

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.

SIMPSON'S POT

October 2023

This fine pothole can be descended as a pull through or hard rigged for exchange with Swinsto Hole. **Simpson's Pot can be hazardous in wet weather. Storm Pot and the duck become impassable and the master cave floods. Settled weather conditions are required.**

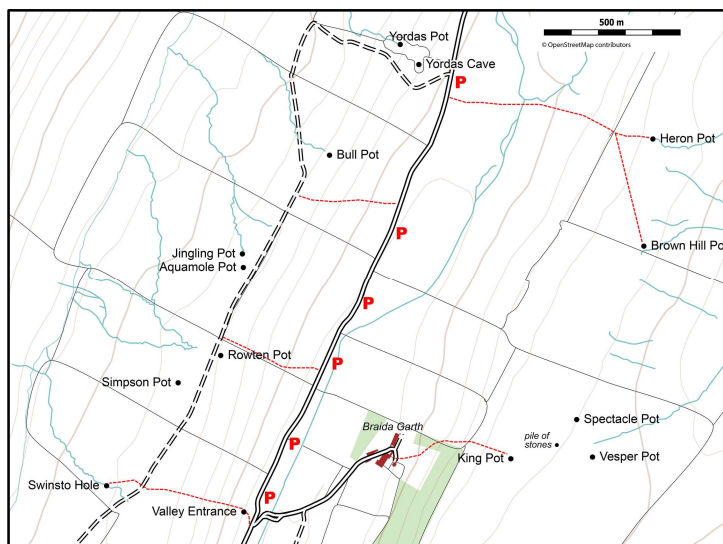
Parking: Park in either of the laybys just before or after the track to Braida Garth Farm in Kingsdale. Do not park opposite or close to the track as this can block access to farm vehicles.

Location: Grid reference SD 69615 77880

Walk up the steep hillside immediately opposite the track to Braida Garth Farm to meet the Turbary Road track at the top of the hill. Turn right and follow the track through a gate at the wall. A further 100m along the track, turn left and 100m ahead (away from the track) is the small shakehole of Simpson's Pot. This can be tricky to find.

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

Navigation:



If planning to exit at Valley Entrance, you must always pre-rig your own rope on the Roof Tunnel pitch down to the master cave (a 30-minute initial trip for a few of your team). While it has become taken for granted that this pitch will have an in-situ rope, this must NEVER be assumed, as in-situ ropes may be removed without warning; Furthermore, in-situ ropes should not be trusted. ALWAYS rig your own. The pitch up to the Roof Tunnel can be climbed (high difficulty), but this should only be relied upon if you have done this before and are confident in the climb.

The description below assumes the cave is being hard rigged. If descending as a pull-through (as is commonly done in Simpson's Pot), ensure all members of your team are familiar with pull-through procedure and safety. **Always use two anchors for a pull-through and always take spare ropes of ample length so you don't get trapped if one rope fails to pull through on any of the pitches and must be left behind.**

The entrance leads into a series of slightly awkward crawls which after 75m gradually enlarge to reach some free-climbable cascades in larger passage (the Five Steps), which can be rigged with a rope for assistance. Below the Five Steps is a traverse over a pit in the floor (often with an in-situ traverse rope). This is called The Pit (or Bob's Pit), a dead end which should not be descended (a common cause for Cave Rescue callouts!)

Beyond The Pit, five very short pitches follow in quick succession (these are Chandelier, Camel, Stake and Storm Pots, with Stake Pot being rigged as two short separate pitches). Storm Pot can become extremely hazardous during wet weather. The route onwards at the bottom of Storm Pot is not immediately obvious as it involves a drop into waist-deep water in the apparently dead-end rift just along from the bottom of the pitch, and then a 1m long duck under the right wall. The water is 1m to 1.5m deep in the duck. There is usually with 20-50cm of airspace; But check this before you pull through! The duck is over quickly and usually of little concern, but nonetheless results in a substantial wetting.

Four more short pitches follow in relatively quick succession (Carol, Shuffle, Lake and Aven Pots) before a chamber is reached at the top of Slit Pot. Getting onto this pitch involves a tight, awkward squeeze through a slit. If doing a pull-through **TAKE EXTREME CARE** to use the correct end of the rope, as within the confined space of this pitch head it could be easy to make a mistake! It is possible to climb 5m up the left wall just prior to Slit Pot to reach a wider alternative take-off for the pitch (with non-CNCC anchors), although this route is less commonly used.

A short distance from the bottom of the pitch is a junction with another stream. Upstream (right) leads to the bottom of Swinsto Hole. Downstream of the junction is the final short pitch of Swinsto Hole, dropping into the bottom of Swinsto Great Aven.

Alternative to Slit Pot and final pitch via Swinsto Great Aven:

A traverse above the stream before Aven Pot (the final pitch before Slit Pot) leads into a passage with a false floor and then a climb up into a chamber with stal. At the corner of this chamber, anchors commence a stunning pitch down Swinsto Great Aven, landing on an unstable heap of rubble which can be followed to the bottom of the final pitch (i.e., Slit Pot and final pitch have been bypassed). Due to the rebelay on this route, it is more complex and will require an additional rope to perform a pull-through descent of Swinsto Great Aven, compared to Slit Pot.

Exiting via Swinsto Hole (if an exchange trip has been arranged):

The navigation out via Swinsto is very easy (see separate description). Just follow the ropes upwards and the water upstream. The pitches may however be extremely wet on the upward journey (the anchors are not well placed for cavers wishing to go up Swinsto Hole). The 300 m Swinsto Long Crawl is reached just before the final pitch is ascended, and then the stream can be followed to the surface.

Exiting via Valley Entrance:

At the bottom of the final pitch is a large chamber (Swinsto Great Aven) with a route downwards through the boulder floor underneath the wall (extreme care; these boulders have moved in recent years). Follow this down to a crawl eventually reaching a wide, low canal. Follow the obvious wet passage for some distance, crawling in 10-40cm deep water, to eventually arrive at the Master Junction. Turn right to enter the main Master Cave stream. Follow the flowing water downstream to the sump, where your rope from Valley Entrance will be found entering from above.

Climb up the rope. Follow the obvious worn route via a mixture of crawling, walking and stooping for about 15 minutes (ignoring any smaller side-passages, particularly on the right at a junction which goes to Toyland). Eventually, this reaches a narrow, knee or waist deep stooping-height wade through water and then immediately after this is the pipe to the surface. This emerges (pleasingly) next to where you are parked.