



The Council of Northern Caving Clubs; meeting of Saturday 21st September 2013

This document contains the following reports;

- Draft minutes of the above meeting
- Agenda
- Chairmans Report
- Secretaries Report (including Access, Training and CNCC TG)
- Conservation Officer's report
- Leck Fell Meet Secretary's report
- BCA report
- An Overview to Access to Caves in Other Regions
- CNCC Proposal for Commercial Groups

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Committee meeting

To be held at Hellifield Village hall on Saturday 21st September 2013
Starting at 09.30

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Officers reports
 - Chairman's report
 - Secretary's report
 - Treasurer's report
 - Access Officer's report
 - Conservation officer's report
 - Training officer's report
 - Technical group report
5. Meets secretaries reports
 - Leck Fell
 - Casterton
 - Fell Birks Fell
 - Penyghent & Fountains Fell
 - Other areas
6. Access for individual cavers
7. BCA report
8. 2016 International Caving Symposium
9. Any other business
10. Date and place of next meeting

MINUTES of the CNCC COMMITTEE MEETING held on 21st Sept 2013 at HELLIFIELD VILLAGE INSTITUTE

The Meeting commenced at 09.30.

PRESENT: R. Holmes (Chairperson/ DHSS), Les Sykes (Secretary/Elysium), Glenn Jones (Treasurer/CNCC TG), S. Lieberman (RRCPC), Ray Duffy (RRCPC), Bernie Bond (Burnley CC), Jim Sloane (LUG) , Ian Lloyd (NSG), Harvey Lomas (YRC), Andrew Hinde (Gritstone Club/Natural England), Pete Monk (Northern Boggarts), Tony Brown (NB), Pete Allwright (DHSS), Pat Halliwell (Craven), Ric Halliwell (Craven), Matt Ewles (YCC), Gary Douthwaite (website manager), Alan Speight (YSS), Kay Easton (Minutes Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES: Fay Hartley (BCC), Johnny Latimer (Earby), Malcolm Hughes (BPC)

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: Minutes of the June 2013 meeting were accepted and signed as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES:
There were no matters arising

4 OFFICERS' REPORTS:

Chairman's report: "Over the last few weeks I have received enquiries from individual DIM members of the British Caving Association as to why they cannot have access to caves. Unfortunately I cannot give anyone an acceptable answer.

The following points have been raised at numerous times:-

1. DIM members pay more into the coffers than any other members
2. The original circular for the creation of BCA contained a statement that DIM members would have access to all caves
3. Caving has moved on from the mega clubs that were required to explore all the major caves in Britain.

The above has always and still does need some discussion on a national level; the unfairness of the situation is plain to see.

Moving on, there has been a large amount of Emails flying about concerning the situation of commercial caving on Leck and Casterton Falls. I will not comment further on this as other council members will hopefully be updating us on the situation."

Glenn commented that individually DIMs and CIMs pay the same contribution towards insurance; DIMs pay extra to receive publications. Although individually they pay more, overall their numbers are such that CIMs and clubs' contributions make up most of the payments. The statement that DIMs would have access to all caves was removed because the Constitution of CNCC does not provide for DIMs.

CNCC receives grant funding from BCA as a result of allowable claims, typically £500-£700 per year.

Secretary's report: A written report is appended to the Minutes.

Treasurer's report:

Written report appended to the Minutes. Glenn said that Andrew Hinde had proposed that an account be set up at a local builders' merchants. Glenn was unhappy about the proposal; as presented, there appeared to be no controls around the process, no named individuals who would have access, and no management – Glenn would be unaware of expenditure until after the event, when he saw the monthly statement.

Andrew explained that the intention was to allow CNCC volunteers to source materials for CNCC conservation projects when Andrew was unavailable to go to the builders' merchants himself. Material would be booked out, and Glenn would receive a single statement and itemized invoice at the end of each month. Control would be provided by a code, specific to each individual approved project, which would need to be quoted for each purchase, ie anyone using the facility would need to obtain a purchase order from Andrew. An added advantage would be that such an account would give access to trade prices.

Glenn then made the following statement:

"I have recently been asked to make payments to cover expenditure of nearly £900.00 that I had no prior knowledge of. Whilst these payments were for legitimate purchases, I would like to make it absolutely clear that I am not prepared to issue cheques for these kind of amounts in future without prior warning and due process..

Due process is to check with me in advance for any unexpected or large expenditure (say over £100.00) which is an expenditure other than "normal" expenses. The reason for this is that I am responsible for looking after CNCC funds, and if I think that it is within my remit to cover that cost, I will. But if I think it is a significant expenditure that is not already planned for, I will refer it to the committee for approval – it's called covering my backside. The only two exceptions to this is where the expenditure has already been authorised by the committee, or where the expenditure has been covered by a specific

NE grant.”

Alan Speight asked what the unexpected purchase was – a Makita saw purchased by Andrew for the CNCC Equipment store. Kay explained that this purchase was on a list sent to Glenn for approval in December 2012; having had no response she had wrongly assumed Glenn had no objection to the purchase. Glenn explained that the email containing the list had arrived while he was fully occupied with legal matters following his mother’s death and he had not read it. Had he read it, he would have asked for it to be referred to the Committee.

Andrew explained that the equipment was being stored securely at his workplace. It was available for use on conservation projects by all CNCC clubs, but use of some of the equipment required the user to show an appropriate certificate of training. Ged Benn is taking responsibility for borrowing of the equipment.

There followed discussion of the process of approval for expenditure. The Committee felt that major expenditure should be under its control, but was content for small amounts to be within the Treasurer’s remit to approve. Glenn pointed out the problem had arisen now because most projects to date had had Natural England funding, which was no longer forthcoming. Ric suggested allowing Andrew the flexibility of an annual budget for conservation work, but Les felt this did not give the Committee sufficient control.

It was agreed by the Committee that any expenditure should be requested in advance from the Treasurer, and the Treasurer should decide whether to approve it, taking into account the sum involved and the urgency/importance of the work, or whether the proposal should be put to the Committee.

It was agreed that consultation with the Committee could if necessary be by email but in this case a non-response should be regarded as “no objection”.

Glenn proposed that, subject to procedures being drawn up to his satisfaction, a credit account should be opened with a local builders’ merchant. Alan Speight seconded, and the vote was passed unanimously.

Andrew then presented a “wish list” of the type of items that he might seek to purchase over the next two years should they be required for CNCC Conservation projects. He would let the Treasurer know when an item was required, and it would then be for the Treasurer to approve or to refer to the Committee. It was suggested that hiring might be an alternative option.

Andrew considered it was not worth insuring the items. Les commented that the Makita saw and similar items would have an identity tag, which would be

read when the item was presented for servicing and allow tracing to the correct owner. The Committee was content not to seek insurance for the items in the CNCC equipment store.

CNCC Mileage rate

Glenn said the normal CNCC mileage rate was 20p a mile but 30p a mile had been agreed for conservation projects. Andrew explained that this referred to jobs done by people with no exploratory interest in the pots involved; jobs such as Clapham Bottoms Pot required a large team, not all of whom could be drawn from people living locally, and it was often difficult to estimate at the beginning how many days would be involved.

The Committee was not happy that there should be one mileage rate for conservation projects and another rate for other CNCC approved mileage.

Glenn proposed that the CNCC mileage rate should be increased to 30p per mile, seconded by Roy and passed unanimously.

Andrew asked what monies CNCC could claim from BCA for Conservation work. Glenn replied that CNCC could claim for all conservation work that was not funded by Natural England, subject to various caps. He would check the position on travel

ACTION: Glenn

Access Officer's Report:

Les drew attention to the proposal for access to Leck and Casterton Fells by commercial caving groups attached to the minutes. It had been agreed between Les and the landowners (Charles Lang for Kay-Shuttleworth Estate, and Thomas Bowering for Whelprigg), who were aware that it required the agreement of the CNCC Committee. Les was aware that two commercial cavers were not in agreement, neither was the Northern Panel (which controls training, assessment etc)

Les then read out a statement from Graham Mollard and Nigel Ball (reproduced here)

"I have talked extensively with the BCA Training Officer re access to Leck and Casterton Systems for professional cavers and their groups, and although we feel that access for all cavers, whether recreational or professional, is to be encouraged, we do so with a considerable number of reservations. If access to professional cavers is to be granted then we feel there should be different categories.

CNCC is a constituent member of BCA and should therefore be supportive of

the training and assessment schemes offered by BCA. We feel that permits should be available free of charge to Trainers and assessors running level two LCMLA or CIC training or assessment, we do not feel the caves on these fells to be appropriate to level one LCMLA training and assessment other than the possible use of Bull Pot of the Witches.

We are adamant that the caves on these fells are not appropriate to novice cavers (person with little or no experience of the underground environment, its hazards, its conservation etc) at any time, and that if an agreement is to be made to allow other than BCA professional training and assessment then it must exclude all novice groups and have a group size restriction as per level two LCMLA training and assessment of one instructor to four clients.

We also feel that the Land owners/ Land agents should impose a fee payable upon booking a permit so much per head. We will not suggest a figure but it should be substantial.

We strongly recommend that in future any BCA qualified leader/instructors proven to have broken any new access agreement is reported with the evidence to the BCA Training Office to allow appropriate sanctions to be applied.

I have personally been in touch with the Military powers-that-be concerning large military novice groups being taken in County Pot with no permits at all; I have been assured this practice will cease."

Les explained that the current system came about because many years ago commercial cavers were able to be club members of CNCC. But since the formation of BCA, permits have only been available to CNCC and BCA member clubs. This has been ignored by certain commercial cavers, some of whom were caught using the Fells, and have had to apologise to the landowners.

Some of the commercial cavers wish to set up their own access organisation, which would be outside the control of CNCC. Les accordingly drew up the proposal in front of the meeting, which gives CNCC ultimate control.

Ian Lloyd commented that CNCC would not be able to stop commercial caving; it was therefore necessary to accept it and bring it within the BCA/CNCC system.

Les said that a fee would be payable to the landowner for each trip, possibly around £20 +vat per trip (landowners decision), though Graham Mollard and Nigel Ball had suggested it should be substantial. Commercial cavers ignoring the access requirements could lose their BCA award, and failure to pay the trip fee would leave them open to legal action by the landowners.

In answer to Pete Monk, Les said that the intention was not to give extra

work to the current meets secretaries. Les would issue the permits (one available each day for Leck Fell and one for Casterton Fell), although he would need to communicate with the meets secretaries for availability. Glenn would invoice the commercial caver, and CNCC would pass the money to the landowner.

Sam asked whether money should be collected by BCA rather than CNCC. Les said it needed to be CNCC to maintain control as access body for the North. CNCC had good relationships with landowners, and T. Bowring and the Shuttleworth Estate wanted CNCC to be in control. The amount of the annual admin fee needed to be determined – it was suggested it should be £20 per commercial group for the first year.

The CNCC Committee wanted reassurance that the BCA would support the process, by disciplining any award holder that was in breach of a negotiated access agreement. Les was confident that the BCA would give this support, since non-compliance of commercial cavers would jeopardise access for all cavers.

Les said H&S and realistic risk assessment would ensure that Leck and Casterton caves could not be used for novice and introductory trips.

Commercial cavers would not have a vote on the CNCC Committee; the Constitution limited Committee participation to Full Member Clubs.

Les proposed and Bernie seconded acceptance of the CNCC proposal; passed with no objections.

Conservation Officer's report:

Written report appended to Minutes

Andrew advised that the next project in the pipeline was likely to be clearance of Daimler Hole. This would take a large group, and would most likely be carried out on a Saturday. He would advise when he was ready to start, and, in answer to criticism that it was unclear how to become involved in the group carrying out conservation projects, he would publicise the planned work more widely.

There was also work to be carried out at Barbon pot.

Work at Tip Wood had been concluded, and £300 had been spent on licensed removal of asbestos.

Ray said the top of Lancaster Hole needed attention; water seeping around the edges of the concrete lid was causing erosion. Andrew replied that the generation of shafts entrances lined with oil drums was coming to the end of their natural life, and he was replacing them by twin wall plastic pipe, likely to

have a longer life. The knowledge and expertise gained in this area by the conservation volunteers would be disseminated to a wider audience in other regions through a lecture at Hidden Earth and an article in Descent.

Alan Speight said there had been discussion on ukcaving.com about Dale Barn Access, and a request that the current situation should be raised at CNCC so that it would appear in the published Minutes. Les said that a particularly unfortunate incident several years ago of a caver totally ignoring the landowners requirements on access had led to the cave entrance being blocked. CNCC has already explored all avenues and the landowner's position means early review of the situation and request for access would be counterproductive.

Andrew Hinde said that as official authority for SSSI, he had written to the landowner in order to obtain access for inspection, but 12 months later had received no reply. He would work on opening a channel of communication, but it would be a long process (years rather than months).

Kay agreed to draw a form of words to explain the situation on the CNCC website.

ACTION: Kay

Training Officer's report:

Brief written report attached to Minutes

Technical Group report:

Written report attached to Minutes. With reference to Bob Mehew's paper on Chloride Stress Corrosion Cracking (the CSCC paper which had been distributed before the meeting), following a discussion Les reminded the Committee that, following recommendation by Hilti, DMM and Lyon, the decision had been taken by CNCC in 1989 that they required the greater protection from corrosion offered by the 316 anchors compared with the 304s. Many of the caves in the region are likely to have raised chloride levels from waste from grazing animals; this is particularly a problem during summer months when cattle are on the upper Fells.

If the Committee decided to change to the 304s, we would need:

- i) site specific analysis of the water chemistry
- ii) a test in wet conditions over a period of time

He considered this too onerous since we would not need this process for installing 316s, and recommended that we do not install 304 anchors and continue to specify 316s. Ian Lloyd agreed, commenting we now have 25years experience of 316s, whereas 304s are "a new game". Les said they

have set up a 304 test bed for testing in the future (year 2027).

***Les proposed that we reject the 304 anchors and install 316 anchors
Ian seconded and the vote was passed unanimously.***

5 MEETS SECRETARIES' REPORTS:

Leck Fell Since the AGM a total of 43 clubs have now been issued permits for the year 2013/14. This is six more than exactly the same time last year. Over recent weeks demand has been noticeably high. With the new academic year now underway and additional demand shortly anticipated from higher education caving clubs, it is considered likely that many of the coming Autumn weekends especially could soon be fully booked. At the present time availability is reasonable with only 5th Oct, 19th Oct and 23rd and 24th Nov fully booked.

Jim has had some requests already for permits for the normally busy time between Xmas and New Year. Usually these start to arrive later in the autumn. Advice therefore is to book early if you want a trip over the festivities.

In addition to these things Jim has recently had emails about tatty old rope left on the first pitch in Peterson Pot which it sounds like could do to be removed.

Tony Brown asked if there is any problem with permits unused by the diggers. Jim said he had no issues – the diggers were issued with the “leftover” permits – and the Estate office had never expressed concern.

Alan Speight said he had received notice that people approaching Pippikin from Bull Pot farm need not call in at Leck Fell House.

Casterton: Nothing to report

Birks Fell: Few requests had been received.

Penyghent and Fountains Fell: Nothing to report

Other Areas

Fairy Holes (Weardale): The new access is working well. The quarry phoned to cancel one trip because the cave was flooded, and offered an alternative booking for the following week. All permits have been booked for the rest of this year. Ric is taking bookings for next year, pending agreement on access.

Excalibur Pot: There are no problems to report with Excalibur Pot and permit requests are low. A group from NYMCC recently visited Sil Howe

mine and devised a proposed strategy for reopening access. Permission from the North York Moors National Park Authority has been obtained and permission from Natural England will be required. Once this has been finalised we will arrange a meeting with the relevant parties and Smiths Gore with a plan to open secured access to the caving community. Surveying and exploration of the newly discovered Jenga Pot is ongoing and we hope to establish an access agreement next year.

Manchester Hole: Les announced that Yorkshire Water are erecting a sign at the start of the Water Board road leading to Manchester Hole and Goyden, which would give dates of Scour Tests and help prevent flash flood incidents. Ian Lloyd has been watching the Environment Agency website the nearest sensor to Manchester Hole is at Gouthwaite, but is below the dam, and he warns that it is of no use whatever in trying to assess reservoir water levels.

6. ACCESS FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF BCA:

It was clarified that this item related to allowing BCA DIMs access to the CNCC permit scheme, rather than all individual cavers. Glenn stated that he did not think that access to DIM's only (and not CIM's) would be acceptable to BCA and the other regions. Les stated that limiting individual access to DIM's would discriminate against those CIM's, that have joined clubs in order to go caving. Glenn's summary of access systems in other regions is appended to the Minutes.

An informal show of hands showed 5 in favour and 5 against changing the CNCC Constitution to allow Direct Individual Membership access to CNCC permits. There followed heated discussion mostly repeating points raised at the June meeting which are therefore not repeated here. Gary said that York CC had discussed the issue; the responses were either enthusiastically in favour of DIM access or indifferent. Alan Speight said Orpheus will obtain permits for DIMs who are members of Orpheus, but not for trips which includes DIMs who are not members of Orpheus. Ian said that DIM access could be useful to members of CDG.

It appeared that most clubs had not discussed this fully among their members and they were reminded to do so.

ACTION All Club representatives

7 BCA REPORT:

A summary of the current position is appended to the Minutes. Bob Dearman, Les and Glenn, on behalf of CNCC/DCA wrote to Andy Eavis asking for a written apology, with the apology being recorded in Andy's report to the October Council meeting of the BCA. There has been no reply. Pat suggested

that Glenn remind Andy, and the meeting agreed that this was the next step. Roy noted that he had not received a reply to the letter he had sent to the BCA Chairman in June.

8 2016 INTERNATIONAL CAVING SYMPOSIUM: No information has been forthcoming from BCA

Craven have been approached for the use of the winch at Gaping Gill during their winch meet, and have offered the Monday-Friday of what would normally be Members' week, since the likely August date of the symposium does not coincide with the normal September dates of the Craven winch meet.

Glenn took demonstration copies of the CNCC Rigging Guide to Expe in Pont-en-Royans, France with the suggestion that Expe may want to stock them in case French cavers might like to purchase in advance of the Symposium.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Ray Duffy asked if the next survey of the Easegill system could be published as a joint venture with CNCC, splitting the cost between Red Rose and CNCC. Glenn agreed in principle, subject to obtaining quotes, and commented that they had achieved good value with the selection of printer for the Shuttleworth Pot publication.

Pete Monk said Colin Newlands of Natural England had asked if more Shuttleworth books could be printed. ***Ric proposed, and Alan seconded, that 100 copies be printed: passed unanimously.*** Pete undertook to supply the file with the latest corrections to Glenn, who would obtain a quote from the printer.

ACTION: Pete Monk, Glenn

Tony Brown said that rabbit monitoring at Victoria Cave had been carried out. There were around 50 holes in the sediments, with active burrowing. He had taken photographs for future monitoring.

Tony expressed disappointment that his report on Northern News had been omitted from the BCA newsletter, and that it would be out of date by the time of the next newsletter. Les said that other material had taken higher priority.

Pat said that she and Ric had been invited to attend the Yorkshire Dales Cave and Crag Access Forum in December, as representatives of CNCC and PC resp.

Sunday 29th is 50th anniversary of Geoff Workman emerging from Stump Cross after setting a new world record by staying underground alone for 105 days. Pat said CPC will be celebrating with Stump Cross and anyone, not

going to Hidden Earth, anyone who wants to join us is welcome.

Kay said that, while trying to update the list of Full Member Clubs, she realised that according to the Constitution, the only Full Member Clubs allowed to vote at CNCC Committee meetings were the 14 specifically elected to the Committee, and that this did not include all the Full Member Clubs that were regular attendees and contributors to the Committee meetings. She therefore suggested that the Constitution should be changed so that Committee meetings would be open to all Full Member Clubs, with voting restricted to one vote per Club. This would bring the Constitution into line with current practice. Les commented that in his view, if a Club put the effort in to attend the meeting, it should be entitled to vote.

Kay proposed and Les seconded, a proposal should be put forward to the AGM: "Committee meetings are open to all Full Member Clubs, but voting is restricted to one vote per Full Member Club". Passed unanimously

This proposal will now be taken to the AGM for a vote.

10 DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:

11 January 2014, Hellifield Institute, 9.30am

The meeting closed at 12.30

Council of Northern Caving Clubs

Chairman's statement

Over the last few weeks I have received enquiries from individual DIM members of the British Caving Association as to why they cannot have access to caves. Unfortunately I cannot give anyone an acceptable answer.

The following points have been raised at numerous times :-

1. DIM members pay more into the coffers than any other members
2. The original circular for the creation of BCA contained a statement that DIM members would have access to all caves
3. Caving has moved on from the megga clubs that were required to explore all the major caves in Britain .

The above has always and still does need some discussion on a national level, the unfairness of the situation is plain to see.

Moving on, there has been a large amount of Emails flying about concerning the situation of commercial caving on Leck and Casterton Falls. I will not comment further on this as other council members will hopefully be updating us on the situation.

Roy Holmes
Chairman CNCC

Council of Northern Caving Clubs

Committee meeting 21 September 2013

Secretary's report:

The period since the last meeting has been a very busy period; the main reason for this is the ongoing unauthorised use of Leck and Casterton Fells by commercial groups.

Access Officer's report:

The problem of unauthorised access by commercial groups has continued to roll on relentlessly and I do not see any let up for the near future. Although a large proportion of the commercial sector are aware of the problems that have been caused, but there is a minority who are either unaware or are ignoring the problem.

After the last meeting I issued a document to the CNCC committee as instructed by the landowners (also sent with this report) to date I have received very little feedback from the document; I cannot stress enough how important it is for the CNCC committee to fully understand the implications of commercial access. I do know that there are representatives that oppose it. This meeting is your opportunity to speak up and ask questions as the next meeting with the landagents is 26 September 2013 and significant irreversible progress may be made.

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 number of meetings with different parties to try and resolve the issue.

T. Brown (N. Boggarts) has send me an email with information for access changes to the caves on Duchy of Lancaster land, to date I have not dealt with this due to other work of a higher priority but it will be dealt with soon. I have agreed with the Estate manager for Leck the position and extent of the hard standing parking for cavers at the Fell gate, I am waiting for conformation before we order the stone.

CNCC Technical Group:

One new long term test bed has been installed in Yordas gorge, test bed two has BP (304 stainless steel) anchors installed using KMR RES a full report is on the CNCC web site.

The anchors installed in Yordas stream bed above the fell gate have also been tested, these anchors were installed in March 1998 a full report is on the CNCC web site.

On 10 August 2013 CNCC ran an anchor installers course for CCC, North Wales and Forest of Dean anchor installers. Currently the regions that are installing anchors to the IPTD (the version agreed by BCA E&T and adopted by the 2010 BCA AGM) are CNCC, DCA, SUI, CCC, North Wales, F.o.D and GSG.

On 14 September 2013 CNCC TG tested four BP anchors; these anchors were pulled at a range of angles to ascertain the ratio between the angle of load and any deformation of the anchor during the test. The angles that were tested were 0 degrees to the placement (axial load), 60, 45 and 30 degrees. The only test that we did not complete was the 30 degree pull; this was because the anchors that had been installed to hold the test rig were destroyed (bent by 90 degrees) by the force of the base plate of the test rig. A full report will be on the CNCC web site (10 days).

BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee:

Finally it has been proven that the initial batch of anchors from Bolt products were in fact 304, despite 316 being ordered. Obviously this is a significant difference in grade of stainless steel. Bob Mehew has painstakingly researched the two different types of stainless steel and its usage and has produced a very useful and informative document. The main difference is the resistance to corrosion especially when chorine ions are present in the water. The ions are produced by a number of factors, salt water and farm associated effluent for example. The document will be discussed by BCA E&T committee in November; however after a discussion with Bob Mehew anchors manufactured from 304 stainless steel can be used in the majority of caves in the north of Britain. However, where there is doubt to their suitability the region must undertake a thorough risk analysis to determine suitability which must be documented, if doubt still remains after the analysis then 316 must be used. Bob's report is attached do this report.

If the CNCC accepts this report and the findings in Bob's document then we should formally make a decision at the meeting that we will implement the control measures for using 304 stainless steel anchors that are advised in Bob's report. If this is done then CNCC should be able to run a revalidation course early October 2013 and start installing anchors again.

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 Conservation Officers Report September 2013.

The restoration of the collapsed entrance pitch to CLAPHAM BOTTOMS POT has been completed by CNCC volunteers. This 7 day project was led by the BPC's Ged Benn and funded by Natural England. Once again this proved to be a long and complex operation which required careful planning and risk management. Valuable lessons have been learned which will be shared with the wider caving community at Hidden Earth Conference and in Descent magazine.

The refuse remaining at Tip Wood (Bowland) has been removed by a small CNCC volunteer sub group. This concludes our obligations to the Crown Estate and will hopefully lead on to the opening of further access to possible caves below the site.

A team of cave conservation regulars assisted Ingleborough National Nature Reserve with the removal of ragwort from Scar Close. This is a very difficult site with permit only access to the deep gryke limestone pavements with dense vegetation cover. Some H&S protocols were tested when one volunteer went missing in the undergrowth for over an hour!

The Leeds Scouts Association spent a day collecting plastic waste from Ibbeth Peril Cave – Dentdale. They managed to recover 5 mailbags full of farm and domestic waste carried into the cave from flood water. They were led in their task by our own CNCC chairman. Other CNCC vols assisted with hauling the rubbish to the car park and clearing the river bed upstream of the cave entrance. The Scouts have now "adopted" the cave and intend to keep it as clean as possible with future working parties booked for next year. Fairy Holes (Weardale) has had a couple of haul sacs of historic refuse removed from the final chambers by members of ULSA. This is a long and arduous trip without the added burden of waterlogged rubbish sacs. No reports of recent damage have been recorded.

A select group of cave conservation volunteers were invited to a free lunch with Natural England directors and board members. This was to celebrate the work of volunteers across the natural environment. The stories from the cave vols made a big impact on NE directors and were later mentioned in dispatches on the NE website.

Any members of CNCC who wish to borrow our 12 inch Makita petrol driven saw must undertake certified training. First course is Mon 16th Sept.2013.

Andrew Hinde

06.09.13

Report to CNCC Committee Meeting on 21/09/2013 – Leck Fell Access Agreement

Since the AGM a total of 43 clubs have now been issued permits for the year 2013/14. This is six more than exactly the same time last year. Over recent weeks demand has been noticeably high. With the the new academic year now underway and additional demand shortly anticipated from higher education caving clubs, it is considered likely that many of the coming Autumn weekends especially could soon be fully booked. At the present time availability is reasonable with only 5th Oct, 19th Oct and 23rd and 24th Nov fully booked.

I have had some requests already for permits for the normally busy time between Xmas and New Year. Usually these start to arrive later in the Autumn. Advice therefore is to book early if you want a trip over the festivities.

In addition to these things I have recently had emails about tatty old rope left on the first pitch in Peterson Pot which it sounds like could do to be removed.

Jim Sloane (CNCC Meets Sec – Leck Fell)
10/09/2013

BCA Report to CNCC Meeting 21st September 2013

At the June 1st CNCC meeting I accepted an action to produce a document based on the discussion document that the CNCC AGM had accepted without amendments (which we once again briefly discussed at the June meeting, with no request for any changes) with a closing section from AH, which would be included in the CNCC report to the BCA AGM. I completed that document which was distributed for comment on 6th June.

Unfortunately the document was not sent to the BCA AGM as the feedback from CNCC Committee was very mixed. From the committee members that did respond (less than 50%) the decision was split on the content with some wanting a complete redraft, even though we (the committee) had effectively agreed the document at the June 1st meeting.

It is frustrating to report that some comments did not even refer to the distributed document, and other comments suggested that I should actually lie about the events that happened – *I am not prepared to lie for this or any other organisation.*

We therefore missed an opportunity to have CNCC's position recorded in the minutes of the 2013 BCA AGM.

Personally, I am far from happy with this. I complied accurately with the action given to me and feel let down by the subsequent back tracking by some on the CNCC Committee. Maybe it is time for CNCC to consider if someone within the committee is better placed for this role (CNCC representative to BCA National Council) than myself.

However, things have moved on. During the early part of July, a vigorous email exchange took place between CNCC/DCA and BCA, which resulted in the following email from the BCA Chairman (14/07/13);

The situation was as I see it exactly as Damian's emails of July 9th at 10.03,19.09 and 19.19. That is what I have been trying to tell you all for the last year or so.

As I haven't succeeded in allowing you to understand this I apologise wholeheartedly for inadvertently misleading you.

As far as I can see Damian has put it exactly correctly. I am so sorry for all the misunderstandings and I apologise to the three of you, the CNCC and the DCA for any misunderstanding that has been perpetrated.

I do so hope that this can now close this event and we can all return to working together as a team to make British Caving better and safer.

Andy Eavis

The email from Damian (09/07/13) ;

Honestly, Glenn, there isn't anything to disagree over. Nick's "deception" was to point out to Faye and Cookie that nothing in the IPTD necessarily needed to remain static forever and, once it had been agreed by all sides, the requirement for SRT competence could be looked at again in the future. Since he did not categorically say this to CNCC/DCA in their individual meetings, Nick considered himself to have deceived them, was embarrassed and subsequently admitted it at the March E&T meeting. As far as I am aware, there is nothing more to it than that.

So, further to the BCA Chairman stating in his report to the March BCA Meeting that "***there was categorically no deceit***" he now appears to have changed his position, is accepting that there was deceit, and has apologised

for it. At least I think that that is what he is apologising for. From the BCA Chairman's email;

"The situation was as I see it exactly as Damian's emails of July 9th at 10.03, 19.09 and 19.19. That it what I have been trying to tell you all for the last year or so".

That statement is simply not true. He has been in denial all the time. He has not reported back to us from the meeting he had with us (CNCC/DCA) last October, and in the March BCA meeting he stated that "there was categorically no deceit".

However, it is an apology and an acknowledgement, at long last, that they cocked up.

The CNCC/DCA response to the BCA Chairman's apology was (15/07/13);

Many thanks for your positive email. We, Bob, Les and myself, have discussed this and feel that to correctly bring this issue to a conclusion, you should write (using the contents of your email as the basis of the letter) to the CNCC and DCA Secretaries. That letter can then be discussed at the next CNCC and DCA meetings, and speaking for Les and myself, we would strongly urge CNCC to accept the apology it contained (as I'm sure will DCA).

We would also expect that you record the apology in your report to the October Council meeting, and on the assumption that BCA National Council accept your report (and therefore apology) we, CNCC and DCA, will consider the issue closed.

I would then be prepared, if requested by CNCC, to resume representing CNCC at National Council meetings.

Please note that the above does not change our position with regards to E&T. Neither Bob, Les or myself are prepared to attend E&T meetings whilst Nick remains as Convenor. Nick has not shown any remorse or responsibility for his actions, he has demonstrated that he can not be trusted, and he has demonstrated that he is incapable of being impartial as Convenor. We (Bob, Les and myself) will continue to remain pro-active with regards to BCA's Resin Bonded Anchor Scheme.

To date (13/09/13) there has been no further communication from BCA on this subject, although the Chairman's apology was included in his report for the 2014 BCA Handbook.

Glenn Jones
CNCC representative to BCA National Council

An Overview to Access Controlled Caves in Other Regions

The following is a quick overview of access arrangements in the other regions based either on personal communication with the relevant region or via the RCC's website.

DCA Region;

The two sites that DCA administers on behalf of Chatsworth Estate are Ashford Black Marble Mine and Lathkill Head Cave - Garden Path Entrance. Applications for visits, usually by email, are sent in advance and should include BCA membership numbers which are checked against a list provided by the BCA Membership Administrator.

Peak Cavern: Visiting cavers must be covered by BCA insurance. Bookings must be made in advance. There is a formal booking system and a keyholder has to be present to make sure that the paperwork is completed and presented at the cave with the access fees. Proof of BCA membership will be required, and the indemnity chit, which has to be completed by everyone, includes a declaration by the signatory that he is covered by the BCA PLI scheme. Numbers are limited to a maximum of 10 persons. ***The charge this season is £4 per person.***

Titan/James Hall: Bookings must be made in advance via Dave (Moose) Nixon who will arrange a key holder to be present on the day. ***Fee to landowner of £2.00 per person.*** Individuals must be over 18 years of age and covered by a suitable insurance policy such as the BCA scheme when entering any part of the Peak-Speedwell system. This includes Titan.

Bagshawe Cavern: Applications for visits, usually by email, are sent in advance and should include not just a list of names and BCA numbers, but scanned copies of their current BCA membership cards. ***Fee to landowner of £2.00 per person.***

DCUC Region;

There are no access restrictions to caves in Cornwall. In Devon there are several locked caves and DCUC do check that the cavers are members of BCA clubs and clubs via the list on the BCA website (or DIM's) or that they carry other liability insurance. Access to some of the caves are BCA membership only, and some are less fussy; and accept them if the cavers hold insurance (for example university clubs who are not CIM's).

CCC region;

1. Cambrian itself does not issue permits for access to caves.
2. Access to the major Welsh systems is controlled by management committees, each responsible for an individual cave or group of caves in a locality. The rules in each case reflect the agreement reached with

the respective landowner. Historically, these were originally very club-orientated and have trended towards our ideal of maximising access for all bona-fide cavers.

3. The traditional arrangement in which a club secretary has to write to the permit secretary of the relevant management committee to get a permit for a specific club to visit a specific cave on a specific date persists in a few cases (e.g. OFD and Aggie). The impact of this, however, is greatly softened by
 - a. Clubs which are frequent visitors being issued with an annual permit and/or their own key allowing on-demand access for their members.
 - b. Up to 50% of the members of a party may be "guests" i.e. not members of a club with a permit. A party can consist of members of several different clubs with their own annual permits, plus guests.
 - c. Sensible pragmatism.
4. More recent access arrangements (e.g. DYO, Draenen) are not club-orientated but are open to groups of bona-fide cavers. DYO requires BCA insurance and a warden to accompany the party but wardens are appointed as individuals, not on a per-club basis. Other locked caves and mines are generally accessible to all bona-fide cavers by contacting a keyholder.
5. FoDCCAG operates a club-based permit system in the Forest of Dean for the 100+ caves and mines on Forestry Commission land. This is currently vigorously enforced. However the three local clubs (GSS, RFDCC and Hades) are exempt and make up about 90% of the trips. Non-forestry sites (e.g. Miss Grace's Lane, Slaughter) can generally be accessed by bona-fide cavers on the basis of a phone call to a keyholder. Otter requires pre-booking for obvious reasons!

All of the above applies only to recreational cavers: the situation for professionally-led trips is, as you know, much more restrictive.

CSCC Region:

CSCC do not appear to control access to any caves in their region. However, a significant number of the more popular caves are locked and managed by the Charterhouse Caving Committee Ltd. Each member club of CCC Ltd (ACG, BEC, CSS, MCG, MNRC, SMCC, SBSS, UBSS and WCC) hold a key for the use of their own members and guests.

Visiting cavers can make arrangements with either a member club or with at least one month's notice from the CCC Ltd Honorary Company Secretary – it is not clear if BCA membership (individual or club) is a prerequisite. The party size is limited to 6. Each party member must sign an indemnity form and **pay the appropriate fee** whereupon a permit will be issued.

Glenn Jones.

Council of Northern Caving Clubs

Proposal for access to lands owned by Whelprigg Estate & Kay Shuttleworth Estate for commercial gain

CNCC proposal on the use of Leck and Casterton Fells by commercial groups; this proposal will comply with the existing access agreements and will be under the strict control of the CNCC on behalf of the landholders.

Through a constitutional amendment the CNCC can create a new class of membership, Commercial member. The commercial member will pay CNCC a small (£5?) administration fee; this is necessary because the CNCC is run by volunteers and they may object to arranging permits for leaders to make financial gain from.

Using the existing structure within the CNCC, the CNCC will administer the additional commercial permit. The procedure will be; commercial group requests from the Access Officer a permit and states the intended group use of that permit using the definitions 'types of commercial caving' appendix A. The Access Officer checks the availability of the cave entrance with the relevant CNCC meets secretary, if there is availability the Access Officer issues a permit to the commercial member with an invoice for the amount agreed by the landowners. The commercial member will send the appropriate fee to the CNCC Treasurer who will then arrange (after a defined period) to forward the permit fees to the respective landowners.

The CNCC will agree with the landowners which caves on their land can be used for a defined category of commercial course and the permit will state that the cave can only be used for a specific category of group (see appendix A); for example County Pot categories 3, 5, 6. If a commercial group does not abide by the category then their membership of CNCC is suspended. The landowner will also be able to make a formal complaint to BCA and that award holder could lose their award and their ability to lead groups. In addition to the monthly meets list sent to the Estates, the Access Officer will send a copy of every commercial permit issued to the respective Estate manager.

Les Sykes

CNCC secretary, CNCC Training Officer, CNCC Access Officer

Appendix A

Classifications of instructed/commercial caving Taken from draft BCA document 'Access & Commercial Caving - Response by BCA Executive to BCA Council'.

Types of Commercial Caving

1. Novice Taster Trips: The vast majority of commercial trips fall under this heading, often involving groups of young people from a wide range of Outdoor Centres and uniformed groups. These trips tend to take place in a fairly small number of caves which are often monitored by the Centres involved and with remedial works undertaken by the leaders in conjunction with landowners. Although in a very small number of the most suitable caves, there can be as many as 10 (or maybe more) of this sort of trip daily, in the vast majority there are none. Any experienced caver will be able to advise on whether your cave is likely to be of interest for commercial novice trips.

2. More Advanced Group Instruction: This will generally involve greater duration or technical difficulty and will be led almost exclusively by more advanced BCA Award Holders. Skills will be developed as an integral part of the instructional input, including hazard awareness, conservation, cave genesis and practical skills, such as safe and effective rigging. There are far fewer of this sort of trip taking place than type 1.

3. Individual Skills Instruction: Such sessions will be led by our highest Award Holders and usually involve recreational cavers wanting to develop an aspect of their technique to make them safer underground.

4. Guiding: This is a traditional non-professional caving trip, but the cavers concerned may wish to extend their skills to a wider range of caves and/or techniques. This type of trip will be very similar to a non-professional trip but will be expertly led.

5. Workshops for Club Cavers: BCA has a fund to promote the training of club cavers. Much of this takes place above ground, but some necessarily takes place underground. This sort of trip will generally involve experienced club cavers plus a CIC holder.

6. BCA Award Scheme training courses, revalidations and assessments: BCA's Awards Holders are assessed against strict criteria. As part of this, all potential Award Holders attend a Training Please note: what follows is the proposed text, rather than the layout, of the landowner leaflet. Course where they learn about important topics such as effective cave conservation, group management and modern rope work. They then progress to assessment. This is an extremely important part of ensuring

