

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.

Robinson's Pot is a short but fine trip taking in a classic and well decorated Yorkshire streamway plus a diverse selection of passages. The cave is uniquely accessed; the entrance is immediately beneath a window at Darnbrook Farm (which is located at the bottom of the steep hill half way between Malham Tarn and Arncliffe). Note that the wet crawl to MacColl's Rift is in an active streamway; a rise in water levels could flood the crawl. Darnbrook Beck responds quickly to heavy rain so ensure the water level is not rising.

Parking:

Call at Darnbrook Farm to present your permit; the tenants are always very friendly and will advise where is best to park. Please be courteous to help sustain good relations here.

How to find:

Grid reference SD 899 706

Enter Darnbrook farmyard and on the left is a patio with the back door to the farmhouse. The entrance is the manhole beneath the window on the right (the tenants may have their car parked on top of it). The lid is held closed by a stake threaded between two bolts.



Please ensure to pull the manhole cover over the hole while you are underground; the farm cat is too inquisitive for its own good!

Rigging: No CNCC-approved anchors have been installed. There are only two pitches; the entrance (7m) is best rigged using an appropriately belayed ladder. The climb down to the streamway (3m) can be free-climbed but a ladder (plus sling) or short handline is recommended.

Navigation:

The pitch lands in a small chamber. Opposite the ladder, climb up on to a ledge into continuing passage. This passage reaches a short drop, which can either be climbed down or traversed over using a polished foothold. The routes rejoin almost immediately, and those who are traversing will need to climb down a gravelly bank.

Continue (passing tape on the left) into 1862 Chamber. At the end of the chamber beside the namesake graffiti there are two obvious onward routes. The way on is down a slope at floor level to the left, which descends into a hands-and-knees crawl, setting the theme for the next several minutes of caving. At the next junction the low muddy passage on the left is the way on (of course this is the least appealing looking route). The remaining crawling is now in a dry mud tube with a couple of sharp left turns.

The crawl pops out in a small streamway; this can be explored upstream (left) for a reasonable distance including various tight inlets and wet beddings. The usual way on however is downstream (right), crawling through the water and cobbles. This quickly enters a flat-out section in the water for approximately 20m; a wetting is unavoidable here. Slight respite is found part way along this crawl in a small chamber where there is room for several people to stand up. The low wet crawl resumes for just a few body-lengths before rising into the vastness of MacColl's Rift.

Beware: This crawl may flood in high water conditions and is substantially worse on the outward journey as the water is flowing against you, which can be problematic in the lowest section. Do not proceed past this point if there is any risk of rising water.

At MacColl's Rift, the way on is right, up a narrow mud channel worn by the passage of many feet. Tape protects formations along the passage. The roof descends and may become stooping for taller members, to another mud crawl. After a couple of minutes this enlarges at a particularly muddy section. Here, the entrance to Crossover Passage is under the left wall and is reached either through an upright slot or a dive under the wall.

Crossover Passage is a gravelly crawl that quickly enlarges into a small canyon with a small active stream. The passage is only 30m long and soon reaches a 3m climb down to the Darnbrook Main Streamway. A ladder or handline can be installed from natural belays.

Turning left (downstream) soon leads to a sump. Upstream is a fine Yorkshire streamway passing several fine formations. Eventually, after around 150m, the streamway becomes more phreatic, with the roof lowering and the water rising. The aquatically minded can proceed to the upstream sump and, in low water, a wet muddy crawl (the Gulp Hole) on the right can be followed into the Worm Series.

The Worm Series is a short and seldom visited 200m excursion. The Gulp Hole crawl enlarges into a larger passage. Keep right at a fork and then along a narrow muddy rift. A small stream enters. This can be followed upstream becoming gradually more awful before reaching a sump. Above the point the stream is met a climb up reaches a terminal choke.