

# 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.

# OUT SLEETS BECK POT

December 2016

This is a superb and often overlooked caving trip. The entrance to Out Slets Beck Pot is in the stream bed of Out Slets Beck. In normal conditions, a small stream flows past the entrance and a dam can be built to help avoid water entering. The entire cave is passable under these conditions providing water levels are stable (see warning below).

**WARNING:** If the stream flowing past the entrance is very high/fast flowing, although the entrance may appear passable, water sinking downstream joins the cave at a major inlet just after the first pitch and can make the cave hazardous. After heavy rain, water overwhelms the entrance (even with the dam in place) and would make the cave totally impassable. Stable water levels are therefore essential.

## Parking:

Travelling north east on the Stainforth to Halton Gill road, call for permission from Penyghent House. Then park approximately 750m back down the road on the verge at the public footpath leading along the south side of Penyghent Gill.

## How to find:

Grid reference: SD 86800 73710

Follow the footpath along the south side of Penyghent Gill for approximately 1.2km (about 15 minutes). Only a short distance after the third wall is crossed, the path crosses Out Slets Beck. Follow the streambed downhill for about 75m to locate the entrance, a 3m deep hole recessed into the true right embankment of the streambed. Ignore any other holes, some of which are currently choked with rubbish.

## Rigging:

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

## Navigation:

Check, and if necessary, improve the integrity of the dam at the entrance before descending.

Climb down the entrance hole into a thrutchy but walking height passage, which should be followed for a short distance to the first climb. This is an easy 3m climb on the way down but is much harder on the upward journey. Installation of the handline shown in the rigging topo is advisable.

Beyond this climb the passage degenerates into a tubular crawl in the stream with a pronounced left bend half way along.

At the end of this passage the first pitch is reached which despite many guidebooks reporting as being free-climbable, is approximately 3m straight down with no sound footholds. Rigging this as a pitch is strongly recommended.

Beyond the first pitch a main inlet enters on the left (ignore) and the water should be followed downstream in approximately 100m of fine streamway with cascades and pools. Cascade Pot is then reached, which is rigged by a climb up before the pitch and then using anchors along the right-hand wall to provide a traverse out over the pitch leading to a Y-hang from opposite walls. This is a short but magnificent and perfectly rounded pothole descending into a knee-deep swirling pool of water.

A crawl at the edge of the pool continues onwards into a low and cobbled bedding. Keep right only a few metres into the start of this crawl to reunite with the flowing water in a wide, low and rather wet crawl with a few flat-out sections. Follow the water downstream and after only 50m the floor cuts down to provide a walking sized passage with some magnificent 'cauliflower' formations. The next pitch, Deluge Pot, is then reached. The anchors are located by a climb up a few metres back from the pitch to a traverse at roof level over the pitch. There are two rebays to help facilitate a drier descent, although considerable spray is still to be expected on this pitch under normal conditions.

From the bottom of the pitch, fine walking sized passage continues for about 75m until the canal/duck is reached. Many cavers choose to turn around here, however, the passages beyond the canal are worth seeing, and the wet section only lasts a minute.

If continuing, SRT kits are best abandoned. The canal starts with an immediate neck-deep pool before narrowing to a passage with waist to chest deep water. This narrow canal zig zags for several metres. After the first bend is a constriction which necessitates an acrobatic head first squeeze above the water (you will be pleased to have removed your SRT kit). Then after a few more bends the duck is reached. This is formed by a rock arch which necessitates a stoop with your belly in the water. Immediately after the duck, the passage rises out of the water.

Beyond the canal/duck is a superb meandering river passage, dropping down several cascades. Once the cascades end, the passage narrows and the way on is a drop into a thrutchy passage at stream level (Shatter Passage). A prominent left bend at the end of this leads to the sump.

