



The Council of Northern Caving Clubs; meeting of Friday 28th September 2012

This document contains the following reports;

- Draft minutes of the above meeting
- Secretary's report
- Access Officer report
- Conservation Officer's report
- Training Officer's report
- CNCC Technical Group report
- Meet Secretary's report
- CNCC Secretary's report to BCA Council
- Report of meeting (2nd October 2012) with Andy Eavis

MINUTES of the CNCC COMMITTEE MEETING held on 28 September 2012 at HELLIFIELD VILLAGE INSTITUTE

The Meeting commenced at 20.00.

PRESENT: R. Holmes (Chairperson), Les Sykes (Secretary), Glenn Jones (Treasurer), Ric Halliwell, FayHartley(BCC), S. Lieberman (RRCPC), Andy Whitney (RRCPC), Alan Speight (YSS), Harvey Lomas (YRC), Andrew Hinde (Gritstone Club/Natural England), Bernard Bond (BCC), Pete Monk (Northern Boggarts), Ray Duffy (RRCPC), Ian Lloyd (NSG), Victor Wain (WRPC), Damien Weare (YSS), Stuart Ingham (NB), Malcolm Hughes (BPC), Kay Easton (Minutes Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES. Tony Brown, Jim Sloane

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: Minutes accepted and signed as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES:

Under Item 4 Treasurer's Report: In response to a question of whether an angle grinder had been purchased for the bolt program, Glenn explained that test grinding of bolts had generated a large quantity of sparks. Therefore that approach had been abandoned, and no angle grinder had been purchased.
(see PECO Anchor Decommissioning document here; http://www.cncc.org.uk/tg_locations.html)

Under Item 4 Conservation Officer's Report: Proposal on clearance of rubbish from sites of speleological interest, Les Sykes said CNCC still does not have a policy for waste removal. Andrew had produced a document which Les had enhanced to cover a wide spectrum of the activity. However, on expert advice Les had been asked to revisit certain areas of the document and reinforce other areas. He now believes that the document is too complex and intends to break it down into the following Operating Procedures; Removal of waste matter with no hazard, removal of low hazard waste matter requiring basic PPE, removal of medium hazard waste requiring specific PPE and management of that PPE. Waste removal outside these criteria will be by contracted licensed waste removal operators.

4 OFFICERS' REPORTS

Chairman's report Nothing to report

Secretary's report Written report appended to Minutes

Treasurer's report

Written report appended to the Minutes.

The sales of the Shuttleworth books were slow but steady, and only a few remained. The meeting decided not to reprint.

There was a request for around £270 to fund a surveying course at Bull Pot farm. It was agreed, provided all course attendees were BCA members (DIM or CIM), for reasons including insurance.

Clapham Bottom has suffered a collapse; it is now an important entrance for divers to Gaping Gill. Glenn agreed in principle, subject to firm estimate, for funds to install 20ft piping and re-shaft the entrance – probable cost £200 – 250.

Access Officer's Report Written report appended to the Minutes

Andrew Hinde had a site meeting with Lafarge at Fairy Holes. An access agreement is imminent, on the lines of the Robinson's Pot agreement. It will be important for parking restrictions to be adhered to.

Conservation Officer's report Written report appended to Minutes

Andrew expressed his thanks to everyone involved in cave conservation work. With regard to Tip Wood, Andrew had Natural England funds to cover removal of the asbestos waste by a specialist firm, and there was agreement that we should remove from the site the waste that so far had been extracted. Liaison with the Estate was required.

Training Officer's report Written report appended to the Minutes.

Technical Group report Written report appended to the Minutes.

5 MEETS SECRETARIES' REPORTS

Leck Fell Written report appended to Minutes. Andrew Hinde said that a Conservation Statement for Shuttleworth Pot was being issued with the permit.

Casterton Written report appended to the Minutes. The access situation appears to have calmed down. BCA Clubs involved have removed from their websites trip reports of trips carried out on days when no permits had been issued. Red Rose have added to their booking form a note that booking a trip with the club is not sufficient; a permit needs to be obtained. Damien said that a club had commented that BCA member clubs appeared to be being dealt with more strictly than non-member clubs and wondered whether CNCC should review its "policing" of the Casterton Fell agreement.

Ric Halliwell offered to stand in during Alan Speight's absence.

Birks Fell Nothing to report regarding Mongo, Birks Fell or Robinsons Pot. Booking numbers for 2012 remain very low for the first two but now getting requests for 2013.

Penyghent and Fountains Fell Nothing to report

Other Areas Tony Brown reported by email that there has been only one request for a permit for Whitewell Pot (from Morley Potholing Club) in 2012.

He had been anxious to remove the rubbish from the site before the Close Season but was unable to get a team together in time. The keeper was happy for us to remove the rubbish without letting him know a specific date, and Tony will check and see if he is content for the work to be done in the Close Season rather than waiting till 2013. The only problem for Tip Wood is parking, which should not be a problem on non-shooting days. It is important that we do shift the rubbish to retain good landowner relations.

Pete Monk said that once the rubbish had been removed from Tip Wood, he was proposing access to Hell Hole and Whitewell Cave should be on the same basis as access to Whitewell Pot, via Tony Brown rather than the Estate office. This would be something to pursue in 6-12 months time.

6 BCA REPORT Glenn outlined the history of the dispute with the Equipment and Technical Committee. He said that over a period of 10 years an Installation Procedures and Techniques Document (IPTD) had been prepared by Les Sykes and Bob Dearman and reviewed by the E&T committee and all Regions. There remained one disagreement, from CSCC, over the requirement for the installer, even for ladder or handline pitches, to be SRT competent; this requirement had been put in for the protection of the installer.

At the 2010 AGM, BCA signed off the IPTD. CSCC objected and withdrew from the scheme. The Convenor of the E&T Committee, Nick Williams was charged with arbitrating. In October 2011 he held separate discussions with CSCC and with DCA/CNCC. These discussions were observed by BCA Chairman Andy Eavis. Agreement was apparently reached, with CSCC agreeing to the SRT competence requirement, and copyright of the IPTD was transferred to BCA.

Between October 2011 and March 2012, suspicions emerged that the agreement reached with CSCC did not require their acceptance of the SRT competence requirement, and copyright of IPTD was returned to Les Sykes and Bob Dearman. Nick Williams offered his resignation to the E&T Committee, but this was not accepted.

Because of Nick Williams' role in the negotiation and the apparent complicity of Andy Eavis, Glenn and Les have resigned from the E&T Committee and Glenn has resigned from his post of CNCC representative on the BCA National Committee. CSCC are no longer able to install anchors. DCA and CNCC have joined to form a new Technical Group. This new group is prepared to take on the long term testing of anchors.

There followed a lively discussion.

Damien said that a BCA Guide to best practice had been written, but it did not go into detail, using phrases such as “competent to be safe while installing”. Regions could add to the document if they wish.

Glenn said that the Regional Councils were responsible for nominating installers and so were responsible for determining competence. Currently CNCC has 7-10 installers – re-accreditation is imminent.

Les said he had no problem with working with the E&T committee but was not prepared to work with the current Convener. A meeting was scheduled for Tuesday (2nd October) between Les Sykes, Bob Dearman and Andy Eavis. (**UPDATE:** A report from that meeting is appended to these reports)

Ric Halliwell proposed that the proposal suggested by Craven PC should be put to the meeting on Tuesday, with amendments as follows:

CNCC regrets that matters have come to a head in the way they have, especially considering the valuable work all parties to the dispute do on a voluntary basis.

CNCC believes that the only way out of this impasse is for a compromise even though this will be distasteful to both sides. With these considerations in mind CNCC recommends that:

- 1. All CNCC representatives who have resigned from the E&T and other BCA Committees should rejoin those committees*
 - 2. Nick Williams should formally apologise and step down as convener of the BCA E&T Committee but should remain a member of that Committee so as to retain his expertise in technical matters*
 - 3. Andy Eavis should act as Convener of BCA E&T Committee until the next BCA AGM when a new Convener will be elected*
 - 4. All bolts around pitches, whether for SRT or Ladder and Lifeline, should be installed and maintained in accordance with the full protocol including the need for SRT competence of the installer*
 - 5. Bolts solely to be used for fixed aids, e.g. chains, hand-lines etc, i.e. those which could not in any circumstances be mistaken for SRT rigging bolts, could be installed by persons without SRT competence but meeting all other requirements of the protocol*
- All the above to take immediate effect.*

This was seconded by Ian Lloyd and passed unanimously.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bernie proposed a vote of confidence in Les and Glenn, Pete seconded it, and the proposal was passed unanimously.

8 DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

18th January 2013, Hellifield Institute.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Council of Northern Caving Clubs

Committee meeting 28 September 2012

Secretary's report

Despite the holidays the last three months have been extremely busy. However, this has not been due to the secretarial work load but other functions that I perform as seen below.

Access Officer's report

Andrew Hinde has been busy negotiating with Lafarge over access to Fairy Caves in Weardale, this is now nearing its completion and CNCC should be administering access in the near future.

As mentioned in my last report I had negotiated access for speleological exploration of land owned by the Duchy of Lancaster in the North of the region. It is an area where there are currently no known caves. The exploration has now concluded and there is no evidence of speleological development in the area. The committee will be aware of the recent upsurge in unauthorised access by cavers on Casterton Fell especially during August. I took the unprecedented step of involving BCA at an early stage, my reasons for this were that all CNCC associate member clubs are BCA members and that I felt BCA should issue notice to its membership regarding the access arrangements and the implications of not applying those access arrangements. It was decided to post a notice on the caving forum as a quick and effective method of getting the message out quickly. However, as usual this did provoke the usual keyboard thumping antagonists into action. I do feel that the message has been understood and that now Alan will be a little busier. I have discussed the issues with the land agent on a number of occasions and they appear to be content with the action that has been taken.

Another problem that has arisen on Leck and Casterton Fells is that of commercial groups. This was brought to my attention by the Estate Office after two web sites had been browsed where caving on Leck and Casterton Fells was advertised. I have spoken to the organisation concerned and outlined the position of the CNCC and that of the land owner as the land owners are not happy with commercial enterprises earning money from using their land.

After the incident at Manchester Hole when it flooded due to North Yorkshire water undertaking scouring operations at the reservoir without prior notice, Graham Mollard has attended a meeting with the water authority and CNCC is to pay for some lockable signage that can be changed when there is a planned release of water, this will be managed by Graham Mollard.

CNCC Technical Group

Due to summer holidays etc. Very little has happened during the summer. In addition to Rowten Pot the anchors in Marylyn have now been decommissioned. Over the next months we would like to make a start on testing the Eco anchors in Yordas Gorge that were installed at the start of the program which form part of the long term testing programme. After these anchors have been tested we will be installing a long term test bed with the Bolt Products anchor for testing from 2032 onwards (well it won't be me because I will either be drooling while propped up in an armchair or have been scattered on some remote hillside by then).

BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee

I can confirm that we have formed a new committee with Derbyshire Caving Association called 'The Equipment Committee' an initial meeting has been held and the minutes are on the CNCC website. The intention is that we carry on as we were doing with installation and testing, but that we will not be attending BCA equipment & techniques committee meetings.

To date there has not been any communication with the BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee convenor, it had been hoped that he may contact us in an attempt to resolve the issues.

CNCC and DCA representatives will be meeting with the BCA Chairman early October in an attempt to try and resolve the issues surrounding his involvement and hopefully move forward.

On the 30/07/2012 the BCA Executive issued a statement of which this was printed 'The Committee is currently developing a new general policy on the placement of resin bonded anchors which outlines the key principles, but leaves Regions and Constituent Bodies free to use their own detailed procedures if they wish to. This is nearly complete and it is hoped that in the fullness of time this document will allow all Regions to come back "under one roof" and avoid the unnecessary duplication of effort, not to mention the ill-feeling that will potentially result from having two Committees doing what is effectively the same thing.' To date I have not received any communication regarding this or been asked to be involved.

The only other point I will make on the issue because I know it will be covered at length, is that the BCA secretary suggested in an email that Glenn, Roy and myself had cancelled the last meeting because we did not want to discuss the BCA issues?

Training Officers report

I have been asked by Graham Mollard if he can attend BCA Training meetings on my behalf, I have agreed to this.

Les Sykes

CNCC secretary, CNCC Training Officer, CNCC Access Officer

CNCC Cave Conservation Officer Report
September 2012-09-14

The Stabilisation of Crescent Pot has now been completed after a huge effort by a small team led by Ian Walker and Mike Cooper. The details of the project will be available to Descent readers in this month's issue.

At the BPC Winch meet a new twin wall pipe was built into the entrance of Christmas Pot. This should alleviate the problem of continuous slumping of the boulder clay into the entrance. Thanks to BPC members.

The Cupcake Pot bones collection has been catalogued and mounted in exhibition cases by John "Lugger" Thorp. This project has taken 100s of hours and has resulted in a mobile exhibition which has appeared at Ingleton Overground /Underground festival and the QRA/BCRA field meeting. It will be at Hidden Earth, curated by the BCRA Cave Archaeology Group.

The derelict fence around Kail Pot – Kingsdale has been replaced with a new stock proof fence. The work was undertaken by the highly experienced CNCC voluntary fencing crew. The landowner is grateful for the protection this affords his lambs in spring.

Stainless steel conservation pins and new tape have been introduced to Inlet 5 of Notts II Pot. (now that it is accessible from inlet 6.5 & ¾) East Passage in GG has also had an up- grade of conservation taping.

The CNCC volunteers have completed the new path building at Victoria Cave – Settle as part of a wider conservation project designed to protect the internationally important cave sediments which were under threat from visitor pressure and rabbit burrows. The YDNP archaeology officer was suitably impressed by the efficiency of the caving volunteers.

I have prepared Natural England "consent" for 4 separate surface digs.

I have also presented an illustrated talk on the work of CNCC conservation volunteers at the Ingleton OGUG festival.

Report to CNCC CCTTEE 28th September 2012 – Leck Fell Access Agreement

Up to 11th September 2012 (date written), for the year 2012/13, 36 member clubs have now been issued permits under the access agreement. This is almost the same number as was recorded for the same date in the previous year.

Demand for permits remains buoyant. Over the past month or so there have been approximately 3 requests for permits per week. As far as weekends are concerned October and November are now heavily booked, but at the time of writing a few weekend permits

for both months remain available. As for December, apart from the second weekend, there is plenty of Saturday/Sunday availability currently, although I am expecting that as usual the Xmas and New Year period will be very heavily booked by visiting University clubs.

I am not currently aware of any concerns from the landowner or his agents about the operation of the access agreement. One club however did make contact with me in relation to the actions of another group on the fell. This was looked into at the time and hopefully is now resolved.

Jim Sloane – CNCC Meets Secretary Leck Fell
11/09/2012

Casterton Fell - Report from Alan Speight

Since all the publicity about Clubs requiring permits applications have picked up but there are still plenty of dates available.

August had 4 permit requests (3 of them midweek) to date 12 permits have been issued for September, 15 for October and 17 for November and 6 for December none of these are over the Christmas period. I have also emailed Andy Hall of the Red Rose asking if he can put something on the Red Rose bookings reminding any club stopping at Bull Pot farm that they also require permits if they are going down caves on Casterton Fell..

Finally I am going on holiday for a month October/November and need someone to issue permits during that time.

Council of Northern Caving Clubs

Report for BCA council meeting 06/10/2012

As the CNCC representative has declined to attend all BCA meetings until the current dispute is resolved, I have prepared a brief report for the meeting.

The committee will be aware of the recent upsurge in unauthorised access by cavers on Casterton Fell especially during August. I took the unprecedented step of involving BCA at an early stage, my reasons for this were that all CNCC associate member clubs are BCA members and that I felt BCA should issue notice to its membership regarding the access arrangements and the implications of not applying those access arrangements. It was decided to post a notice on the caving forum as a quick and effective method of getting the message out quickly. However, as usual this did provoke the usual keyboard thumping antagonists into action. I do feel that the message has been understood and that now Alan will be a little busier. I have discussed the issues with the land agents on a number of occasions and they appear to be content with the action that has been taken.

It is now up to the member clubs to play their part and request permits for access to the Fells where there is an agreed access agreement.

Another problem that has arisen on Leck and Casterton Fells is that of commercial groups. This was brought to my attention by the Estate Office after two web sites had been browsed where caving on Leck and Casterton Fells was advertised. I have spoken to the organisation concerned and outlined the position of the CNCC and that of the land owners; the land owners are not happy with commercial enterprises earning money from using their land.

After the incident at Manchester Hole when it flooded due to North Yorkshire water undertaking scouring operations at the reservoir without prior notice; Graham Mollard has attended a meeting with the water authority and CNCC is to pay for some lockable signage that can be changed when there is a planned release of water, this will be managed by Graham Mollard.

I have been asked by Graham Mollard if he can attend BCA Training meetings on behalf of the CNCC training Officer, I have agreed to this. The CNCC Council meeting on the 28 September 2012 passed the following resolution.

CNCC regrets that matters have come to a head in the way they have, especially considering the valuable work all parties to the dispute do on a voluntary basis.

CNCC believes that the only way out of this impasse is for a compromise even though this will be distasteful to both sides. With these considerations in mind CNCC recommends that:

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5. Bolts solely to be used for fixed aids, e.g. chains, hand-lines etc, i.e. those which could not in any circumstances be mistaken for SRT rigging bolts, could be installed by persons without SRT competence but meeting all other requirements of the protocol

All the above to take immediate effect.

Les Sykes
CNCC secretary
CNCC Training Officer
CNCC Access Officer

Meeting with Andy Eavis, 2nd October 2012;

The following are the key points from this morning's meeting with Andy Eavis (AE), Bob Dearman (BD) and myself (Les had vehicle problems and could not attend);

We discussed the October 2011 E&T IPTD negotiations and AE stated categorically that there was no deception or duplicity during the negotiations that he witnessed between Nick Williams and CSCC, and Nick Williams and CNCC/DCA. He (AE) further stated that the statement issued by E&T following the meeting was a true record of the agreement; *"As a result of the process of arbitration, CSCC have agreed to the IPTD including a requirement for Council of Southern Caving Clubs SRT competence, on the basis that the document will become copyright of BCA and subject to future revision as agreed by the E+T Committee"*

We discussed the statement contained in the February 4th 2012 CSCC minutes *"FL clarified that the acceptance of the IPTD with regards to SRT competence is only applicable for placing anchors for SRT pitches only"* and AE stated she had no authority to make that statement, and he (AE) would speak to CSCC to further understand the context of the statement.

We discussed section 10.3 of the March 2012 E&T minutes where *"NW noted that he accepted he had made a promise to CSCC which he had not made clear to GJ, BD and LS in that he had not distinguished between SRT anchors and anchors for other purposes"* and on the basis of that admission NW had returned to copyright of the IPTD to BD and LS. AE stated that he would talk to NW with a matter of urgency in order to understand what had happened between the October E&T meeting and the February CSCC meeting.

AE clearly wants a resolution to this dispute and suggested one way would be to remove the reference to SRT, which is not acceptable to either CNCC or DCA, but further, is a requirement determined by Nick Williams *"NW; Competence of the installer is an integral part of the safety of the scheme and of the insurance cover for the Scheme. The removal of the word SRT would not be appropriate"* (June 20th 2009 BCA minutes)

We discussed the forthcoming *"new general policy on the placement of resin bonded anchors which outlines the key principles, but leaves Regions and Constituent Bodies free to use their own detailed procedures if they wish to"*. AE would not confirm the authorship of the new document, but both BD and myself stated that unless the safety of the installer is paramount, DCA and CNCC are unlikely to agree it.

Both BD and myself reiterated that neither CNCC or DCA would attend E&T meetings whilst Nick Williams was Convenor.

Overall, it was a very productive meeting, and we look forward to an update from AE.

Glenn