

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.

New Rift Pot (not to be confused with Rift Pot on the Ingleborough Allotment) is superb trip involving a few slightly awkward squeezes and a superb big pitch dropping into an impressive chamber. The low crawl after the entrance pitch is flood-prone, so settled weather is essential.

Parking:

About a mile west of Ingleton on the A65, turn off at the sign for Masongill. Pass through Masongill village and follow the winding narrow road to the end of the public road by the derelict waterworks building. Park here without blocking access for farm traffic.

Location: Grid reference SD 67917 76892

Follow the track heading gently uphill from the parking area. After 500m (near the top) the left wall is crossed at a stile. Follow the vague footpath across the fell. After 200m turn right and head directly towards the wooded area (Marble Steps Pot), and after only about 100m the large shakehole of Rift Pot is encountered, with the prominent fenced open entrance.

Rigging:

The rigging topo is available on the CNCC website.

Navigation:

The entrance to Rift Pot is, as the name suggests, a large rift. An easily climbable 2m drop is followed by a scramble down a steeply descending rift passage with jammed blocks to the head of the pitch. Attach the rope to a couple of natural belays further up the rift to protect the approach to the pitch, and then two anchors over the pitch head allow for a free-hang down this 8m scaffold-supported drop.

Larger cavers may wish to remove and carry their SRT kit in a bag from this point until the start of the next pitch due to the awkward crawls.

At the bottom of the pitch is a drop down into a low crawl. After several metres a junction is reached and the way on is right. The low and awkward flat-out crawling continues with a few puddles on-route for added pleasure. After about 20m the passage enlarges at a trench, and then soon after this is a 2.5m climb down to the floor in a small chamber. The way on is then to turn right into a crawling-height blasted passage.

This passage bends right after only a few metres. The following several metres of passage becomes gradually smaller, culminating with an awkward sideways wriggle leading to a short drop. Larger cavers may find that the entire section of passage from the right bend to the drop is best tackled feet-first (lying on left side for the final bit) to avoid a restricted head-first approach to the drop.

The route then continues with further awkward climbs in a steeply descending passage, with a few slightly spacious sections to put SRT kit back on. The head of the next pitch is soon reached with a chockstone belay for the traverse and then an anchored Y-hang for a take-off. This is narrow at the top but quickly enlarges into a spacious and airy pitch.

About 10-15m down is a ledge where the two SRT routes shown on the topo diverge.

Direct route: The second anchor of the traverse at the ledge also serves as a Y-hang allowing an almost immediate continuation down the pitch. A further Y-hang rebelay (or deviation) 6m down repositions the rope for either a free-hang to the floor. Alternatively, lovers of rebelays can use two further anchors in the roof of the chamber 10m lower for an exposed Y-hang rebelay. This route may be quite wet.

Route 66: This route was more recently anchored to provide a drier hang and is therefore most recommended. An exposed traverse along the ledge using several anchors reaches a Y-hang. Swing onto another ledge about 8m down to locate the next Y-hang rebelay, and then a deviation a few metres further down positions the rope for the final descent.

The pitch lands in Coates Cavern, an impressive large chamber (about 60x30m) with several routes leading off. Many cavers choose to have an explore in all directions before commencing the outward journey. However, there are options here to exchange with Low Douk, Ireby Fell Cavern or Large Pot. The CNCC does not yet have a description for these connections, so further research is required if planning this.

