

SEPTEMBER 2021

FRIDAY 3/9

I picked up Shane and Mo from the Quarry at around noon. I never cease to be amazed by the sheer amount of caving gear that can be fitted into the boot of a B7 Volkswagen Passat (and not even an estate model). After we had brought down just about all we wanted I tetrised the car while the other two went back for their last couple things. By the time they returned I had found enough room for a person in the boot.

We headed up to do Bruce's Pot, it was my third time to Bruce's but only my first to do the full through trip; the previous two times we'd not known the way or not been able to find it. But now I am confident in the route, you go up the climb and turn around to go the less obvious way. The obvious route peters out rather quickly, but if you stand at the top of the climb and step out across the climb to the other side you'll find yourself in a small chamber where there's another short climb / scramble up through a window above head height, which leads to another window, this time circular, that one drops through and after that it's a sideways scramble to the hole in the cliff. You literally can't miss it.

We did have an awful faff trying to get signal to leave a callout. And we did have an awful faff because the first rope we brought was too short for the first pitch. Oh and also we had to pay €3 (IIRC) to park in the car park there at Bruce's Pot. Probably to do with the time we arrived at. I don't think the parking attendant 1/ even knew there was a cave there.

After we got out we went down to the Scout Hut where Robin was to meet us with the keys. He gave us the full tour, and oh my the place is really looking good since the last time I was there on a joint DCU QUB trip in December 2015 2/. The building is about twice the size that it used to be; it now has 29 bunks, I do not recall the original number of bunks, but it was definitely less. We could tell how excited Robin was about the place. I do think the drying room is the most beneficial addition for cavers. We made great use of the kiddie archery sets, I think within 3 hours of arriving we'd turned it into a drinking game. It was a rather long night,

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1/ Such an American term for an old man with a bag of Euro & Sterling coins and a book for raffle tickets.

2/ Unfortunately DCUCC are having website issues and so the trip report is no longer available online - though I do still have the original. Maybe sometime in the future it'll be back up.

I myself went to bed at 0430 but apparently some were still up and partying at 0550.

#### SATURDAY 4/9

I woke early and got myself and Aodhán breakfast rolls from the Go station in Blacklion. When I got back people eventually started to rise, and gaze longingly upon Aodhán's breakfast roll. I ended up taking a big group out mainly to caves that they had not been to. Though Emma and Zuzanna had been to Upper Cradle with me before.

We went to Upper Cradle first, which sounds counter initiative but I decided on that course of action for a few reasons:

1. The cold water would wake us up
2. We had "Blue" with us who had a bad wrist and wouldn't be able to crawl - so walking cave first

I tried to put the two girls in the lead, but with the speed that I moved through the cave I'd overtaken them again within about 30 seconds - whoops. We had a nice little trip in but it only took us a short while.

We then headed over to the Hoo where we met Hugh and Petie, who were going surveying in John Thomas. They were curious why I was bringing the group to Poll Thanarees 3/ via the Hoo, but I did so that the group would know how to get to and from each cave via the Hoo.

It took me a little while to re-discover Poll Thanarees, and to beat down the nettles at the entrance. I brought us down through the climb, which was probably the most exposed that some of the group had done (but I have no true reference for that remark). "Blue" sat this one out because of his arm, luckily he had a nice sunny day. We only spent about 90 minutes in the cave if I remember correctly. It had been a very long time since I'd been there and so I was a bit vague on where to go but we had a satisfying poke around that filled the afternoon nicely.

Jimmy did us a nice curry for dinner, and I regaled us with recollections of Desmond Morrison from Underground issues - I think my favourite is where Des has to rescue a few men from Gigginstown Pot in Co. Leitrim 4/. We

3/ Or however you spell that cave name.

4/ Underground 97, Spring 2020.

later had Hugh and Petie join us as QUB were in the Hoo. It was another long night were a tshirt was lost, one person chundered, and the archery set made another appearance.

#### SUNDAY 5/9

Hugh and Petie told us about Legnabrocky Pot on Saturday night when we were talking about needed easy SRT caves that we weren't bored with doing. On Sunday morning 5/, seven of us headed up there, the lads had given us rough directions when we were drunk, and the survey was more or less useless. I lead us up from the Marble Arch car park and we headed up the hill towards Bruce's Pot. Aodhán kindly rigged the midgie infested pot, and needless to say the rigging was interesting. The second little pitch was neatly tight, and only maybe 5 metres deep. We determined that it'd be a nice little cave to bring freshers to before they go somewhere tight like Prod's. It was a very well decorated cave even if it was a little dirty looking, some parts were very pretty though.

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5/ Truthfully it was probably more like afternoon.