

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.

GINGLING HOLE

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Gingling Hole is often called the 'King of Fountains Fell' and offers an excellent trip with no real difficulties as far as the sixth pitch. Beyond here two routes allow for a choice of more challenging continuations. Parts of Gingling Hole will become hazardous in wet weather, with the lower reaches filling to the roof, so settled and dry weather is essential.

Parking: Call at Rainscar House to ask permission and then park at Dale Head.

How to find: Grid reference: SD 85513 70179

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 about 2km a shooting hut is reached. Turn left at the hut and Gingling Hole can be found 300m away on a bearing of about 80° in a dry valley downstream of Gingling Sink. The entrance is at the bottom of a large shakehole.

Rigging: The rigging topo is available on the CNCC website.

Navigation:

The entrance shaft is a simple 8m drop landing on boulders. Descend the boulders to a 3m climb down a narrow slot followed by a short (potentially slightly wet) crawl leading to the streamway.

Further easy crawling in the streamway soon enlarges to walking size before the second pitch is encountered, with anchors high on the left wall.

A narrow meandering passage leads to a chamber followed by a rift and then the third pitch. Where the stream starts to cut down, climb up to the roof to locate a natural belay around a block and then a second belay around some stal to provide a traverse to two anchors at the pitch head.

Below this pitch a narrow rift leads to a climb down. The stream then once again starts to cut down and anchors on the right protect the exposed traverse above Stalactite Chamber to the head of the fourth pitch. An alternative route is to continue the anchored traverse along the ledge to the very end, thus allowing the pitch to be climbed down via a boulder slope.

At the bottom of the fourth pitch is a climb down boulders into a flat-out bedding crawl. This soon eases and enlarges into a finely decorated passage (Fools Paradise). **Considerable care is needed in travelling along this passage to avoid damage; take particular care with bags.** At the end of the passage is a traverse on a ledge to the head of the fifth pitch, where a pair of anchors on the right allow a Y-hang followed soon by a rebelay anchor on the left for the hang down the pitch.

Below the fifth pitch, a crawl leads to a chamber and then further crawling between blocks leads to the sixth pitch. This starts with a traverse, where a chockstone provides a ledge to start rigging using anchors at roof level, with a rebelay a short distance down. At the bottom, either crawl at stream level or traverse 3m above the stream, to reach a 4m pit just beyond a corner. Traverse over this and continue along the narrow passage to reach a short climb down into wider passage. It is here that the cave splits into two separate routes, each leading to separate sumps.

Big Pitch route:

A small hole in the floor is 'Ammered 'Ole pitch, rigged from a pair of anchors. It is narrow and awkward at the top (it was dug out originally) but enlarges further down and lands in a small chamber. Onward from here is a small winding passage leading to Little Pitch, with a thread belay on the left wall well back from the pitch, allowing a traverse to a single anchor in the roof for the descent.

Only a short distance downslope from the bottom of Little Pitch is the start of Big Pitch. Rigging commences from a flake/spike on the left wall and an anchor on the right. A descending traverse leads to a Y-hang and a 15m descent to two anchors on opposing walls which create a large Y-hang for the final descent. The rigging topo portrays two ropes, however, a single 80m rope is sufficient if the second Y-hang rebelay is omitted and instead the far anchor of this is used for a deviation. This pitch lands on an ominous ledge next to the sump with no way on.

Big Rift route:

Traverse over the top of the 'Ammered 'Ole pitch. A route through calcite including a few squeezes leads to two climbs down and then a very narrow awkward slanting climb down (The Thrutch). A stream passage ends at a right turn leading into a canal, which varies between crawling and stooping with a few deeper sections. After further calcited sections of passage, and the water is lost down a hole. Step over this into a walking sized passage leading to the seventh pitch. Two anchors on the right commence the descent, with a rebelay just over the edge.

The eighth, ninth and tenth pitches follow in quick succession and are each rigged from two anchors just above each pitch. The ninth and tenth pitches are awkward at the top due to the continued narrowing (and increasing slipperiness) of the rift. The final descent is then a steep muddy slope rigged from a natural belay and usually just handlined down to the sump.

