

# **COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS**

## **British Caving Association**

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**Officers and Meet's Secretary Reports for 12<sup>th</sup> September 2015 Committee Meeting**

### **Chairman's Report**

The period since the last council meeting has been exceptionally quiet with no major problems. This situation is due to the good and tireless work of all the officers and permit secretaries of the council. Nothing to report but my sincere thanks to all the above, please keep up the work and keep caving.

**Roy Holmes – CNCC Chairman**

## Secretary's Report

As Roy has reported, it has been a quiet summer with no issues being raised.

At the previous Committee meeting, Alan Speight suggested that now might be a good time to pursue more open access for Casterton Fell. I have followed this up by writing to the land agent a few months ago (if any Committee club wish to see this letter please email me). Unfortunately I have received no response yet and am planning to chase this up after the September meeting.

Also following the previous meeting, I tried to make contact with CHECC (via their email address on their website) to discuss the best approach to make permits more easily available. Unfortunately I have received no response. I suspect that this is due to it being the student summer holidays.

Since the AGM in March I have received enquiries about full membership from two enthusiastic and active northern clubs. Both asked what the procedure for applying is, and one even asked how much it cost (it has been some time since the CNCC abolished subscriptions). This made me realise that the CNCC website was missing some simple information about membership and the application process. With this in mind, and also Pete Monks' excellent suggestion of creating a membership application form, I am pleased to announce a new section has been added to our website called 'Get Involved'. This explains what full membership and Committee/Officer roles involve, and how to go about applying for these. It includes a downloadable paper version, and a digital version of the final membership application form which should facilitate information gathering on new applicants. My thanks to Pete for his work on the form, and to Gary for making this all work on the website.

I am pleased to see a proposal regarding instructed cavers on the agenda for this meeting. Hopefully this agenda item will be the start of some fruitful discussions with another branch of our sport.

I am also very pleased to see that the IC anchor team have been busy, and Gingly Hole and Long Drop Cave are now installed with Resin anchors, which will no doubt benefit many cavers.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all full member clubs that there is now an eight week constitutional deadline on submitting notifications of intentions to stand for the next Committee or Officer team at the 2016 AGM. Based on the current AGM date (26<sup>th</sup> March) this means 30<sup>th</sup> January is the deadline to submit notification (this may change if the date of the AGM changes due to the accidental clash with Easter). Notification can be submitted by a simple email (to me), ideally with a short supporting statement or manifesto.

I suggest that if your club is considering standing (or re-standing) for a Committee role next year or if you as an individual are interested in an Officer role, you consider this before the amnesic effects of Christmas start to take hold. At the AGM this year there were a couple of clubs who indicated their willingness to step down from the Committee to make room for 'new blood' (but in the end did not need to), and only one contested Officer role; So the message to any clubs/individuals thinking of getting involved for the first time is that there is ample opportunity.

**Matt Ewles – CNCC Secretary**

## Treasurer's Report

There have been no transactions since the June meeting due to the protracted handover in bank signatories (to remove Glenn and Les, and add Pete and I). Believe me, this is not a simple process when all individuals are in different parts of the country, one is in the process of changing address and some of them are not existing Barclay's customers! Thank you for the patience!

However, I believe that this is finally almost sorted and I believe Pete is now in the UK and in a position to fully take over the reigns as Treasurer.

My understanding is that the following transactions are pending once signatories are final:

- (1) £380 to be paid to Cave Diving Group for the repair of walling at Keld Head.
- (2) Funding for 50m of rope to replace ropes in Stake Pot, Easegill (£TBC but probably £50-100). Ropes in Fall Pot have already been replaced.
- (3) Up to £500 of funding on-offer for each of the three CRO's (Swaledale, UWFRA and CRO) to spend on enhancing their communications equipment (e.g. CaveLink or Nicola III). As yet, none of these CRO's have made contact to request these funds. Roy is dealing with this.
- (4) Approximately £80 (TBC) reimbursement to Gary Douthwaite for printing costs of June 2015 newsletter and the collaborative Natural England/CNCC digging guidelines poster and leaflets.
- (5) Any relevant transactions for room bookings at Hellifield.

**Matt Ewles on behalf of Pete Bann – CNCC Treasurer**

### Conservation Officer's Report

The work done in Autumn 2014 by CNCC volunteers stabilising the entrance to Providence Pot appears to have withstood the winter, and is currently being evaluated to see whether any further work is required.

CNCC assisted Duncan Jones in disposal of rubbish removed from Cove Hole, and have given funding to CDG for the repair of the wall above Keld Head. Reports of graffiti in Katnot Cave and rubbish dumping in Victoria Cave are being investigated.

BPC in conjunction with Andrew Hinde, NE held a "Reducing the cavers' footprint" day, scything thistles on Ingleborough NNR followed by a meal at Brackenbottom. If anyone else is interested in such an event either for their own club, or as an inter-club event, please contact Andrew or me.

Tim Allen has been raising the profile of conservation, and it has been pleasing to see the amount of discussion on ukcaving that has ensued, and the reports of other people's work.

It is hoped to set up a second team of volunteers available to work at weekends, and I will be contacting University caving clubs over the next few months to see if they are interested. Anyone who would like to be involved, please contact me.

Other commitments have meant that the Northern Caves Monitoring database has been in abeyance over the summer, but work is expected to resume shortly.

Natural England (Andrew Hinde) is putting together a proposal for England's first underground National Nature Reserve designation, at Scoska Cave, The proposal will be in partnership with caving organisations including CNCC.

**Kay Easton – CNCC Conservation Officer**

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

It's been a quiet few months regarding access but I'm pleased that there haven't been any problems as far as I'm aware.

#### **Birks Fell**

We have yet to receive a copy of the updated lease between the NT and Mr Horner at Redmire Farm. They have confirmed a new 10 month open season but I'm hesitant to publish this before we have sight of the new lease.

#### **Langcliffe Hall Estate**

The Estate's Land Agent will not discuss cave access with me and refers me back to an old agreement which CNCC signed with them but which pre dates their HMRC tax exemption. I have spoken to HMRC and subsequently written to them outlining the issues we have. I have yet to receive a reply.

#### **Casterton Fell**

Alan Speight has been working to ease access on Casterton Fell. A letter has been drafted and sent from the Secretary. Hopefully we may have some progress before the meeting.

**Johnny Latimer – CNCC Access Officer**

### **Training Officer's Report**

A verbal report will be provided at the meeting

## Report on the IC Resin Anchor Project to the CNCC, September 2015.

### *Anchors installed to date:*

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| It's a Cracker               | 16 |
| Rift Pot                     | 17 |
| Washfold Pot                 | 8  |
| Boxhead Pot                  | 5  |
| Long Drop Cave               | 11 |
| Gingling Hole                | 15 |
| Pool Sink, Spiral Staircase. | 2  |
| Lancaster Hole, Brass Monkey | 4  |
| Heron Pot                    | 2  |
| Steam Passage                | 1  |
| Total -----                  | 81 |

There has been some discussion within the installers group about priorities. High priority is being given to replacing anchors that are deemed to be dangerous which are mainly old Spits. It now seems somewhat pointless to assign strict priorities to tasks because tasks get done when installers are motivated to do them for a variety of reasons.

Steps are being taken to recruit more installers. None have been trained since the last CNCC Committee meeting but several people are interested and I expect some new ones will be trained.

Since the last CNCC Committee meeting 15 anchors have been installed in Gingling Hole which partially completes equipping the cave. Several anchors have been installed in Ease Gill and Lancaster Hole and work is continuing in those caves.

The 5 additional anchors in Boxhead were to replace drop-in anchors which were being used. The Drop-ins were installed several years ago. Two are for deviations at the top of the first pitch and at the top of the Main Shaft to make it possible to descend more safely in wet weather. The other three split the Main Shaft into more even pitch lengths and give a better landing on Kendal Flyover.

Development of the removal tool is taking place and several improvements have been made to it. The latest version can be seen on the IC website. It has been used to remove one PECO anchor in Stream Passage Pot in order to try it out in preparation for replacing all the PECO anchors in Stream Passage Pot. That anchor was replaced with an IC anchor in the same hole.

Two loose DMM ECO anchors in Heron Pot were reported to me. I understand these two anchors have been known to be loose for several years. The resin to rock bond was broken and they could be twisted by about 3mm. They were both pulled out using the removal tool. One was replaced using the same hole and one new anchor was installed in a different position.

I want the IS Resin Anchor Project to be seen to be as open and transparent as possible. Please tell me if you think there is any information which should be reported which has not been reported. I welcome any questions about the project.

**Simon Wilson**

## **Webmaster report**

As Matt has reported, the CNCC website now has a 'Get Involved' section.

The changes to the website regarding the anchor section have been made. The title 'Anchor Scheme' is too long for the main menu bar (now that the Get Involved section is also there) so it has been presented there as 'Anchors' but called Anchor Scheme in the section heading.

Matt has provided some general introduction text for the section, to explain the current position within the CNCC of having two separate groups approved for the installation of anchors (a situation which without explanation could cause some confusion). The section has been slightly restructured to include a link to the IC anchor website and with the CNCC Technical Groups pages presented as they were in a separate sub-section to the Anchor Scheme page.

The list of anchor locations and the function to report a defective anchor has been moved into the 'Anchor Scheme' section as these sections clearly applies to any resin anchor, whether it be P-hanger or IC anchor. Any reports of defective anchors received by the CNCC can be forwarded onto the relevant party (CNCC TG or IC anchor team) to be addressed.

Some discussion is required with the relevant parties to consider further restructuring to create a more logical layout while still embodying the individuality of the two groups. If either the CNCC TG or the IC anchor team wishes at any point in the future to make further use of the CNCC website to the benefit of their projects then I would be very happy to help make this happen.

Caves which have been installed with IC anchors (e.g. Rift Pot, It's a Cracker, Long Drop, Gingling) have had their details updated to make people aware that IC anchors are in place and to direct them to Simon's website for more information.

A page on digging guidelines and, separately, on the history of the CNCC (including scans of some very old CNCC handbooks) has been created and can be found under the 'about' section.

**Gary Douthwaite – CNCC Webmaster**

## **Meet's Secretary Reports**

### **Ingleborough Estate and Aygill Caverns – Geoff Whittaker**

Since the last committee meeting in June, permit requests for caves and potholes on the Ingleborough, Allotment and Newby Moss areas have reduced slightly, the majority coming from BCA member clubs with only a couple of new individuals requesting permits as BCA CIM's . I've had only one further request from a new BCA DIM.

I expect now with the Universities going back that there will be a lot of requests from University Caving Clubs that are wanting to secure potholes for their 2016 diaries.

The most popular requests for caves/potholes by far have been for Bar Pot, Stream Passage Pot, Flood Entrance, Marilyn, and Henslers Pot.

Again 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.

Since the last committee meeting in June, permit requests for Aygill Caverns again have been very few, and only 3 have been requested to date, making only 6 since January. There have been no issues raised by the Estate Office.

### **Stump Cross/Robinson's/Birks Fell – Ric Halliwell Penyghent area – Sam Allshorn Casterton Fell – Alan Speight**

No issues or matters to report for any of these areas.

Note: Hannah Walker will be replacing Alan Speight as Casterton Fell meets secretary on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2015. All necessary steps have been taken to ensure a smooth handover, and details of the change will be communicated on the week ahead of the transition.

### **Whitewell Pot area – Tony Brown**

No permits issued. For the last CNCC meeting I should have mentioned the York Caving Club meet to Whitewell Cave and Pot and Hell Hole in May which makes a total of one permit issued in 2015. York reported the need for work on the oil drums on the second pitch of Hell Hole. The land agent is now Savils Inc. Smiths Gore and our contact, Simon Waller has been replaced with Andrew Johnson.

### **Excalibur Pot – Matt Ewles**

Permits for Excalibur have remained steady at one every couple of months. No problems to report.