

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.

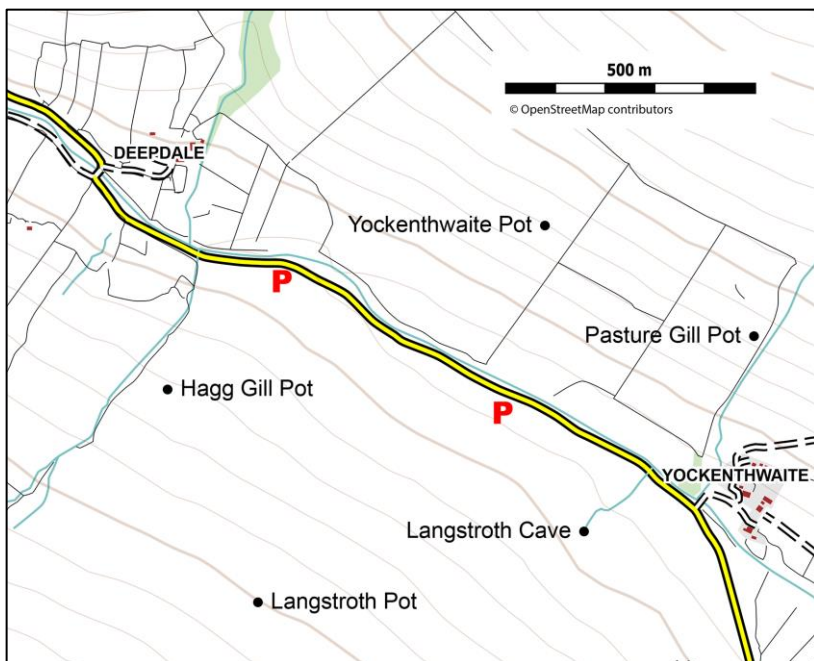
Many in-site ropes and ladders are mentioned throughout the descriptions. These should only ever be considered navigational markers and not safety critical belays. The CNCC does not install or maintain any fixed aids in caves other than the resin anchors shown on the topos. Never trust your safety to 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.



HAGG GILL POT

April 2017

Hagg Gill is an active stream cave and becomes hazardous after very wet conditions.

Despite only presenting a single entrance pitch, Hagg Gill must not be considered a novice trip; the formations could be easily damaged by inexperienced (or careless) parties. Make sure everyone in your group is aware of the need for caution and delicate caving technique. This includes some crawling in the stream on occasions to avoid helictites (despite walking being an available option).

Parking:

Call at Raisgill Farm to ask permission.

If you have just one (reasonable small) car you can park in a tiny layby about a mile to the west along the Langstrothdale road, immediately opposite a stone barn and directly below Hagg Gill Pot. If you have multiple vehicles, a much larger layby 500m back down the road (east) towards Yockenthwaite is more suitable.

How to find: Grid reference: SD 89376 79300

At the layby that is immediately opposite the stone barn, walk directly uphill (parallel to the right field wall which is about 50m away). A steep uphill climb for 130m reaches the convergence of two dry shallow valleys and some outcrops of exposed limestone and a few lonely trees. The right of the two shallow valleys should be followed gently uphill for another 130m to locate the entrance to Hagg Gill Pot. The entrance is approximately 40-50m from the right field wall in the shallow valley, and is a concrete shaft covered at ground level by a steel plate.

Rigging:

The cave only has one pitch commencing at the entrance and broken 4m down by a shelf. This can be rigged for SRT (using a 25m rope from the surface and at least two slings). Alternatively, the first 4m can be free-climbed while on an appropriate belay and the pitch from the ledge can be rigged with a 12m ladder (belayed from surface). There are no resin anchors but ample natural belays; use appropriate judgement.

Navigation:

Climb or abseil down the 4m scaffolded shaft to a ledge (take care to avoid dislodging rocks from behind the scaffolding). The pitch continues below the ledge and is narrow at the top, but soon opens out into a splendid chamber and lands on a large pile of rocks above the stream.

Upstream, the passage is of fine proportions, soon reaching a boulder collapse, which can be climbed over to return to the stream. Further upstream the walls are adorned by tiny helictites protruding like worms. Sadly, much damage has already been done. **Further damage can be avoided if you are willing to crawl in the stream through the narrowest sections, rather than walking and rubbing against the walls.** Further ahead, a few excellent flowstone formations are passed including a several metre tall calcite column.

Just beyond the flowstone formations a huge boulder-filled chamber is reached; the termination of the upstream passage. At the top of the slope of boulders and on the right, a passage leads to an upward squeeze and an inlet waterfall. An extremely exposed upward climb then gives access to a gallery of straws (one of which is approximately 1.5m long) high up above the boulder chamber below. **This climb is very exposed and is likely to cause some anxiety even for experienced cavers, particularly on the downward journey (handline useful). The straw gallery is very vulnerable; take extreme care from the moment you reach the top of the climb to avoid causing damage and only go up there one or two at a time.**

Back at the bottom of the entrance pitch, the downstream passage leads through two sizable chambers before a scramble down some calcited blocks at the far side of a chamber intercepts another streamway. Left (downstream) sumps after 50m and instead, the way on is right (upstream). After a few pools and easy climbs the passage narrows and forks. Right leads up to a large chamber and is the site of numerous digs; the way on is the left fork, continuing upstream in an initially narrow/awkward passage, soon developing into a wider stooping height passage with formations on both sides. **Cavers are strongly encouraged to crawl along this decorated section and take your time to avoid damage.**

A short distance further (opposite a decorated grotto on the left) a step up out of the stream on the right enters a large fault rift; an inspiring place! At the end of the rift the stream is re-joined and quickly narrows. At the point the stream narrows, the walls for the following several metres are once again adorned by worm-like helictite protrusions; most unusual indeed. **Despite the passage being wide enough to walk sideways along, please crawl for the first several metres to avoid further damage to these helictites.**

Further upstream, the passage narrows even more and progress becomes difficult. Progression at stream level is recommended as much as possible, but traversing at higher level is necessary on a few occasions (care; there are some sparse but vulnerable formations and loose blocks above the stream). After a considerable distance of awkward, narrow, winding stream passage, a blank wall is met. The stream enters from a low passage on the left which can be followed (passing a line of white straws; the Thin White Line) until the final chamber is reached. The stream enters this final chamber as a waterfall from several metres up.