

# 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.

**An infrequently visited short cave, in a popular area. Perhaps it is the tightness of the entrance slot, the difficulty of the natural rigging or the fact that a large amount of the cave is wet crawling, that deters visitors. Nonetheless, some consider Southerscales Pot to be a little gem.**

**Parking:** Park on the main road a few hundred metres northeast of the Hill Inn at Chapel-le-Dale. There is a small parking space which accommodates 3-4 cars immediately next to the start of the footpath up Ingleborough (on the right if heading away from the Hill Inn), and a larger parking area another 100m further on the opposite side of the road.

**How to find:** Grid reference SD 7498 7683

Follow the main marked footpath up Ingleborough for about 600m, passing through two gates. After the second gate, turn left and follow along the wall (signed to Great Douk) for 300m to reach the walled depression of Great Douk. Ignore this and keep to the left wall for another 250m, pass through a gate into the next field and continue along the left wall another 150m. Just as the line of the wall turns right slightly, the original entrance to Southerscales Pot is a small shakehole containing a narrow slot, about 30m away. It may be overgrown and hard to spot. Another entrance is located across the wall, but as this is in a nature reserve access via this entrance is less preferable.

**Tackle/Rigging:** All rigging using natural belays (assuming tying directly into initial belay; otherwise, extra sling/krab required for each pitch)

**First pitch:** 15m rope, 1 sling, 1 krab    **Second pitch:** 20m rope, 1 sling, 1 krab

## **Entrance to First Pitch:**

Descend through a slot in the grass at the bottom of a small 2x2m shakehole. The slot is a tight, awkward, and slightly loose 2m drop to a flat-out crawl. Upstream leads to waterlogged passage, but downstream (in the direction of Great Douk Cave) is the way on. After about 20m you are met by the inlet from the other entrance, and shortly afterward this is the first pitch. There is space for about three people to put on their SRT kits here. The pitch is rigged initially from stals 2m back from the pitch on your right as a backup, then a sling belay around an obvious spike at floor level at the pitch head. This pitch is dry in good weather.

## **Canal and Millipede Crawl:**

From the bottom of the pitch, the long crawl begins. It starts off quite soft in silt and not too wet, but soon changes to deeper water over a solid floor. Passage height changes from crawling in water to low crawling in water or mud. This goes on for 10 minutes (if you are reasonably fit) until a junction is met. The usual route is straight on, continuing down the main passage, gradually increasing in size, with a short oxbow on route until eventually you reach the second pitch (Zoology Pot). You will have crawled about 300m in total to get here!

*Left at the junction is President's Passage, which is the smaller route and leads through a flat-out crawl to an alternative pitch of 4.5m landing near the bottom of the usual second pitch.*

## **Second Pitch (Zoology Pot):**

This pitch is acrobatic to rig and requires a bit of nerve and/or a long reach. The first belay is about 2m back from the pitch at head height on the left (facing towards the pitch), from some small but solid spikes of rock. There are small ledges to allow a traverse out 3m over the pitch to a good natural belay high up on the right-hand wall. From here, it is a straight, dry descent to the floor.

## **Downstream passage:**

You land in a grand chamber and from the bottom it is large passage for once. The large passage encountered on the left after about 20m is West Inlet (described below). Continuing ahead, unfortunately, the large passage dimensions cease, but the crawling this time is brief. A low stooping passage eventually leads to the so called "6m waterslide". Whoever named this must have got imperial and metric dimensions mixed up as it is about 6 feet, but still worth taking a photo! Around a corner at the bottom of the "waterslide" is a slowly diminishing airspace passage leading to the 7.3m sump through to Great Douk Cave, which is not free-diveable due to a constriction which must be navigated mid-sump.

## **West Inlet and West Passage:**

Initially quite large, at a boulder pile the passage drops to a low canal for about 30-40m similar to the entrance canal. Then, unexpectedly, the passage breaks out into a large and decorated chamber with two ways on. Ahead, is a shattered passage and an interesting boulder bridge, best not touched! After another 10m or so the passage narrows with a short slot to re-join the stream. Beyond here the way on would require manoeuvring through a suicidal boulder pile (not recommended), prior to ending at a small sump.

Back in the large chamber, when facing in, on the right, is a 2.5m climb into a higher cross rift and the way on along West Passage.

*Looking across from here on the other side of the chamber is a decorated passage (the White Highway), blocked by formations, that likely leads back to the chamber below the second pitch at near roof level.*

Continue along on solid ground following the hourglass passage for about 5m. At the point the rift above you gets wide enough, climb up 2-3m to reach the top of the hourglass. The continuing passage is roomy at first before it degenerates into a muddy crawl, followed by rockier going with a squeeze over boulders and then a small tube that finally deposits you in a larger chamber where you can stand up again. Larger passage than earlier but still mainly crawling leads to another final chamber 20m on with a small flat-out continuation quickly getting too tight.

Now, one just needs to turn around and enjoy it all again in the other direction.