

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

Important safety information about using CNCC descriptions and rigging topos

This MUST be read and understood by anyone using a CNCC-provided cave description or rigging topo

These descriptions and rigging topos are provided by the CNCC for use by experienced cavers only in assisting with trip planning and route-finding on some of the popular sporting routes in our region. They are not exhaustive, they do not cover every passage or feature, and details may have been greatly simplified to try to keep them concise and clear.

Great efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the information. Nonetheless, there are likely to be errors and (over time) an increasing number of inaccuracies due to changes in the caves and the replacement of resin anchors. The descriptions may also contain subjective viewpoints which could be open to misinterpretation. It is entirely incumbent upon all cavers to exercise appropriate care and caution when going underground using these topos and descriptions, and to have researched the trip from several other sources. Never make any safety critical decisions based on the information in these descriptions or topos.

Pull through trips must only ever be undertaken by cavers who are confident in finding the lower route out of the cave without a description, and who understand the extra precautions demanded of such trips (e.g. carrying multiple ropes).

The rope lengths stated in the rigging topos are considered the minimum length required based on average rigging. There may be errors, or your rigging may use more rope than anticipated. Therefore, it is critical that all ropes that are deployed for use have two tightened knots in both ends, to mitigate against the risks associated with the ropes not reaching the bottom of pitches.

Difficulty ratings, or 'grades' have been omitted from these descriptions. All cavers must make their own informed judgements of whether the cave is suitable for their capabilities, backed up by thorough research into the nature of the cave from numerous sources and an understanding of the capabilities of others in your group.

Many in-site ropes and ladders are mentioned throughout the descriptions. These should only ever be considered navigational markers and not safety critical belays. The CNCC does not install or maintain any fixed aids in caves other than the resin anchors shown on the topos. Never trust your safety to a rope or ladder which is left in a cave. For resin anchors you must understand the importance of belaying your rope to multiple anchors, including full traverse ropes leading to pitches, and always performing a pre-use inspection on every anchor. If any resin anchor shows movement, or fracturing in the nearby rock, it must not be used.

Rigging must always be performed to avoid any rub points or other hazards. Rigging exactly as depicted in the rigging topos does not guarantee a rub-free descent; this must be assessed and ensured by each individual caver on each pitch in every cave.

Many caves which are susceptible to danger from flooding have been highlighted in the descriptions. However, all caves, even typically dry ones, can flood in various circumstances, and it is therefore critical that the experienced caver using these descriptions makes their own judgement based on experience, extensive research and weather forecasts. Decisions to descend any cave after or during wet weather, or when wet weather is forecast, should be made based on an informed judgement backed up by thorough research from multiple sources. The critical moto which should be adhered to is "If in doubt, stay out!"

Although warnings are provided where there are some specific known hazards, the absence of a warning does not indicate that there are no hazards. Caves can (and do) change over time. Furthermore, the CNCC does not perform routine inspections or surveys of caves to look for specific hazards (e.g. loose rocks). All cavers are strongly advised to view the webpage on the CNCC website for their chosen cave to check for any warnings that have come to our attention. Experienced cavers using these descriptions must make their own evaluations for hazards throughout the duration of their trip and act appropriately to mitigate any risks.

Neither the author of the descriptions/topos or the CNCC will accept any responsibility for any damage, injury or loss (however caused) resulting from the use, misuse or misinterpretation of information in these cave descriptions or rigging topos.

CHRISTMAS POT

April 2017

Christmas Pot provides an enjoyable route to the Grange Rigg sump, meeting Grange Rigg Pot half way down. Unlike its near neighbour, Christmas Pot presents fewer physical challenges. The entrance takes a small stream and so the cave should be avoided in extremely wet or flash-flood conditions.

WARNING: Loose cobbles and blocks on the Christmas Pot pitches are a hazard; The first pitch partially collapsed in 2016 and may still be loose. Pay attention throughout!

Parking:

Park in Clapham village car park (small parking fee) or in a suitable nearby location (for example, Newby Cote). It is very important that you do not park outside resident's houses or cause congestion. Ensure appropriate discretion when getting changed into and out of caving gear.

How to find: Grid reference: SD 75735 72695

If parking in Clapham: You can approach as detailed for Gaping Gill via Ingleborough Cave. However, the most direct route is to follow the footpath leading out of Clapham behind the church (Thwaite Lane), passing uphill through two tunnels. At a fork in the path at the top of the hill, go left (Long Lane) and follow this path for about 30 minutes, above the usual Ingleborough Cave path. A gate is eventually reached leading onto an ascending open fell. Beyond the gate, leave the path and continue straight ahead away from the gate (north). After 300m, bear left slightly towards a prominent dry valley leading uphill for another 400m to the top of the fell where a second gate is located (the bearing is 350° from the first to the second gate). Only 120m straight ahead after the second gate is the entrance to Christmas Pot (a plastic pipe). Grange Rigg Pot is located 200m west (bear left after the gate) about the same distance from the wall.

Note: An approach from Crummack Dale can also be made; follow the route onto the Allotment (as described for Long Kin East Pot); at the end of the limestone pavement 'path' leading past the Long Kin East Pot entrance, continue straight ahead (approx 240°) for 300m; there is a gate in the wall between the Allotment and the fell containing Grange Rigg Pot and Christmas Pot. The first sinkhole after the gate is P5/Pay Sank, and 100m beyond, about 120m from the left wall is Christmas Pot, and then 200m further is Grange Rigg Pot, a similar distance from the left wall.

A compass and map is highly recommended for both approaches; finding your way back in low visibility can be challenging!

Rigging: The rigging topo from 'Northern Caving' is available on the CNCC website (courtesy of CNCC Technical Group).

Navigation:

The first rope should be belayed at the top of the entrance pipe. A 2m drop below the pipe lands immediately onto a ledge above the first pitch. Some careful removal/gardening of rocks from the top of this pitch is essential and care is needed throughout the descent and at all rebelayes due to numerous loose rocks. The pitch is otherwise a splendid descent, passing three rebelayes to a final excellent drop into a spacious hall.

The way onwards is into a well-worn crawl through blocks at the end of the hall. The crawl remains a couple of metres above the trickling stream. After 20m the crawl passes over the top of a 3m deep pit (ignore) and soon reaches a small chamber. An ascent up some stacked walling from this small chamber quickly reaches another small chamber with the start of the second pitch. This pitch is a small pothole, and is awkward at the top. The rope is rigged exclusively from natural belays (including a prominent stal pillar on the right just above the pothole).

This initial descent lands in a narrow passage. Just around the corner, the second pitch continues, initially through a narrow hole but opening out into an excellent rebelayed route down a splendid staggered shaft.

At the bottom of the pitch a spacious junction is reached. On the left is the route entering from Grange Rigg Pot.

The way on however is down a step and along a passage to the right. This splendid passage is decorated with flowstone and straws. The formations are vulnerably located; **take extreme care along this passage to avoid damage.** After approximately 30m the passage enlarges into a chamber. The next pitch starts from a single anchor on a large flat wall on the left (ensure backup to appropriate natural belay); it is advisable to rig from this anchor using a sling positioned between the rope and the anchor to avoid rubbing of the knot against the wall.

The final pitch soon follows, landing in a wide rift; most cavers turn around here.

For those with excess energy and sufficient determination, a route onwards called The Drainpipe leads after 10 minutes to the Grange Rigg sump; and from here a one hour round trip can be taken to Pinnacle Hall. Another pothole (Pay Sank) enters from above into Pinnacle Hall, thus creating a particularly adventurous exchange trip (Pay Sank to Christmas/Grange Rigg); more research is required if considering this.

