

THE COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

The Annual General Meeting of the Council will be held at the Ingleboro' Hotel, Ingleton, at 3.00 pm on Saturday 17th May 1975.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 1974 AGM.
3. Chairman's Statement.
4. Secretary's Report.
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. Meets Secretaries Reports.
7. White Scar Cave.
8. The National Park Plan.
9. Election of Officers and Committee.
10. Whernside Manor.
11. Any Other Business

Members are reminded that voting will be restricted to one representative from each paid-up Full Member Club present at the Meeting. Nominations for the posts of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary will be accepted at the meeting or in an advance letter from a Full Member Club secretary.

Special Notice

All clubs are requested to inform their members that a delicate situation exists at Stump Cross at the moment, with Mr George Gill very ill in hospital. Parties going to Mango Gill without calling at the Cafe and without permits have been causing great concern and further violations present a real threat to the access situation. Clubs can readily obtain permits if they write to D. C. Mellor, 9 South View, Farnhill, Keighley, Yorks.

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON
SATURDAY 17TH MAY, 1975, AT THE INGLEBOROUGH HOTEL.

The following clubs were represented:-

Gritstone Club (Chairman): Bolton Speleo (Secretary):
Headingley Caving Club (Assistant Secretary): Vibram Caving Club:
Cave Rescue Organisation: Red Rose Cave & Pothole Club: Kendal Caving
Club: Craven Pothole Club: Sunderland Caving Club: C.N.C.C.
Representative N.C.A. Equipment Committee: Whernside Manor: Viking
Cave & Pothole Club: Yorkshire Subterranean Society: Earby Pothole
Club: Burnley Caving Club: Rochdale Cavernophilous: Furness Underground
Group: Leeds & District Speleo Group.

ITEM I:

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from A. Shaw, N.P.C.; J. Clarke, B.P.C. (C.N.C.C. Treasurer).

ITEM II:

Minutes of 1974 A.G.M.

Copies of the Minutes had been distributed and the meeting agreed that they were a true record and should be accepted as read. Prop. K.C.G., Sec. Headingley C.C.

Matters Arising:

Associate Membership - The committee had further discussed the question of membership from school groups, outdoor centres etc., and concluded that for such groups it was, in fact, the leader of such a group that required vetting before application was approved. Any applications from centres, schools or youth groups would be considered as special cases and one or more of the following conditions would be applied as the committee thought fit.

- a) The centre, or group, should name the person(s) in charge of their caving activities and who would undertake to be responsible for the group in areas subject to C.N.C.C. permit control.
- b) A named leader should either be a member of a recognised club which was prepared to vouch for his suitability to take inexperienced groups caving or, alternatively, he should hold the Cave Leadership Certificate.
- c) A centre could be inspected by C.N.C.C. nominees.
- d) Following acceptance as Associate Members, permits would be granted only when applied for by the nominated leader.
- e) A change of leadership would require re-assessment by the C.N.C.C. Committee before further permits could be granted.
- f) A centre could be asked to accept midweek bookings for popular holes.

C.N.C.C. - Minutes of A.G.M. 17.5.75. Ingleborough Hotel.

Weather Forecast Scheme - The scheme was said to be still not running satisfactorily, and discussion was under way with the National Park Wardens Service to improve the situation.

ITEM III:

Chairman's Statement: This had been circulated in advance to draw attention to the importance of two items on the Agenda - White Scar Cave and the National Park Plan.

The Chairman stated that after this, his tenth year of office, he would not be standing for re-election and went on to thank the committee for their continued support. N.P.C. proposed a vote of thanks for the Chairman which was endorsed by the meeting.

ITEM IV:

Secretary's Report: This Report had been circulated in advance and copies were available at the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

ITEM V:

Treasurer's Report:

It was brought to the attention of the meeting that subscriptions had not been received by some 20% of member clubs. Consideration of adopting a bankers order system of payment will be discussed at a later date. A copy of income and expenditures for year ending 31st March, 1975, was available.

Subscriptions - Although other regions have updated their fees, C.N.C.C. feel that, through sale of handbooks etc., subscriptions could be kept as stated for another year.

ITEM VI:

Meets Secretaries Reports:

Leck/Casterton Fell - The Meets Secretary, Ian Jopson reported that on Leck Fell there had been 102 permits issued to Northern clubs and 60 to Southern clubs. On Casterton, there had been 114 issued to Northern clubs and 42 to Southern clubs. The secretary also reported an increase in mid-week meets.

Birks Fell/Langstroth dale - The Meets Secretary, Donald Mellor reported that at the moment there was very limited access with the closed season extended to between 1st November and 14th April. At Strans Gill and Pasture Gill Potts the situation is at present unchanged with no access permission. It was reported that the landowner will not enter into negotiations with C.N.C.C. representatives and he stated all correspondence would have to go through his agents.

C.N.C.C. - Minutes of A.G.M. 17.5.75. Ingleborough Hotel.

Mongo Gill - All clubs are reminded that a delicate situation exists at Stump Cross at the moment with Mr. George Gill being very ill in hospital. Parties going to Mongo Gill without calling at the Cafe and without permits have been causing great concern and further violations of the existing agreements could present a real threat to access. The landowner has stated that the close season, in May, June and July, must stand as he does not want his stock disturbed.

Permits can be obtained from the Meets Secretary, D. Mellor, 9 South View, Farnhill, Keighley, Yorks.

Cherry Tree Hole - Discussions are progressing and the situation looks for a re-opening of the cave.

Mike Hartland was not present at the meeting but had not reported any problems regarding access to Fountains Fell, Pen-y-Ghent etc.

A case of pirating was reported by Craven Pothole Club at Gingling Hole, the group apparently having no knowledge of access agreements etc.

ITEM VII:

White Scar Cave

In the Chairman's previously circulated statement, member clubs had been asked to consider carefully the options which might be open to the new owner in making access available to the further reaches. The attitude of C.N.C.C. could have a considerable influence on the future of the cave which, with the right approach, could be made accessible as well as being protected from damage caused by careless usage.

P. Morgan (E.P.C.) thought that the unofficial wet entrance provided a suitable measure of control but it was pointed out that damage was already apparent since the use of this entrance had commenced. Furthermore, the owner was known to be unhappy about the present arrangements. The meeting resolved that the Committee should be entrusted to negotiate the best access arrangements, having due regard for the conservation of the cave and the opportunity for speleological research.

ITEM VIII:

National Park Plan

The Committee had set up a working party to identify the issues, problems and opportunities for caving in the Yorkshire Dales National Park so that a report could be prepared which would be taken account of in the preparation of the National Park Plan by the authority. It had been necessary to submit this report already and the Chairman outlined the main points made which were mainly related to general problems affecting access to caves.

It was resolved that the paper, as submitted, should be circulated to members clubs to encourage more cavers to consider ways in which the National Park could help caving interests in future.

C.N.C.C. - Minutes of A.G.M. 17.5.75. Ingleborough Hotel.

ITEM IX:

Election of Officers and Committee

CHAIRMAN - Jack Rasdell, Bolton Speleo, was proposed by Y.S.S. and seconded by Earby Pothole Club. There were no other nominations and Mr. Jack Rasdell was duly accepted as Chairman.

TREASURER - J.M. Clarke was proposed by C.P.C. and seconded by Red Rose Cave & Pothole Club. There were no other nominations and Mr. Clarke was re-elected as treasurer.

SECRETARY - Graham Hudson was proposed by Y.S.S. and seconded by Earby Pothole Club. There were no other nominations and Mr. Hudson was duly accepted as Secretary.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY - D.C. Webster was proposed by Y.S.S. and seconded by B.P.C. There were no other nominations and Mr. Webster was re-elected as Assistant Secretary.

Committee Members:

Gritstone Club (prop. Y.S.S., sec. K.C.C.)

Craven P.C. (prop. K.C.C., sec. C.P.C.)

Kendal C.C. (prop. C.P.C., sec. R.R.C.P.C.)

Red Rose (prop. E.P.C., sec. C.P.C.)

Earby (prop. B.S.C., sec. K.C.C.)

Rochdale Cavernophilous (prop. K.C.C., sec. G.C.)

Burnley C.C. (prop. C.P.C., sec. R.R.C.P.C.)

Sunderland C.C. (prop. K.C.C., sec. R.R.C.P.C.)

ITEM X:

Whernside Manor

After a meeting with the Yorkshire Dales National Parks Committee, Mr. Ben Lyon stated that the committee had expressed their wish to safeguard the future of the centre and were prepared to recommend to the N. Yorks. County Council the purchase of Whernside Manor from the Scout Association subject to further consideration of the financial implications. Thanks were offered to the clubs and organisations etc., who sent letters of support for Whernside to the National Parks Officers.

C.N.C.C. - Minutes of A.G.M. 17.5.75. Ingleborough Hotel.

Any Other Business

C.N.C.C. re-affirms its support for N.C.A. as presently constituted and furthermore deploras any attempt or proposal to further restrict its powers. Ben Lyon proposed that the committee should be given powers to take any further steps considered necessary to protect the N.C.A. constitution and that no restrictive amendements be made to the N.C.A. constitution this year. A unanimous vote of confidence was recorded for this proposal.

1977 Speleo Conference, Sheffield: Some progress is to be reported and the draft programme preparations are going ahead.

B.C.R.A. Conference, Manchester, September 13/14, 1975: The council has been asked by the B.C.R.A. organisers to encourage more clubs to take an interest in this year's event. A further possibility that the committee would consider was for a C.N.C.C. Stand to be organised including, e.g., access information, sale of handbooks, club publications, quarry developments etc.

N.C.A. - A.G.M. - Saturday 6th December, 1975 at Ingleton.

C.N.C.C. was the 'host region' this year and would have to find a Chairman and recorder for the meeting. Appointment of these and the Council's delegates were referred to the Committee.

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

Chairman's Statement

Included on the Agenda are some very significant items which could have a considerable bearing on the future of caving in the Dales.

Although the White Scar Cave lease was purchased by a private buyer and not acquired for the National Park as had been hoped, its future usage may still depend to a large extent on the attitude of Northern Caving Clubs and decisions made by the Council. The eventual aim will undoubtedly be for clubs to have permitted access to the system beyond the Show Cave and initial contacts made with the owner give rise for cautious optimism. Because of the importance of the cave, however, and the unique opportunity which it presents for speleological study whilst it is still in a relatively undamaged state, CNCC should give careful considerations to all the options before simply pushing for club access as soon as possible. It is only natural that cavers, including myself should want an opportunity to see the further reaches after being denied access for so long but, all too often when a big cave has been newly opened up, the most beautiful sections have been ruined within a year or two by the indiscriminate passage of inquisitive potholers. Pippikin is a typical example and certain parts of White Scar are much more vulnerable than that was.

Although it is inevitable that usage of the cave will cause wear and tear, it is surely worthwhile taking any reasonable precautions to prevent, or at least slow down, destruction of the finest formations, crystal floors, etc. I believe that priority should be given to the publication of a comprehensive survey and report on the morphology of White Scar Cave before general club access is commenced. This could help by illustrating the vulnerability of valuable deposits and by reducing the tendency for cavers to go crawling into every corner looking for passages which do not exist. This project could be initiated jointly by CNCC and BCRA and could involve any Northern-based speleologists who had a serious interest in the system and who could commit themselves to a strict programme of work. Of all the possible options, this is the one that I favour but it must be remembered that any of them would be largely dependent on the co-operation of the Show Cave owner, and his considerations will be mainly financial. Other options include pressing for designation of the cave system as a Nature Reserve for the sake of its long term protection, and the possible adoption of a 'leader system' for club access as seems to work fairly well in Dan-yr-Ogof. Whatever is decided, we should not ignore the unique opportunity to plan for the future where White Scar Cave is concerned.

Within the Yorkshire Dales National Park other opportunities may present themselves for safeguarding or improving facilities for caving in the long term. CNCC is quite rightly being involved in the consultative procedure being adopted by the National Park officers during the preparation of the 'National Park Plan'. They are committed to having this Plan ready by April 1977 and it will guide future management policies on such things as the provision and maintenance of facilities for recreation, conservation of the landscape and so on. The Council has already had to define its principles and policies with regard to caves and caving in the Dales and identify the problems and opportunities. The Committee's thoughts on these issues will be presented to the Meeting.

As I intimated at last year's AGM, I will not be prepared to stand for re-election as an Officer of the Council this time although I should be happy to continue as a club representative on the Committee for the time being. After 10 years as Chairman, I think I am justified in retiring and I believe it would be better for the Council to change all the jobs round more frequently - but not all at once. People get set in their ways, or relied upon too much, and there is better overall continuity in a Committee if others take a turn with the work. Nothing particularly onerous is involved with any office, provided that jobs are not allowed to pile up, and considerable scope still exists for streamlining things because most of the Secretary's correspondence could be answered promptly by standard letter.

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During my term I have seen CNCC membership grow from 20 clubs to 100. This reflects as much the fragmented way in which caving is organised as it does the increase in activity. Both these factors are worrying but what most frightens me when I think back over these 10 years is that probably 90% of the active caving population has changed three times over. An awful lot depends on the standards set by the other 10%, not only on safety considerations but also with regard to access procedures and respect for the natural features of caves. Some of the region's access rules appear unreasonable to many of today's 'short-term' potholers. CNCC relies heavily on the more experienced club members to explain what lies behind the restrictions and on club secretaries to pass on current information. It is up to Northern Clubs also to ensure that they are being represented by an efficient and forward-looking Committee particularly now when so much thought is being given to the future management of the National Park. The Park officers have now got the message that caves and caving are one of the most valuable assets of the area, hence the consultation and the help which is being given over Whernside Manor, access at Darnbrook etc. We should recognise that this is largely due to the existence of NCA. It is the nationally representative bodies who can exert the most influence these days and CNCC foresaw this when we proposed the formation of the national association as long ago as 1964. It is up to clubs to make sure that CNCC makes sure that NCA does not misapply its influence and that it safeguards the right of every caving club to plan its own caving trip and to make its own assessment of the risks involved.

J. Roger Sutcliffe

April 1975

THE COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

SECRETARY'S REPORT 1975

A year of some progress is to be reported. As well as the usual Committee meetings, which were well attended, delegates of the Council have attended various committee meetings of the NCA, the NCA Annual General Meeting, held this time in the south of England, and was represented at the NCA Equipment group meeting.

Membership has steadily increased, but this is offset again to a large extent by Clubs which have either become defunct or simply reached their allowed limits of non-payment of subscriptions.

A meeting with the Landowners of Leck/Casterton has produced some improved access but Lost John's remains closed to us during the usual 3 months breeding period. The committee intends to pursue this again this year with a view to obtaining all year round access.

For myself, I regret to report that I am still unable to apply myself to the work of Secretary in the manner which the job demands, and offer my thanks to the Chairman for his tremendous help and my apologies to the people who have had to wait for answers to their correspondence.

The thanks of the Committee are due to the staff of the Sports Council for their efforts on our behalf.

J. Rasdell

Hon. Secretary.

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 1975

	<u>This year</u>		<u>Last year</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions		93 00		134 00
Sales of Access Booklet		70		12 10
Grant		50 00		50 00
Royalties		- -		6 09
Donation		35 00		- -
Interest		5 37		- -
		<u>184 07</u>		<u>202 19</u>
Less Expenses:-				
Bank Charges	- -		- -	
Meteorological Office	13 61		40 58	
Room Hire	1 00		2 00	
Travel Expenses	12 78		13 00	
Insurance	25 00		- -	
NCA Subs.	35 00		15 00	
Lancs. Sports Fed.	1 00		1 00	
Yorks. " "	1 00		1 00	
Printing & Stationery	24 39		63 48	
Secretary's Expenses	11 18		7 80	
Chairman's Expenses	5 38		2 81	
Meet Secretary's "	1 20		7 25	
Treasurers Expenses	3 86		4 25	
Pikedaw Mine	63 59		- -	
Access Agreement	4 00		- -	
Deposit Account	- -	202 99	100 00	258 17
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		<u>(18.92)</u>		<u>(55.98)</u>

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 1975

	<u>This year</u>		<u>Last year</u>	
	£	£	£	£
SOURCE OF CAPITAL				
Accumulated Fund	119 76		175 74	
Balance at 4.6.74				
Excess of Income over Expenditure	(18 92)		(55 98)	
		100 84		119 76
EMPLOYMENT OF CAPITAL				
Current Assets				
Deposit Account	100 00		100 00	
	100 00		100 00	
NETT CURRENT ASSETS		100 84		119 76

J. M. CLARKE

HON. TREASURER

18.4.1975