

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.

Rumbling Hole is fed by a small stream cave entering several metres down the entrance shaft. In moderately wet conditions the cave is passable throughout (the rigging is mostly out of the water), although the lower section of the entrance pitch may become quite unpleasant. In very wet conditions or after a full night of heavy rain, the cave does become hazardous and the lower sections flood severely.

Parking: Park at either layby on Leck Fell (the furthest upper layby is recommended as it is usually less busy and closer).

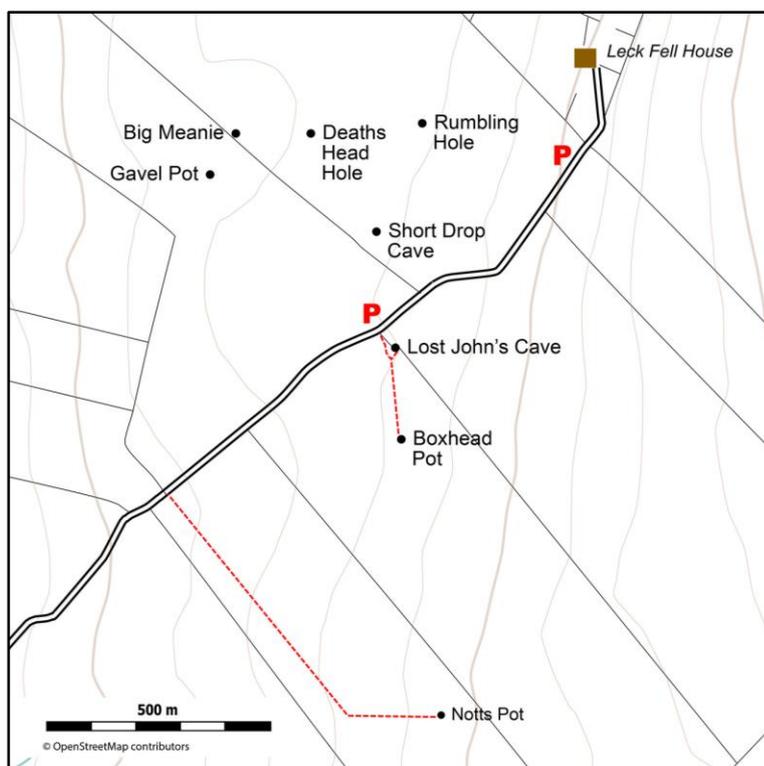
How to find: Grid reference: SD 67112 79115

To approach from the upper car park, walk for about 200m across the fell on bearing 285°. Alternatively, walk directly down the fell approximately half way between the two walls for 200m. Rumbling Hole is a fenced slit with a stream falling in, and is not as far down the fell as Death's Head Hole (also fenced).

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

Navigation:

This description covers the classic route. An alternative and independent SRT route called the Dead Bobbin Series can also be tackled; see Northern Caves The Three Counties System and the North West (Allshorn and Swire 2017) for a good description and tackle list. This is not fitted with CNCC approved resin anchors.



Rumbling Hole is a splendid and relatively uncomplicated pothole with a lot of action over a very short distance. The entrance shaft is a truly impressive location with excellent and very photogenic views from the top.

The rope should be belayed from a fence post and then a tree for a slippery scramble down to an exposed ledge above the shaft. Anchors allow for a 2m descent to reach a Y-hang rebelay which is hidden from view immediately beneath two protruding rock buttresses. From here a fine 20m abseil can be made, landing (via a slight pendulum) onto a large flat balcony.

(The Dead Bobbin Series commences via a traverse 7m down this pitch, going back underneath the entrance scramble).

The way on (remaining on-rope) is a descending traverse along the right wall of the shaft following the anchors. This becomes gradually more exposed before ending with a Y-hang for a 10m descent to the floor via a mandatory deviation from the opposite wall. In wet conditions this part of this pitch can develop a lot of spray and can be a cold and windy place.

Follow the water down some cascades and underground along a descending rift passage for about 60m. In settled weather, the stream is lost through the floor part way along here. After a few stooping/crawling sections a sudden drop of several metres is encountered. Here, the best route is a crawl under the right wall at floor level just above the top of the drop. This steps down onto a balcony from where a 2m climb down to the floor on the right side is possible with care. A large sling may prove useful here to assist with this slightly awkward climb.

The second pitch commences immediately. In dry conditions this pitch may be descended 10m to the floor. However, the P-anchored route shown on the topo (designed to get away from any falling water) is to swing through a narrow rift 5m down the pitch to locate anchors for a Y-hang rebelay and a further 6m descent. A final single-anchor rebelay is optional as this final 2m section is easily climbed.

At the bottom of the second pitch, remain on-rope along a short section of passage to the head of the third pitch. This starts as a Y-hang above a slot and descends via an optional deviation. At the bottom the next short drop of only 5m is quickly encountered, followed, only a few metres around the corner, by the next very short (3m) pitch from just a single anchor in the right wall.

At the bottom of this pitch is a fine flowstone pillar. The passage then leads down for 15m to the final pitch. Stay high in the narrow passage as you approach the pitch to locate the anchors. The Y-hang is comprised of one anchor and an obvious high-up rock beam which a sling can be wrapped around. A rebelay part way down this pitch is optional depending on whether there is rope rub or falling water.

At the bottom is a spacious chamber transected by a stream which lowers in both directions. This is usually the end of the trip for most cavers.

However, for those with severely sadistic tendencies, this can be followed downstream for 300m through some torturous wet squeezes and many low-air-space ducks to emerge in the Leck Fell Master Cave, 300m downstream of Groundsheet Junction (near the bottom of Lost Johns' Cave).

Further research, extremely dry conditions and a masochistic mind are essential if you are considering doing this!