

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.

Greensett Cave is a small cave with a long walk, requiring no ropework. There are some moderate squeezes and sections of the roof are loose and should be treated with appropriate care. Parts of the cave are active streams and will flood in wet weather. As this sits outside of the Great Scar limestone, the cave differs in appearance from many Dales caves, and has some nice formations. Despite having six entrances, Greensett Cave is quite a simple cave and there are three main routes from the main entrance, and multiple options for exiting.

The lovely walk with minimalist caving gear and a picnic in your rucksack, combined with a potter around the various routes within this interesting cave, makes this a splendid and highly recommended summer day out.

Parking: Park at any of the laybys near the Ribbleshead Viaduct.

How to find: Grid Reference SD 74753 82183 (map/compass or GPS recommended).

Follow the main Whernside path past Blea Moor signal box up to Force Gill. Above Force Gill, leave the path and head west up the gill for 500m until a wall heads uphill to the left of, and away from, the gill. Follow this wall for 700m to a left corner. Head west for 80m from the corner until you meet a stream in a small channel. Follow this upstream (past a small and unusual limestone stack) to its resurgence in a boulder pile. The main cave entrance is a slot most of the way up the boulder pile on the right.

Tackle/Rigging: None required, however if a ground spike and 5m ladder are brought, an additional pitch entrance can be used to gain easy access to the southern parts of the cave.

Navigation:

There are three routes through the cave from the main entrance.

Bleamoor Tunnel Route: The main entrance brings you into a chamber with a shallow stream crossing it. Follow upstream for 70m until you reach a junction where the chamber closes down. Take the left passage (right is Formations Route, see below). This is a narrow stream rift in water which can be taken at floor level or traversed above the water level to avoid the deep pools where the rift turns corners.

After 100m of the obvious route, a daylight shaft is reached. If this has been rigged from the surface (ground spike and ladder required), you can exit or enter here. To the right at floor level is the duck to start the Short Circuit Route (see below), however, Bleamoor Tunnel Route continues through a low, narrow rift-crawl in the stream on the extreme left.

The crawl soon opens out and continues for a further 40m in gradually enlarging rift which eventually reaches the surface via a stable pile of large boulders. You will pass several unstable or too-tight daylight windows before reaching this stable entrance.

Short Circuit Route: From the pitch entrance mentioned above, take the duck on the right. This is about 5m long. After the duck is another 40m of wet rift until you exit up a short climb out of the bottom of a shakehole.

Formations Route: From the junction at the end of the main chamber, take the low and wide passage on the right, mostly crawling over a mix of soft mud banks and cobbles following an obvious route, climbing over fallen roof slabs in places. After 50m there is a particularly large roof slab to climb over and drop down on the other end, and another soon after. At this point daylight is reached and the cave can be exited. Alternatively, you can continue via a flat-out crawl in the stream down on the left. After 5m the crawl can be departed by climbing up over blocks on the right, and the rift regained. From this point onwards the cave is particularly well decorated: Please TAKE CARE not to damage the formations.

Follow the rift for around 20m to where a large orange boss occupies the rift. The route splits into parallel rifts for 20m before they rejoin, and both are passable. On the left is a taller rift which becomes thinner; straight on (and then left round a corner) is a lower crawl over cobbles with curtains. Both options rejoin with a squeeze around a 90° bend to emerge into a small chamber.

From the small chamber, continue straight ahead up a small climb into the roof. Another 10m of crawling reaches an exit climb up into the same shakehole as the exit from the Short Circuit Route.