

# QUAKING POT

Wetter than a wet thing

---

20th May 2006

People present - Mike Skyrme, Rob Santus, Duncan Jones

Inglesport – 9:00am for breakfast, was the message from Dunc on Friday evening and a recce into Quaking Pot as far as the Crux being the plan.

Saturday morning dawned grey and wet. After fuelling up, I was on the road to Ingleton by 7:50am. The rain was relentless as I made my way along the A590 and A65 into Yorkshire, but somehow, it didn't seem as bad as the day we went to Small Mammal Pot.

I arrived at Ingleton around 8:55am and headed straight for Inglesport and the café to find no-one there except two waitresses, one tending to the griddle and the other young lady tending to more important matters (I assume) on her mobile phone. After what seemed like an eternity she finally looked up and promptly 'shit herself' judging by the yelp and the panic stricken face she displayed (didn't realise I was that ugly!!!).

Half a brew later Dunc and Rob appeared and breakfasts all round were ordered. Once scoffed, we began to debate the day's challenges that lay ahead. Following this, Rob ducked out to procure chocolate and fizzy pop for the needy whilst Dunc and I went next door to Bernies, Dunc proffering that he needed a new footloop – but really he wanted to quiz Andy Whitney about our choice of cave. That said, Andy reckoned that Quaking should be OK despite the weather but seemed to question our sanity. Comments such as, "Been to the Crux once before and ain't going back again!", "relentlessly tight" and the more poignant "Don't expect me to come and get you out later!" really stuck in my mind as we left the shop – and yes Dunc finally bought the footloop!!

One short journey later and an extremely quick change (due to weather conditions and perverts masquerading as motorists – why oh why is it always the blokes that stare???) the long slog up Ingleborough began. As we climbed the rain eased off a little to become a light drizzle. We ambled along Crina Bottoms (picturesque place) and onwards and upwards until we thought that we were in the approximate location. At this point we split up and began searching the many shakeholes for our cave.

A likely looking candidate was found but it didn't match the description given to us by AW who said "dry waterfall at one end". This was a waterfall in full flow, which given the weather of the previous week, AW can be forgiven for his 'misleading' description.

A bit of ferreting by Rob (Dunc and I were just stood looking at the torrent of water disappearing into a hole at the bottom of the shakehole) the entrance was located. "Oh well – here goes" I thought as we slid down the tube and into a small chamber and the head of the first pitch.

The ladder was belayed to a nice little rock bridge and released down the pitch. Rob disappeared first quickly followed by Dunc and then myself. The pitch landed in a nicely formed rift chamber with the way on through a tight looking rift. It was at this point that we met up with the water that was entering the system from above as it flowed out of a cross joint, into the bottom of the rift and spilled down the second pitch about one metre below the pitch head. The noise was terrific and made communication difficult.

Rob scrambled into the rift and proceeded to rig the ladder to what could loosely be described as a "chockstone" (more like a 'chockpebble' to me though!!). Dunc slid into the rift as Rob headed down the ladder.

After a bit of a struggle trying to get my shape to fit the rift's shape, I slid in just in time to see Rob, minus his tackle bag, appear at the top of the pitch. "Bloody ladder's tangled" was the utterance as

he pulled the ladder back up the pitch. Once untangled it was back down for Rob only for him to reappear again seconds later to say that the ladder didn't even reach the bottom of the pitch.

At this point I was becoming increasingly concerned (call it old age intuition or call it what you will) that maybe we had bitten off more than we could chew by attempting one of the most difficult (alleged) caves in the country on a day like this. I voiced my concerns and the others seemed to agree. However, this left one small problem - retrieval of the bag from the bottom of the second pitch!

As we had deduced the hard way that the ladder was too short, the only alternative was to don SRT kit and rope the pitch – ha! problem solved.... not quite!!!! Although there was a smattering of bolts located here and there it was soon realised that our plentiful supply of hangers were safely ensconced in the bag which was now, unfortunately residing at the bottom of the second pitch – bugger!!!!

However, good old ingenuity began to kick in and a short time and some semi-suitable ropework later the pitch was rigged and ready for our hirsute heroes to descend into the cacophony of water pouring down the pitch.

As they disappeared I busied myself hauling tackle back up the first pitch and I can only assume that inquisitiveness overcame them both as by the time I returned to the chamber all was quiet. After a brief scurry back into the rift and a crawl up the cross joint (another thing better suited to a dry spell) I returned to the chamber to await their return.

After ten minutes or so it was beginning to get cold but I suddenly became aware of a faint glow which at first I couldn't decide whether I was seeing things or not, but the light steadily grew until I could hear the return of the happy wanderers above the noise of the water. Dunc was first up quickly followed by Rob who had decided to have a look at the third pitch and described it as "dangerously wet". At this we quickly derigged and returned to the surface to find that the rain had finally stopped.

Less than twenty yards from the hole we met some "part time ramblers" who asked if I'd had a good walk – to which I smiled politely and muttered under my breath "F\*\*king idiots, as if I wear cloths like this to go walking!!!"

A speedy descent back to the car and more ogling by motorists later, we retired to the Craven Heifer - Ingleton for a well earned pint and a muse over what might have been.

Oh well, as they say – you win some, you lose some and in this case, we definitely lost this one – but Quaking Pot beware, we will return!!!

*Mike Skyrme*

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