

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Officers Reports for 28th June 2014 Committee Meeting

Chairman's Report – Roy Holmes

Many emails have been going too and throw since our last scheduled meeting. I have had a few enquiries from clubs and individuals regarding membership of CNCC which I have replied to.

The unscheduled Council meeting of 31st May was exceptionally well attended and although promising to be controversial turned out to be one of mutual consent. The main topic, to back BCA in their endeavour to seek to obtain a definitive interpretation of CRow legislation as regards access to caves, was fully supported.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Johnny Latimer being co-opted onto the Council as Access Officer.

Roy Holmes – CNCC Chairman

Secretary's Report – Matt Ewles

It has been nothing if not an eventful first three months in the role; however, significant progress has been made. Ultimately, the cornerstone of the CNCC has not changed; that it exists to improve caving in the North or England, and that those who participate in whatever way, are dedicated to achieving this. What is now changing however are some of our processes and procedures.

The CNCC received much criticism for not issuing a list of full member clubs, for historical reasons. Since the AGM I have contacted ALL full member clubs (52 in total), many by Email, some by post, to ask them to update their contact details, and in doing so, agree for their club to be listed publically as a full member of the CNCC. I'm very pleased to say that this process is complete, and out of the original full member clubs, 18 are defunct (either they confirmed this directly, I have received other information to confirm this, or they have been uncontactable) and 34 have confirmed that they are active and are now listed as full member clubs. This list is available on the website.

I am delighted to say that this meeting will see an application from an active northern club (Th'oud Skool Caving Club) to become a new full member club. I would encourage more to follow suit! The matter of the criteria for clubs to be full members is up for discussion at this meeting.

Also on the cards for this meeting is the start of a process of constitutional review, to ensure the document that defines how we work is more up to date and clear.

The role that our website has to play cannot be overestimated. This was overhauled last year; however, over the last three months much of the information on there has been updated to clearly define the correct procedure for applying for permits. New access agreements have been added (including the agreement which has recently been established for the Bowland caves). A back-end to the website with a professional email and document control system has been created to ensure that documents can easily be made available and different groups (Committee or all Full members) can be contacted with greater ease using their most up to date contact details.

This could actually just be the starting point for the website, and hopefully there will be time at the meeting for Gary to update us on other possibilities for everyone to consider.

Few of these changes are impacting yet directly on day to day caving, and so it is tempting to wonder whether any of these really matter? But these are all critically important infrastructure to put in place if the CNCC is to become more communicative and inclusive in the future, which will in time filter down to a greater ability to respond to the needs of northern cavers.

I'm delighted to welcome Johnny Latimer as a co-opted officer to the CNCC. It is great to see continued enthusiasm from newcomers to the CNCC, as this brings new ideas to the team. You will see that the 'upgrading' of the Access Officer post to full officer position is up for discussion.

There is much to do, but I'm pleased to see that a start has been made!

Matt Ewles – CNCC Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Financial Status as of 9th June 2014:

Current Account: £3,022.32

High Interest Account: £20,185.06

Key payments for this period include;

£190.54 for conservation work at Sil Howe Whinstone Mine

£681.00 for the Paperless Survey Course (to be part reimbursed from Training Committee)

£675.00 for the reprint (100 copies) of the Shuttleworth Pot into Witches Cave book

£37.80 for fence repairs at Hardrawkin Pot

I have been Treasurer of the CNCC since 1994 and the 2015 AGM will be my 21st year. Whilst I say at each AGM that I am prepared to stand again if no one else wants the role, I will not be standing again at the 2015 AGM. We had a new secretary at the 2014 AGM and hopefully he will have found his feet by the time of the next AGM – it is therefore the correct time to stand down, especially as there is such an apparent desire for change from some quarters. So CNCC has the best part of 9 months to find a new Treasurer. I will be prepared to give any assistance required to any candidate acceptable to CNCC between now and the 2015 AGM, and to that end, the following is the job description for the role;

Day to day as required: issue (and post) cheques as required (ensuring supporting paperwork/payment limits are correct and filed accordingly). Deposit any payments received in bank. Respond to any CNCC financial queries (usually by email)

Monthly: reconcile bank statements with accounting application ensuring that income and expenditure is correctly recorded in the appropriate Budget Head.

Quarterly: produce Treasurer's report for CNCC meeting

Annually: produce Treasurer's Report for CNCC AGM which should (ideally) be given to the club that will be scrutinizing the accounts in readiness for the AGM at the January meeting. The report should include items that can be funded from BCA and the management of that claim with BCA's Finance Committee.

Publications; store and manage stock of various CNCC publications (Rigging Guides, Shuttleworth Pot Book and survey – at any time as much as 500 items). Manage sale and delivery of publications and arrange for reprints as required by stock level.

Immediate task for new Treasurer: Agree signatories' for cheques, inform and arrange with bank, arrange for transfer of bank accounts to new Treasurer.

Glenn Jones – CNCC Treasurer

Conservation Officer's Report

Since the last meeting I have assisted in providing Natural England consent to a cave dig and a BBC film unit trip to Gaping Gill.

I have responded to a complaint from Austwick Parish Council about a consented cave dig on a SSSI. This has now been sorted out and the diggers have made a presentation of their project to a meeting of the PC. This is a noteworthy development in community relations which helps to dispel the myth of diggers as 'outlaws'.

Ray Duffy has led a team of Red Rose and other club members on the restoration of Lancaster Hole entrance. Several weeks of unseasonable weather were selected for the excavation which uncovered half a century of BSA treasures and icons such as bomb damaged steel work, and several generations of lids. Watch out for BSA memorabilia appearing on Ebay. I understand that costs for this project are being met by Mike Cooper with funds raised from the sale of his book- Not For The Faint Hearted.

A group of CNCC volunteers (mostly Little Green Men) have removed the rotten fencing around Hardrawkin Pot and replaced it with new post and stock netting. The old wooden sleeper stile was also removed and replaced with a stone through stile. This land is NNR and is managed by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. They are extremely grateful for our assistance.

The Cupcake Pot archaeology/palaeontology collection has been displayed at AV presentations given by John Lugg Thorp in Settle and at the BCA Party Weekend.

A Cave Conservation Plan for Fairy Holes Cave –Weardale is being edited by Ian Cummings. A first draft should be available soon for consultation.

John Gardner and team have done a fantastic job of hauling out a ton of scrap metal and wood from Bull Pot Kingsdale and Jingling Pot.

The next job on the list for conservation volunteers is the casting of a new concrete rim on Aquamole Pot. The 100mm conc blocks on the top of the shaft are frost shattered.

Andrew Hinde – CNCC Conservation Officer

Access Officer's Report

The work on the entrance to Lancaster Hole has been completed; I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped with this project and thanks Ray Duffy for co-ordinating the work. The rigging for the entrance remains the same.

Due to the time constraints from the Estate and the weather the plan to lay stone for cavers parking at the cattle grid on Leck Fell has been postponed to the drier summer months.

I have spoken with the two main landowners and informed them that BCA/CNCC is looking at and seeking legal advice on the interpretations of the Crow Act as we feel that there may be some scope for relaxation of access restrictions.

Over the years the role of Access Officer has been one that has been hard to fill, probably because of the nature of the job itself. I took on the role because no one else wanted to do it, but it became more than apparent to me that it was probably one of the most important roles within the CNCC.

The role of Access Officer is not easy to describe as it is everything to do with access, from negotiating with landowners and Estate managers to conflict resolution which became very apparent after walkers got Gatekirk Cave and Skirwith Cave to name two, closed through their selfish actions.

With the demands of the role in mind I spoke with Johnny Latimer who has shown an interest in acting as CNCC Access Officer. We discussed working together for as long as necessary so that he can learn the roles, responsibilities and develop the necessary skills to do the role. Both of us agreed that CNCC, landowners and cavers need a smooth transition so that the landowners see continuity and receive support and our access is unaffected. To enable this to happen I withdrew my nomination for the post and hand over to Johnny to continue in this role.

Les Sykes – CNCC Access Officer (until 31st May 2014)

Training Officer's Report

Insurance for BCA award holders

Graham Mollard has negotiated with Perkins Slade insurance for BCA award holders, for information please contact Graham gnmmminiatures@btinternet.com

Training courses

CNCC has organised two 'first aid for cavers' courses to be run on 18th October 2014 and 1st November 2014 at Hellifield Village Hall. These courses are free to BCA members. The courses will be funded by CNCC and BCA. Each course can accommodate 20 students, if demand is high there is further availability later in 2014. BCA members who wish to attend should send an email to training@cncc.org.uk to book a place, availability is first come first served.

To date in 2014 there has been one free initial cave awareness training day and one free SRT follow on training day. Further courses are planned during 2014. For information and availability of the free courses please send an email to training@cncc.org.uk

Les Sykes – CNCC Training Officer