

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.

DISMAL HILL CAVE and OLD ING CAVE

November 2022

These caves are part of the Birkwith-Red Moss Pot system. Thanks to caver engineering, they are connected for non-divers, allowing a characterful and wet through-trip. The entire system is very flood responsive and should not be entered during wet weather.

Parking:

Parking at High Birkwith Farm is likely to be refused.

Parking may be permitted at Low Birkwith Farm for a goodwill fee, but do not rely on this being available. You may wish to enquire in advance with the farm.

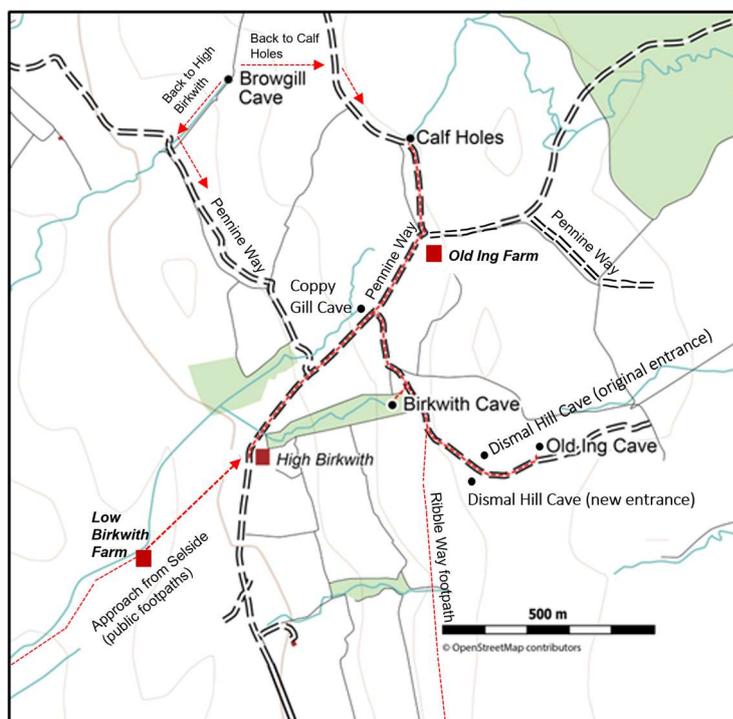
The nearest and best public parking is on the green lane west of the road at the north end of Selside, where cavers traditionally park for Long Churn and Alum Pot. Parking is free (the access fee here is for Alum Pot/Long Churn access), and it is a pleasant 3km walk on public footpaths past Selside Farm and along the south bank of Coppy Gill to reach High Birkwith. Be familiar with the exact access specifics on the CNCC website before your trip, as some discretion around High Birkwith Farm may be required.

How to find:

Dismal Hill Cave (new SRT entrance): SD 8055 7676

Dismal Hill Cave (original entrance): SD 8057 7682

Old Ing Cave: SD 8074 7686



About 300m beyond High Birkwith Farm, the Ribble Way footpath leads off on the right along a wall. Follow this for 100m and then cross another wall. Another 200m further (passing near the cluster of trees containing Birkwith Cave), the Ribble Way continues south, however, a second track (not a public footpath) bears off left to cut across the pasture. Follow this and after 75m the original Dismal Hill entrance is in a shakehole 20m to the left (north) side of the track, and the newer SRT oil-drum entrance is 20m to the right (south) side of the track. The track then turns east (left) and after approximately 150m, soon after the corner of the left wall, Old Ing Cave is in a shakehole 20m on the left side of the track.

Old Ing Cave navigation (to connection with Dismal Hill Cave):

The entrance leads to easy passage for 200m until a junction where a passage carrying water enters on left. This is Rough Hill Inlet.

Rough Hill Inlet is a short excursion, explorable for 120m via a deep duck to a cascading inlet on the left. Following the inlet for 50m of crawling reaches a sump. Ignoring the inlet and continuing straight on passes a few avens and a duck before ending after 40m.

Ignoring Rough Hill Inlet, follow the water through several pools and cascades. About 150m after Rough Hill Inlet is a small chamber at a sharp left-hand bend. About 100m beyond here sumps are reached.

There are two sumps, Sump One: 3m long and Sump Two: <1m long (but 2m deep). They have been free dived by many groups but this requires considerable research and experience to ascertain whether the underwater route is unobstructed. We do not recommend undertaking these sumps as free dives. They lead into The Leeds to Liverpool Canal, a swim, which soon reaches the other side of Mick's End entering high on the right.

Only just beyond the chamber at the sharp left bend is a climb up to the roof into a 20m long awkward bedding crawl (Mick's End). This emerges high up above a fine stream passage. Left (upstream) is the Leeds to Liverpool Canal to Sumps One and Two, and right (downstream) leads via a series of cascades and a waterfall down into Swift Falls Chamber. Shortly beyond here is an exposed and awkward traverse and then the blasted crawl to Dismal Hill Cave which bypasses the 11m sump. After the blasted crawl, continue downstream and after 100m, watch out for the route out via Dismal Hill on the right (see Dismal Hill description below for details on the route out beyond here).

Dismal Hill Cave navigation (to connection with Old Ing Cave):

The new entrance is an oil-drum which requires a 25m rope to rig, however, the description here focuses on the original entrance on the left (north side) of the track which is more challenging and does not require ropework. A short flat-out crawl at the bottom of shakehole leads to two sequential climbs of about 4m each (handline best for novices). At the bottom, continue along the rift and into a parallel rift, from where various options are provided to reach a lower bedding. In the bedding, a squeeze and flat-out crawl for 30m lead into the Dismal Hill Stream Passage.

Downstream is 150m of fine streamway and traversing, ending at deep pools and then a sump.

Upstream leads via a canal and then the new SRT entrance lands on a shelf on the right. More canal passage reaches the sump, where a short, blasted crawl avoids the need for what used to be an 11m dive. An exposed and awkward traverse and then some deep water (bypassable by a higher bedding on the left) soon reaches Swift Falls Chamber with a waterfall. Climb up the waterfall and head upstream, looking out for a climb up on the left into a bedding crawl, Mick's End; if you miss this, you will end up swimming in the Leeds to Liverpool Canal and then arriving at a sump.

Mick's End is a short crawl which emerges into the roof of Old Ing Cave. The sumps back through to Dismal Hill Cave are downstream, and the Old Ing Cave entrance is found by following the water upstream and keeping left where Rough Hill Inlet joins on the right.