

# **COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS**

## **British Caving Association**

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**Reports for 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 Committee Meeting**

### **Chairman's Report**

#### **Living Uplands Project**

This is a joint project between Durham Wildlife Trust and the Landowner of Fairy Holes Cave. It is an outreach project to engage local school children with their natural environment. Mark Tellwright has asked the CNCC to help him with the production of digital teaching modules on the underlying geology of the region, in particular, the formation of the hypogenic caves such as Fairy Holes. I will be asking our talented videographers to help with the production of some one-minute film facts about the underground world. <http://www.livinguplands.com>

#### **Crackpot Cave Cleanup**

Well done to Rowan Worsman and all involved with this project. It has transformed the cave into a site which everyone would agree is worth protecting. It has produced some interesting new prototype equipment to commission for future projects. Would visitors to the cave please report back to me with any information about the condition of the conservation tape and whether it is being respected?

#### **Stories in Stone Project**

This is now in its final year and we hope to benefit from funding for our new prototype equipment as described above. We will also be investing in more equipment for use by cave conservation volunteers.

#### **SABIC Ethylene Pipeline**

Can I remind cave explorers to check that their digs do not stray within 50 metres of the pipeline route (particularly in the eastern region of the CNCC area). The route can be found on the CNCC website.

#### **Providence Pot Landslide**

The recently reported landslide adjacent to Providence pot requires a pick and shovel team to re-establish the flow of the stream past the cave entrance shaft. An ideal one-day job for a club active in Wharfedale.

#### **Ingleborough Estate**

I have had further meetings with Philp Farrer (family member trustee of Ingleborough Estate) to keep him informed of the progress of the old dig capping projects. Another 2 digs were capped by members of the BPC during the pre-winch season. The capping of the "Time" dig on Hurnell Moss has begun with some innovative engineering / fabrication works. Philip Farrer likes to be kept informed of caver activity. It is worth getting in touch with the Estate Office if you are going to be carrying unusual items of equipment up to the caves for whatever purpose.

**Andrew Hinde – CNCC Chairman**

## Secretary's Report

The publication of the March 2019 newsletter very shortly after the AGM was another milestone, as for the second time the CNCC has generated enough news in six months to fill an 8-page newsletter! Not bad going at all, and reflective of the amount of excellent work being done.

Only three months on from that, content for the next newsletter is already lining up; the excellent conservation work at Crackpot cave and at various abandoned digs, cave entrances and shakeholes on Ingleborough (see Kay's report), the evolution of the High Birkwith situation, and any actions on Leck Fell after this meeting.

Gary and I put together a video on the Crackpot Cave cleanup. This aimed to show off the efforts of our conservation volunteers. A link to this video can be found on the news article on the website; it may be useful for anyone trying to demonstrate cave conservation to new cavers.

Immediately after the AGM in March, Gary Douthwaite, Andrew Hinde, Mark Sims and I went to County Pot, where the remnant metal spikes from the previously installed staples were cut flush to the rock and camouflaged with resin, and the damage to Wretched Rabbit was inspected but was beyond repair. I hope this is the last such visit we will have to make, and the message that unilateral modifications (particularly where perfectly good alternatives are available) are not encouraged.

A lot of time over the past few months has been putting together content and working with Gary to design the stall that the CNCC will have at Hidden Earth in September (probably the weekend of 21<sup>st</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup>). It is three years since I first presented this idea, and finally it is going to happen. Gary and I will transport everything down and set up on the Friday night at Hidden Earth, however, we would be very grateful for volunteers to man the stall during Saturday and Sunday daytime for as much time as possible... Ideally people who can engage with passers-by and who can talk the hind legs off a donkey and are up to speed on the work of the CNCC from the last few years. If you can help with this, please get in touch. An unmanned stall is fine, but it really is much better to have people there to chat with. My thanks again to the YSS for the loan of their display boards.

I am concerned about the future of our anchor scheme. It took years to bring this to fruition and bringing Simon on board with this was tremendous news. His efforts to design, test and implement the IC anchor, serve as installation trainer, installer and anchor coordinator, anchor inspector, E&T representative to the BCA, and to research new resins to overcome the shrinkage issue have been remarkable. Unfortunately for us, Simon has advised that he now needs to step down. Over the past three months I have been asking around to try to identify people to help pick up the various facets of the anchor coordinator role, but very few people seem to have the time. My thanks to Alan Speight who has offered to help, but it would be good if the load could be spread a little so that the burden doesn't all fall to one person again. I would like to hear from any volunteers and to perhaps take a little time at the meeting to discuss this. The CNCC anchor scheme is a jewel in our crown and getting a small team together to help run this would make me very happy.

A few online cave descriptions have been added or updated since January, and a few topo errors have been reported and the topos corrected. If anyone spots something wrong in a CNCC topo or cave description, or would like to submit a description then please get in touch.

I am now in my sixth year as CNCC Secretary and need to consider moving on to allow me to focus on other responsibilities. We are extremely lucky that Josh Young, another York caver and a former president of York University Cave and Pothole Club, is extremely interested in the CNCC Secretary role, and you will see in the agenda I wish to co-opt him as an Assistant Secretary.

Finally, I am in dialogue with the CaveFest organisers and I understand they are coming up at the start of July to view a couple of possible venues for bringing this event up-north. I plan to meet them and provide whatever help/advice I can personally, and unless there are any objections, I will also see what they think the CNCC could do to help. Obviously, this falls outside of the CNCC's usual remit, however, the enthusiasm these folks have for putting on an event that actively promotes caving is great to see, and I hope that northern cavers (and the CNCC) will support this.

**Matt Ewles – CNCC Secretary**

### **Treasurer's Report**

#### **Financial Status as of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019:**

Business Community Account:	£910.06
Business Saver Account:	£17050.74

Since the March meeting, the following payments/receipts made:

£53.50 to Sam Allshorn for tackle bag after installing anchors in Quaking Pot.  
£218.46 to Tim Allen for shoring materials for New Rift entrance stabilisation.  
£328.90 to N. Bairstow re. the Paperless Surveying Course (£150 to be claimed from BCA).  
£2585.22 received from SIS re. mileage claims/other spending etc (no breakdown supplied).  
£325 to Dales Training re. 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Course (£125 to be claimed from BCA).  
£100 to Inprint Colour for CNCC Newsletter printing.

Projects which have involved multiple payments (total values to be confirmed):

Mileage payments paid re. P5 clear-up (SIS).  
Payments re. Crackpot Cleaning mileage and specialist equipment have been made (not SIS).  
Payment made to JT Atkinson for lintels etc. used by BPC on Christmas Cracker Pot (SIS).

SIS = Stories in Stone

**Pete Bann – CNCC Treasurer**

### **Conservation Officer's Report**

Various projects have been completed. The old dig near Christmas Pot has been stabilised, with a twin wall pipe fitted to the entrance shaft and a stock proof lid fitted. The entrance rocks at Pay Sank have been stabilised with a scaffold frame, and a wooden gate has been fitted. The Pot Noodle abandoned dig in Clapham Bottoms has been backfilled, and waste fencing removed from site.

Degraded conservation tape has been removed from Old East Passage in Gaping Gill, and been replaced with conservation [pins and orange nylon tape]. Formations have been cleaned in Crackpot, and conservation tape used to create a route through the Turnip Field and protect the cleaned formations from trampling.

Ongoing work includes the stabilisation of the Time Dig by Rubber Duck.

The remaining digs to be capped on Ingleborough Estate are the two YRS digs above Rayside track. Five volunteers attended a CNCC sponsored First Aid course, and volunteers were trained on the capstan winch that has been purchased for CNCC use.

New volunteers are always welcome, for weekend or weekday working parties. No specific skills are necessary, but if you have them, we will do our best to make use of them. On the job training is given as needed. Occasionally there may be the opportunity to attend a training course. Tools will be provided, but you are responsible for providing your own protective clothing - stout footwear, preferably with steel toe caps, stout gloves, weatherproof clothing, helmet. You will also need to provide your own packed lunch and hot drinks. If you'd like to be placed on the mailing list to be informed of future projects, please contact Kay Easton on [conservation@cncc.org.uk](mailto:conservation@cncc.org.uk)

**Kay Easton - CNCC Conservation Officer**

### **Access Officer's Report**

Greetings to all at CNCC, northern cavers and beyond, I hope to see you at our meeting. A short report this month I am pleased to report.

#### **Leck Fell**

The main issue here is detailed in my letter and comes up as an agenda item in its own right. There has been no further dialogue since I wrote that letter. Third party conversations suggest this is just a matter of caving coming so far down the list of estate priorities that they have not been able to respond even within six months. That being the case there should be no great harm in our withdrawal from the old agreement and starting any renegotiation upwards from that position. That is my recommendation.

#### **Barbondale**

Following my meeting reported earlier in the year we need to draft some advice to cavers for accessing certain caves during the shooting season. This will need doing by the end of July at the latest.

#### **Birkwith**

I have been informed of the possibility of arranging parking at a fee at a different farm. I have yet to make further enquiries to see if it is anything the CNCC would wish to be involved in.

#### **Snatcher Pot**

I have yet to make the visit I planned to check this entrance. However, conversations with those in the know suggest there will be no stock proofing issues with the entrance.

#### **Caves and Karst books**

I now have a further 20 of these fabulous books that we can give away to our landowners. I shall bring some to the meeting if anyone has the right connections.

#### **National Park**

There is a Cave and Crag Access Group meeting in July which I shall be attending. I will take the opportunity to update the meeting on recent issues and find out what else is going on from both the climbing and authority perspective.

Access matters on Ingleborough and Langcliffe seem to be quiet and settled. I shall continue to try to progress the managed access issues at Casterton Fell.

Good caving

**Tim Allen– CNCC Access Officer**

## Training Officer's Report

Position vacant

## Webmaster's Report

There have been no significant changes to the website since the last report in March, I have just been keeping on top of general housekeeping and updating. Site and social media statistics to date are as follows.

### Google Analytics

Page views for (per week) from 1 Jun 2018 to 31 May 2019.



Total page views in the last 12 months: 114,754. Previous 12 months: 75,403 (53% increase).

Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19
8381	8940	7682	6850	8856	13082	12516	9605	9838	11966	9211	7827
+38%	+107%	+24%	+66%	+33%	+72%	+140%	+31%	+25%	+90%	+12%	+47%

% is increase on same period in the previous year.

### Facebook

As at 16 Jun 2019 we have 963 page likes (+138 since AGM report on 5 Mar 2019) and 1019 followers (+160 since AGM report).



Above: Page likes in the last 12 months.

### Twitter

As at 16 Jun 2019 we have 357 followers (+26 since last report on 1 October).

### Online Booking System

To date, there are 289 registered users and 411 individual bookings have been made. This number includes 344 approved bookings and 67 cancelled bookings.

Below: approved bookings since the system started in Feb 2018.

	By booked date	By booking made date
Feb 2018	26	78
Mar 2018	24	15
Apr 2018	21	7
May 2018	7	3
Jun 2018	6	5
Jul 2018	15	8
Aug 2018	5	5
Sep 2018	14	19
Oct 2018	18	23
Nov 2018	22	24
Dec 2018	30	27
Jan 2019	20	22
Feb 2019	11	13
Mar 2019	35	33
Apr 2019	22	21
May 2019	11	18
Jun 2019	31	23
Jul 2019	7	-
Aug 2019	2	-
Sep 2019	2	-
Oct 2019	5	-
Nov 2019	0	-
Dec 2019	9	-

**Download Statistics (to 16 Jun 2019):**

- Publications:
  - Total (since 16/09/2018) – 3,186 (2,282 unique)
  - Approx. average per month – 398
- Topos:
  - Total (since 20/11/2018) – 18,008 (12,471 unique)
  - Approx. average per month – 2,572
- Cave descriptions:
  - Total (since 20/11/2018) – 12,193 (8,729 unique)
  - Approx. average per month – 1,524

**Gary Douthwaite – CNCC Webmaster**

### **Anchor Coordinator and BCA Equipment and Techniques Representative**

See Secretary report; position vacant.

### **BCA Youth and Development Representative**

There has not been a Youth and Development meeting since my last report. Our main activity has been rather public, as seen on UKC and at the BCA AGM.

Apart from the Charterhouse stuff, which is still ongoing, our main recent achievement was to lobby the BCA Council to write off the debt owed by the new student caving clubs in Swansea and Lancaster for kit. You've probably seen Lancaster caving around the Dales, and they probably represent your closest student club (apart from possibly University of Cumbria Mountaineering, who aren't a CHECC member and we know relatively little about).

I don't think I need (or want) to go over Charterhouse, except to say that we are doing our best to resolve the situation. As always, we are welcome to ideas and input, and if you have any questions about taking young people caving with your club don't hesitate to ask.

**David Botcherby – CNCC representative to the BCA Y&D Committee**



## **CNCC/BCA Representative's Report**

### **Report on the BCA AGM, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019:**

Some of you will have attended the BCA AGM but for those who didn't here is a quick summary with the main points as I noted them down. Of course, change and modernisation was on the agenda and our own Matt Ewles due to take over as secretary. It was a packed village hall with about 75 folks turning up - more than I had seen at any other AGM in the six years since I became involved.

### **Reports**

There was quite a kaffuffle over the Charterhouse Caving Company banning under 18s from caves under their control. Members of the Youth and Development Group had a number of grievances over the role Robin Weare (BCA Sec) had played. Charterhouse now allowed 16-18 year olds despite a barrister's opinion and other advice suggesting there was no legal reason to limit access to this age group. It is one to watch as we do not want this unfortunate problem to infect other areas.

Plenty has been happening with BCA insurance. June 1<sup>st</sup> saw the launch of an expedition insurance scheme. You're sure to see it promoted quite widely over the coming months. BCA is still consulting on a Personal Accident Insurance as a member benefit, but it does seem to attract significant support. The liability level of BCA public liability insurance is likely to go up to £10m in the near future. This at a cost of around £7000.

BCA showed a surplus of 19K and has net cash assets in the bank of £250K.

There was some further discussion over a number of the reports particularly from the webmaster whose report very nearly did not get approved. All the reports are available somewhere on the BCA website if you wish to know more.

### **Elections**

Mick Day – Honorary President - elected

Matt Ewles – Secretary - elected

Howard Jones – Treasurer - elected

Jane Allen - Publications and Information – elected. (Jane had resigned from this position midway through the year but had been persuaded to give it another go under different terms).

Louise Baddeley - Conservation and Access – elected

There was a contentious issue as to whether Will Burn had been correctly nominated to re-stand for one of the Individual Member rep positions. In the end the AGM voted to accept his nomination and to create a one-off extra individual member rep position for him. So, all four nominations could take up a position if they were voted in (achieving a 50% vote from the room). There were a few surprises.

### **Individual member rep**

Tony Brocklebank - not elected

Dave Cooke - not elected

Phil Rowsell - elected

Will Burn - elected

**Club Member rep**

Dave Cooke - withdrawn

Hellie Adams - elected

Gary Douthwaite - elected

**Council's proposals**

There were a large number of standardised policies to be adopted. These included; Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, Bullying and Harassment, Serious Incident policies. All were passed.

**Terms of references**

A number of the BCA Standing Committees had no terms of references despite this being a constitutional requirement. Four were put forward and all passed.

**Member's proposals**

Put forward by Matt Ewles

Approving the Newtoscaving leaflet - passed

Approving the new logo (against the old one) - passed

Instructing BCA Council to appoint Gary Douthwaite webmaster under the terms submitted with the proposal - passed

The P&I proposal put forward by Jane Allen was amended to remove the constitutional changes and a position on the BCA Executive. Thus, the following was passed; P&I to be abolished as a standing committee and replaced with the position of P&I officer with responsibility for overseeing the outward facing publicity, promotion, and information side of BCA function, including current functions of the P&I committee.

Finally the big one put forward by Matt Ewles and discussed in some detail at our last meeting. Removal of the two house voting system and replacement with individual electronic voting. 70% majority was needed in both houses for this one to progress to a membership ballot. The individuals voted overwhelmingly for this and the groups just got there by 71%, so this now goes to a full membership ballot.

There was a lot of discussion throughout the meeting and you should all refer to the minutes which will reflect the true course in case I have got anything wrong. A big thanks to Andrew for all his contributions as C&A, he has now stepped down from the fray. The mood of the AGM was very much one of modernising and adopting change. There were a lot of younger cavers in the room supporting that position and I hope our whole northern caving community will be able to get behind BCA as it moves forward. Good luck Matt and Gary. You may well need it.

**Tim Allen – CNCC Representative to BCA Council and General Meetings**

### **Meet's Secretary Reports – Geoff Whittaker (Aygill, Ingleborough, Leck, Casterton)**

#### Aygill Caverns

No activity

#### Casterton Fell

Permit requests have dropped slightly since last meeting.

#### Leck Fell

Closed Season and only about half a dozen permit requests received for beyond July 1<sup>st</sup> so far.

#### Online registrations

These have slowed down a little, approx. 41 registrations since 9<sup>th</sup> March

#### Online permit bookings actually used since 9<sup>th</sup> March (not advanced bookings)

March – 22      April – 21      May – 12      June – 19

### **Meet's Secretary Reports – Tony Brown (Bowland)**

No permits given out in the period.

Of interest perhaps UCLAN Archaeology Dept are doing some exploratory digging at Dinkling Green Mine Cave to see if the mining activities unearthed anything still remaining in the spoil heaps. It's part of their Bowland Prehistoric Landscapes Project which has been going on for about 5 years now.

### **Meet's Secretary Reports – Matt Ewles (Excalibur)**

A small flurry of interest in Excalibur in the last few weeks before this meeting; two permits issued for later this year, on target for the usual trend of 4-5 visiting groups annually.

Access to Jenga Pot remains on an unquestioned basis; it is technically on differently owned land to Excalibur, however, to date, providing groups have permission for Excalibur (i.e. a permit to display in their car so the gamekeepers know they're cavers and not poachers), no issues with walking the 100m down the track to Jenga Pot have been raised and our digging group maintain friendly relations with the gamekeepers.

Our team went for dinner with the Excalibur landowner up at his farmhouse last month (he hosts the most extraordinary suppers and parties). We presented him with a copy of Caves and Karst courtesy of the CNCC. He is happy to see the access agreement modernised in line with current CNCC practice but is keen to keep some of the current restrictions in place (it is a private shooting estate). I think it should be possible to get a good compromise that enables easy access for all BCA members (clubs and individuals... currently it is clubs only). I'm working on getting this finalised.