

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.



Cherry Tree Hole is a complex, varied and interesting cave, which presents a series of challenging obstacles and a choice of two grades of trip for visiting cavers:

Simpler trip:

A trip to the Main Streamway, upstream to Boulder Chamber and downstream to Large Chamber provides worthwhile, interesting caving of modest difficulty, and is passible in damp, but not wet conditions.

Challenging trip:

The trip further upstream of Boulder Chamber, to The Far North, Blackstone Chamber and The Terminus is more demanding and requires an awkward ladder climb (which used to be just an easy scramble, prior to Storm Desmond in 2015). There is then a tricky climb up a cascade and wet wallowing including the intimidating Double-Duck. **This route is not recommended in high water levels or if rain is forecast or has recently fallen.**

Parking:

Park respectfully near the track to Tennant Gill Farm, 2km southwest of Darnbrook House, and approach via the Pennine Way; Beware that the grass areas become very boggy in wet weather. Alternatively, approach can be made from roadside parking about 500m west of Darnbrook House, following a track that winds up the hill towards Darnbrook Pot. **Whatever your choice, call at Darnbrook House for permission and advice before visiting; they are extremely friendly towards visiting cavers.**

How to find: SD 8822 7040

Cherry Tree Hole is notoriously hard to find, and many trips there end without getting underground! Map and compass or GPS strongly recommended! If parking near Tennant Gill, follow The Pennine Way path up to Tennant Gill Farm and continue uphill to a wall. Cross the wall using the stile and on the other side leave the Pennine Way and take a path that traverses right (northeast) and soon reaches a second wall. Cross this by a stile and head northeast, parallel to a low limestone outcrop. At the end of the outcrop turn left (roughly north) and continue via vague footpaths until you arrive at the field boundary fence. Turn left and follow the fence until you arrive at the fenced shakehole of Cherry Tree Hole.

Tackle for the simpler trip:

10m handline suggested to descend shakehole (slippery when wet)

15m rope and three krabs required for entrance pitch (assorted non-CNCC anchors in place; use with appropriate care)

Additional tackle for the more challenging trip:

Downstream beyond Large Chamber: 15m rope to reach sump; assorted vintage hangers; recommend use of natural belays instead!

Upstream from Boulder Chamber: 3m ladder, sling, lifeline, and means of getting the sling around a spike at the top of a 3m climb (see overleaf)

Two long slings recommended to assist a climb up the cascade in Far Stream Passage (natural belays).

Navigation:

Entrance to Main Streamway via Crossover Passage

The obvious entrance shaft at the north end of the shakehole requires a 15m rope. There are three non-CNCC anchors high up in the wall above the scaffolded shaft. At the bottom of the pitch, head towards the sound of water, passing over boulders as you do so. On the right is a narrow slot which leads to a pit in the floor with a stream visible. Do not descend here but instead climb up to the right to get into the top of a keyhole shaped passage, which has the stream in the bottom. Crawl awkwardly along this using the conveniently jammed boulders to prevent your legs getting trapped in the narrows. Soon, step down onto a flat boulder at a junction in a wider section.

Straight ahead is **North Stream Passage**, a pleasant rift leading to an aven with some formations but also loose boulders (care). However, the way on is to turn left at the flat boulder into the entertaining **Crossover Passage**.

Crossover Passage presents several obstacles but also some nice sections including an aven, flowstones, gour pools and unusual black stals. The first obstacle is a large boulder jammed across the passage, which it is easier to go over. From there, it is up, down, squeeze, wriggle, walk etc, in more-or-less a straight line until you emerge in the Main Streamway. If in doubt about routefinding, look for the most polished rock.

Downstream in Main Streamway

Downstream is **South Stream Passage** which has some pleasant walking and some climbing over boulders, as well as a couple of small cascades until you reach **Large Chamber**, a sizable fault chamber. Here the stream disappears into a boulder choke, marking the downstream turnaround point for most cavers, as further progress is particularly awkward.

For those wishing to push further downstream, go to the far end of the chamber and climb up about 3m. From here mostly stay high with some traversing and more climbing. At one stage a small descent is needed, followed by a tight squeeze forward into a small chamber. From here more muddy progress through the boulder choke eventually leads to a chamber with a crawl into a muddy tube at head height; this is not the way on. Instead scramble down rightwards to an awkward descent into the stream. A short distance brings you to the head of the final, almost never descended 10m pitch (natural belays). A descent of this involves a thorough soaking and leads to the downstream sump.

Upstream in Main Streamway

Back at the junction where you joined the Main Streamway from Crossover passage, upstream is **Far Stream Passage**.

This starts with a short stooping section but soon becomes a tall rift. Continue along this passing a couple of small cascades. As soon as you arrive at a boulder choke, climb up 3-4m to get on top of the boulders. Walk forward to arrive in **Boulder Chamber**, the upstream termination for most groups on a casual visit, as further progress involves rather more serious and demanding caving (but with some rewarding formations).

For those wishing to push further upstream, the stream can be seen emerging from a low section on the left. Above, is an obvious passage, and this is the way on. There is a boulder slope on the right. To get into the passage above requires an overhanging climb of 3m and a ladder. There is a convenient spike at the top of the climb to act as belay, but the problem is to somehow get a sling over this for the ladder; a stick about 70cm long with a karabiner attached to one end is one option. From the boulder slope you can loop the sling over the spike, attach the ladder and so gain access to the passage above. See the photo below to demonstrate this climb, to assist with planning.



Note: This climb used to be just a slope of boulders but changed around the time of Storm Desmond in 2015. Therefore, you will not find the requirement for a ladder mentioned in older guides or descriptions.

Above the climb, a short traverse in a rift leads back to the stream. A nice section of streamway with some small cascades is followed by a wallow in a canal. Exit the canal into a chamber with the 4m tall **Cascade** entering from the left; The next challenge is to scale this. The walls and top are smooth, and it is too wide to bridge, so some form of combined tactics is the best way to get the first caver up. There is a convenient spike on the true left wall, two long slings attached to this will help the rest of the party climb up.

Above The Cascade, a narrow stream passage leads to a junction (easily missed). Right here is **Branch Inlet** but the way on is left, following the water. Eventually this passage leads to a final squeeze into **Decision Chamber**. Why Decision Chamber? Well, here you have to decide whether to continue or not, as the way on rapidly becomes less appealing!

Straight ahead is a flat-out bedding-plane almost filled with water (and a lot of cobbles). This is **Double Duck**.

There are two short flat-out ducks, with a small air-bell between. Even in low water conditions you need to find the deepest point and it is best to remove your helmet and be prepared for face-in-water. This is intimidating and committing because you cannot see the passage enlarging beyond.

Straight after the Double Duck is a short crawl that brings you to **Aurora Hall**. This has fine decorations and straws in the roof that can best be seen by ascending the boulder slope, keeping left.

Continue to the far end of Aurora Hall and climb over an orange flowstone and into a short arduous section, through a boulder choke, that requires many contortions. A crawl in deep water in a small passage follows, with a final squeeze and wriggle to arrive in **Blackstone Chamber**. Here are more fine decorations and care is needed not to damage them.

Straight ahead out of Blackstone Chamber is **Morass Inlet**, a low crawl in glutinous mud that leads after 80m or so to a sump.

Left out of Blackstone Chamber, wriggle through boulders to enter a short stooping passage with nice straws for decoration. This soon ends in an area of calcited boulders. Two squeezes up through these and over more boulders and flowstone brings you to a mud slope. On the left is a short, narrow, black passage with water entering from an impenetrable fissure in the roof. This is **The Terminus**. You can feel proud to be amongst a very small number of people to ever venture this far, while commencing your outward journey.