

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.

MAYDAY HOLE

January 2024

Shortly post-pandemic, Mayday Hole added to the growing collection of fine and wet-weather-resistant trips on Dowlass Moss. This is a nice multi-pitch pothole offering a short and uncomplicated day out. The entire pot can be explored in quite wet weather, although in severely torrential conditions, there is scope for it to become unpleasant.

Parking:

Park in a dirt layby 50m east of the Cold Cotes junction on the upper Ingleton to Clapham road. A tarmac farm track leads up the hill and only a short distance up this track, take the gate onto the open access fell.

Location: Grid reference SD 72796 72526

A vague path starts a gentle ascent. After about 1km, you find yourself parallel with some small limestone outcrops. The path soon turns to the right and about 300m further, the path forks. Keep left and only 150m on, you find yourself sandwiched between a deep open pot on the right (this is Bridge Pot) and a line of shakeholes on the left, which contains Mayday Hole approximately 30m along (with surface anchor at the bottom of the shakehole to signify you are in the right hole).

Rigging: The rigging topo is available on the CNCC website.

Navigation:

The rigging commences immediately from the surface with an anchor in a small limestone cliff above the entrance, and a further anchor for the first pitch just inside the entrance. About 4m down (do not descend to the very bottom) are anchors for the start of a sharp and slightly awkward traverse (Razor Traverse) for 5m leading to a Y-hang for a 14m descent of the second pitch. A deviation from a drilled thread repositions the rope for the final part of this pitch to avoid a rub-point, although careful positioning or kicking away from the walls may be required here.

The third pitch (The Nipper) commences almost immediately with two backup anchors and a single anchor rebelay.

A short crawl along a blasted bedding (Lockdown Crawl) soon reaches an inlet and the floor cuts down towards the head of the fourth pitch (Doughnut pitch). This is backed up by two anchors and has a Y-hang take-off, followed by a Y-hang rebelay at a ledge 9m down.

At the bottom of Doughnut pitch, an opening in the wall leads to a washed-out muddy shale bedding crawl with some stal. At the end of this crawl is the fifth pitch (Frank's Pitch), an 8m drop with two backup anchors and a single anchor hang. This pitch is spacious at the bottom.

Below Frank's Pitch the route descends a 2m climb to a blasted section leading quickly to the sixth pitch (Baby Pitch). Rigging commences from a drilled thread and then a backup anchor to a Y-hang for the first 5m drop to a ledge. A Y-hang rebelay followed shortly by a deviation from a drilled thread across the shaft achieves a clear hang to another ledge. A further Y-hang followed by deviation reaches the end of the sixth pitch.

The boulder floor at the bottom of Baby Pitch has a few ways on; a mud slope leads down to a choke, however, this is a dead end, and instead the way on is the enlarged entrance between boulders onto the seventh pitch (Boom Pitch). It is recommended to remain on rope between Baby and Boom pitches. Boom Pitch drops 13m to a boulder choke, which is the end of the trip, but with some promising gaps for future explorers.

