

# 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.

# VESPER POT / SPECTACLE POT

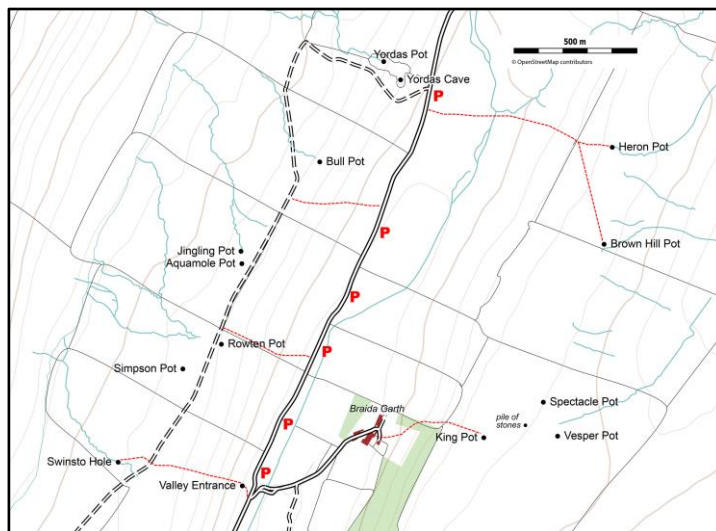
August 2019

Vesper Pot is passable with care in moderately wet conditions; however, the final pitch becomes unpleasant. Spectacle Pot, on the other hand, has wet crawls which require low water levels.

**Parking:** Park in a layby near the Braida Garth Farm track.

**Location:** Grid references: Vesper: SD 71185 77620  
Spectacle: SD 71280 77840

Call at Braida Garth Farm for permission. Past the farm, go through two gate and bear left up the hillside with limestone outcrops to intercept the wall on the far left of the enclosure. Follow up the wall to a gate into a smaller enclosure with a very steep embankment. At the top, a gate leads onto the open fells. About 300m away (bearing 90°, away from the wall) is the start of a shallow dry valley, marked by a large pile of stones. 100m along this valley on the left is the entrance to Vesper Pot (a small hole with metal surround). Spectacle Pot is about 100m north east from the pile of stones (i.e. with the valley on your right) and is a small elongated shakehole.



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

**WARNING:** Some of the pitches in Vesper Pot are very technical and can be very challenging to dismount on the upward journey. Spectacle Pot is a particularly challenging cave; Splutter Crawl, only a few minutes below the surface, is extremely small and cavers should consider trying themselves for size before committing to an exchange trip. Dodds Pitch has loose rocks and walls, hence great care is required.

## Vesper Pot navigation:

The entrance takes a head-first dive into a very narrow and awkward passage. After several metres of tight sideways progress, a small streamway is reached, which should be followed downstream in a low crawl. This enlarges after a more substantial inlet joins. A 1m drop on a left bend marks the point where larger cavers may need to commence a high traverse (**CARE: Delicate formations at roof level**). Returning to stream level after about 15m, the first pitch is reached only a short distance further. This is narrow at the top and can be unpleasant in wet conditions.

Below this pitch the stream passage continues very narrow and awkward for some distance to the second pitch, which should be approached at high level. It is initially tempting to abseil down the narrow rift in the floor, to where a window leads out over the pitch proper, however, it is easier to traverse high (on rope) out over the pitch and sharply around to the right to locate an anchor. This pitch descends 8m via a Y-hang rebelay, and the cave enlarges to much more civilised proportions from this point. At the bottom, a short traverse along the wide rift (staying on-rope) reaches the third pitch down the continuing deep rift in the floor. Careful rigging is needed here to avoid rope rub and ensure a free hang.

At the bottom of the third pitch, the fourth pitch commences only a few metres further along the rift. This splendid, deep, dramatic pitch involves an exposed 5m bridging traverse to the Y-hang take-off at the point the walls pinch outwards. There is an unobvious but convenient shelf to stand on just below the Y-hang on the right. A natural deviation about two thirds of the way down the pitch (around the corner) avoids the water.

A short scramble down at the bottom of the pitch (staying on-rope) reaches a small balcony. Around the corner the fifth pitch commences and is belayed from a Y-hang. The anchors for this are challengingly located across the far side of the pitch, creating an exposed reach out. Mounting and dismounting this pitch always provides entertainment. The final pitch drops down a huge elongated rift, with a single anchor rebelay at a tiny shelf part way down. The lower section of this pitch may be extremely rainy in wet weather. The pitch lands at the bottom of the Great Rubble Heap, a very stormy place in wet conditions. A final 10m pitch (with non-CNCC anchor) leads down towards the sump and is rarely descended.

## Spectacle Pot navigation:

**A small personal bag to carry SRT kits is useful as you may find it necessary to remove them for Splutter Crawl and the long wet crawl.**

The entrance pitch commences on the surface and is tight at the top. This drops 5m into a narrow passage which descends steeply. At the bottom of the slope there is no obvious way on but look closely at floor level and you will see Splutter Crawl. This looks impossibly tight on first glance, but is just body sized. It is best tackled one arm forward one arm back, with propulsion achieved through earthworm type contractions and wriggling. Splutter Crawl is only about 5m long and ends, entertainingly, at a 2m head-first climb down (with rusty metal ladder at time of writing).

The next pitch is rigged with one anchor as backup and one for the hang. Below this pitch a low crawl reaches an inlet (Onion Passage). Continue downstream in easier crawling/stooping to reach a tall aven. Beyond the aven a drop through blocks leads into a long, low and gloomy wet crawl which may require some excavation to facilitate progress. This takes several minutes, and emerges into the spacious Dryden Chamber.

At the end of Dryden chamber is a climb over a large block and a traverse through blocks along the left wall to the head of Dodds Pitch. The pitch itself is approached via a low crawl to a single anchor over the pitch, followed by a Y-hang a few metres down. Care is needed here to avoid rope rub. **This pitch is extremely loose and anyone below must stand well clear.** A deviation part way down is required to avoid rub.

The pitch lands in a huge boulder-strewn rift. At the end of the rift is the final pitch, through the lower of two eyeholes, to a descending traverse against the right wall and a single anchor hang dropping onto boulders at the top of the Great Rubble Heap. The rope from Vesper Pot enters from above at the bottom of the rubble heap. A final 10m pitch (with non-CNCC anchor) leads down towards the sump and is rarely descended.