the first pitch, well saw me to the first pitch. I had climbed halfway down to have Dan shout to me saying he could not get through. He then had another attempt facing the correct wall this time and slithered through after I had already come back up to see what the problem was.

We both free-climbed the first pitch and thought we better rig the second pitch as it looked bloody tight at the top. We however didn't dare use our Descenders due to the narrowness and opted instead to treat it as hand line climb.

Now the next obstacle was the dreaded Bosch Rift. Dan was in front and I was pushing his large tackle bag from behind. It was quite tiring but neither of us really struggled in the rift except for the sky dive at the end where my harness got caught on something and wedged forcing me to do the sky dive almost completely vertical to get out of it. It was an interesting handstand manoeuvre. Thankfully I avoided nutting the floor, so we carried on to the third pitch, which we then rigged and abseiled.

Not much longer we reached the main rift that lead to the University Challenge pitches down stream and the bits we were after up stream. I followed what I thought was the obvious traverse route which had nice wide ledges. However this just dropped me down to stream level where after a short waterfall climb it ended in a too-tight rift, no good then. Dan went up a dodgy and exposed climb in a wider part of the rift that was only a couple of metres up stream from where you enter the passage. I thought that could not be it, it looked way too precarious, but alas it was. Anyway I followed him up and climbed it, thankfully it was not too bad. At the top of this climb after a slightly awkward manoeuvre an easy crawl takes you above the rift into breakdown chambers full of loose and dodgy rock. At this point the cave changes character here from rifts to large cavernous chambers.





We negotiated the rocks and was met with a very dodgy climb complete with flaky rock and a big hole half way up going down some 6 metres should you slip. This led to yet another chamber.

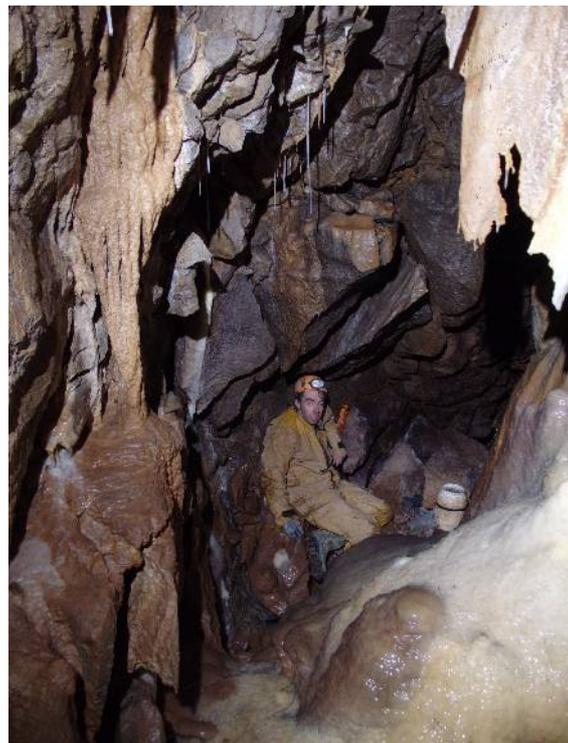
Our laminated guide said there was an obscure climb in the roof, I spotted one and had a look at it first. This did not seem to go anywhere, but there was no where else to go? Confused I decided to send Dan up to take a look. Before he climbed up I warned him about a very big particularly dodgy rock at the top of the climb, however that warning did not stop him dislodging it and sending it crashing down and smashing into pieces, before it disappeared through various holes in the floor. As I knew it was dodgy I was well out of the way. I think I said at this point we should call it, as this place was just too darn dangerous. However as Dan was coming back down he spotted the way on and headed up there for a look leaving me in my hiding place where I dared not budge until I heard the “All clear”.

Shortly after Dan shouted me come on up, we had reached the formations. They were fantastic and large well worth our effort to get there, to think I almost abandoned the trip just 10 metres from our goal.

After taking a lot of photo's we headed out knowing full well what lay in-store for us on the way out.

More rocks and stones followed us as we made our way down the climbs. As we headed down the rift I almost came a cropper as a hand hold I grabbed hold of just fell away and clattered its way out of sight below, was this place made by Italians or something? It is bloody lethal.

Anyway we soon made our way up the third pitch where we stopped for some refreshments and had a good laugh at what to do with the excessive amount of nuts I had brought with me, I just tried to feed Dan all of them. I brought them not only because nuts are a good energy food but also thought the nuts were appropriate for this cave, you know because the cave is called Knacker Trapper. Knackers, nuts get it? Never-mind.



Bosch rift for me was far easier on the way out though Dan did not think so, needing a few breathers. I had a little bit of trouble on the second pitch as I was wearing my ascending gear. Bad idea really I should have just free climbed all of it.

Anyway we were soon up that and the first pitch and out of the cave through the high powered shower of the entrance climb to be greeted by a wonderful sunset, which unfortunately we couldn't be bothered to take a photo of, hate winter its too darn cold ☹.

We headed up to the Station Inn that night to enjoy revelry with the rest of the club and drank a few well deserved pints and enjoyed the late night “entertainment”.

**Trip time:** Leisurely 5 hours. We were in no rush ☺

*Alex Ritchie*

*Photos – Dan Jackson*



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