

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.

BLACK SHIVER POT

November 2016

Black Shiver is an extremely wet and flood-prone cave; it responds very quickly to wet weather and floods seriously. Dry and settled conditions before and during your trip are essential. Take a compass for navigation.

Parking:

Park on the road a few hundred metres north east of the Hill Inn at Chapel-le-Dale. There is a small parking space for 3-4 cars immediately next to the start of the path up Ingleborough (on the right if heading away from the Hill Inn), and a larger parking area another 100m further across the road.

How to find: Grid reference SD 73698 75428

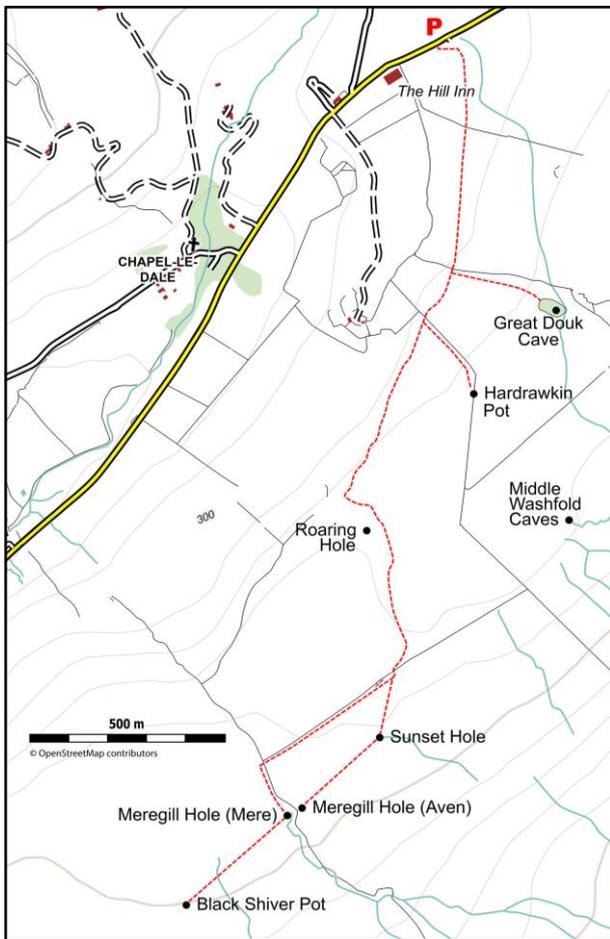
Follow the main marked footpath up Ingleborough for about 1.5 km until a massive shakehole is seen on the left. After the next wall, turn right to leave the footpath, and walk along the wall on your right hand side to a stile.

Cross the stile and follow the left wall for 100m to reach Meregill Hole. From here turn right and walk on a bearing of approximately 235°, perpendicular to the axis of the Meregill Hole fissure. After about 300m an area of exposed limestone ground is crossed. Just after this is a short rise up an embankment; Black Shiver is just up this embankment amongst a cluster of shakeholes. The entrance has some exposed limestone and is a 5m free-climb.

Rigging: The rigging topo from 'Northern Caving' is available on the CNCC website (courtesy of CNCC Technical Group).

Navigation:

Black Shiver Pot deserves its ominous sounding name; it is a classic Yorkshire Dales very wet pothole with several challenging SRT situations, wet pitches, a huge 55m free-hanging pitch and a true sense of foreboding in several places.



The entrance is a 5m free-climb. At the foot of the climb a small stream disappears into a low and uninviting crawl which is the way on. This starts as flat out (chest in water) crawling but eases slightly after 5m. The passage then develops into a narrow low twisting crawl for 50m before enlarging to a rift passage leading to the first pitch. This pitch is broken into two short easy descents connected by a narrowing.

A short distance on from here the second pitch (Blood Pot) is reached. A 1m descent reaches a single anchor rebelay on the right which helps to avoid the water. This drops onto a large shelf where an anchor 1m out along the right wall provides a further rebelay for the final drop.

An easy crawl in a canal leads on from the bottom of Blood Pot towards Black Dub Pitch. The 2m approach to this pitch is hourglass shaped and too narrow at the middle, making rigging this pitch challenging. The best approach is to belay the traverse line before the narrowing, and send the rigger along the top of the hourglass to rig the Y-hang and drop the rope. Unless the rigger is exceptionally bendy, he/she will then have to reverse and approach the pitch head via the bottom half of the hourglass. This involves a narrow squeeze at water level into a pool at the pitch head where easier access to the rope is gained. On exiting this pitch on the upward journey it is necessary to swing into here feet first.

At the bottom of Black Dub Pitch is an ominous lake. To the right this is very deep indeed, but there is a wide ledge about 50cm under the water along the left wall. There are two anchors to belay the rope for a tight handline along the wall to avoid any aquatic accidents.

There appears at first to be no way on; however, at the back left of the chamber (at the end of the underwater ledge) a 20m wet crawl leads to Thunder Pot. This is a very short and wet descent leading almost immediately to the start of the Black Rift. Where the water disappears down the shaft, traverse to the left (in a washed out shale band) and over a hump of rock to a small balcony with the Y-hang to commence the descent. There is a deviation approximately 6m down which is essential to achieve an appropriately positioned landing.

This pitch drops 20m to a shelf in the rift above a few huge jammed blocks. A 2m swing along the wall reaches a Y-hang rebelay above the blocks. This commences the next descent, with an immediate steep deviation from an anchor in the jammed block. This deviation is essential to position the rope in the centre of the shaft. This is a magnificent 55m straight hang down an ominously dark and wet rift. The water crashes down only metres away making this a noisy and intimidating place. The final 25m of the descent can be extremely wet indeed!

At the bottom of the pitch, pass underneath the falling water to reach a low and wet crawl under a 50cm high arch with typically 25-30cm of water. This gloomy crawl is very short and thankfully gives way to a large rift passage. Many cavers omit this and to turn around at the bottom of the Black Rift, however, the route onto the sump is excellent and highly recommended.

At the end of the rift the water flows away to the left and should be followed along a slightly sharp and awkward streamway for approximately 100m (nothing too nasty) leading to the next pitch, which is a window out into a very large chamber (North Chamber). A natural pillar provides a belay for a short traverse line to the edge where two anchors (one out of sight near the roof) provide a Y-hang. A deviation via a rock 'knob' half way down avoids the water if necessary (although as you will likely be soaked by now it hardly seems worth the bother).

At the foot of the chamber go downstream to the final pitch which is belayed exclusively off a large rock spike. Continuing along the splendid, gloomy and atmospheric passage soon reaches the sump, and the exhilarating outward journey begins. A tremendous adventure!