

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.

WASHFOLD POT

April 2017

Washfold Pot is an active stream sink and becomes hazardous in wet weather; dry and settled conditions are essential. The difficulties of this pothole (challenging climbs, exposed traverses and the awkward head of the first pitch) should not be underestimated. Carrying an extra handline to assist on some of the climbs (using natural belays) is recommended.

Parking:

Washfold Pot is located on the Ingleborough National Nature Reserve. One of the two routes of approach detailed here must be taken.

Park at the start of the road leading to Colt Park, just off the Ribbleshead to Selside road. Do not take vehicles up to Colt Park itself. Alternatively, park on Alum Pot Lane in Selside (SD 78240 75700). No fee is required as the route of approach is not via Alum Pot land; instead an approach is taken by returning to the main road and following a public footpath (see below).

How to find:

Grid reference: SD 77442 76552

If parking on Alum Pot Lane in Selside:

Walk north (left) up the main road for 500m and take the public footpath on the left into a field. Follow this path gently uphill for 1km to a small wooded area on the limestone shelf at Bent Hill Rigg. Turn south (off the footpath) along the shelf for 500m, keeping to the left wall. Washfold Pot is a fenced shakehole located at the end of a stream valley 30m from the wall.

If parking on the track to Colt Park:

Follow the track up to Colt Park and then take the public footpath south to Bent Hill Rigg (where the footpath turns left and heads back down toward the main road). At this point leave the footpath and walk straight ahead (south) following the left wall for approximately 500m. Washfold Pot is a fenced shakehole located at the end of a stream valley 30m from the wall.

Rigging:

Washfold Pot is equipped with both P-type eco-anchors and IC anchors. A rigging topo is included on the CNCC website. In addition to the ropes shown, groups are recommended to carry an additional ~15m rope in case the climbs (including the second pitch) prove troublesome.

Navigation:

Note: A much more detailed description of Washfold Pot can be found in the book 'Not for the Faint Hearted' (Mike Cooper).

The middle of the three holes inside the fenced enclosure gives the easiest climb down 5m to the stream. Upstream leads to Washfold Cave, downstream is Washfold Pot.

The first section of Washfold Pot is best tackled with SRT kits carried in bags as it is thrutchy and awkward. Twisting, narrow canyon passage leads downstream to a calcite barrier after approximately 50m. A 2m climb up here reaches a roof-level bedding crawl with a slight squeeze before a split 5m climb drops back down to the streamway. A chamber (The Depot) is then reached, an ideal place to put SRT gear on.

The first pitch is a short distance downstream. Avoid the water by climbing up at the far end of The Depot and traversing along a narrow rift past a large flake (where the traverse line should commence) and rigging in the roof to reach a Y-hang over the pitch head. The pitch is narrow at the top but soon opens out. A chock-stone deviation at -6m can be used (via a substantial pendulum across the shaft) to achieve a drier descent.

The pitch lands on a ledge above the base of the waterfall. Follow the water into the rift but stay high when the stream drops away, and traverse along a false floor for about 30m until a large flake gives a daunting but fairly straightforward 9m climb down to the water.

Follow the stream through a short, wet crawl (which may have low airspace in wet weather) until it once more drops away. Further traversing for about 30m leads to a climb down of 8m. Further progress along the rift in a downward direction, and the streamway is once again lost down a rift. A short traverse leads to a 5m chimney descent into a pool. Continuing downstream, more traversing over blocks and then squeezing down to the stream reaches a stooping passage leading to the 2m second pitch.

The second pitch is free-climbable however if you have problems, your spare rope may come in useful. This tiny pitch drops into a rounded chamber. The third and fourth pitches follow in quick succession, landing in a spacious chamber near to the final sump.

