

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.

LONG DROP CAVE

Sept 2019

Long Drop Cave is one of the lesser popular trips on Leck Fell, but does offer an interesting descent, and an exchange with Deaths Head Hole if the duck is bailed from the Deaths Head side. Long Drop Cave can be descended in moderately wet conditions.

Parking:

Park at either of the laybys on Leck Fell. Ideally use the second layby a few hundred metres before Leck Fell House to help spread traffic a little (the lower layby is usually busier).

How to find: Grid reference: SD 66978 79180

To approach from the upper car park, walk directly down the fell approximately half way between the two walls for 200m. Rumbling Hole is passed (a fenced slit with a stream falling in) and about 100m beyond this down a shallow valley is the smaller fenced and often heavily overgrown enclosure of Long Drop Cave.

Rigging:

The rigging topo is available on the CNCC website.

Navigation:

Inside the shakehole, scramble down to the bottom where there is a small overhanging cliff above the entrance. The first pitch is just within the entrance and is slightly restricted at the top but opens out to a reasonably spacious shaft.

At the bottom of the first pitch is a short excavated flat out crawl leading to the narrow second pitch, only 5m deep. Beyond here the cave returns to more narrow and awkward passage for about 25m to reach the third pitch into Fault Chamber, where things suddenly enlarge.

The final pitches are a spacious series of drops of about 35m in a large fault rift. They include a rebelay, deviation and then a Y-hang rebelay at a shelf, dropping to the final stream passage. Upstream the water emerges from a fissure that is too narrow, but downstream is a low wet crawl. This soon becomes easier, however, after about 50m of progress a wet tube is encountered which will usually be a desperate duck or totally sumped. This is the route to connect to Deaths Head Hole, and may be bailed from the Deaths Head (downstream) side.

Part way down the final pitches, across the far side of Fault Chamber is a 10m climb up to a window leading very awkwardly to a further pitch and streamway. The climb is very exposed, and this route has no safe anchors, so cavers wishing to explore this part of the cave should research elsewhere and go properly equipped.

