

# 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.

# BOGG HALL RISING AND CAVE

January 2021

**Bogg Hall is the resurgence cave for Excalibur Pot and Jenga Pot, and while only being a few hundred metres long, it offers a very exciting hour of exploration for any cavers visiting the North York Moors. It is a splendid trip, requiring hefty neoprene. Bogg Hall is best visited over summer (May to September) when water levels are lowest, and requires there to have been no prolonged or heavy rain over the past several days, although a few light showers during a mostly settled week will have little impact.**

**Parking:** There is some limited parking immediately next to the cave entrance, on the muddy/grassy verge opposite the sawmill building ('Bogg Hall') 250m north of Keldholme village (by an old gate). However, this is only suitable for a few cars, and is a vulnerable position to park and change due to fast moving traffic. It may be better to park in Keldholme and change with appropriate discretion.

**Location:** Grid reference SD 70994 86540

**Rigging:** A well-knotted handline (15m rope) or ideally a ladder (7m) belayed to a nearby tree with a few slings is strongly recommended for the entrance, mainly for the upward journey which is particularly awkward once the mud becomes wet and slippery and you are much heavier due to wet gear.

## Navigation:

A return trip to The Font should less than an hour but is tremendous fun providing you are well equipped with neoprene (3mm if you are hardy, 5mm preferred, hood useful).

Approximately 250m north of Keldholme, up the road towards Hutton-le-Hole (opposite the Bogg Hall buildings) is an old and possibly very overgrown gate on the left. Through the gate is a path and after 15m there is a scramble down the embankment to the river where you will find Bogg Hall Rising (the resurgence entrance). The metal hatch for the 'Oh my Ears and Whiskers' dry entrance is beneath a large tree only a few metres down the embankment. The entrance hatch may be camouflaged under leaves.

The resurgence entrance is a 15-20m sump with shifting silt banks. Do not attempt to free dive this!

At the dry entrance, belay the handline or ladder to a tree and drop down the oil drum into a cramped chamber. Continuing downwards, a narrow slot drops into a small wet passage with two routes onward.

The low wet crawl is the quickest route onwards. The most enjoyable route however is the enlarging passage which leads into deepening water (chest height). The sump to the surface is passed on the right; ignore this and follow the obvious and splendid stooping-height river passage on the left, through chest-deep water, to reach a junction with a submerged block.

Left at this junction returns to the entrance, however, the way onwards is right into the beginning of The Drain, a series of narrow, wet passages. After a few metres is a left turn and then an overhead chamber is reached with an obstructing block at water level. Climb over the block and return to the water beyond and continue straight ahead with gradually reducing airspace. Approximately 4m beyond the block, a low arch on the right with only about 10 cm of airspace leads immediately to The Duck (the airspace increases slightly immediately prior to The Duck).

The Duck is an elongated slab jammed across the passage at water level. It is possible for thin and agile cavers to slither over the top of this slab. For everyone else however, remove your helmet, feed yourself feet-first under the slab, reach underwater and grab the far side of the slab, and pull yourself under. Take care upon surfacing not to bang you head on the roof (neoprene hood provides good cushioning).

From here the cave starts to get exciting and it is important to remain calm and enjoy the experience.

Just beyond The Duck is the first particularly narrow part of The Drain. This triangular shaped passage, with only 15-20cm airspace, appears very intimidating, however, it is actually quite spacious below the water allowing plenty of room for your body and legs. Progress is best made feet first with helmet held out ahead of you and your face jammed in the airspace where you will be tickled by tree roots as you progress. After about 4m of rather claustrophobic progress a tiny chamber provides a slight respite. The way onwards is the immediate right as you reach this enlargement into a further 4m of narrow wet passage. Alternatively, at the slight enlargement, you can continue to the far end and then go right, through a flat-out wriggle half full of water (The Wedge) best tackled on your back. Both routes emerge into the main river passage.

The main river passage is a splendid wide wet passage, a mixture of stooping and walking, past large fallen blocks and then passing a forked junction. It is arbitrary which route is followed as they soon re-unite shortly before a large chamber (The Font) emerges from the darkness.

The centre of The Font is a water-filled pothole, approximately 18m deep, with all the water resurging from an extremely tight (unexplored) passage at the bottom. You can either swim across the sump it or tiptoe around the outside.

The Font is home to some exciting cave fish, including a colony of lampreys who will suction onto you. Beyond the Font, a muddy passage slopes up into some old digs (which come remarkably close to the surface) **however cavers must not enter these passages** as they are home to an Otter. If cavers are lucky and sit quietly at The Font at the right time of year, is it not unknown for the Otter to come out for a swim. Please do not dazzle it with your headlight or use flash photography and remember that this is its home, not yours; you are merely the uninvited visitors.

