

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.

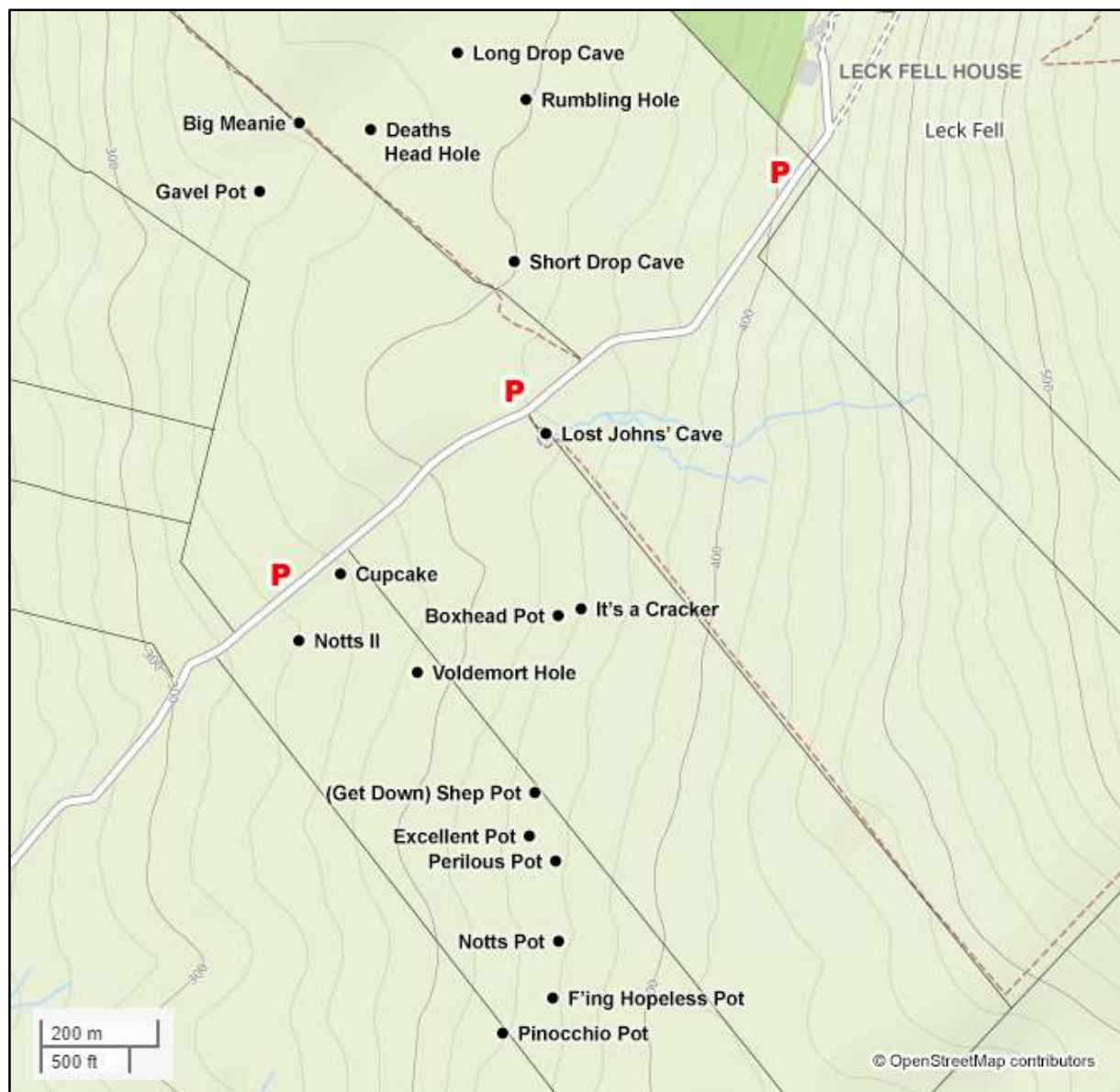
Neither the author of the descriptions/topos or the CNCC will accept any responsibility for any damage, injury or loss (however caused) resulting from the use, misuse or misinterpretation of information in these cave descriptions or rigging topos.

F'ING HOPELESS POT

August 2022

F'ing Hopeless Pot is a cracking 2021 discovery on Leck Fell; It is a standalone cave in the gap between Notts Pot and Ireby Fell, which has not yet been connected into the Leck Fell Master Cave, and is explorable in moderately wet, but not flood conditions.

F'ing Hopeless Pot is a very well-decorated cave with many formations in extremely vulnerable locations. Sections of the cave are also really muddy, providing a bad combination! The CNCC implores cavers to ensure this fine discovery is preserved for future generations. Conservation notices within the cave serve as a reminder. This is a trip only for **CAREFUL** and **EXPERIENCED** cavers who can move delicately around vulnerable formations. **MOVE SLOWLY** and **BE OBSERVANT**. Please take some water into the cave to carefully wash any formations that you accidentally muddy (there is a spray bottle located near The Apostles which we encourage you to use where appropriate).



Parking:

Park at the first major layby on Leck Fell, 700m after the cattle grid. Alternatively, a small number of cars can be parked either side of the cattle grid near to Notts II; However, if doing so **PLEASE** leave plenty of space; the farmer at Leck Fell House needs to be able to get up the road and use the cattle grip with agricultural vehicles and trailers, so do not park too close to the cattle grid or block the road.

How to find:

Grid reference: SD 67087 77707

Just down the road from the cattle grid, go through a gate on the left. Walk up the fell for roughly 800m following the broken-down wall and wire fence. On reaching the obvious Pinocchio Pot shakehole immediately right of the wall, turn left and the F'ing Hopeless shakehole is 80m away from the fence/wall and about 90m south of Notts Pot. It is an obvious shakehole with an excavated shaft at the bottom.

Rigging:

The rigging topo is available on the CNCC website.

Navigation:

The entrance is an excavated, climbable shaft which descends via multiple ledges to about 20m depth; This can be a tricky climb for anyone of short leg length (30m knotted handline may be useful, not shown on topo). At the bottom, beyond the slot, the route descends to the left (the right-hand route leads down a narrow rift to a sump) into a flat-out crawl (Incunabulum Crawl) to the first pitch (Tim's Pitch) after only a few metres. Two anchors provide a traverse and then two in the roof allow a Y-hang.

The pitch lands in a spacious hall (Space Mine). The way on is to climb down 4m and then continue onwards (ignoring routes up on the left) to reach a scaffold-shored hole. Descend this into a tall rift-passage. At the bottom of the slope, continue straight on (the lower route to the right leads to several more difficult drops to the streamway). Go up the muddy slope to a sideways wiggle leading to the second pitch (Frank's Pitch). There are two anchors on the right wall, and one in the roof for a 6m descent to a ledge, where two anchors enable a further 4m descent.

The second pitch lands at the top of a narrow descending rift which leads awkwardly down to a spacious junction with the stream (Streamway of Merit). The way on is left, over jammed blocks, which soon drops back to the stream. Downstream the passage reduces in size to a crawl, passing a fine gallery of straws (**CARE**), and soon after this arriving at the head of the third, 4m pitch (Geoff's Pitch), rigged from two anchors. The pitch lands in a small chamber with two inlets, and the way on is a flat-out crawl downstream, ending with an awkward ascent into walking-height passage.

Avoid becoming over-excited by the walking-height passage, as just around the corner is an excellent but vulnerably positioned curtain (**CARE**). Onward, a T-junction is reached at The Apostles, a splendid cluster of stalagmites. The way on is left, requiring a wriggle past these formations. **Please take care, and if necessary, there should be a water spray bottle nearby for cleaning purposes; Please refill from your own supplies.**

About 10m beyond The Apostles is an aven which leads up several awkward pitches to the Lady of the Lake. This is a pristine white calcite formation and chamber with crystal pool. There are no in-situ ropes here to preserve this vulnerable site. Please do not try to enter.

About 40m beyond The Apostles, the optional forth pitch (Squealing Pig Climb) is reached, going up. There is probably an in-situ rope to help demonstrate the rigging, but each caver must identify a safe way of ascent. At the top, Eggshell Chamber is accessed via an awkward 2m climb up into a crawl-traverse. A few minutes of crawling is rewarded with a sizable chamber with an impressive glistening flowstone formation (**CARE**). At the entrance to Eggshell Chamber a small calcite tube runs off to the left, tight in places, it soon opens into a decorated passage (Levelling-Up). The formations in this passage become denser and more extraordinary as you progress. **Please stay within the taped areas, move with great care, and do not try to reach the end of the passage (it is blocked with calcite). Any attempt to go further will cause needless damage.**

Beyond the bottom of this pitch, leave SRT kit and unnecessary bags behind to help you move more delicately. The route descends and only a few metres beyond a conservation sign is an awkward thrutch into Speechless Grotto, with some stunning straws, some of them being only a few centimetres away from you as you wriggle into and through the chamber. **Take care, move slowly and with maximum awareness.**

In Speechless Grotto look but go no further into the grotto itself; Keep left, taking care not to damage straws as you clamber over boulders. You soon arrive at Ironmongers Choke. The obvious way to the right ends in boulders, so traverse left past long straws (**CARE**) to find the way through the choke. Drop down through some boulders, passing a section of scaffold and boards which lead to the streambed, where a flat-out crawl in the water and squeeze past a flowstone boss emerges into larger passage with many calcite straws (**CARE**).

Traverse along the slope of boulders to a calcite slope and descend to your left, **taking care to only walk on the already-muddied section of the slope**. At the bottom of the slope, 2m above the streambed, a sandy crawl to the right emerges into a low, wide, sandy floored chamber with an inlet entering on the right. The inlet can be followed upstream for a few meters but soon chokes. Downstream enters a passage at floor level through a blasted flat-out wet crawl (Covid Crawl) which, after a few metres, emerges into a small chamber (All in Vain). The original stream joins at a confluence and continues in a flat-out wet crawl which has not yet been pushed to a conclusion. Work continues here.