

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.

FOUL POT

April 2023

Unlike many deep Fountains Fell pots, FOUL Pot isn't quite as tough. There is a rather low crawl just inside the entrance, and a tight rift below the second pitch, but these are very short. In return, FOUL offers an excellent adventure, splendid pitches and good formations. FOUL Pot can be visited in moderately wet weather although in very wet conditions some of the pitches can become hazardous, and the sump rises ~30m to the top of the final pitch!

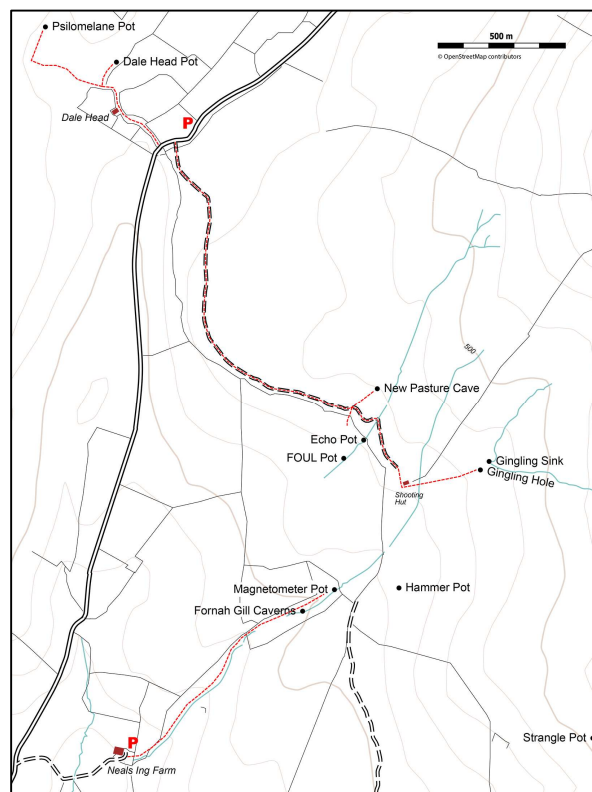
Parking: Park at Dale Head (check CNCC website for any permissions).

How to find: Grid reference: SD 8500 7020

From the parking area at Dale Head, follow through the gate and along the track leading south/east across Fountains Fell (away from Penyghent). After 1.5km, the track bears down into a shallow valley; just before this, leave the path and cross the wall on the right where some convenient limestone blocks allow the wall to be stepped over with ease. FOUL Pot is in a shakehole 200m down the dry valley (not to be confused with Echo Pot, closer to the wall).

Rigging: The rigging topo is available on the CNCC website. **NOTE:** One maillon is required for the wetter route down Man O' War pitch (left as shown on the topo) due to one rebelay anchor being too tight to the wall for a krab.

Navigation: The fenced entrance is an easy climb of 4m. Care is required with the stacked walling. At the bottom, a cramped passage leads into a small chamber and then a flat-out crawl through puddles or a small stream. After 4m this crawl rises slightly through blocks into a small chamber.



From this chamber the way on is to keep right into an awkward crawl-traverse over blocks in a rift. The passage quickly enlarges at a drop down onto a shelf which overlooks Octopus Hall below. Take note of where you have just come from (as it can be easy to miss on the way out). The drop into Octopus Hall is a 4m pitch (rigged around a large boulder at the top). There is an in-situ ladder which should not be trusted.

Octopus Hall is predominated by a large orange flowstone (care to avoid muddying this). The way on is beneath the flowstone, through a low wriggle under or scramble over some blocks and into the ongoing passage **CARE; These blocks are very precariously stacked; go one at a time and with care!!!** Then, another tight wriggle through blocks reaches a tiny chamber. The way on is under the right wall where a short crawl reaches a drop down onto a balcony overlooking the second pitch (all anchors for this are in the roof; two just before and two over the pitch).

At the bottom of the second pitch is a very narrow rift. This looks worse than it is, although SRT kit removal will help above-average sized cavers to fit. The rift is only 4m long and it is easy to pass bags through with teamwork. A short climb down (not all the way to the floor) reaches a further 3m narrow section. At the end of this second narrow section an awkward 3m climb down enters a large chamber, Keel Hall.

The way on from Keel Hall is at floor level under a boulder and into the ongoing passage, an easy crawl in the stream, which turns sharp left after 10m. A short flat-out section then eases to a crawl through a trench in the shale for 20m, which soon enlarges into a proper vadose passage.

Downstream in this proper passage is an excellent flowstone which you must duck under (extreme care, this is in pristine condition). Beyond here are some excellent straws in the roof, some over 1m long. An awkward 1m drop down under a jammed block quickly leads to a traverse formed as the floor cuts down on the approach to Man O' War pitch. Stay high, however if you reach a nice flowstone on the left at head height, you are too high, and you will need to carefully climb down a few metres to locate the first anchor for the Man O' War pitch traverse.

The pitch is rigged from a large Y-hang from opposite walls. Careful positioning of the knot is necessary to avoid rope rub further down the pitch, the first hang of which is not a perfectly straight descent. Below here, there are two anchored routes down Man O' War pitch:

Route 1 (left side on topo): This involves a descent of about 15-20m and then a swing across to a Y-hang rebelay. Note that the left-hand anchor of this rebelay is a little tight to the wall and a karabiner may be hard to get in and out; a maillon is recommended. The final descent is a magnificent drop of about 20m in a clean spacious shaft, landing in a large passage. This route may be very unpleasant in wet conditions.

Route 2 (right side on topo): This route involves a descent of about 12-15m and then a swing across to a different Y-hang rebelay further away from the water, a second rebelay, and then a deviation. Although this route requires more rigging/rope, it is more suited to wetter conditions.

Around the corner is another short pitch (Pool Pitch, 4m), rigged from a few anchors. It is then necessary to climb up into the ongoing passage. About 15m further, just before the final pitch, the passage abruptly narrows ahead as the water cuts down and it is necessary to traverse to the top of a ridge of rock. Here, on the right, two anchors commence the traverse down the equally slippery slope to the pitch head. Care with the positioning of the Y-hang at this pitch head is needed to avoid rope rub on the rock buttresses just below the take-off point.

The pitch descends via a few ledges (no rebelay required if careful) into a muddy chamber of large blocks (Fastnet). A scramble down a loose slope of rocks leads towards the stream, and a few climbs eventually drop into a sizable chamber with lots of mud. A stooping height passage on the right (which may be sumped) reaches the usual sump after only 25m; well worth reaching for the sake of completeness.