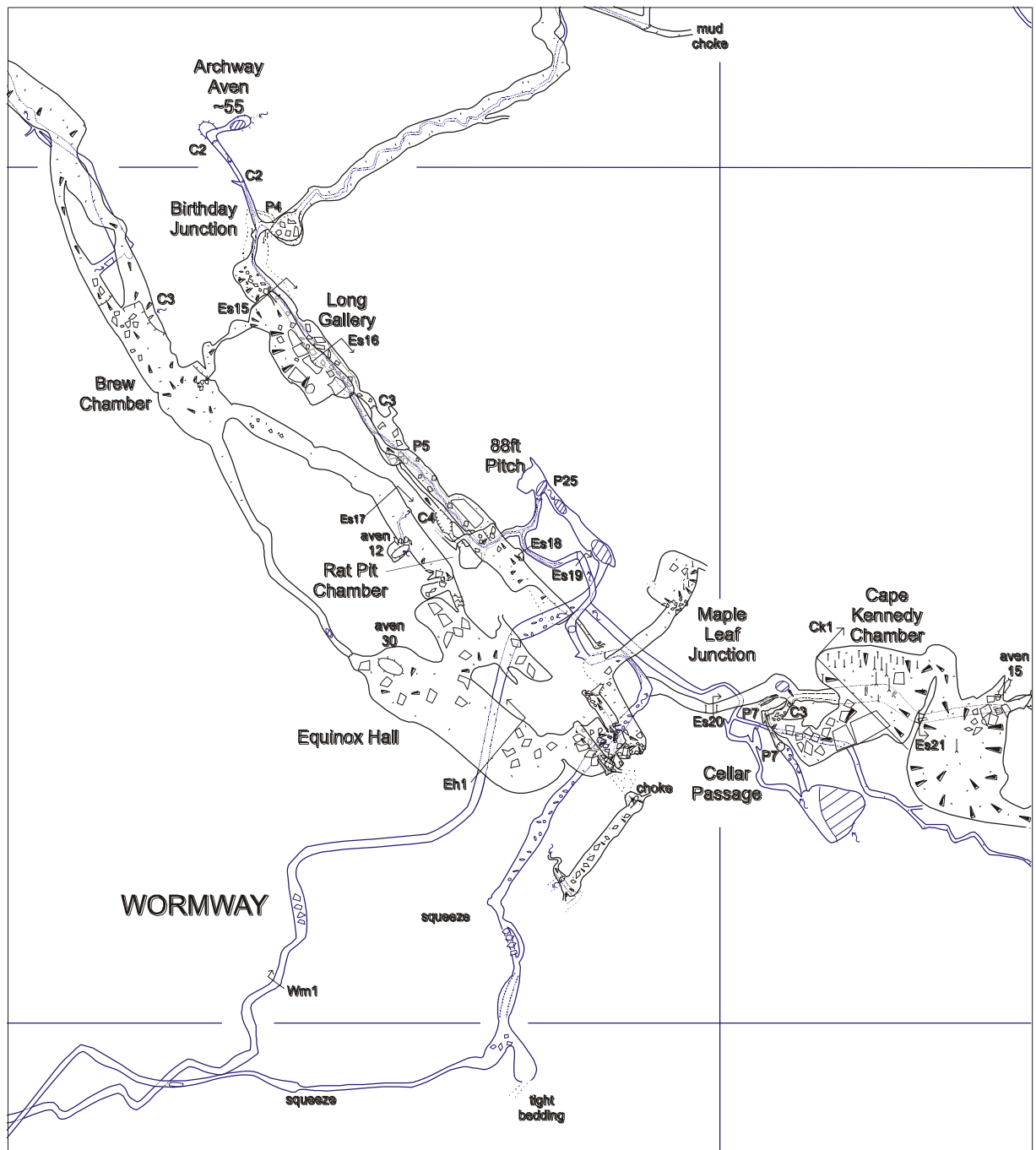


Part 2
LANCASTER HOLE
Stake Pot to Snail Cavern Area

A Companion Guide to accompany
Sheet 2 (revised edition 2011) of the RRCPG Grade 5b Survey

by: Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club



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Author Note

The area around the Grind extensions of the Darkside will be described in the booklet associated with the first Leck Fell survey sheet.

Cover illustration:

Extract from accompanying Sheet 2 survey that is produced in 2 colours.

Sheet 2 Survey:

Lancaster Hole – Stake Pot to Oxbow Corner

Drawn by Ray Duffy, winner of the Arthur Butcher Award – BCRA Hidden Earth 2006

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Addendum

Notes

Very early in the planning for this re-survey of the Ease Gill System we realised the need to fix the major entrances in relation to each other. It was essential to be able to get the Lancaster Hole end of the system to join accurately with the Top Sink and Pippikin ends, a problem encountered by earlier surveyors.

To fix the locations of the entrances, two sets of laser equipment were borrowed and set up on Brownthwaite Fell (the Bullpot Farm lane), and the car park on Leck Fell. To help reach the sites in the gill itself a party set off to establish a fixed station part way up Crag Hill overlooking the Top Sink end of the gill. With each party equipped with 'walkie-talkies' it seemed the mission would be successful, the weather, however, had other ideas. Not only did it start blowing so hard that the instruments wavered around uncontrollably but the mist and rain put the final nail in the experiments' coffin. We could not at the time use the easier, if less accurate method of GPS, as the Forces still had the final digit withheld for their own purposes in the Gulf War. We did have an earlier compass, clinometer and tape survey to the major entrances tying in the trig points at Brownthwaite Fell and Tow Scar. It was decided by those close to the project to proceed with the entrances as we had them as they worked very well in relation to each other and the drawing up of Sheet 1 was undertaken. Just before the production of this sheet we had the opportunity to try again to fix the locations of the entrances.

Take two, arrived with an even worse day but with better equipment. This time we needed only one laser and sighting pole and the modest aim was to go from the trig point on Brownthwaite Fell to Lancaster Hole, into the gill to Link Pot and up to Pippikin. The remainder of the entrances would be surveyed to in the normal manner from fixed stations set up in between by the laser. It took part of the morning and most of the afternoon to go from the trig point to Lancaster Hole, less than 1km. The rain was so hard at times it was impossible to see the 100m stations except during lulls. The team were frozen, as some of the rain was of the solid variety, wet, and extremely frustrated at having failed again. This time at least we did get some readings but they seemed at odds with the locations we were using, and, given the conditions under which they were obtained, it was decided to proceed with the original entrance to Lancaster Hole in compass, clino and tape position. Error!!!!!!!!!!!!

By early 2002 one of the team had turned his attention to finding GPS positions for the entrances and the features around the area. Surprisingly, he found a slightly different value for Lancaster Hole than the one we had used on Sheet 1. Looking carefully back over the data for the surface survey some original errors in positioning Bullpot Farm, from which the other surveys radiated outward, were found. Ooops!!!!!!!!!!!! Although the error didn't affect the entrances and underground features in relation to each other they did alter everything relative to Grid. The original sheet from Lancaster Hole to Stake Pot, had used blue grid lines at 100m intervals, that were now incorrect as were the co-ordinates of the entrances. Rather than make Sheet 2 totally different in format we have decided to keep the blue grid but use it as a sizing grid and mark the real grid co-ordinates along the edge of the sheet so as to be less obtrusive.

Lancaster Hole	was 66385, 80680 now 66403, 80717
Cow Pot	was 66415, 80816 now 66432, 80853
Hellot Hole	was 66163, 80616 now 66179, 80650
Shorty Hole	was 66355, 80627 now 66373, 80663

What can I say folks but sorry!

Ray Duffy

Introduction

Notes

Location

The caves under and around Ease Gill, which is on the Cumbria/Lancashire border of the United Kingdom, form the longest and most complex cave system in Britain at the time of writing. The system extends beneath Casterton and Leck Fells and around the western flanks of Gragareth Hill. The caves are formed in the Carboniferous (Dinantian) Great Scar Limestone and contain a wide range of passage types, sediments and speleothems.

This publication is the fourth part of a series of surveys and companion guides to be published about the system. Beside being a guide and description of the cave passages, included with the Part 2 survey is some general material on Conservation, Access and History of Exploration covered by this guide.

The Survey

Background to Production

It has proved necessary to re-survey the system as more and more bits of the CRG published survey (1967) proved to be inaccurate and new discoveries in the system meant that this survey was added to without knowing from where to start surveying. The re-surveying of the whole system was started by the North Manchester Caving Club in the early 1980's, and much work was done before 1990. The notes and drawings were left with The Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club (RRCPC) who have continued the work and in some cases repeated the surveys for accuracy. A Grade 5b survey is gradually being completed, and is to be published in a series of sheets at a scale of 1:750.

It was only after extensive new surface survey work had been undertaken that we realised that the available co-ordinates for the cave entrances were a little suspect to say the least. In an attempt to correct these errors some highly accurate levelling work from the Ordnance Survey triangulation point on top of Barbon Low Fell across Casterton Fell via Lancaster Hole and on to Leck Fell was undertaken

On re-fixing the cave entrances with the new data everything became a little clearer and work on the rest of the system could continue. Most of the cave entrance survey stations and many of the important underground survey stations have been marked with yellow lamb tags to aid accuracy - please leave these in place. The survey data has been entered and plotted onto a computer using Survex software. This was then imported into a drawing package for final drawing of the passage detail. At the same time a photographic record of the system is being compiled. Many of these photographs are now available on the "Ease Gill Guide" section of the RRCPC web site (RRCPC URL: <http://www.rrcpc.org.uk/easegill>). Surveying work continues towards the publication of other sections of the system. (*See end of the guide for details*)

Conservation

Notes

Introduction

Ease Gill Caverns form part of the Leck Beck Head catchment Area S.S.S.I. administered by Natural England. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.s) are notified by Natural England because of their plants, animals, geological or physiographical features. Most S.S.S.I.s are privately owned or managed. About 40% are owned or managed by public bodies such as the Forestry Commission, Ministry of Defence and The Crown Estate, or by the voluntary conservation movement, and S.S.S.I.s cover approximately 7% of England's total area, Natural England liaises with about 23,000 owners and occupiers on these sites. The Whelprigg Estate and Kay - Shuttleworth Estate own the majority of Casterton Fell and the Leck Fell areas, respectively.

What are Sites of Special Scientific Interest? (S.S.S.I.s)

S.S.S.I.s are notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, in recognition of their special biological and/or geological interest, having been selected according to rigorous and published guidelines. Together they comprise a nationally important series of areas representing all that is best in England's natural heritage. They do not stand alone, they are part of the characteristic natural areas that are England's countryside and they depend on how this remaining countryside is cared for by our society.

Why is the Ease Gill Cavern System part of an S.S.S.I.?

The Leck Beck Head catchment S.S.S.I. comprises an area which is not only of outstanding geological importance but that also includes areas of major biological interest. More detail with regards to the geomorphology of the area is to be found in the Part 1 guide of this series.

Conservation Work in Ease Gill Caverns

The RRCPC has been closely involved with the Ease Gill Caverns cave system since its discovery in 1946 and adopted it under the Descent "Adopt-a-Cave" scheme. No-one likes to go into a cave only to find dumped carbide, chocolate wrappers or anything else that shouldn't be there. In 1977, Descent magazine began a scheme to help acknowledge, promote and encourage the work done by individuals and clubs in looking after their favourite caves. The RRCPC therefore holds an annual clean up meet in the cave system and in recent years a great deal of rubbish has been removed, formations have been taped off to prevent damage from careless visitors and some formations have been cleaned. The use of carbide in the system is discouraged, hopefully to help reduce the dumping of spent carbide both inside and outside the cave. Bats have also been seen in the cave system and a number of entrances have been provided with stock proof yet bat-friendly lids that allow bats to still use the caves.

Surface work

In recent years footpath erosion has become a major problem with the increase in visitors to the system. Again the RRCPC has taken steps to prevent or reduce the risks of footpath erosion by carrying out remedial work, re-routing paths and repairing boggy areas of the heather moor land, below which much of the cave is located. Fences and stiles have also been repaired. Access signs have been placed on the fells and these should be followed at all times. The RRCPC and its members on behalf of the Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC) have carried out this work. As part of the club's conservation policy we have appointed a Conservation Officer, who can be contacted at Bullpot Farm or by consulting the contacts page of the RRCPC Web site.

Access to the Cave System

Notes

The Council of Northern Caving Clubs currently controls access to the caves of Leck & Casterton Fells. Initial contact with the Council can be made by contacting:

The Honorary Secretary:

Les Sykes, 49 Manfield, Ashurst, Skelmersdale, Lancs, WN8 6SY
Email: les@speleo999.freeseve.co.uk

Most of the land on these fells belongs to the Whelprigg and Kay-Shuttleworth Estates and access is by permit only to member clubs of the Council. The area below Leck Fell House, on which Pippikin Pot is located, now belongs to the Middleton family and permission must be obtained from Leck Fell House to enter Pippikin, Nippikin or Bye George Pots. The area has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.) primarily as a result of its cave systems and as such deserves respect from those who take advantage of the unique amenities the fell provides.

Casterton Fell

The booking Secretary is:

Alan Speight, 8b Springfield, Bentham, Lancaster LA2 7BA
email: alanmavisspeight@btinternet dot com

Permits are issued for a maximum of:-

Five permits per day at weekends

Two permits per day on weekdays

Three permits per day on weekday Bank Holidays

The maximum number of cavers is limited to 8 per permit, with a maximum of two cars per permit.

Cars should be parked with consideration; always allowing access through Bull Pot Farm and to other roads and gates, as this area is still used by agricultural vehicles on a daily basis. Access to the caves is via the agreed routes as shown on the permit. Signs and paths are maintained by the CNCC along with the stiles at Cow Pot and Link Pot.

Leck Fell

The booking Secretary is:

Jim Sloane, 60 Sharoe Green Lane, Fulwood, Preston, PR2 8EE
Email: jsjimi@blueyonder.co.uk

Details of the access agreement are as follows:-

There are 2 permits per day with no caving during April, May and June. No more than three cars are to be taken onto the fell per permit. Other cars may be left on the car park at Cowan Bridge (donations in the honesty box are welcome). Cars taken on to the fell must only be parked on the Lost John's Cave car park and not on the road verges elsewhere on the fell. This is indicated on the map on the reverse of the permit form. Cave entrances to be approached via the routes indicated on the permit map. The country code is to be obeyed at all times.

The landowner has indicated that in the event cavers transgress the access agreement, the fell will be closed for caving. The CNCC, on behalf of all cavers, wishes to maintain good relations with the landowner and therefore the cooperation of all concerned is sought to maintain caving access.

History of Exploration

Notes

Much has already been written on the history of exploration of the cave system and reference should first be made to:

The Caverns of Upper Ease Gill - Northern Pennine Club (1952)

Lancaster Hole and The Ease Gill Caverns - CRG Transactions Vol.9 No.2 (1967)

The Ease Gill System - Jim Eyre (1989)

A brief summary of some historical events is given below.

Date	Event
1898/9	First recorded exploration of Bull Pot and Cow Pot, YRC
1909-1912	Bull Pot of the Witches - discovery of Burnett's Great Cavern etc., Kirkby Lonsdale Grammar School.
1919	First survey of Bull Pot of the Witches, YRC
1926	Further exploration in Bull Pot of the Witches including discovery of Robert's Passage, YRC
1927	Exploration of Hidden Pot, YRC
1929	First exploration of Pippikin, Nippikin and Peterson Pots, Gritstone Club
1932	Surveying, photography and discoveries in Bull Pot of the Witches and Cow Pot, Eli Simpson & BSA
1933	Survey and exploration of Lower Ease Gill Cave, BSA
1935-1936	First recorded exploration in Upper Ease Gill, Boundary Pot etc., BSA
1946	Discovery of Lancaster Hole and Hellot Hole, BSA
1947	Discovery of Oxford Pot and Near Ease Gill Caverns, BSA
1948	Cow Pot connected to Lancaster Hole, BSA
1949	Lancaster Hole pushed as far as Ease Gill Far Series, BSA
1950	Connection of Oxford Pot to Lancaster Hole, RRCPC
1951	Exploration of Slit Sinks and Rosy Sink, RRCPC
1952	County Pot dug out after Rosy Sink Collapses, RRCPC/NPC
1952-1955	Exploration of Top Sink and Upper Ease Gill, NPC
1956	Exploration of Pool Sink to Ease Gill Caverns, PPSG
1957	Discovery and exploration of Pegleg Pot, NPC
1958	CRG Extension and other Far Ease Gill discoveries made, CRG
1963	Discovery of Borehole, NLSC
1965	Discovery of Aygill Caverns, NSG
1966	Bull Pot sump connected to Lancaster Hole, HWCPC
1967	First full survey and account of system published, CRG
1970	Major extensions to Pippikin Pot, HWCPC/ULSA
1971	Discovery of Stake Pot (Earby) Series, EPC
1972	Climbing into Magic Roundabout Series, Lancaster Hole, CPC
1972	Discovery of Mancunian Way and Manchester Bypass, MUSS
1973	Maracaibo discovered, RRCPC
1976	Gavel Pot -Lost John's sump Connected, CDG
1978	Discovery of Link Pot, NPC
1981	Exploration of Woodhouse Way, Lancaster Hole, RRCPC
1984	Wretched Rabbit Entrance opened up, RRCPC
1989	Pippikin Pot - Gavel Pot Sump Connected, CDG
1989-1999	Lancaster Hole downstream sump extended, CDG
1989	Discovery of Sylvester Pot, RRCPC
1994	Discovery of Bye George Pot, RRCPC/ULSA
1997	Connection of Cow Pot to Aardvark Country, NPC
1997	Connection of Pippikin Pot to Witches Cave, CDG
1997	Connection of Leck Beck Head to Witches Cave, CDG
1999	Discovery of Slug World, RRCPC
2002	Connection of Peterson Pot to Pippikin Pot via Svengland, RRCPC
2003	Connection of County Pot to Swindon Hole and Corner Sink, RRCPC
2005	Spiral Staircase Passage connection to Wretched Rabbit, RRCPC
2007	The Darkside, The Grind extensions, RRCPC
2007	The Fork Handles Series, RRCPC

The references to these explorations are listed at the end of this publication

Part 2:

Notes

STAKE POT to SNAIL CAVERN AREA

High Level Route - Stake Pot to Oxbow Corner

(For passages west of here, see Part 1 of the guide, published in 2007.)

From the bottom of the pitch at Fall Pot a muddy traverse along the southern wall of the chamber is followed by a climb up a steep mud-covered boulder slope that leads up into the continuation of Montagu East Passage. The large walking passage quickly becomes a series of obstacles best tackled first on the left of the passage and then on the right-hand side, until the gaping hole of Stake Pot is reached. In recent years this section has become extremely slippery and recent rock falls have made the bridge between the two high passages more unstable. From the left wall at Stake Pot a 5 metre split pitch leads down to the boulder bridge. At this point climbs down to the north followed by a steep boulder slope leads down to the Master Cave. A climb up mud steps from the boulder bridge, on the opposite side of Stake Pot leads to the continuation of the High Level Route. Following the right wall from the climb up for about 30 metres, a passage on the right, behind fallen boulders, gives entrance into the Stake Pot Series and E.P.C '71 Series.

Crossing over to the far side of the passage just before the Stake Pot Series entrance, the High Level Route continues to where a 'window' in the right wall overlooks the Arson Shaft, one entrance to the exciting, Magic Roundabout. Beyond this is a hole down to another route down to the Stake Pot Series and the Rabbit Warren. Further along the passage is the large formation of Bob's Boss and pursuing the High Level, the floor gives way to boulders and the passage narrows at the Painter's Palette, a fine mass of calcite curtain and stal. Along the passage a little further, the twin holes of Scylla and Charybdis are soon reached. A slippery mud path traverses the south walls of both holes and should be treated with care as they drop 20 metres to the Master Cave. The passage roof lowers until a step up into a crawling section gives way to a boulder covered floor. Part way along this tall and wide passage is a hole down to the downstream start of the Oxbow Corner boulder choke. Eventually the top of a steep downward boulder slope on the left is encountered, this leads down to the streamway of the Master Cave at the upstream end of the choke at Oxbow Corner.

The Magic Roundabout

Access to the Magic Roundabout Series is best gained via Arson Shaft. There is an obscure window into this shaft found on the south side of the high-level route between the start of the Stake Pot Series and Bob's Boss. The window into the Arson Shaft is some 17 metres up from its base and 26 metres below the pitch head. At the base of the shaft is a series of muddy tunnels that form part of the Stake Pot Inlets.

At the head of the Arson Shaft is a slit into a 5 metre deep blind pit but above are two further pitches up into The Old Kent Road. This begins as a well-decorated traverse at roof level above a deep narrow trench. A junction is soon reached where to the right is an awkward passage leading to the Chocolate Box. Beyond the Chocolate Box a climb up into bedding plane leads to a tight squeeze followed by 40 metres of well-decorated passage, Quality Street, this ends at a bedding plane that is too tight, above a calcite choke. Back at the junction, straight ahead is the main route onward, briefly flat out but soon enlarging to hands and knees at a sharp right hand turn. Partway along this crawl is a tube leading off to the right, this connects with a passage heading to, The Chocolate Box.

The main crawl soon emerges on a balcony above an 11 metre pitch, across which, is a spectacular and serious traverse leading to the Pristine Way. This beautifully decorated and tight passage ends in a drafting calcite choke.

Below the 11 metre pitch, pleasant crawling soon leads to a series of cascades to the head of the 22 metre deep, Aquarius Pot.

From a ledge some 18 metres down this pitch, a climb up leads to an 8 metre pitch down. The passage here passes a small aven and the long and narrow rift passage leads onward, becoming the roof of Brass Monkey Passage, although no physical connection exists.

At the base of Aquarius Pot, however, a walking passage soon degenerates to crawling and after about 100 metres the final 9 metre pitch is met. The water drops down an impenetrable fissure and a traverse leads to one of two alternative pitch heads. The first is tight and awkward and is down two, 4 metre drops. However, further traversing leads to a larger 9 metre pitch. Traversing over the pitches leads to a continuation crawl, passing two floor slots to end at a 7 metre deep pitch into a blind chamber. Below the 9 metre pitch the stream passage passes a ledge on the left toward the Arson Shaft base but heading on downstream emerges out the obscure inlet into the Lancaster Hole Main Drain just upstream of the Stake Pot boulder choke.

High Level Route - Stake Pot to Oxbow Corner

The way on in the High Level continues as a crawl over mud banks and along a bedding plane in the right hand wall to a low chamber and crawl through to a larger chamber. Here on the right is a 3 metre climb into Diamond Hall. Beyond the climb up to Diamond Hall the main High Level route continues over boulders until it enlarges dramatically at Oake's Cavern, a 40 metre long cavern, which seems to end abruptly. A step down, however, under the end wall lands at the start of The Minarets, a fine 100 metre series of parallel joint controlled phreatic tunnels, linked by short crawls. This can be bypassed by a short crawl over blocks at the start of the first Minaret. At the far end of The Minarets, a climb round huge fallen blocks reveals the vastness of Corne's Cavern. This cavern is best traversed along the left slope until near the end where it is necessary to cross to the right hand side, south wall. Near the end of the right hand wall of the cavern is the start of The Mancunian Way leading into County Pot. Corne's Cavern narrows at boulders at the top of the continuing slope and then the passage enlarges again as Snail Cavern is entered. At the top of the slope on the right are the Halberdiers formations and at the bottom of the slope a hole down leads through loose boulder chambers to the streamway.

WARNING! All of the High Level Route should be treated with respect due to the confusing route finding and slippery mud slopes over dangerous deep holes.

Diamond Hall

Emerging from the crawl in the high level route beyond Oxbow Corner, a climb up large boulders arrives at a cross rift just before Oake's Cavern. On the right a climb up enters a large passage that displays fine gypsum crystals on its walls and splits after about 100 metres. The left hand branch of the passage is a dug out crawl for 20 metres to boulders. The right hand branch is a low crawl, that has had several dug extensions, heading towards Maple Leaf Passage in the Stake Pot Series.

Long's Passage

If south wall of Oakes' Cavern is followed into the right corner, Long's Passage is reached. This rises to an excavated section through sand to 15 metres of passage to a descending tube of clay and calcited sand, The Pleasure Dome, beyond tight crawling continues to a choke.

Mancunian Way

Entrance is behind blocks in the south wall of the Snail Cavern end of Cornes Cavern, leading eventually into County Pot via Molluscan Hall. This starts as a drop down a boulder filled rift to some stalagmites followed by a straight joint controlled passage. The passage is mainly crawling for almost 100

metres to where it appears to end. The way on is down a hole in the floor to the left and into a sandy bedding plane. Following the draft through some low passages and chambers leads through to Ease Gill Aven and the way down to County Pot via Molluscan Hall. Over the top of Ease Gill Aven passages lead to an alternative tight route down pitches and through to Dismal Junction in County Pot.

Stake Pot to Oxbow Corner by Lancaster Hole Main Drain

(The downstream section of the Master Cave is described in the guide accompanying Sheet 1.)

Starting at the foot of the boulder slope at Stake Pot, the Master Cave continues upstream as a passage decorated with many formations. The streamway here is now 3 metres wide and some 15 metres high in places. A huge slab jammed across the passage is passed and shortly after this the roof is no longer visible. This is the point where the two holes of Scylla and Charybdis descend from the High Level route over 20 metres above. About 250 metres upstream of Stake Pot, a large passage enters from high up in the wall on the right, Breakdown Cavern.

Beyond the entrance to Breakdown Cavern, the Master Cave can be followed across a deep pool to a water chute and a section where the roof lowers and is made of boulders. Just beyond this point, Breakdown Cavern re-enters the main stream on the right, there is a climb up on the left through boulders into the High Level passages above to the boulders almost at the Oxbow Corner. The streamway continues through a complex boulder choke to Oxbow Corner.

WARNING! The route through the boulder choke at Oxbow Corner involves crawling in water and these sections are very dangerous in high water conditions.

Breakdown Cavern

High in the right hand wall going upstream from Stake Pot, an awkward climb up the wall enters Breakdown Cavern. Although initially large, being some 10 metres wide and 5 metres high, the passage gradually closes down with piles of collapsed blocks littering the floor. The way on at the eastern end is down a slot and crawls through unstable boulders back to the streamway near the downstream end of the Oxbow Corner boulder choke, thus it forms an old oxbow to the Main Drain. The Breakdown Cavern itself also contains the 20 metre oxbow, The Wormery, on the north side of the passage near its western end.

Upstream of Oxbow Corner by Lancaster Hole Main Drain

Reached either through the Oxbow Corner boulder choke or down the boulder slope from the high level route, the stream at Oxbow Corner emerges from a low arch upstream. A dry oxbow on the right leads more easily to the upstream end of the arch. Directly opposite the upstream exit of the dry oxbow a route leads up a climb against the north wall to a muddy passage linking to Maracaibo and a confusing and unstable route through boulders back down to the Lancaster Hole Main Drain. In the streamway upstream of Oxbow Corner there is a section of stooping passage that passes the low entrance on the left to Maracaibo. Beyond here the passage enlarges at a breakdown chamber with a high level link back to Oxbow Corner. The only way on upstream is at stream level and is low and wet. A route has been forced in drought conditions to a point beneath Lower Snail Cavern, where a climb up through boulders joins with the High Level Route at Snail Cavern. The streamway route continues through more low, wet and loose sections to Eureka Junction

WARNING! Upstream of Oxbow Corner toward Lower Snail Cavern the water passes through very unstable boulder chokes and sumps off completely in all but the driest conditions. The way on seems to be blocked at the time of writing.

Maracaibo

The entrance to this is best found by going 30 metres upstream of the oxbow at Oxbow Corner in the Lancaster Hole Main Drain, where a low arch at floor level, leads back over the stream to the narrow inlet passage of Maracaibo. A narrow twisting rift soon leads to a climb above a calcite blockage and the way ahead is a straight rift, 1 metre wide and 7 metre high, for over 100 metres, The Bloody Thigh Rift. The rift is best traversed until the stream is met, it then bears left in a short oxbow after which the rift rejoins the stream in a passage of varying height. This passage is followed for 30 metres until, as it suddenly lowers in height, a climb up a slope to the right leads to a sandy crawl into the largest chamber in the extension.

The stream may also be followed at this point, where it reappears as a trench in the floor. In the roof of the chamber is an aven with a too low passage at the top. A climb over some blocks at the end of the chamber leads back to the stream, Tortuga Way, with some crawling required in the next 30 metres. The roof of the passage rises and just near here a shelf on the right hides a crawl into another sizeable passage, that eventually chokes. The roof of the main passage continues to rise and the formations become more profuse. A mud slope on the left leads up to, The Wurlitzer, some beautiful 'organ- pipe-like' stalactites and a crystal pool.

CARE! The passage containing the crystal pool should not be entered as it chokes just out of sight.

The main passage winds onward, varying in height from less than a metre to over 6 metres, the formations increasing in abundance and beauty. These fine formations eventually end at the Last Post and just beyond the roof lowers over a pool and then becomes a very low crawl. Beyond here the way on continues through straws and into a traverse with particularly sharp helictites, The Keel Hauler, to a junction. Left leads in a short distance to a chamber and a passage that chokes. Straight ahead leads into a crawl and then into the final section of twisting rift passage, made awkward by the acute angle of some of the corners. Finally, the rift rises to about 9 metres and a short section of walking leads to a climb up into a final chamber with left and right branches. At floor level in the left branch a hole leads into a bedding plane over cobbles for 30 metres before it eventually gets too low, this bedding may be blocked at present.

Stake Pot Series (E.P.C '71 Series)

This route provides the link from Lancaster Hole to Link Pot via the 88ft Pitch and Echo Aven connecting the caves of Casterton and Leck Fells.

WARNING! When the stream is flowing in lower Ease Gill all the passages below the 88ft Pitch (28 metre), flood to the roof and the pitch itself can back up to the top.

Stake Pot to Brew Chamber

In the High Level route, by following the right hand wall of Stake Pot towards Bobs Boss, an arched passage is reached, partly hidden behind some boulders. Taking this passage, a small pit is soon encountered, this leads down to the Rabbit Warren a series of small passages leading to the Stake Pot boulder slope. Further along the main passage another pit is reached at Streamway Junction, where, beneath the boulders an upstream route leads to a stal choke while downstream, the Barlick New Road continuation, connects to the Rabbit Warren back below the small pit previously mentioned. Straight ahead from the junction is a climb over a flake in a fissure to the long joint controlled, Barlick New Road (sometimes referred to as 93' Passage), leading to Thirsty Junction. Left at the junction is a streamway that terminates after 30 metres in the 40 metre high Razor Aven, while the way on is to the right, where the passage splits into two. Straight ahead leads to a grotto and just before its end a low tight passage on the left

leads to a connection to the Subway. On the right before the end of the grotto is a short draughty crawl to Canuck Climb, the climb has a fixed steel ladder in place.

To the north west behind the top of the ladder the passage soon chokes. In the opposite direction from the top of the climb, a passage over boulders, leads to a short crawl upwards into the square Breakthrough Chamber. This is followed by a sandy crawl into an inverted cone-shaped chamber. Down to the right a crawl leads to a small chamber and ends in a tight fissure clearly the upper part of the old inlet that enters the aven at Canuck Climb.

Back at the cone-shaped chamber a slope over a sand bar and a low sandy crawl gives access to a larger chamber containing tall stalagmites. A bedding plane in the opposite, undercut far wall leads to a crawl and just beyond here an arch spans the passage, this is Bridge Chamber. This chamber has a high rift in its roof and a small climb up into this gives a narrow section, followed immediately by a drop into a wider continuation. The passage has stal columns on the right and a hole seen behind the stals is the base of a 10 metre high aven, well decorated with dripstone. A climb up here leads to an impassable passage at the top.

In the main passage, a sloping and stooping crawl leads toward Brew Chamber, passing the slope down to the blind hole, The Pit. The continuation passage soon leads to a 'dribbly climb' down into a larger passage. A further scramble down boulders underneath the climb leads to a chamber and The Subway. Up the slope beyond the 'dribbly' climb a large dry tunnel leads quickly to Brew Chamber.

The Subway

Below the 'dribbly climb' near Brew Chamber a boulder slope leads down to a small stream. To the right is over 100 metres of small stream passage to a low muddy section that can be passed, with care, as it can sump, to another 20 metres of passage that ends in the alcove almost opposite the entrance to the crawl to Canuck Climb.

Equinox Hall

From Brew Chamber the continuation has a floor level arch under the west wall into a crawling sized passage, this soon enlarges and passes a 12 metre aven before closing down at some blocks. A connection has been made through this tight section to Equinox Hall. Further along the continuation from Brew Chamber the passage closes down until a short crawl and squeeze, in water, leads into Equinox Hall. This is a large low chamber with a roof aven and on the left is the connection through to the previous passage. Ahead the chamber closes down to give a series of descents through boulders in parallel rifts at the bottom of which is a low passage into a small chamber. A tight and tiny tube has been forced from here to the end of the passage beyond and over the top of Rat Pit Chamber.

Brew Chamber to The 88ft Pitch

From Brew Chamber, a climb down on the left through boulders, leads to a crawl and a chute into the north end of Long Gallery. Long Gallery has loose passages at two levels, the upper level is best avoided and the lower one followed as the route to Rat Pit Chamber. The lower passage of Long Gallery is best reached by sliding in front and to the left of a large boulder directly below the entrance chute. The passage so entered is an abandoned streamway and downstream is the route to Rat Pit Chamber, whilst to the left and upstream the passage quickly becomes a traverse in the roof above an active streamway to Birthday Junction. After a few metres, the confluence of Birthday Junction is reached. Heading downstream in the lower section of Long Gallery, the passage to Rat Pit Chamber drops down awkward climbs to a shattered chamber. Climbing down through boulders at the far end two routes can be followed. The upper one negotiates part way through the boulders and then follows the roof of the streamway as a traverse until an exposed step over into a parallel rift allows a climb down to Rat Pit Chamber.

The other route drops through the initial boulders to a lower level and then a crawl through a tube enters the same parallel rift and then down to Rat Pit Chamber. From the awkward initial climbs the right hand ledge traverses over the top of Rat Pit Chamber and gives access to a tortuous passage connecting to the lower end Equinox Hall. At Rat Pit Chamber a crawl through the stal grille and a traverse forward leads to a junction. Left here leads to the top of The 88ft Pitch and so down to the Lower Streamway Passages, while to the right leads to Maple Leaf Junction.

Mortuary Passage

From the North end of Long Gallery, upstream the passage quickly becomes a traverse in the roof above an active streamway. After only a few metres, the confluence of Birthday Junction is reached. Straight ahead the traverse leads to a streamway, where a 2 metre cascades leads up to the base of the 55 metre high, Archway Aven. Right at Birthday Junction continues as an interesting traverse, the alternative is a 4 metre pitch down to the stream. The traverse is followed by walking streamway until a mud wall blocks the passage, a climb up into a higher level is soon followed by a sharp bend to the left. At this point a narrow awkward muddy pot drops back to the stream, emerging from the Mucky Ducks. This starts as a low wet crawl with one vicious duck, followed by crawling. Traversing in a tall rift passage continues ending at a spectacular 25 metre high wet aven, some 100 metres from the duck.

The passage above the narrow pot, Mortuary Passage, continues as a crawl for 50 metres to a climb up into a rift. Beyond the rift, a section of false boulder floored passage leads to a junction. Straight ahead chokes rapidly in boulders, whereas the sharp right bend continues as a crawl past crystal pools in an awkward passage in the base of a rift. Eventually a low arch opens out to a small chamber with a pool. Here, the rift narrows and a section of squeezes leads up to, and then awkwardly over, a large slipped boulder, followed immediately by more tortuous rift. A section of well decorated crawling passage opens out to a tall rift which ends at a fine flowstone mass, here a 2 metre climb and squeeze up leads to the base of a large, 15 metre plus high aven. The base of the aven is rock strewn but covered in delicate formations and calcite. On the right side of the aven is a roped, 10 metre, flowstone climb, the top of which leads to a climb over, or squeeze under, a large fallen block. A second rope climb continues above a fine crystal pool, whilst behind at this level, a careful step across some boulders meets the base of a rope pitch leading to a blind alcove in the roof. Back on the main route, the rope climb leads up to a narrow rift ledge and then 4 metres up to the base of the final climb. The final 10 metre climb really requires SRT gear and has a very awkward exit and climb above the belay into a mud floored, very well decorated, roof passage. From here hands and knees crawling for 25 metres passes an un-descended 6 metre pot under the left wall, then, just beyond a dogleg, the passage terminates with a fine white calcite flow blocking the way on.

The 88ft Pitch to Maple Leaf Passage

From the junction beside The 88ft Pitch, a narrow stream passage with stal masses leads rightwards to a short crawl that enlarges at Maple Leaf Junction. At Maple Leaf Junction straight ahead leads to Ramsden's Crawl, whereas, a bedding plane on the left gives a crawl on a ledge, passing over a pretty crystal pool, (**CARE!**), to a roomy continuation, the start of Maple Leaf Passage. To the right, downstream, leads to the top of Maple Leaf Aven and down to Cellar Passage, an alternative way down to the Lower Streamway Passages involving two, 7 metre pitches. Continuing straight on for 30 metres leads to an 8 metre deep vadose trench. After some initial traversing it is possible to climb down into the floor trench and follow it downstream to join up with Cellar Pot, the alternative pitches to 88ft Pitch to the Lower Streamway Passages. In the top of Maple Leaf Passage the way on is over a mud bank to a section of fine phreatic tunnel, this continues for

over 100 metres to where the stream enters from a vadose inlet on the right. The phreatic tube comes to an abrupt end at a bank of silt and on the left is a short section of dug passage. The active inlet is now followed as mainly hands and knees crawling for nearly 100 metres with an awkward 3 metre climb half way along. Near the end of this section an old dry inlet is passed on the left and a few metres further on a 4 metre climb is reached. The climb leads up into a section of large phreatic passage. To the East the passage ends in a boulder choke. To the West the passage can be followed to a junction, straight ahead the passage continues over large blocks to an impassable crawl. To the right a crawl leads back to the stream passage but a traverse over the stream follows and leads to a further section of large passage and a 9 metre waterfall. At the top of the waterfall a narrow streamway leads to a small chamber with a series of short climbs to the base of 15 metre aven. This has been climbed to enter a cross rift, both ways being blocked by gritstone boulders. The water is thought to enter here from the sink near the Maple Leaf Dig on the surface.

Maple Leaf Passage to Redhead Aven

Beyond the crystal pool near the start of Maple Leaf Passage, a narrow slot up through boulders on the right emerges at the base of a large chamber, Cape Kennedy. Further climbs up boulders leads to the chamber proper, at this point a large mud bank on the left is well decorated with large, rocket-like, white stalagmites, the chamber itself has a large unsupported flat roof and measures 20 metres by 10 metres. A climb over a sand bar at the end of the right hand side of the chamber leads to the similar sized, Fire Hydrant Chamber. The stalagmite boss that gives the chamber its name is in the middle of the chamber and nearby is a calcited bat near the chamber floor. To the far left there is a choked 15 metre aven, while to the right up a mud bank is a low crawl. Straight on from the Fire Hydrant a gully cuts up through the mud bank and a gap at the top gives access to a short crawl and a third chamber. This is Straw Chamber, the smallest of the chambers but equally well decorated, containing many delicate straws up to 1 metre long. At the far end of Straw Chamber a low passage, Redhead Passage, leads off. A short way along this a couple of tight crawls lead off on the right. The main passage continues for 30 metres to the 12 metre high Redhead Aven, this has an impassible passage at the top.

The Lower Streamway Passages

The 88ft Pitch starts as a traverse in the roof of a rift from the junction, just beyond Ratpit Chamber, soon opening out into a fine shaft that lands in a pool. Downstream from the foot of the pitch, a second smaller chamber, leads to a short low crawl and the junction with Cellar Passage. Upstream in Cellar Passage a 20 metre aven, Cellar Pot links via two, 7 metre pitches, up to Maple Leaf Passage, whilst further on upstream continues as a tortuous inlet. Downstream from the junction is easy going for 200 metres to a junction with The Wormway entering from straight ahead and the combined streams flow off to the right in a 1 metre high passage to a sump. The sump is low and heavily silted and backs up considerably in wet weather. Upstream in The Wormway, stooping height passage leads to the inlet rift at Sausage Junction, here the water from Far Pinnacle Streamway enters. Beyond Sausage Junction, The Wormway enters a low section before regaining height. A dry oxbow bypasses a sump and The Grind enters on the left. The Wormway continues upstream, passing a short choked inlet on the left before arriving at the towering Echo Aven, with the connection at the top to Link Pot and the Leck Fell part of the system.

Ramsden's Crawl

At Maple Leaf Junction, the obvious way on continues as a low stream passage, Ramsden's Crawl, whereas to the left goes through a low bedding plane up into a boulder strewn phreatic passage, here is a high chamber with a roof inlet that chokes after 30 metres beneath Equinox Hall. A small aven

enters the passage and a high-level rift passage leads off at the top. This can be followed to a boulder choke. A small inlet dribbles down the aven and flows into Ramsden's Crawl via an impassable passage directly under the aven. The main route of Ramsden's Crawl continues through pools of water for about 200 metres. The first section follows the stream to a point where it issues from an impassable bedding and the way on is to the left via a tight squeeze and a low bedding chamber with false floor. Under the false floor leads back to the stream and the passage height increases slightly. At this point an inlet on the left is passed and this brings in the water from the larger phreatic passage, previously described. The main passage soon lowers again to a low phreatic tunnel with a floor covered in a mixture of mud and calcite paste. The flat out crawl continues passing tight squeezes until after about 150 metres a pool about 1 metre deep and 8 metres long is reached, two more similar but slightly longer pools are crossed soon afterwards. Beyond these pools the passage height increases until after some 20 metre a further junction is reached, here a small inlet enters from the left and just beyond the inlet the impressive Far Pinnacle Streamway is entered. Upstream the impressive passage, 8 metre high and up to 1 metre wide, ends after 30 metres. Water enters from a small passage on the left above floor level, the passage starts as hands and knees but lowers to the Border Sump. The sump has been dived to an impenetrable bedding plane after about 50 metres, the water coming from the nearby Frontier Sump in Pippikin Pot. Downstream from the junction with Ramsden's Crawl is Pinnacle Streamway, now the main way on. This leads via two short drops to a large rift chamber with the 12 metre Pinnacle Pitch landing on a rock pinnacle in the floor. From here a 4 metre climb leads down to a static un-dived sump. Back at the base of Pinnacle Pitch the water flows down a narrow slit in the right hand wall, the way on is a 6 metre pitch set to one side that enters a small chamber. The stream descends a narrow gully but progress continues in a wider section of traverse above the gully to the top of another 6 metre tight pitch to a chamber and short passage to Sausage Junction in The Wormway. At the bottom of the pitch is a 5 metre climb up that leads to a short section of wet passage to a static sump.

Stake Pot Inlets

This series of passages can be entered at the upstream end of the Stake Pot boulder slope and starts as a very narrow stream passage, it leads to the bottom of the Magic Roundabout Series and also links to the Stake Pot Series. Following the twisting inlet for about 30 metres leads to a connection with the Stake Pot Series via a shelf on the right hand side. Straight ahead finally reaches the base of the last pitch of the Magic Roundabout. The shelf, however, leads to boulders and to the right these are followed by a steep and muddy slope, heading up to the right. From the top of the slope an awkward section is climbed using a chain and then a short iron ladder used to ascend through a hole into the High Level route near Bob's Boss. Turning left at the bottom of the muddy slope leads via several obstacles to the bottom of several avens one of which is the Arson Shaft. Just before entering the Avens there is letterbox slot through to a small passage on the right that joins to the lower end of the Barlick New Road streamway. Crossing the streamway and negotiating boulders and slopes reaches a squeeze between the passage left wall and a large boulder. Forward reaches a mud slope down to appear from a passage halfway down the boulders of the Stake Pot boulder slope, not far above the original stream passage entrance.

Another entry to this area can be made by following the water downstream from Streamway Junction to where it is joined by a passage down through the small pit at the start of EPC '71 Series. The small pit drops down some awkward climbs to join the streamway, which then flows down cascades to meet the passage coming from the letterbox at base of the Arson Shaft. The complexity of the whole area leads to some confusion, hence the name, The Rabbit Warren.

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This is by no means a definitive list but contains the main references referred to in the text, earlier guides to the system and publications since Appendix 3 of The Ease Gill System - J.Eyre (1989) which contains a detailed reference list.

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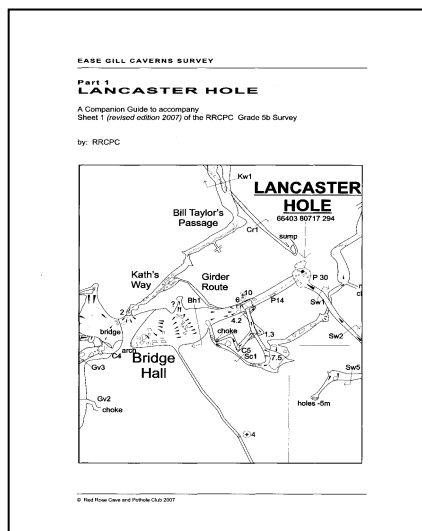
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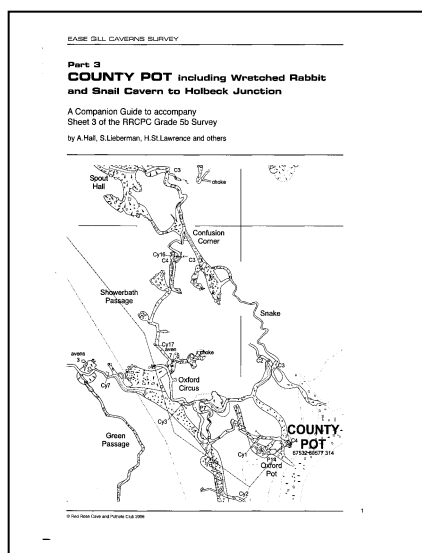
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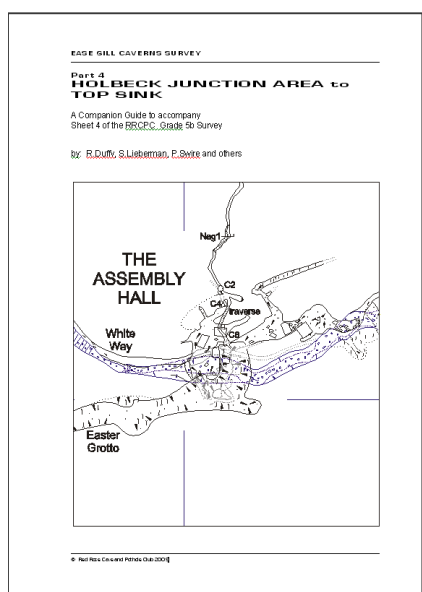
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