

# 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.

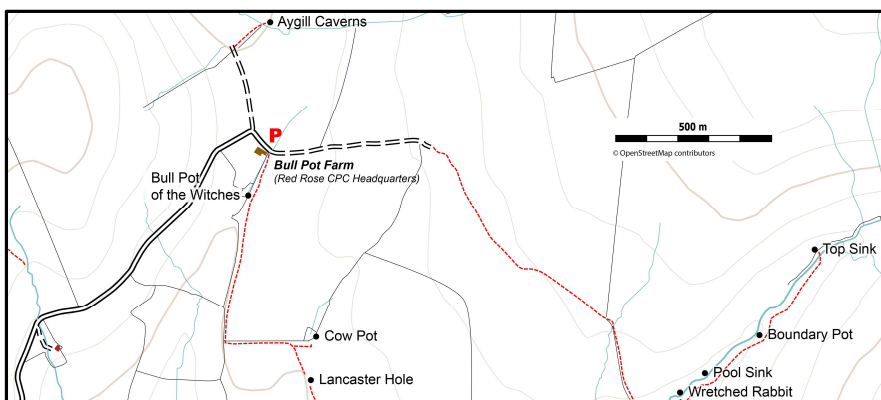
# BULL POT OF THE WITCHES (Route to Long Gallery)

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Bull Pot of the Witches is a complex and fascinating cave, with many passages and chambers at different levels, many stream sections and several sumps.

The route described here is a pleasant and easy SRT trip. The pitches are short and largely dry, with plenty of variety, so this would be a good first underground SRT trip under appropriate instruction and once the basic skills have been mastered. **The lower stream sections should be avoided in flood.**

**Parking:** Parking available at the end of the public road by Bull Pot Farm (SD 6630 8145) or at Bull Pot Farm itself, car park to rear, check with residents.



**Approach:** From Bull Pot Farm follow the footpath south through the gate on the side of the farmhouse. The enclosure of Bull Pot of the Witches, a large open pothole, is passed on the right after 100m (SD 66265 81310).

**Rigging:** The rigging guide is available on the CNCC website. **For novices, an additional 25m rope and a few extra slings/krabs may be beneficial as a handline for the path around the entrance leading to the Chimney Route (belays for this are not CNCC-approved so must be used at your own discretion; the quality of the rock prevents the installation of CNCC-approved anchors around the top of the pothole).** Some experienced cavers choose to free-climb the entire route, although this is not recommended as some sections are very slippery.

**Note about other passages and routes:** Bull Pot of the Witches is a complex system, with many other passages, chambers, and routes to explore. Many other descriptions attempt to cover the entire cave, which can be challenging to follow, hence why we have chosen just one specific route in this guide that follows the CNCC-anchored route. You can have a lot of fun exploring and understanding this complex system and how it interlinks. Consult Northern Caves (Three Counties volume, Allshorn and Swire 2017) or [www.braemoor.co.uk](http://www.braemoor.co.uk) for more comprehensive information.

## Navigation to Long Gallery:

Climb over the stile into the enclosure of the pothole and follow the path, staying close to the fence/wall, to where it turns right and starts to descend. You will have passed above the remains of the tree that once provided a belay for the direct descent, and a memorial to Ian Plant who sadly died diving here. The path beyond here becomes quite exposed, and although not shown on the topo, a 25m handline belayed initially to a metal stake on the left is a good precaution, although owing to the unknown integrity of the stake, this should not be relied upon if possible.

Descend the path carefully and at a point where it turns right towards the open shaft there is a non-CNCC approved anchor on the left (below and left of the big tree) which can be used for the handline. Continue to descend and eventually the path drops down a rock step, an easy climb, where the handline can be attached to a sling around a thread on the right. Finally fasten the end of the rope to the CNCC-approved anchor on the left of the obvious cave passage, which is the start of the Chimney Route rigging as shown on the rigging topo.

A short distance down the passage a chimney climb is met. Although this is free-climbable, it is awkward in one or two places and the final 3m bells out and is very polished and slippery from frequent use, so it is best to treat this as the first pitch. There are anchors for a traverse, a short descent and then a rebelay for the final drop. Note: On the return it is much easier to climb the chimney with jammers on the rope for security than to attempt to prussik. **Beware; the bottom 3m or so is very polished and slippery so take care.**

The climb arrives in a large passage with daylight visible to the left (a crawl to the right leads to Cavern 32, a worthwhile quick excursion). Walk towards the daylight to emerge in the open shaft with the waterfall opposite. There are three passages leading off from this point, as you face the waterfall; the way on is to double-back behind yourself to enter a passage which is below the one you have emerged from. Very soon the anchors for a traverse line are encountered on the right wall, which leads towards the next pitch.

The pitch descends in two drops, via a deviation near the top and a large ledge part way down. There is a rebelay on the right for the final short descent. The rope can be continued down the next climb a short distance ahead, if required to provide assistance.

A short section of easy passage arrives at a junction with the streamway entering from the left. Turn right and follow downstream, ignoring the tempting passage on the left. There is a short climb down, a section of low passage, and then the stream cascades down the next pitch. To rig this pitch there is an obvious thread behind you and an anchor in the roof. In wet conditions, a deviation a few metres down on the right when facing out can be included. This pitch lands on a large ledge. Stay on the rope and continue traversing to find anchors for a Y-hang for the final short descent (one anchor located on left near a drilled thread, and one higher up on the opposite side, easily missed).

From here, the stream descends a short climb to the head of a second climb. The water seen below has come from Aygill Caverns and eventually flows into Lancaster Hole, but there are sumps guarding these routes. This climb can be descended with the aid of a sling but leads to an isolated section of stream passage. Instead, climb up through a hole above the second climb to emerge in a dry passage, Long Gallery.

Long Gallery can be followed to the right where it eventually descends to meet the stream coming from the upstream sump. This can be followed for as far as you wish. Alternatively, turning left rather than right in Long Gallery, the passage continues and can be followed back to the stream and eventually the downstream sump. Explore for as long as you wish before commencing the outward journey.