

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.

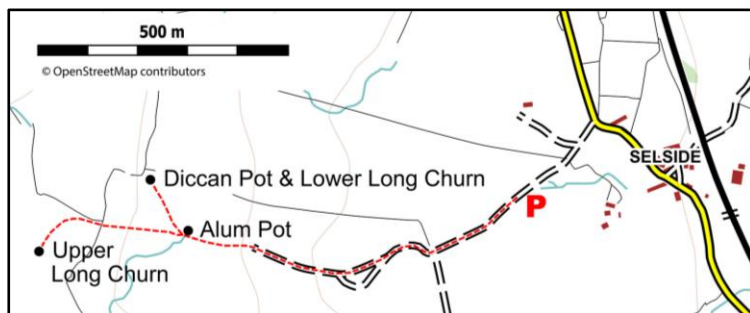
ALUM POT, DICCAN POT and LONG CHURN CAVES system

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This whole system should be avoided in wet weather. Long Churn Caves and Diccan Pot flood severely and rapidly. Diccan requires days of dry weather before it becomes passable.

Parking: SD 78240 75700 (location of track for parking)

Call at Selside Farm to pay an access fee then park along the track leading off from the north end of Selside village (100m north of the Farm). This may be a very busy place so those with capable vehicles are encouraged to park further along the lane.



How to find: Follow the lane and cross the stile at the end. Follow the obvious path up the hill. The walled enclosure of Alum Pot is soon reached (surrounded by trees). Continue around to the left, cross the stream flowing into Alum Pot and then follow the path up and over the field. After 150m, two fenced enclosures are reached. The right of the two (as you approach) contains the resurgence of Long Churn and also, downstream, the entrance to Diccan Pot. The second enclosure (left) is the traditional way into Lower Long Churn. Turning left, away from these enclosures, leads to another stile across a wall 100m away. Climb up onto the fine limestone pavement. Cross this and walk 100m towards a tree in a depression at the end of a stream valley. Here you will find the top entrance to Upper Long Churn.

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

Long Churn Caves:

At the top entrance, follow the water underground and then down a water chute (Dr Bannister's Handbasin). A 20m knotted handline is useful. This drops into a waist-deep pool. Follow the fine passage downstream for several minutes to reach the lower entrance. Ignore the daylight ahead and follow the water to the right into a crawl, leading to a climb down a 3m high waterfall (drier climb to the left). Another way out of the cave is met. Continue to follow the water until the resurgence exit is reached only a minute later (a low crawl to daylight with the water). The way on through the cave is the dry route on the right just before the resurgence exit. This leads through two deep pools (the Double Shuffle Pools) and then a short climb down a rift into a large chamber (St. Pauls Chamber).

Ahead, at chest-height is the Cheese Press, a 3m long flat-out squeeze (passable to most average sized cavers). After the Cheese Press is a 3m climb down. The Cheese Press may be avoided by a different 3m climb down further along the chamber. Handlines are recommended. Both routes lead to Dolly Tubs pitch. A 15m descent (either via the anchors on the left wall, or around to the right where a window leads onto a pitch dropping to a traverse along a shelf to a final descent). Both SRT routes land very close to each other near to a spectacular ledge looking out over Alum Pot.

A roped traverse out from the Dolly Tubs ledge starts on the left side and then drops 3m down a rock slope (Greasy Slab) while crossing to a broad shelf along the right side of the shaft. This shelf leads to The Bridge, a huge sloping jammed block which must be traversed over and down. Below this block, anchors (facing Dollytubs ledge) allow descent to the bottom of Alum Pot, or it is possible to traverse further along the shaft (away from Dollytubs, towards where the SE route enters from above) to two alternative points of descent.

Alum Pot (NW and SE Routes):

NW route: The entirety of the shaft is descended with one hang, commencing at the north-west (NW) end (nearest to Long Churn caves).

SE Route: Belay the rope to a tree a few metres from the ruined stile on the SE side of the shaft (as seen on approach from the cars). Then traverse along the edge to another tree overhanging the shaft which is the take-off point. A rebelay several metres down provides a clearer descent. From the landing point, a few direct routes of descent of the second part of the shaft are possible, or you can traverse along to reach the bottom of a huge sloping slab (The Bridge) to intercept the end of the traverse route coming from Dollytubs (on left at top of slab).

ALL ROUTES: At the bottom of all routes (SE, NW or from Dolly Tubs), a further downward pitch reaches a large passage which can be followed downstream. A final awkward climb down a waterfall can be bypassed via a slot down through blocks on the left leading into a descending rift. At the bottom, the water of Diccan Pot crashes down and flows straight down into a sump. This is a draughty and impressive place!

Diccan Pot:

The water resurges from Long Churn Caves, and then disappears back underground again. Follow the water downstream through a fine river passage. The first pitch is soon reached with the water thundering below (perhaps one of the noisiest places in Yorkshire caving). An initial Y-hang followed by two Y-hang rebelays near the top of this pitch and then a deviation half way down, help to avoid the majority of the water, but considerable spray will still mean a wetting in all but the driest conditions. The pitch lands on a broad ledge where the rope continues down a further short drop to reach a chamber with water crashing down.

Across the chamber, an exposed and rather memorable traverse leads out away from the water over the next pitch.

For the final pitch another very exposed traverse leads out away from the water. This final pitch is broken by several rebelays and deviations to try to swing away from the water, but once again a lot of spray should be anticipated. Nonetheless this is an absolutely outstanding location.

At the bottom, the water flows down into a sump. Go uphill towards Alum Pot. The initial awkward climb up a slippery waterfall can be bypassed by a narrow rift on the right. Continue upstream towards daylight where a final pitch (up) is required, which must be pre-rigged, to reach the very bottom of Alum Pot where the ropes from the various Alum Pot routes enter if an exchange trip has been planned.