

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.

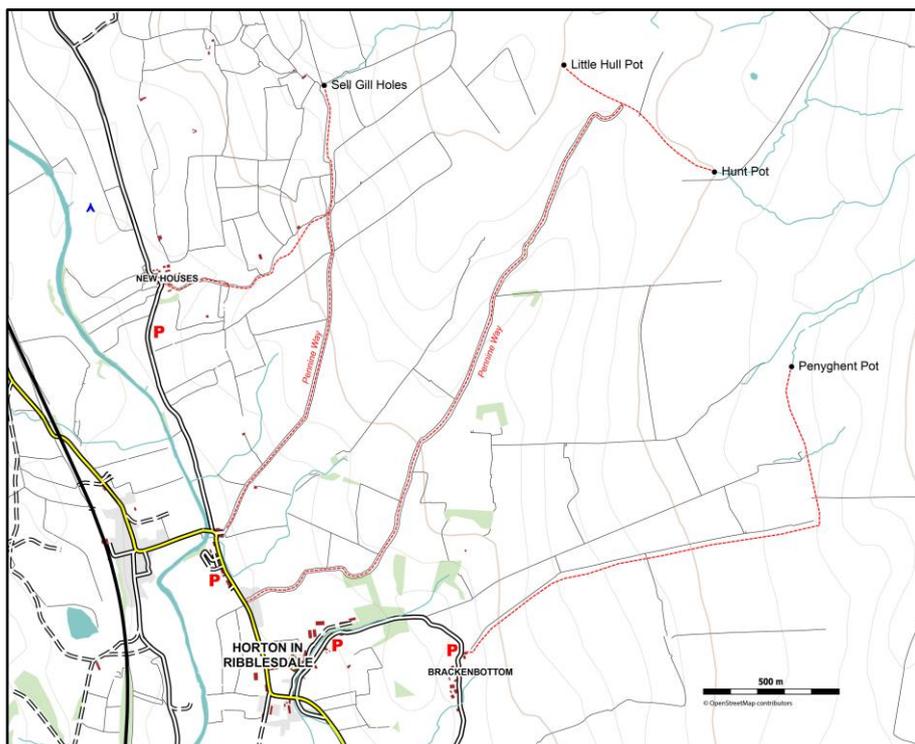
Rigging must always be performed to avoid any rub points or other hazards. Rigging exactly as depicted in the rigging topos does not guarantee a rub-free descent; this must be assessed and ensured by each individual caver on each pitch in every cave.

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.

A low and wet canal a short distance into the cave will flood and become impassable under wet conditions, and the pitches can also become very wet. Penyghent Pot is a long and quite serious undertaking and must only be tackled under very settled conditions and by well-prepared parties (particularly if venturing into the Friday 13th/Living Dead Extensions).



Parking:

Park in Brackenbottom, or Horton in Ribblesdale. The Bradford Pothole Club headquarters is found in Brackenbottom (SD 81640 72160) and if any members are present they may, if asked, grant permission to park in their car park or use their changing facilities for a small donation.

How to find:

Grid reference: SD 82890 73320

On the north edge of Brackenbottom village is the footpath up Penyghent. Follow this for about 30 minutes.

After crossing the third wall, turn left (off the footpath) and 50m ahead is an old rusty gate. Cross this gate and then walk parallel to, but keeping approximately 100m away from the left wall. After about 500m a shallow valley is reached. This leads to the scaffolded entrance of Penyghent Pot in a small depression.

Navigation:

A more thorough description of the route for Penyghent Pot (including the Living Dead extensions and Friday the 13th Series), the ropes required and the rigging can be found in the book 'Not for the Faint Hearted' (Mike Cooper). This excellent book is highly recommended. Although various non-CNCC approved resin anchors are in place in Penyghent Pot, many of the later pitches are rigged from naturals.

The entrance is a climb down a scaffolded shaft. **This is particularly loose and a careful assessment should be made before descending!**

Below the scaffolding is a mixture of awkward crawling and stooping until the stream is met.

Follow the water downstream into a 250m long, wide and wet canal passage. This passage is particularly low towards the end and involves flat-out crawling in the water and a guaranteed wetting. The passage then gets bigger just before the first pitch. At the bottom of this pitch, ten minutes of annoying crawling/stooping (along the badly named 'Easy Passage') then reaches the second pitch.

Below this pitch is a short drop down a narrow rift. The water then disappears down a deep shaft. Crawl under the left hand wall of the rift to reach a traverse and the start of the third pitch. This pitch starts narrow but quickly opens out, descending to a ledge where a crawl under the right hand wall (remaining on the rope) immediately reaches the fourth pitch, where a clear hang of 15m drops into a large and draughty chamber. Warm clothes will be rewarded here!

The way on from here is to the left of a huge block and into the continuing rift passage.

From here, the cave is a very long, linear and well-proportioned rift. There are seven further pitches to negotiate (some of which are free-climbable). Rigging is from a variety of natural belays and anchors of various vintages; always use solid natural belays where possible. There may be several abandoned ropes throughout which should never be trusted.

The 11th (final) pitch, Niagara, is usually very wet and is bypassed by a climb down a narrow slot on the left just after the previous (10th) pitch. At the bottom of Niagara, follow the route underneath the waterfall and along the stream passage to reach a large rift/chamber. If the water is low you can continue on along stooping height streamway for several minutes to the downstream sump.

Most cavers now commence the long outward journey.

There is a considerable amount of cave to explore in Penyghent Pot including the Friday the 13th Series and the Living Dead Extensions (a trip to the far reaches probably constitutes one of the longest and most demanding trips in northern caving, ranking alongside the far reaches of Mossdale Caverns or Langcliffe Pot as some of the most remote locations in Yorkshire). These extensions are not to be taken lightly as they involve relentless ducks, a free divable sump, canals and tight arduous squeezes. Anyone considering this MUST take a copy of the Not for the Faint Hearted description, they must be very well prepared, and the water levels must be extremely low and stable.