

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.

LARGE POT

February 2020

The second pitch of Large Pot is extremely narrow and cramped on the approach and requires a high level of agility. Rescue from beneath this would be problematic. Route-finding is more involved than many other potholes, and progress is strenuous on many occasions.

Large Pot can be descended as far as Colossus Pitch in relatively wet conditions; however, Colossus Pitch itself can become hazardous, or in very heavy rain, impassable quite suddenly. If planning to connect to New Rift Pot be aware that further research is required; Rift Pot itself is very water responsive. Both the usual connection (The Mousehole) and the bypass (Grime and Punishment) sump in wet conditions.

Parking:

A mile or so west of Ingleton on the A65, turn right at the signs for Masongill. Pass through Masongill village and follow the winding narrow road to the junction on the public road by the waterworks building and park somewhere there. Do not block access along any of the lanes.

How to find:

Grid reference: SD 68230 76870

Follow the track heading gently uphill from the parking area. At the top where the track turns right, continue straight ahead keeping about 15m from the wall. The lidded entrance is found in a small shakehole after 150m, just before the (ironically) larger shakehole of Little Pot.

Rigging:

The rigging topo from 'Northern Caving' is available on the CNCC website (courtesy of CNCC Technical Group).

Navigation:

The entrance, although free-climbable, is best treated as a pitch rigged from a combination of naturals and resin anchors. At the bottom, a drop down into a small chamber leads into an extremely narrow floor-level tube which is best tackled feet first on your left-hand side. It is wise to start the traverse line for the next pitch before this tube. This tube is only a few metres long and reaches an awkward bend near the head of the second pitch. Here, the passage enlarges slightly, and it is necessary to perform some constricted acrobatic manoeuvres to rig and descend the pitch.

At the bottom, a spacious descending boulder slope (remaining on-rope) reaches the third pitch which drops from a window into Thornton Hall.

Follow the passage downstream from Thornton Hall until a junction is reached which is easily missed. The way on towards Colossus is to take a small passage a few metres up on the left leading away from the stream.

Continuing downstream leads to a pitch and the Red Herring Series (see 'Not for the Faint Hearted' by Mike Cooper for details of this route)

This left passage starts as a muddy crawl and soon reaches The Pit, a 3m deep hole where it is necessary to climb down and the back up the other side. These are challenging and slippery climbs and installation of your own ropes as shown on the rigging guide is highly advisable.

The passage beyond The Pit continues as a crawl to a split, where both routes reach a T-junction with Tinkle Passage. At Tinkle Passage, turn right and follow the water downstream in a narrow rift passage to a high aven (Fissure Aven). The way on is a constricted sideways crawl at the bottom of the aven. Eventually, the passage drops down and enlarges at Calcite Corner which is easily recognisable.

The way on from Calcite Corner is sharp right into a muddy tube. An awkward corner is then followed by a long section of uninspiring passage combining muddy crawling and stooping, later developing some squeezes through calcite obstructions. Eventually a T-junction is reached with Pumpkin Passage. Go right (downstream) to very quickly reach Colossus Pitch.

Take extreme care on the approach to Colossus; the pitch appears quite suddenly and is very slippery at the top.

A slippery and intimidating roped traverse along the left wall of the pitch reaches the take-off point for a single 40m hang down this spectacular pitch. There are numerous calcite formations including curtains and a decorated washed out shale bed to enjoy during the descent/ascent. In heavy rain a substantial stream can appear out of nowhere at the top of Colossus and render the pitch impassable.

Colossus lands in a huge chamber (Necropolis). Most cavers enjoy a brief explore and a few photos before commencing the outward trip.

Connection to New Rift Pot for an exchange trip:

The route to connect to New Rift Pot is south west from Necropolis leading to a large boulder choke which must be negotiated, initially along the right-hand side, to emerge into the Eldon Extensions. From here, a very unpleasant and wet bedding must be negotiated (which frequently sumps) leading to a 5m climb up The Mousehole into New Rift Pot. If planning to undertake the route from Necropolis to New Rift Pot, additional research and navigational material is required. Both routes (The Mousehole and Grime and Punishment) sump in wet conditions.

