

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.

SUNSET HOLE

July 2018

A small but enjoyable active stream cave. Popular with novice groups. Although all but the final (main) pitch can be free-climbed, it is advisable to take handlines or SRT ropes for the three climbs, as they can be sporting in wet conditions. Be aware that as an active stream cave Sunset Hole will respond to rainfall and the climbs can become impassable. Beyond the usual turnaround point at the Main Chamber, the Upper Series and 1968 Extensions offers some more challenging exploration.

Parking:

Park on the main road a few hundred metres north east of the Hill Inn at Chapel-le-Dale. There is a small parking space which accommodates 3-4 cars immediately next to the start of the footpath up Ingleborough (on the right if heading away from the Hill Inn), and a larger parking area 100m further on the opposite side of the road.

How to find: Grid reference SD 74217 75907

Follow the main marked footpath up Ingleborough for about 1.5 km until an obvious massive shakehole is seen on the left. After the next wall (crossed at a gate), take a bearing of 210° for 130m. The cave entrance is at the end of a streamway. Another entrance is found 15m away by a 3m long rock ledge.

Rigging:

The rigging topo from 'Northern Caving' is available on the CNCC website (courtesy of CNCC Technical Group). In summary 10/15/15/35m ropes, 12 krabs and a few slings will suffice for SRT throughout. If venturing into the Upper Series/1968 Extensions a few additional ropes (15/18m, not shown on the topo) and an assortment of slings and rope protectors are recommended for rigging from natural belays (no resin anchors).

Navigation:

The cave has a fine streamway that is followed all the way to the 'Final' Chamber. The two entrances join up quickly and the stream is followed for about 250m to the first climb with three options:

- (1) This can be free climbed in low water.
- (2) A single P-anchor allows a handline to be installed for an assisted climb.
- (3) Backing up the P-anchor to a natural pillar allows for an SRT descent.

The second climb has three very similar options:

- (1) This can be free climbed in low water.
- (2) A selection of P-anchors allows a handline to be installed for an assisted climb.
- (3) A full P-anchored traverse above the stream can be rigged to allow an SRT descent from a Y-hang.

Continue downstream to the third climb.

Just before the third climb (and about 30m after a 2.5m diameter chamber on the left) is a bedding passage on the right leading to a squeeze and a climb up into the Upper Series which can be explored if desired. It is unclear how this connects to the Upper Series accessed via the 'Final' Chamber discussed below; we would welcome some clarification on this.

The third climb has resin anchors and natural belays for a handline descent or a traverse and short SRT pitch. This is followed by a short walk to reach the main pitch.

The main pitch has resin anchors to provide a traverse across a small chamber and a well-placed Y-hang allowing a clear descent. This is suitable for SRT (35m rope) or ladder and lifeline. This avoids the stream until a bit of spray is met further down. The pitch lands in the 'Final' Chamber, where the water sinks into a low bedding and most groups intending a simple sporting trip turn around at this point.

There are options for further exploration beyond this usual turnaround point (including two further pitches, no anchors). This is the Upper Series and 1968 Extensions, and these are tight, awkward and may have loose blocks. Directly across on the opposite wall of the Main Chamber is an awkward 4m climb up, the second opportunity to access the Upper Series. This climb may have a very old in situ rope which should not be trusted. Onward from the top is a short pitch (15m rope, no anchors in place), which drops down to a tight corkscrew descent leading immediately onto another pitch. A 18m rope should be belayed at the top of the corkscrew to protect the descent and rig the pitch, again no anchors so natural belays will have to be located. This final pitch drops into Rift Chamber, where numerous routes and block chambers can be explored which ultimately all choke within about 50-100m.

