

LANCASTER HOLE

Chasm-tastic

2nd December 2006

People present - Mike Skyrme, Neil Heywood, Duncan Jones

Weather: Chilly on the surface

With Rob away ‘romancing’ (we assumed) in Scotland, the decision was made to get Neil down Lancaster Hole as this was one of his wish list of caves to visit.

I travelled over with Neil and we met Dunc at our usual place – Inglesport Café for breakfast, before nipping next door to Bernies for some bits and bobs and information from the ‘ever so helpful’ Mr Whitney.

Andy recommended the “Chasm” pitch as a good way down into the master cave and warned us to make sure we used the deviation as the rope “rubbed like a bitch” otherwise.



Armed with this gem of information we set off for Bull Pot Farm. Travelling back along the A65, Neil and I were discussing the weather and how bad it had been a few weeks earlier when we were in Derbyshire and the fact that it wasn’t raining today! Sod’s Law – as soon as we turned onto the fell road, the heavens opened and it pissed down. Luckily by the time we reached the farm, the rain had eased somewhat, so a quick change ensued before heading across the fell to the entrance.

I opted to rig (get out of the wind quicker LOL) and quickly disappeared. The entrance pitch was rigged with two ropes as we needed the larger rope for Chasm pitch. Once at the bottom the obligatory “rope free” shout was delivered before I settled down to take some pics of the others descending.

After a bit of entanglement changing ropes, Neil appeared and was quickly followed by Dunc. Once sorted, we set off for Chasm. This took us to Bridge Hall and down Kath’s Way, heading for Fall Pot. Just before Fall Pot we took a left down a mud slope (where Neil admirably demonstrated a controlled slide!!!) before heading round to the top of Chasm.

After tying off, I dropped down into the rift to the hang point. The ‘Y’ hang was quickly tied before dropping down to the ledge mentioned by Andy. After a bit of buggeration with the sling (too long/too short if doubled) the deviation was in place and I continued my descent.

As I dropped further down the pitch I began to feel the rope start to rub somewhere above me, “Shit” I thought as I tried to push myself out from the wall only succeeding to slip around (bloody mud!!!). My descent increased in speed as I tried to minimise the gap between my arse and the passage floor. Once down I called for the next man. A couple of minutes and a look at the downstream sump later I was joined by Dunc, who informed me of two things.

1. He had noticed a rebelay in the opposite wall, which if rigged, would have solved the rubbing issue. I hadn’t seen it as I was too busy looking up the rope to see where it was rubbing. And
2. Neil wasn’t joining us!



“Eh?” I enquired, “He’s happy with one pitch and wants to make sure he can get out again!” was the reply. “Oh well” and off we went exploring the upstream passage as just a little further on from the ‘washing machine’ – is that right Dunc??? We returned to the pitch and as I made my ascent, Dunc nipped downstream to check out the sump. Once up, a ‘sleepy eyed’ Neil enquired what it was like adding, “It was ever so peaceful in the dark so I”, “Lazy bugger” I thought, “any excuse for a kip!”.

Once Dunc was up and the rope packed we headed back to Bridge Chamber and up to see the Colonnades for some pics and sustenance (chocolate and juice). Some good pics were taken here and Neil was mightily impressed with the chamber. We then set off for the entrance as I could hear the faint calling of a beer pump.

As I had rigged, I had the option of going up first and taking a ‘calculated risk’, decided to do so – what a mistake that was!!!!

Once on the surface and into a semi-dark and cold, windy evening, I shouted down for Neil to come up before ditching my SRT kit. I grabbed my camera and returned to the entrance to take some final pics.

I could see movement down below so I shouted “Neil, are you on the rope yet?” “Fuck off – I can’t hurry up, I’m going as fast as I can!” was the disgruntled reply from below. Baffled by such an outburst, I enquired a second time which was met with even more abuse. Giggling to myself, I let him get on with it!

After much grumbling, growling, howling, huffing, puffing and general moaning, interspersed with the odd “I’m never fucking doing this again!”, Neil emerged from Lancaster hole in one piece. Not bad for someone who has a major phobia about heights and rebelay in particular.

Once off the rope, he calmed somewhat, said that he had enjoyed himself and then apologised profusely for his outbursts (good job he’s been by best mate for nigh on 36yrs!!!). Dunc was soon out and what followed can only be described as a quick leg it back to the cars, an even faster change, a brief chat with Dom (BRCC member – why he wasn’t on the trip I don’t know!!!) before heading down to the Whoop Hall for some well earned refreshment – Hic!!!!

All in all a good day with a few laughs along the way, as well as some major achievements for a certain member – well done mate!

Mike Skyrme



Photos - Duncan Jones and Mike Skyrme

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