

Gautries Hole, Perryfoot, Castleton.

Grid Ref: SK 10133 81452 (GPS)

Alt: 310m

Length: 513m

Access: Park at Perryfoot in the pull-in (SK 10085 81284) and call at Perryfoot Farm opposite. It's probably best to go round to the back door (go down the little road and into the farmyard). A small access fee is charged - £1.00 at the time of writing.

Introduction

Gautries Hole evokes a mix of opinions, most of which will be valid. It's grotty, interesting, sporting, wet, muddy and not that long. Keep your eyes open and there's plenty to see including some interesting cave development and some excellent fossils in the entrance passage. Various outdoor centres use the cave but rarely now. The cave was extended in 2009 by the Eldon Pothole Club doubling its length.

Location

From what's left of the pull-in by the gate climb over the obvious stone stepped stile. Along the main farm track go through a gate with a small enclosure on the right. Here the track veers 45 degrees left heading towards another five bar metal gate. Beyond this leave the path and head towards the copse walking down slope to a wooden stile. Once over the stile contour round the left hand side of the depression through nettles and undergrowth passing the first slope on the right (Car Pot) to the second which leads down to the entrances of Gautries Hole. 10m from the bottom of the slope is the rarely used Upper Entrance, the Main Entrance is down at the bottom of the slope. Beware of slippery old tree trunks and old tyres hiding in the vegetation.

The Cave

Entering via the Main Entrance: The 1m high by 0.6m wide entrance leads instantly to a 1m drop down into the streamway. Left can be followed upstream through and over boulders to the generally unused **Upper Entrance**. Right and downstream the passage is around 1m high and 2m wide and after 23m reaches the **First Chamber**, 6m wide, 8m long & 2m high. From the point of entry the stream flows down through a small impenetrable hole on the left.

There are three ways on from the **First Chamber**. Up, back and right over the entrance passage a 2m climb leads up to a 15m long crawl through a pool to a small blind aven 3.5m high. Back in the chamber on the opposite side a slope up leads to the **Downstream Series**, described later. The main way on is at the far side of the chamber, a small hole at floor level, usually accommodating a pool. This marks the start of a sporting little crawl, up a slippery slope to a left turn, down a short drop, left through pools, over or under an eye hole, through a pool to a narrow walking passage to emerge in **Angle Chamber**, 25m from the First Chamber.

Angle Chamber and beyond

The passage immediately up and to the left goes nowhere. Continuing across the chamber at floor level the passage turns sharp left. From here there are two ways on, staying low follows a bouldery passage for 9m to a 3.5m climb down, then 8m of narrow passage to a sump. This has been pumped but found to close down. Back in **Angle Chamber** a 5m slippery climb from the corner ascends to a low passage at roof level, 10m on is the **Muddy Duck** with brick dam to the left. It used to be possible to bale the water into the dam but the outlet to this is now blocked (2004). If you want to bale it now take a bucket and pass it back up the passage, easy enough with three people. Baling isn't necessary if you don't mind getting submerged. Usually the duck has three or four inches of airspace but after wet weather it can completely sump. Either way, it's less than a meter long. On the other side 4m of passage reaches the eye holes and the pitch into **Pool Chamber**. The first eyehole is the easiest way down. This can be rigged with a 10m ladder and line or headline only for the stronger caver. There's a small natural thread and a couple of dubious 8mm rock anchors (spits) to rig from. A 2m drop lands on a steep slope leading down for a further 8m to land on the floor of a very muddy chamber. The aven directly above the top of the slope has been climbed (details to come).

Across and down to the left a steep and very slippery slope drops into a sump which has been dived and pumped, both methods of exploration finding the way on too restricted. The crawl on the left at the end of the chamber is 10m long to what was a dig, pushed in 2009 breaking through into The Eldon Series, doubling the length of the cave. A climb up to the right at the end is very slippery and precarious, a fall from here would result in a serious fall. This leads up to a descending passage which is soon blocked.

The Eldon Series (discovered 2009)

From Pool Chamber there are two routes into the Eldon Series. Either a steep descent with a hand-line leading to a flat out muddy crawl through the old sump and a constriction, or a small tube at the far end of **Pool Chamber** leading 10m to a short pot followed by a crawl (**Turtle Bypass**) which avoids the sump. Both routes meet in a chamber where an inlet flows in from the right (**Bob's Back Passage**) leading 9m to a clay blockage. Following the stream a 5ft climb down enters another chamber. From here the stream can be followed for 7m in a squalid crawl to a sink against a solid wall. A climb up at the far end of the chamber enters a crawl to a 7m high aven, constricted at the top ending at a silt choke. From the base of the aven a squeeze at floor level leads to **Nun's Chuff Pot**. This water-washed pot can be descended on the right (very tight and awkward) for 6m with a crawl going back on itself for 7m in water leading to a small chamber with a mud sump. The main passage ascends as a gravelly crawl where a boulder choke is met on the left. Just after the choke a small silted tube in the floor draughts well but is too small to enter. The passage continues passing silt filled tubes on both sides leading to the top of 12.5m muddy slope (**Route 68**) with a hand-line. At the bottom siphoning water sinks in a boulder choke. A short climb above the sink enters a hands and knees crawl up a gravel slope to meet **Sump 1**. This is 6.5m long and can be siphoned or baled. A dry bank is met followed by **Sump 2**, usually a 7m long duck. The passage slowly descends as a muddy crawl passing a draughting silted tube on the left. A crawl underneath a false roof leads to large, wider section of passage. A Short crawl over boulders on the right reaches the top of a 6m pot leading to a sump, **The Worse Dive Base in Derbyshire**. This has been dived for 15m in a bodysized tube to -5m rising to -3.8m in a rift reaching silty bedding with no natural line belays in zero visibility. At the main passage a steep ascending mud slope reaches a small chamber. A flat out muddy crawl (**Poundland**) eventually enlarges slightly followed by a short constriction to hands and knees crawl for a few feet. This enters a large heavily silted passage which terminates at a steep descending mud slope, eventually becoming too tight but draughting strongly.

The Downstream Series

From the First Chamber an ascending passage opposite the entrance passage leads for 13m to a hole up through a false floor. From here the passage goes left and back down slope for 13m to a 2m downward climb. At the bottom right ends at another squalid dig after 9m. Down to the left the stream can usually be heard. Following this passage another junction is

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reached after 4m. Both left and right drop down to the stream. Left is 8m to the stream, left here reaches the downstream side of the eyehole in the First Chamber, right and downstream soon blocks. Back up at the junction the right-hand branch drops down to the stream which sumps after 16m, with an abortive dig above. This has been dived and pumped but no way on has been found.

Description Notes:

Written: October 2004, Shaun Puckering with assistance from Stuart Anderson, Jon Tompkins, William Stephenson, Malc Whitehead and Frag Last.

The Eldon Series (2009) by John Pemberton (Eldon PC).

Last Updated: 10th July 2010.

This Edit: 3rd January 2011.

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Surveys:

Basic A6 plans in:-

- Caves of the Peak District (p71), DW Gill & JS Beck 1991, now out of print ISBN 1-85568-034-3
 - Classic Caves of the Peak District (p68), Iain Barker 1997, now out of print ISBN 1-86126-058-X
- Basic A5 plans in:-
- Limestones and Caves of the Peak District (p320), Trevor D Ford 1977, out of print ISBN 0 86094 004 1 (paper) & 005 X (cloth)



Further reading:

- Caves of the Peak District (p70), DW Gill & JS Beck 1991, now out of print ISBN 1-85568-034-3.
- Classic Caves of the Peak District (p67), Iain Barker 1997, now out of print ISBN 1-86126-058-X
- Limestones and Caves of the Peak District (p208-9, 235, 319-320), Trevor D Ford 1977, out of print ISBN 0 86094 004 1 (paper) & 005 X (cloth)



Entries in Descent Magazine:

- #45 (p12) Mar./Apr. 1980
- #77 (p13) Aug./Sep. 1987.



Entries in CDG Newsletter:

- #60 Jul. 1981 (p22) (Upstream Sump).



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Amendments:

Amendments and additions can be sent to:-
caveguides@peakdistrictcaving.info (any information regarding access or safety issues is automatically passed on to the Derbyshire Caving Association).

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