

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.

TRAPDOOR POT

May 2020

Trapdoor Pot has received increased visitors since featuring in 'Not For The Faint Hearted'. Three squeezes may limit the exploration for any overly-nourished cavers, but these are all short and are separated by more spacious sections. The cave is accessible in damp conditions but should be avoided in very wet weather. Anyone considering a visit to Trapdoor Pot, be warned that the FTSE Choke is loose, and Electron and Megatron Pitches have seriously 'flaky' walls, so extreme caution is needed at all times. Take extraordinary care and ensure everyone in the group is sufficiently experienced and prepared for such a delicate and physically demanding pothole.

Parking:

Park in a small dirt layby (space for two cars) 50m east of the Cold Cotes junction on the upper Ingleton to Clapham road. A gate with convenient climbing rungs leads up onto the open access fell. A vague path starts a gentle ascent, bearing right after 1km, forking another 300m on (keep left) and passing through a line of shakeholes 250m later (one of which, Bridge Pot, is an open pothole immediately on the right of the track). Depart the path here on the left (aim for about 45° right of the line of shakeholes) and walk north for 150m to locate an enormous shakehole. Trapdoor Pot is 60m behind/left (north west) and is a modest sized shakehole with a small and uninviting opening to a 6m pitch.

Location: Grid reference SD 72724 72727

Dowlass Moss is a featureless fell with hundreds of shakeholes and often low visibility. Locating the cave (or your way off the fell), might be tricky, therefore take a map/compass or GPS to assist navigation.

Rigging: (Ropes; 10m, 20m, 9m, 19m, 6m (optional), 25m, 50m)

There are no CNCC approved anchors in Trapdoor Pot and no rigging topo. The cave is fitted with a selection of uncertified fixed anchors intended to be used in combination with natural belays. Visiting cavers must use their own judgement. Rope requirements are covered below. For an extra description and rigging details, we recommend 'Not For The Faint Hearted' (Mike Cooper), which is available from all good caving shops.

Navigation:

The entrance is a small opening which can be creatively rigged from natural belays with a 10m rope. It is narrow at the top but quickly enlarges to a 5m drop into a blocky chamber. From here, a short climb down the breakthrough point dig and a low crawl drops into another chamber, followed by a further drop into a rift passage soon reaching the 4m free-climbable Foam Pitch. **Take care; this whole area is potentially loose.**

Beyond Foam Pitch, the first of Trapdoor Pot's three squeezes is reached, The Ripper. This is a narrow section of rift-traverse which will require a 1m long strenuous sideways squeeze (SRT kit off) for most cavers. The head of the next pitch is only a few metres beyond (care) but there is just enough room beyond the squeeze for some careful yoga-like moves to redress in whatever apparel was removed only metres earlier.

The pitch (That's Better Pitch) is a fine 15m descent of a spacious shaft (20m rope), landing at the top of the FTSE boulder choke. **The FTSE Choke is loose and must be inspected by each member of the party, taking utmost care and staying well clear of each other.** The choke commences as a scramble down leading into a 3m free-climbable chimney, landing in a small cavity amongst the boulders. The route continues as a diagonally downwards squeeze through boulders to reach a scaffold bar above the FTSE Choke Pitch, a 4m drop down a narrow rift (9m rope).

A spacious chamber at the bottom of the FTSE Pitch offers some relief and a chance to regroup. The way on is now down a hole in the floor at the far side of the chamber, which is the second squeeze, The Gripper. Although not as tight as the previous squeeze, taller cavers may find this harder as it needs some interesting body-bending to manoeuvre into the low crawl below. In damp conditions, a small stream may enter just above the squeeze and flow down it, adding to the pleasure. In wet conditions, the amount of water here could make the squeeze hazardous.

The Gripper squeeze drops into a crawl leading to the reasonable spacious Ready to Roll Pitch (19m rope).

Around the corner from the bottom of Ready To Roll Pitch is a narrow rift and blasted crawl to a short drop down followed by Millennium Pot, a 4m descent which is often just handlined by experienced groups (6m rope), or even free-climbed a little further along.

The continuing passage is much as before and soon reaches the third squeeze, The Stripper. This is entertaining. The squeeze involves a cautious partial descent of a rift. A few metres down it is necessary to reposition yourself sideways to commence head-first entry into a tight sideways crawl continuing onwards. Beyond here is a short climb down and things get much more spacious.

Yet another blasted crawl leads to the spacious Electron Pitch (25m rope), which drops onto a large ledge, where a further 2m climb down (staying on-rope) reaches the huge and impressive Megatron Pitch (50m rope with a rebelay 4m down). **The walls of Electron and Megatron Pitches are 'flaky' and prone to delamination. A former deviation at -16m on Megatron was 'lost' due to this. When a caver is ascending or descending Megatron, the party above should remain still. Cavers at the bottom of Megatron should stand well clear from the bottom of the pitch.**

Megatron lands on a large pile of boulders where a celebratory snack can be enjoyed before the gruelling outward journey.

