

Giant's Hole Part 2.

Garlands Pot and The Crabwalk to Sump II and Eating House, and the Upper Series including the connection to Oxlow Cavern.

See Part 1 for an overview of the entire system, access and location.

Introduction:

Ignoring the side passages, the trip from the entrance to Garlands Pot is relatively short. Beyond Garland's Pot the cave really starts, becoming more complex and sporting. There are two possible routes to Eating House and the lower reaches of the cave. These are the long narrow winding vadose stream canyon known as The Crabwalk and higher level Upper Series. Traditionally cavers descend the cave via The Crabwalk and return via The Upper Series. This is because the Crabwalk is relatively easy down hill and downstream but it's long and arduous to reverse. The route back via The Upper Series is easier in predominantly large dry walking passages. However, there are a few obstacles including the Giant's Windpipe to contend with. This low crawl is at best half full of water and after wet weather can sump completely. On no account should a free dive through this be attempted due to its length. The Upper Series is described in this guide from the far end heading out.

Garlands Pot to Eating House via The Crabwalk:

Garlands Pot is 7m deep but non the less impressive. The approach and left wall are equipped with resin anchors providing a number of rigging options. Alternatively, a line of natural anchor points on the right wall can be used to traverse around and down to a ledge on the opposite side of the pot. From this point a free climb reaches the floor. The bottom of the pitch is 4m in diameter and in all but dry conditions spray from the waterfall reaches most of it.

From the base of the pitch the stream enters **The Crabwalk**, a narrow and winding vadose canyon. Immediately above you and to the right is the aforementioned ledge. From that route you can climb down into the stream at this point or continue on in bigger passageway at a higher level. At stream level the passage is followed for 24m to a chamber, **Chert Hall**, where the higher level drops in. 8m downstream from Chert Hall is a 1.5m drop. Climbing forwards and up at this point leads to a high level passage that follows The Crabwalk at roof level, eventually reaching the upstream end of the **Upper Series** and the infamous **Giant's Windpipe** (described later). 25m further down The Crabwalk following the stream, the rift can be

climbed again to access the high level passage, while another 57m forwards leads to a third way up (marked by a small alcove filled with cobbles at head height on the left). This takes the form of a free-climb up between the narrow canyon walls with reasonable holds and ledges.

Staying with the stream for another 30m, a series of cascades are followed by a long stretch (220m) of tedious sideways 'crabwalking' to **The Vice**. This landmark is a very narrow tight section that can be passed only by the thin. Cavers of more generous proportions may have to resort to lying in the stream where the passage is a little wider (and wetter) or climb up to avoid the constriction. Having escaped the indignities of The Vice, 5m of wider passage leads to a short drop down soon followed by the **Razor Edge Cascade**. This is normally passed by sliding down the stream, however in wet conditions, the dry oxbow to the left leads to a climbable 3m vertical drop avoiding the water. After 23m another waterfall is descended using an in situ iron ladder. This is 3.5m deep and would be tricky were the ladder ever removed.

4m on there's another 2m climb down with a dry oxbow on the right. Here the cave changes character. The passage becomes wider and lower so that the roof is visible and generally flatter. This is **Great Relief Passage**. Follow the stream for another 142m to the 'chamber at the end' and a welcome breather, just over 0.5km from Garlands Pot. 15m downstream is **Sump 2** but to the right a small passage marks the way on. This leads through to the **Eating House**, a chamber with convenient boulders to sit on and enough space to reorganise.

Sump 2 is 30m long with an airbell 2m from the downstream end. It can be bypassed via Eating House and keeping left (see Part 3, The lower reaches - Eating House to East Canal).

The Upper Series: (described from the Eating House heading out)

After ducking under the waterfall just beyond **The Eating House**, a 2m climb up to the right and behind reaches a ledge. From here a 3m climb up (usually rigged with a hand line) leads to a short crawl to enter the bottom of **Maggins Rift** which starts as a large bouldery passage leading up to the left (described later). Directly across from the point of entry a less than obvious crawl leads through to the way on but it's easier to head up the boulder slope for a few metres to a narrow walking sized passage on the right. After 12m this drops into a bigger passage with the crawl entering from the right. Left 42m of walking passage leads to a short climb up. Above an old fixed rope ascends to an aborted dig (Rob's Dig). Ahead is

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another loop, left is preferable and leads for 22m to the foot of an 8m climb (handline usually in place). At the top, elbow right and follow the passage for 78m to a junction. Straight ahead is **Poached Egg Passage** and the connection to **Oxlow Cavern**.

- Poached Egg Passage is initially walking sized but soon lowers to a stoop before being completely blocked with sediment. The second of two small holes in the floor on the right is the route to Oxlow. This starts as a flat out descending crawl reaching a series of ducks to the **Chamber of Horrors**. These are committing with minimal airspace and can sump after wet weather.

Back at the junction right enters the **Ghost Rift Series**. After 45m of easy walking, a scramble up enters **Ghost Rift** (described later). Over to the right is a small hole leading down into **The Giant's Windpipe**. In normal weather conditions 23m of low crawl reaches an 8m long section half full of water but in wet weather this can back up and sump completely rendering it impassable. Beyond the passage enlarges but remains wet for a further 14m.

6m beyond the water is a junction. Straight on is Handshake Crawl ending at an impassable restriction connecting back to the main route. Right is the way on along 45m of mostly hands and knees crawling to a small tube off and down to the right, through which the streamway in the crabwalk can be heard. 10m further on is another junction and a small pit in the floor, left here is the other end of Handshake Crawl and very tight crawl in the bottom of the pit passes acute bends to emerge in the roof of The Crabwalk.

Continuing on the passage enlarges passing two blind passages on the left before reaching a calcite boss after 62m which can be passed above or below. 30m beyond the calcite boss the floor suddenly drops away (care!) as the passage joins the roof of **The Crabwalk**. Here there are two P Bolts equipped with Maillons for a pull-through abseil down to the stream below. Note: please thread ropes through the maillons to prevent wear to the bolts.

Continuing on past the P Bolts 25m of traversing leads to point where the passage tightens into a keyhole. Just before this is a large natural thread that can be used to protect a climb down to the stream. This is 8.5m deep and was described as the "3rd way up" in the description coming down The Crabwalk. Either drop down here or continue on up at the roof level to meet the stream just downstream from **Chert Hall**. From here follow the stream back up to **Garlands Pot** and out to the surface.

Maggins Rift:

This takes the form of a high, steeply ascending, boulder floored vadose passage which can be followed for 140m before topping out and ending in a crawl. This leads via two squeezes to a small aven.

Ghost Rift:

A very old fixed rope (do not use) ascends 14m to enter more than 200m of passage terminating in a very unstable boulder choke. This was dug and passed in 1990 entering **The Earth Leakage Trip**. A climb up an inverted cone of rocks enters a chamber 25m long trending to the north-west. At the far end a low passage reaches a choke after 14m (2).



Description Notes:

Written: March 2004, Tim Webber and Brendan Sloan with additions from Shaun Puckering.

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References:

- 1). CDG Derbyshire Sump Index
- 2). Keith Joule, pers. comm.



Surveys:

Published by John Beck, available from Hitch n Hike. North Rift: Descent #152 (p10) Feb./Mar. 2000.



Further reading:

- Crewe CPC Rigging Guide (topo) available from Hitch n Hike.
- Caves of the Peak District, DW Gill & JS Beck 1991, now out of print ISBN 1-85568-034-3.
- Classic Caves of the Peak District, Iain Barker 1997, now out of print ISBN 1-86126-058-X
- The Peak Cavern System - a Caver's Guide, John Cordingley 1986, now out of print ISBN 0-948152-01-X
- Limestones and Caves of the Peak District, Trevor D Ford 1977, out of print ISBN 0 86094 004 1 (paper) & 005 X (cloth).



Entries in Descent Magazine:

- #93 (p13) Apr./May. 1990. (The Earth Leakage Trip / Ghost Rift)
- #112 (p18) Jun./Jul. 1993 (Magin's Rift).
- #153 (p10) Apr./May. 2000 (Rob's Dig).
- #156 (p9) Oct./Nov. 2000 (Rob's Dig).



Amendments:

Amendments and additions can be sent to:-

caveguides@peakdistrictcaving.info (any information regarding access or safety issues is automatically passed on the Derbyshire Caving Association).

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