

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.

Fossil Pot

December 2020

Fossil Pot is a quirky short trip on Grassington Moor, with a variety of acrobatics and a short but sweet main streamway. The cave is passable in moderately wet weather but not flood, when the usually dry valley turns into a river.

Parking:

Follow the main street out of Grassington for a few miles to the hamlet of Yarnbury where there is plenty of parking near the Grassington Mines information board.

Location: Grid reference: SE 019 668

Continue straight ahead beyond Yarnbury, along the track (Old Moor Lane) for 750m. The track then turns left, and a few hundred metres later at the bottom of a valley is a gate on the left. A suitable vehicle may be able to drive to this point.

Through this gate, follow the boulder-strewn dry valley for 300m. The entrance is a metal hatch in the dry streambed, approximately 60m before a prominent mine adit on the right hillside. The entrance may have rocks piled on top (replace after your trip) so may not be immediately obvious.

Rigging:

There are four pitches, fitted with through-bolts and stainless steel hangers which are not CNCC approved. Treat with caution. May contain in-situ ropes on some pitches which must be treated with caution; always rig your own for safety.

Tackle Requirements (minimum):

14m, 16m, 12m and 22m ropes, 10 krabs and 4 slings.

Navigation:

Below the hatch is an easy 2m climb down into a narrow rift with the most spectacular array of fossils in each wall. A few metres along this rift, a traverse rope may be commenced to the top of the first pitch, rigged as a Y-hang. This 8m pitch is narrow and awkward at the top but widens out only a few metres down, landing in a spacious chamber.

It is suggested to remove SRT kit for the following section of cave unless you are small and very bendy.

A descending crawl continues away from the entrance. After just a couple of metres, the way on is an obscure 1.5m squeeze up a chimney on the left wall. This rises into a rather confined chamber, where the way on is through a small, blasted arch (the Pie Muncher squeeze) leading directly onto a 2m drop down a narrow rift. It is desirable to go feet-first through this arch, but this requires a challenging manoeuvre in the cramped chamber. If a feet first approach is impossible, an entertaining head-first approach down the rift will be necessary.

A further sideways wriggle along the rift reaches a spacious chamber. The way on is now a pitch upwards, through the false floor of boulders several metres above, with a few deviations to position the rope. There may be an in-situ rope to demonstrate the route. This pitch may be climbed; however, this is quite an exposed climb so your most capable climber may need to go up first to rig the rope for others.

From the top of the pitch, just over a large boulder pile, is a slope leading up to a right bend. Around this bend a 3m sideways wriggle leads to a second right bend. The narrow rift then slopes awkwardly downwards for 4m to the head of the next pitch, with the traverse and hang being rigged creatively at floor level using natural belays. Exiting this pitch on the upward journey can be entertaining.

The narrower parts of the cave are now over and the way on is an obvious crawl into an arched passage. Turn left at a T-junction and you will soon reach the head of the next pitch, a fine 15m descent. At the bottom, the way on is a 2.5m chimney climb down (Pie Muncher's Revenge, awkward on the upward journey) leading into a spacious passage which descends towards the Main Streamway.

The Main Streamway is a large stream passage, a worthy reward for the short but energetic journey. This passage seems to offer so much hope, but sumps only 30m downstream. Upstream it lowers to stooping and reaches a crawl in the water (a drained sump) after 50m, leading through to a further large chamber with some avens where all routes soon terminate.

Several climbs to muddy digs offer entertainment to curious explorers, otherwise it is back out to Grassington in time for tea and cake.

