

PIPPIKIN POT to BYE GEORGE POT

Hard cavers or broke back mountain?

22nd March 2008

People present - Pete Dale, Rob Santus

Weather: - Dry with a chilly wind.

Arriving in Ingleton we had a chat with Dave in Inglesport and then had a brew in Bernie's while looking through the cave bible that is 'Not for the faint hearted' crossing various trips off due to length and amount of time we had we decided to have a go at Pippikin to Bye George pot through trip. Not knowing whether Pippikin was rigged I popped back into see Dave and got the info we required.

Arriving at the car park on Leck fell we were not surprised to find it quite chilly so no time was wasted getting changed we then chucked a 30m rope in a tackle sack just in case and set off down the Fell to the entrance. Once at the entrance to Pippikin we de numbed our hands and kitted up. Rob took the lead and by the time I had reached the bottom of the first pitch he was well on his way to the squeezes. From the bottom of the pitch a flat out bedding takes you to the top of Cellar pot were a scaffold pole is wedged handily over the top giving you easy access to the first awkward bit. Shimming along the pole you then climb into the passage turn around and climb out over Cellar pot and then enter the squeeze feet first, a tricky manoeuvre to say the least but easy enough. The squeeze itself is a short downward wriggle into thin air until your feet find a ledge to stand on! This is immediately followed by a squeeze through a window which is then followed by a tighter squeeze to the top of the second pitch. Once down the pitch a short climb down is then followed by a short slanting climb down a rift to the top of the third pitch belayed off a handy scaffold pole across the top of the pitch. Once at the bottom you are met with the crux of the pot a sloping rift to the top of the forth pitch which is tackled by staying high up until your feet hit another scaffold pole, it is then a short climb down to the top of the fifth pitch. From the bottom of the pitch you meet the stream or trickle of water depending on the weather today we were lucky and it was just a trickle. Next a short head dive into a larger chamber followed by a bit of passage to another climb down into a chamber. The next section was a traverse at roof level to stay in the wide stuff to avoid misery at stream level. A small chamber is passed and a scramble through some calcited blocks and you suddenly reach the sixth pitch which takes you back down to the stream.

You then follow the stream along nice easy walking passage which ends at a boulder choke but we were heading for the Cigalere stream way so, at the corner where the stone on a ledge marks the climb up to 'Cross over passage' we left the Pippikin stream and made our way through to Leck fell lane, were a tricky climb down and a short stroll downstream brought us to the start of the Cigalere.

The Cigalere stream starts with a fantastic 3 m cascade which you climb up to be met with some exciting passage with challenging climbs vibrant cascades and beautifully pot holed passage floors. All too soon this ends though with another climb up a waterfall and then a good few meters of crawling on heavily scalloped passage ending abruptly with a deep canal. A very deep canal lets just say I was traversing on ledges at knee level below the water and the tackle bag was hanging below me freely, so well over 6ft deep. After a few bends the canal starts to get shallower permitting walking with a tremendous roar in the distance and after a climb over and around a few rocks you emerge at the grand cascade an 18m waterfall with a handily placed rope.

Rob ascended the pitch first while I kitted back up and up on hearing rope free I made my 'DRY' ascent. Reaching the top I clambered over the lip of the pitch and removed my SRT kit as it would make the rest of the trip that bit easier going.

Following the stream again we were soon met with another waterfall which was the inlet for the Cigalere stream. Our way on was straight ahead into dry passage and a few dodgy looking boulders

which we had to climb through. It was then just some nice twisty walking passage which lowered to stooping and then a short section over flowstone and around a few more bends to the first serious squeeze. This squeeze was the original end of the cave until it was passed back in the nineties. The squeeze itself is a sideways crawl in the stream around a slight left hand bend. Looking at it, it didn't seem too bad so Rob dived in and was soon through I then passed him the tackle bag and I set about trying to pass it. My first attempt failed so I retreated back out and removed my helmet and battery, passed them to Rob who had gone on ahead and turned around. I then launched myself in again and wedged solid, Bollox! Informing Rob I was stuck he grabbed my hand and on a count of three he pulled and I kicked like a madman I inched forwards slowly and then 'POP' I was free to move, I inched slowly along and in doing so I could feel my welly coming loose and yes it came off!

I carried on under a low section and waited as Rob was facing the right way to retrieve the offending welly. Reunited with my friend we carried on along the passage which again was a nice winding stream way with walking crawling etc. a short duck was met but there was plenty of head room above water and on the other side an impressive flowstone of white red brown and black draped over the left hand wall for a good few meters. Then it was a bit more of the same until a wriggle over a calcite blockage and a short crawl to another wet squirm in the stream. After another section of crawling the way ahead lowered to just over 1ft in height with a sharp left bend which I looked round to see Robs feet writhing around so I waited were I was till the all clear was heard. Shouting "come on through" I set off around the bend which wasn't too bad to be honest and then under a stalactite which forces you into the water and then the way ahead lift a bit to permit hand and knee crawling to a sharp right hand bend 'The Backbreaker Squeeze' a nasty looking obstacle to say the least picture this. You are lead on your left side in the stream with ample room above to move your right arm about, you then wriggle around the corner with the way on being up but as you wriggle up your chest wedges solid against the rock both front and back and unable to physically push myself up and through as my legs were in no fit state to do anything, my right leg bent with my foot flat on the ground and my left leg straight out with my foot wedged against the wall and my knee locked solid. I had a dilemma to say the least Rob had got through so he could assist in any way possible. I backed off and removed my light again so I could at least look around and survey the situation. We both measured the squeeze to see were the widest part was and from where I was it looked like lower down was wider so I had a go at it that way and I did get a bit further but still unable to push myself up I retreated yet again.

I could see a problem emerging now if I couldn't get through the squeeze, I would have to go back would I be able to get through the other squeeze? Would Rob be able to get back through the Backbreaker? Problems, problems I knew we were not far from the exit now so going back was really not a good choice so I had to get through and besides once I was through that was it in terms of hard bits. So with a renewed sense of valour I wriggled forward into and around the corner and edging slightly higher than the last time I told Rob to grab my hand and pull on a count of three. I exhaled all the air I could on Robs count and he pulled and I wriggled and I inched forward into the squeeze, with my chest severely wedged now I could only take small breaths so again on three I breathed out once again and moved another inch, now the lower part of my chest was wedged and I couldn't breath so signalling Rob to pull I moved again and 'Pop' my chest was past the squeeze my problem now was that my left leg was trying to go around a bend without bending not good at all but there was nothing I could do about it. I couldn't go back so there was no choice but for Rob to pull again. Finally I managed to lift my waist up a little and my leg was through but not without an overstretched knee. Out of the squeeze I felt a lot better but I just wanted to get out know my morale had waned and I had expended a lot of energy. Luckily the rest of the cave had little in the way of obstacles apart from one big one, my light was dying! So now I was caving in the dim glow of light from Rob in front he would go a few meters in front and then shine the light for me while I made my way along. Another grovel in the stream and some hands and knees crawling and the sound of water could be heard in the distance with this morale boosted as it had to be the pitch near the entrance. Sure enough it was the pitch and it was nice to stand in a spacious chamber again. Rob

set off up the 5m pitch first and once safely in the passage I made my way up we then made the last few meters of crawling to the exit which by the way had slumped since the last time me and Dunc were in here. Climbing up the entrance pipe into warm sunshine was a relief! We then made our way back across the fell to the car park and got changed into nice warm clothes.

Well it is fair to say that Bye George pot is the limit of what mine and Robs body will fit through anything tighter is just not possible and as I sit here writing this with my twisted ankle (First squeeze) aching knee, sore chest, aching back and very sore elbow, I'd have to totally agree! Still it was an excellent trip and if you are up for a challenge both physically and mentally then go and try it, but I would enter via Bye George then at least if you can get through the backbreaker squeeze the rest of the trip will be easy!

Pete Dale

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