

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Officers and Meet's Secretary Reports for 6th June 2015 Committee Meeting

Chairman's Report

At the AGM 2012 a decision was made that CNCC would finance two ends of Nicola III for each of our three local rescue teams i.e. Cave Rescue Organisation, Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team and Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Team.

Due to development problems it is only now that Nicola III is ready for manufacture and in consequence the number required.

I feel that it is only right (due to the long period of time since the decision was made) that CNCC has an opportunity to confirm or reject the decision. I have been in touch with each of the teams asking for their comments. As yet no replies but maybe by the 6th of June there will be. I have also been informed that the British Cave Rescue Council is funding four ends for each of the countries rescue teams. There is however a problem in that ancillary equipment (chargers, spare batteries, headphones etc.) is not being funded.

The only other things to mention is fielding the usual enquiries and either dealing with them myself or steering them to the appropriate offices.

Roy Holmes – CNCC Chairman

Secretary's Report

The new constitution is live on the website and now 'in force', hence the rather more advanced circulation of the meeting agenda than usual. We also are now able to use the members' area of the CNCC website for the circulation of meeting minutes to those clubs attending, ahead of making them public. This has been now done for the AGM minutes and as will be done in future for all meetings.

I hope that by the time this meeting comes around we will have the second CNCC newsletter circulated in digital form, and in production in hard-copy format, which will be six months following the previous newsletter. The first newsletter was well received and so the second will hopefully be similarly useful. I hope that a precedent for this roughly every six months can be set, although this depends on the availability of content. Please get in touch if you have something to include.

Eurospeleo 2016 is our chance to show off on a world stage what a fantastic place the Yorkshire Dales is, and what great caves we have. I cannot stress enough the importance of all clubs promoting this event, to your members and any other cavers all over the world with who you have contacts. I have volunteered to take on the role of coordinating the congress guide book for this event, Gary is doing the event website, Johnny will be working to address all matters relating to access, and Ian Lloyd will develop a greater role in the coming year as the CNCC Liason.

My next aim is to try to set the ball rolling on re-invigorating the role of the CNCC in anchor installation in our region. We have already made a good start with this through the nomination of a representative to the BCA E&T Committee, and the availability now of two different anchors (the IC anchor and the BP anchor), each well suited to different situations.

I have set forward some suggestions for further ways forward with this in the agenda. My suggestions cover the general policy that the CNCC, as a regional council, might take regarding bolting management, and they are broadly in line with BCA policy. I have also suggested that we nominate someone to administer this. However, this is just a starting point, as my suggestions do not cover actual practicalities of how bolting might be performed under the CNCC name (who can do it, how can others get involved, should caves be approved for bolting, what anchors should be used and when, how are rigging guides circulated etc). This is something that those directly involved in bolting, and who are most passionate about it, will need to discuss in more detail, probably at a future meeting or offline from Committee meetings altogether.

Matt Ewles – CNCC Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Financial Status as of 29th May 2015:

Current Account: £2,685.94

High Interest Account: £18,884.19

Key payments for this period include;

£246.00 for Tax audit

£325.00 for Winching Techniques course

All the treasurer related archive material has been passed to the new treasurer. I will be handing over the 2015 file to the new treasurer at the June meeting and therefore completing my duties as Caretaker Treasurer.

Glenn Jones – CNCC Treasurer (Caretaker pending return of Pete Bann to UK Mainland)

Conservation Officer's Report

A total of 8 volunteers have been trained in safe operating procedures for a variety of winches, which will be helpful in future shakehole clearance like the recent exercises at Daimler Hole and Homeshaw Cave. A waiting list is being compiled with the intention of running a further course. The CNCC now has a supply of orange conservation tape (about 10 reels of 25m), and pegs. This stock will be maintained courtesy of the CNCC, and is available for use by any cavers undertaking exploration or conservation works e.g. to help preserve delicate features. If you would like some, please contact Kay Easton. The tape can be collected from Colt Park Barn, LA6 3JF (near Chapel-le-Dale), but it may be possible to make alternative arrangements.

It is hoped to set up a second team of volunteers available to work at weekends. Anyone who would like to be involved, please contact Kay Easton.

Kay Easton – CNCC Conservation Officer

Access Officer's Report

A verbal report on a few topical matters will be provided to the meeting

Johnny Latimer – CNCC Access Officer

Training Officer's Report

There are plans to run a SRT coaching and rescue workshop, probably around September time. As some of you know I work as a CIC, this has enabled me to forge links with the BCA and aspirant CIC's who are willing to coach for free in order to gain valuable high end coaching hours needed before assessment I currently have 2 instructors plus myself lined up to run this course at no cost to the CNCC. I have spoken with the BCA training committee who have informed me that as the coaches are working voluntarily they are covered by their BCA public liability insurance. We are currently just sorting dates and a location before we advertise this course.

I also attended the BCA training panel meeting on the 12th May in Staffordshire; representing the CNCC and its interests. I had very little to put onto the agenda at this meeting, but I view it as important to represent our interests and continue to forge links between all aspects of the caving community.

Following this meeting, there is a development that is of interest to the CNCC and member clubs.

The BCA has a training grant that can be applied for by clubs or the CNCC, the 'pot' for this currently stands at £2000 per year; and the BCA would be willing to increase this should enough valid applications be made. Traditionally it has been a slightly complicated application process and very few grants are made each year. It was proposed to simplify this process. It has been decided that the grant will now be paid (upon approval by the BCA committee) directly to the applicant and it is up to the applicants to use the money as they feel fit towards the cost of the course e.g. food, accommodation, transport costs, venue hire, etc. The grant is now been standardised and increased to £25 per attendee for a minimum of 4. The applicant needs to pay the costs initially then they will be reimbursed after the event and attendee numbers have been confirmed.

This potentially means that for the proposed SRT course later in the year we could apply for 12 x £25 = £300. This would cover the hire cost of the YSS Rig for the day at £20 per head. This effectively means with the free instruction from me and the two aspirant CIC's; and a grant we could run the course at no cost to the CNCC or attendees; other than their transport costs to the venue.

I am pursuing this and hope to have more to report soon.

Dan Irving – CNCC Training Officer

BCA E&T Representative report

(Supplementary report)

Report on the IC Resin Anchor Project Prepared for the CNCC

From the outset it was intended that the project should be in line with the BCA Anchor Policy. I contacted the BCA and was invited to attend the meeting of the E&T Committee in March 2014. I presented the first prototype to them and was given encouragement and advice on how to proceed. The design was then developed and tested in consultation with and with the assistance of members of the E&T Committee. Throughout the period there have been regular discussions covering the development of the anchor and all aspects of the BCA Anchor Policy, record keeping and insurance. The project was made public in October 2014 by the website and this was timed to be before the November meeting of the E&T Committee. The project was well received by the E&T Committee and was then presented to the CNCC in January 2015.

A group of experienced installers was brought together and at the first meeting of the group the primary objective was to discuss the content of a manual covering installing, training and record keeping. These topics and other aspects of the IC resin anchor project have been discussed by the group. The IC resin anchor and the manual were presented to the E&T Committee at the March meeting. At that meeting the IC anchor became a BCA designated anchor and I was approved as a trainer. Training workshops took place on the 29th March and 12th April and there are now six trained installers.

Installations have taken place in Rift Pot (17 anchors), Washfold Pot (8), It's a Cracker (16), Boxhead Pot (5) and Long Drop Cave (9). Each anchor has a unique identification code. The records are being kept as a spreadsheet to which the installers and the E&T Convenor have access.

I think that the installers group are the most appropriate people to make decisions about the IC resin anchor project. I hope that the group will develop and continue to operate in a spirit of cooperation, inclusiveness, openness and mutual support. I think it is beneficial to attract cavers with a high level of skill and expertise and want them to be attracted to become part of the project. I think people will be more inclined to join if they feel valued and empowered.

Simon Wilson – CNCC BCA E&T representative

Webmaster report

(Supplementary report)

Following testing by a handful of volunteers, the member club area of the website was made live at the end of February 2015. As discussed at the March AGM, the secure area now also has a documents section enabling documents such as minutes for approval to be seen only by committee clubs (or all clubs in the case of AGM) before being made public. Also available here are the full access agreements.

The members' area has been quite well used with 19 out of 37 active clubs logging in to it, with most of those being regular.

Plans to add online permits have been put on hold for the time being due to many changes going on with access in several major areas. Hopefully this will still happen but I am waiting until the access details are finalised before putting lots of work in to this.

The site overall is receiving an average of 30,000 hits and around 2,000 unique visitors per month with the most popular search engine terms being about access to specific caves. Facebook has around 100 followers and Twitter has 117 and I am keen to improve this as it is one of the best ways to keep in touch with people, particularly student cavers.

Several entrance photos have now been added to the public site -many have been taken by me but I have also had several submissions from other people. If you have any entrance photos, please email them to me at webmaster@cncc.org.uk (you will of course be credited).

I am keen to make sure that all the cave details on the site are up to date and accurate so I would appreciate it if all of the committee could check for any details that are missing or incorrect or any major caves that are not listed (for example, we recently discovered that FOUL Pot was not specifically listed on the CNCC website despite being a relatively major cave). Thanks.

Gary Douthwaite – CNCC Webmaster

Meet's Secretary Reports – Ingleborough Estate – Geoff Whittaker

Since January, there has been a lot of activity in permit requests for caves and potholes on the Ingleborough, Allotment and Newby Moss areas, the majority coming from BCA member clubs with quite a few BCA DIM's and CIM's also requesting permits. The number of Clubs applying for permits so far this year is 36, with 6 DIM's and 2 CIM's.

The actual breakdown of permit requests and permits issued are as follows:

Month.	Permits in use monthly.	BCA member club permit requests.	BCA DIM's permit requests.	BCA CIM's permit requests.
January	15	6	1	
February	20	13	4	
March	21	14	3	2
April	32	17	4	
May	5	9	2	

Totals	93	59	14	2
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The most popular request have been for Bar Pot, Stream Passage Pot, Flood Entrance, Juniper Gulf and Hurnell Moss, although all areas have had a good selection.

Quite a lot of the permit requests from Clubs and Individuals have been short notice, and most have had their permits electronically returned within the day.

There have been no issues raised from the Ingleborough Estate/Ingham and Yorke, so hopefully everything is progressing smoothly.

Meet's Secretary Reports – Aygill Caverns – Geoff Whittaker

Since January, permit requests for Aygill Caverns have been very quiet, and only 3 have been requested to date. There have been no issues raised by the Estate Office.

Meet's Secretary Reports – Stump Cross/Robinson's/Birks Fell – Ric Halliwell

The Stump Cross access agreement has expired but Richard Bowerman has signed a new one. It will need your (Matt's) and Roy's signatures at the meeting. I raised the question of access by individual BCA members with Richard but at present he is not willing to allow this, he wants access to remain at club level. However he has signed the agreement for only 2 years rather than the usual 5 so that the matter will be reconsidered earlier than would normally be the case.

Nothing to report on other areas (Birks Fell, Robinson's Pot). Note that permits are still available for Fairy Holes for October/November/December.

Meet's Secretary Reports – Penyghent area – Sam Allshorn

Penyghent Pot and Dale Head Pot: No permit issues to report. Due to a general lack of demand at the moment and the weather conditions needed for both these pots both days of a weekend are issued if the club may be able to make use of them. The online calendar does mean that I don't get requests for dates that are booked by others.

Alan and Mavis Speight have visited the Coates family (Fountains Fell), there are currently no issues to report and they are happy so far with the way the new system is working. Please could we request that all cavers continue to maintain these good relations and we will hopefully see a continuation of this permit free system next year.

Meet's Secretary Reports – Casterton Fell – Alan Speight

Written by Matt Ewles based on information from communications with Alan Speight:

No issues to report: All is progressing well. Hannah Walker will be taking over the role around September. When the handover is due I will ensure this is appropriately communicated. Alan has been working with the landowner and is trying to persuade them to remove the need for a permit for caving on Casterton Fell, even if just for a one-year trial. If this is successful this would be an exceptional achievement. For now I would encourage all cavers to assist with Alan's efforts by continuing to work within the current permit system and respect the landowner's wishes.

Alan has said that there is plenty of permit availability, particularly when booking well in advance, although there is a strong trend towards very last minute request: Alan can deal with last minute requests if he is at home. But of course (as for all permit requests) please do not take this for granted as it cannot be guaranteed.

Meet's Secretary Reports – Leck Fell – Andy Farrow

No issues to report

Meet's Secretary Reports – Whitewell Pot area – Tony Brown

No issues to report

Meet's Secretary Reports – Excalibur Pot – Matt Ewles

No issues to report. Excalibur permit issuing remains steady at around one every two-three months. One of our digging team is currently trying to get agreement for Jenga Pot (recently connected to Excalibur Pot, creating a fine 4hr through-trip) to be 'added' onto the existing Excalibur Pot access agreement under the same terms, to allow a permit to be issued for the entire system (including a third entrance half way between the two). This is probably the most simplistic approach, with the greatest chances of success. Jenga Pot is on land of a different landowner, so it may take a little while longer to sort this out (we also need to clear the cave of digging equipment first!)