

COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN CAVING COMMUNITY

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 will be errors and (over time) an increasing number of inaccuracies due to changes in the caves and the replacement of anchors. The descriptions may also contain subjective viewpoints which could be open to misinterpretation. It is entirely incumbent upon 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 totally confident in finding the lower route out of the cave, and that this route is passable and appropriately rigged, and who understand the extra precautions and techniques demanded of such trips (e.g. carrying multiple ropes in case one gets stuck and pull-through technique using an assortment of belays).

The rope lengths stated in the rigging topos are considered the minimum length required based on average rigging. There may be errors, or you might use more rope than anticipated. For this reason, it is critical that strong and well-tightened knots are placed on both ends of ropes during packing, to prevent falling off the end of a too-short rope, irrespective of which end is deployed first.

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-situ fixed aids such as ropes and ladders are mentioned throughout our descriptions. These must only be considered navigational markers and never as safety critical belays. The CNCC does not install any fixed ropes in caves. Ladders, even if CNCC-installed, should always be used with a separate belay. The only fixed aids installed and endorsed by CNCC are stainless steel resin bonded anchors shown on the topos, and in a few carefully selected locations, other appropriate fixed aids which will be listed on our website. Never trust your safety exclusively to a rope or ladder which has been left in a cave or is of unknown integrity.

When using stainless steel resin bonded anchors you must understand the importance of belaying your rope to multiple anchors, including use of full traverse ropes leading to pitch heads, and always performing a thorough pre-use inspection on every anchor. Details of how to perform a pre-use inspection, and other anchor safety information can be found on our website. This, along with our fixed aids participation statement, must be read and understood by anyone using CNCC-installed anchors.

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 motto 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 authors 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.

Important safety information regarding pull-through trips down Swinsto Hole and Simpson Pot

Published: April 2025

In April 2025, Swinsto Hole and Simpson Pot were fitted with new anchors to provide an improved situation for cavers embarking on pull-through trips using these caves. Simpson Pot has also been fitted with chains (each spanning two anchors) in three locations to provide a pull through solution where anchors alone would have been less optimal:

- Slit Pot (anchors 44/45)
- Slit Pot 'overhead' (anchors 49/50)
- Swinsto Great Aven (anchors 55/56, reached by abseil from anchors 52/53)

Only one of these three pitches fitted with chains needs to be descended to complete a pull-through of Simpson Pot.

Below is some information about these additions that may prove useful to suitably competent cavers using these caves for pull through trips. **This is NOT a "how to" document and does not replace suitable experience and knowledge. All cavers must use their own judgement about the necessary tackle and the suitability of any belay and techniques.**

Traverse lines

Neither cave has any CNCC-fitted in-situ traverse lines. Use a separate short length of rope (10m is minimally sufficient) to rig (first person) and de-rig (last person) a suitable traverse line. **Please do not leave any ropes behind.**

Using the anchors

As with all caves, always perform a pre-use anchor inspection: www.cncc.org.uk/equipment/anchor-safety

Each pitch-head has two anchors for threading the rope - one anchor is slightly higher than the other. The rope to abseil on should be the closest one to the approach. This will make pulling down easier due to the angles of the anchors.

Using the chains (Simpson Pot only)

Before use, visually check the chains for any signs of damage. Check the maillons are closed and that no thread is showing. Check for any significant (>1mm) rope wear to the bottom maillons. **Ensure you thread both maillons to achieve two belay points are maintained throughout the descent.**

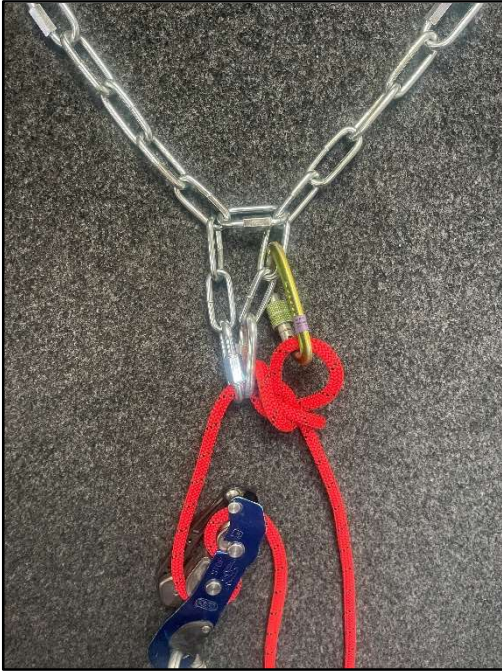
Pull-through recommendations

It is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED that all except the last member of the party descends with the ropes in a 'locked off' arrangement (see images overleaf). You must still abseil on the side shown, however a loop clipped back to the anchor provides a safeguard in case anyone abseils on the wrong side. This can be easily changed to the 'pull down' setup by the last member of the team to descend by unclipping the krab from the anchor/chain.

Ensure the chosen blocking knot is of suitable integrity so that it does not risk distorting or coming out when pulled against the anchor with force. Each user must use their own judgement to choose a suitably robust blocking knot.
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For pull-through trips you must carry multiple ropes to avoid stranding if one of your ropes gets stuck.

Rigging locked-off (krab in place):



Chain rigging 'locked off'



Anchor rigging 'locked off'

Rigging in pull-down mode (krab removed):



Chain rigging for pull down



Anchor rigging for pull down

Any issues?

Please report any issues with the integrity of any anchors or chains at www.cncc.org.uk/caving/report

Simpson Pot

Version: 04/2025

NGR: SD 69615 77880

Info: cncc.org.uk/cave/simpson-pot

