

BCA Three Counties Traverse – from one extremity to the other.

Dear Secretary,

I write to inform the CNCC through your office that an idea is developing into a project to achieve the first traverse of the Three Counties System from one extremity to the other in one go. The plan is to do this from Large Pot to Top Sinks.

BCA Council has agreed in principle, subject to a detailed plan for any financial assistance, to support the project.

A number of cavers have been harbouring the idea and following some discrete inquiries, the response has been more than enthusiastic. The concept has taken off as more cavers with detailed knowledge of the Three Counties were approached for advice and “came on board” the development of a steering group including those with far ranging knowledge of the system, and some of the most experienced divers in the Country.

We envisage offering the opportunity for any caver particularly young people and club in the Country, to be included as a considerable amount of support will be required such as rigging, portering equipment, guiding, even admin in preparing for the actual final traverse.

The vision, from the BCA perspective, is to support a project that will inspire and motivate UK cavers and regenerate caving after the Covid pandemic is over as well as create a lasting legacy for future generations of cavers to aspire to.

Part of the plan envisages entrances left rigged and freely available for all cavers to use during the active periods of the project. Conservation is in the plan and whilst the detail is to be worked out, issues such as the removal of the pipes from Ireby/Notts sump have already been identified.

The original timescale for the project aimed to achieve the traverse this year but in developing the plan it became clear that realistically, with the uncertainty of the times we live in, Summer 2022 is a more sensible target. However, there is a significant amount of detailed and meticulous preparation required which we hope to begin once current restrictions ease and access becomes more open.

The actual date for the traverse to take place is an unknown and in many respects a moveable feast inevitably dependent on the weather. There is speculation already that this will be a “jamboree” but nothing could be further from reality. The simple fact that the date is so uncertain rules anything approaching a “jamboree” out of the question.

Such a significant event in British Caving requires recording for posterity but just how this is achieved is debateable at this stage, a written record at least but some form of visual i.e. film of the whole traverse including the preparations would be desirable. This has still to be considered and no decisions have been made to date; similarly with sponsorship, nothing in the offing yet.

Bull Pot Farm will form an important location for the project and RRCPC have already indicated their support which coincides with the 75th Anniversary of George Cornes discovering Lancaster Hole on 29th September 1946.

At this point I ask CNCC for support for the project in general and specifically to request help regarding access and in particular, seeking consent from the landowners for the proposed project. I am more than happy to do this personally, but knowing how these things work from of old, feel it may be better going through “official channels” so to speak.

I look forward to hearing from you and if CNCC have any advice, suggestions or generally good ideas about the project, I would be more than happy to receive them and equally, more than happy to present the project in person (virtually) to the CNCC Committee should they wish.

Kind Regards

Russell Myers

Chair BCA

19th February 2021