

# 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.

# GRANGE RIGG POT

April 2017

**Grange Rigg Pot responds quickly to wet weather and sudden downpours and would become quickly hazardous. Dry and settled weather is required. This is a strenuous pothole (particularly on the upward journey) with awkward pitch dismounts.**

**Parking:** Park in Clapham village car park (small parking fee) or in a suitable nearby location (for example, Newby Cote). It is important that you do not park outside resident's houses or cause congestion. Ensure discretion when getting changed into and out of caving gear.

**How to find:** Grid reference: SD 75735 72695

**If parking in Clapham:** You can approach as detailed for Gaping Gill. However, the most direct route is to follow the footpath leading out of Clapham behind the church (Thwaite Lane), passing uphill through two tunnels. At a fork in the path at the top of the hill, go left (Long Lane) and follow this path for about 30 minutes. A gate is eventually reached leading onto an ascending open fell. Beyond the gate, leave the path and continue straight ahead away from the gate (north). After 300m, bear left slightly towards a prominent dry valley leading uphill for another 400m to the top of the fell where a second gate is located (the bearing is 350° from the first to the second gate). Turn left and follow the wall for 200m; Grange Rigg Pot is then 120m away from the wall.

**Note:** An approach from Crummack Dale can also be made; See Christmas Pot description for more details.

**A compass and map is highly recommended for both approaches; finding your way back in low visibility can be challenging!**

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

**Navigation:** **Note:** A much more detailed description of Grange Rigg Pot can be found in the book 'Not for the Faint Hearted' (Mike Cooper)

A scramble down blocks in the Grange Rigg entrance leads into a fine stream passage, which, after about 40m, reaches the first pitch (the pitch has an initial 3m drop; do not be tempted to climb down; stay high and you will locate the anchors for the traverse just around the corner).

A narrow passage below the first pitch leads quickly on to the second pitch; only 3m and often free-climbed.

Below the second pitch is about 30m of narrow passage leading to the third pitch (just after a crawl in a puddle under a black calcite arch). This pitch can be treated as an assisted climb, but an abseil rope rigged from an anchor far out on the right wall is recommended. This pitch is narrow at the top and is challenging to dismount on the upward journey (best done feet first).

The pitch lands in a roomy chamber. Follow the water to reach the fourth pitch (rigged from roof-level anchors). At the bottom, follow the water into a 7m flat out crawl over cobbles which may be constricted and in need of some excavation. The fourth pitch and wet crawl can be bypassed by traversing over the fourth pitch and continuing ahead as a roof-level crawl/traverse. After 15m straddle over a pothole. A few metres beyond the pothole is a 5m descent of a narrow chimney (with a notable pinch-point half way down). The fourth pitch rope may be useful for this to assist the later upward journey. At the bottom of the chimney, a few squeezes lead to a 2m hole down to the streamway beyond the wet crawl. There are at least two other bypass routes to the fourth pitch and wet crawl (see 'Not for the Faint Hearted' for more details).

Continuing downstream, the passage enlarges and becomes egg-timer shaped; the recommended route is the upper level, Anemolite Crawl, which involves several minutes of awkward, and at times, sideways thrutchy crawling above the stream. At the end of this crawl, a 3m climb/pitch drops down to the stream at small chamber. **Note that this is the fifth pitch in the CNCC rigging topo; however, the 'Not for the Faint Hearted' guide does not mention this as a pitch.** The rope is recommended for easier access back up into Anemolite Crawl on the upward journey.

Downstream is Battleship Passage; much easier going than Anemolite Crawl. A short climb to roof level is required and then back down again, and then the water flows into a low crawl for several metres. This crawl has shallow puddles and is not quite flat out, and should not be of any concern to anyone who has already got this far. However, there is a tight dry bypass straight ahead for cavers determined to stay dry.

Finally, a sideways thrutch between jammed blocks must be passed, before the passage enlarges. The second pitch of Christmas Pot enters from an aven above on the right. The way on is down a step and then right, along a well decorated passage with straws and flowstone. These are very vulnerably located; **take extreme care along this passage to avoid damage.** After approximately 30m the passage enlarges into a chamber. The next pitch starts from a single anchor on a large flat wall on the left (ensure backup to appropriate natural belay); it is advisable to rig from this anchor using a sling positioned between the rope and the anchor to avoid rubbing of the knot against the wall.

The final pitch soon follows, landing in a wide rift; most cavers turn around here.

For those with excess energy and sufficient determination, a route onwards called The Drainpipe leads after 10 minutes to the Grange Rigg sump; and from here a one hour round trip can be taken to Pinnacle Hall. Another pothole (Pay Sank) enters from above into Pinnacle Hall, thus creating a particularly adventurous exchange trip (Pay Sank to Christmas/Grange Rigg); more research is required if considering this.

