

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.

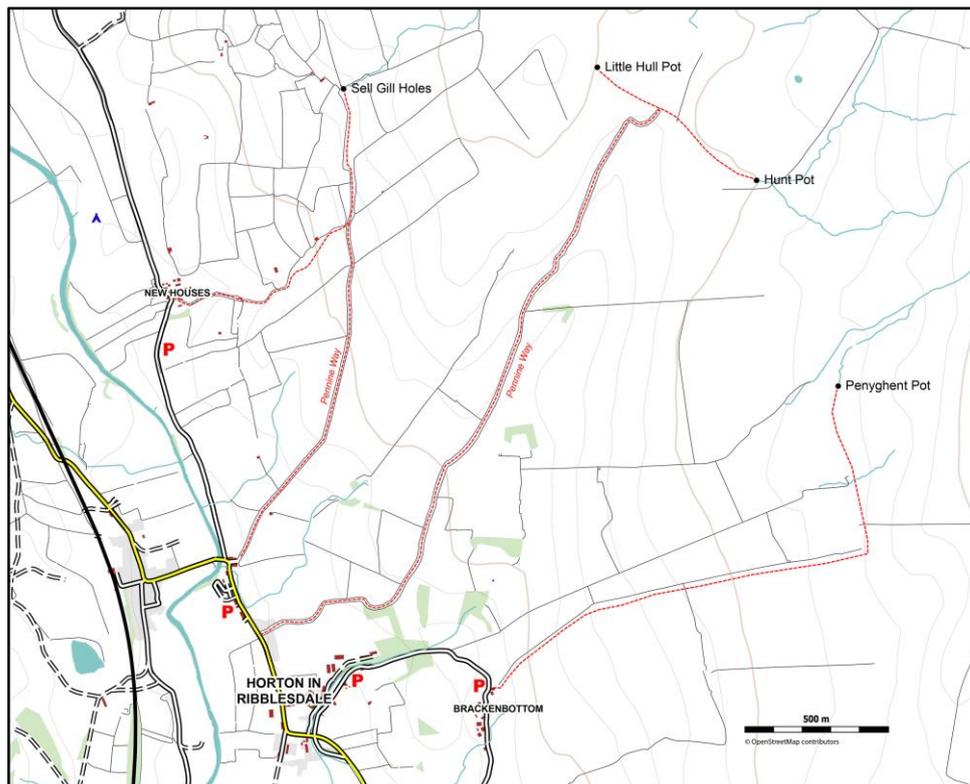
Rigging must always be performed to avoid any rub points or other hazards. Rigging exactly as depicted in the rigging topos does not guarantee a rub-free descent; this must be assessed and ensured by each individual caver on each pitch in every cave.

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.

This description covers two entrances to Sell Gill Holes (one wet, one dry) which unite at the large passage at the bottom.



Parking:

Park in Horton-in-Ribblesdale near the Crown pub (there is on-road parking on the road between the Crown pub and the railway station and also south of the Penyghent Cafe). Alternatively use the village car park (small fee). A slightly closer but much steeper approach can be made from New Houses (parking in one of several laybys) via the public footpath.

How to find:

Grid reference: SD 81183 74347

From Horton-in-Ribblesdale, follow the Pennine Way footpath behind The Crown pub gently uphill for about 2.5km, passing the footpath coming up from New Houses. The very obvious entrances are easily found, one on either side of the footpath. On the right (east) is the more technical and flood-prone wet (Goblin) entrance and on the left (west) is a dry stepped gully leading down to the first pitch of the dry route.

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

Dry Route (passable in moderately wet weather conditions):

From the bottom of the gully, three simple and dry pitches lead directly to the main passage and the connection with the wet, Goblin Route. The first pitch commences with a traverse down the gully leading to a rebelay at the top of the pitch. Once inside the cave the second pitch is immediately reached via a traverse against the left hand wall to either a very large Y-hang spanning both walls, or a Y-hang off the left wall with an immediate deviation from the opposite wall (depending on how you would prefer to rig it). This pitch lands in a large chamber.

The next and final pitch is reached almost immediately and is broken by a shelf a few metres down.

At the bottom of the final pitch, follow the passage downwards; after only 10m the water crashes down on the right (the rope from the wet route enters here). The spectacular large passage can be followed steeply downstream for a short distance before it gets smaller. Then you are faced with a small wet section including a climb over or stoop under calcite obstructions. This is best avoided in very wet weather.

The final obstacle is found where the water disappears into a very wet, narrow, sideways crawl in the stream around a right hand bend. This typically involves considerable immersion in the water (hence most cavers turn around here), but is only a few metres long. The large passage continues beyond the duck, and is worth the wetting, but soon degenerates to some low dug crawls leading to another pitch (currently only bolted with exploration hangers of untrustworthy condition and best avoided) dropping into a large rift-chamber with an active dig.

Goblin Route (not suitable for wet conditions):

This is a much under-rated trip with some technical and very varied ropework all happening in quick succession.

The entrance climb (where the stream goes underground) should be protected by a short (10m) handline as the rock is very slippery.

Walking-sized passage soon reaches the first pitch. An exposed traverse (on rope) goes left around the corner into a short loop passage. From the end of this is a reach out around the corner for the anchors of the Y-hang. In wetter conditions this is a very dramatic place indeed with the water thundering below and lots of spray. There may be considerable spray as you descend the rope, but thankfully, you don't continue too far down; about 5m below the Y-hang, swing out of the water into a letterbox shaped crawl which leads into a dry parallel shaft. From here, a staggered descent leads to a hanging rebelay above the final pitch, which lands alongside the waterfall only 10m from the dry route.