

# **COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS**

## **British Caving Association**

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**Officers Reports for Annual General Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

### **Chairman's Report**

The last twelve months have seen a year of many changes within the CNCC with more access being negotiated by our access officer and permit secretaries, more conservation work being undertaken by the conservation officer, his assistant and the many volunteers. Our constitution has been considered and hammered into the 21st century by a dedicated team. The Technical Team continue with the never ending task of installing, replacing and testing of anchors. The work load has probably been the most to date that our organisation has had to contend with. Many thanks to everyone for the support they have given despite their family commitments and the overwhelming urge to continue caving etc.

There have been an unprecedented number of officers and secretaries retiring many from the posts they have held for numbers of years. Change can be a good thing but continuity is most important and a smooth handover in all cases seems to have been achieved.

Along with everyone else I look forward to the removal of more restrictions of access where this can be done with the good asperses of the land owners concerned. Hopefully BCA will be able to make clear the role of caving within CRoW legislation, time will tell.

All the best to everyone for the next year, hope your dreams come true and your dig doesn't end in a 2" joint.

**Roy Holmes – CNCC Chairman**

## Secretary's Report

The approach to the AGM last year was a very turbulent time; and the CNCC was faced with considerable scrutiny. On occasions, this turned unnecessarily nasty and personal, which was not nice to see at all and it certainly made me think twice before throwing my hat into the ring.

However, this year has been very successful indeed. The CNCC has seen our biggest influx of new people for quite some time. Our new Access Officer has managed to achieve some excellent access improvements with Ingleborough Estate, and is working with Langcliffe Estate too. Thanks must also go to Alan Speight who, very much off his own back, has done an absolutely fantastic job with the improvements to access on Fountain's Fell and Penyghent. Our ability to push for improvements in access now are made possible by the promotion of the CRoW debate, which has opened many eyes to our desire for greater access, but also by the excellent relations that the CNCC has fostered with the landowners over the last few decades. I would suggest that everyone should consider this before being critical about former years; today's progress is a culmination of previous years of work.

At the last AGM I made an election speech where I raised the following aspirations:

(1) We should improve the membership system:

The proposed new constitution removes geographical boundaries to membership and would remove honorary membership to simplify the system. I have worked hard to promote to other clubs the opportunities available for them to be involved in the CNCC and as a result we have approved three new full member clubs in the last year.

(2) We needed to communicate more with our members:

This year has seen the reintroduction of the CNCC newsletter, and greater communication with our full members. Back in March/April 2014 I contacted all of our full member clubs, identified which were defunct, and worked with our webmaster, Gary Douthwaite, to get an email system established with all active full members who wished to retain their CNCC involvement. As part of this work I was also able to get our membership list made publically available. Communication has been enhanced through use of the CNCC website, and also through the use of Twitter, Facebook, Descent, email and the UK Caving forum.

(3) Creating a system to engage with cavers:

The upcoming members' area on the website will be a good way to enhance this, and also the CNCC taking a proactive role in the upcoming redeveloped UK Caving will help.

(4) Greater representation for DIMs:

The question of if and how to get DIMs democratically represented in the CNCC is one for a future agenda. But this year we have seen our first access agreement which allows individual cavers to apply for permits, a constitutional amendment to be discussed at this meeting to make this possible elsewhere, and a discussion and vote on whether we should actively push for this, which I think is an excellent start for the CNCC in considering the needs of individual cavers.

This year has also seen identification of a clear pathway to making our access agreements available to all full members and ultimately, publically available, meaning yet more transparency.

Next year sees the arrival of the 'Eurospeleo' event in the Yorkshire Dales, which promises to be one of our regions' largest festivals of caving for many years. Several CNCC personnel are involved in this, including Johnny to get access matters addressed for the event, Gary to do the event website, Ian Lloyd to act as CNCC/Eurospeleo liason and provide additional CNCC manpower, and myself to help prepare the conference guidebook. I'm sure all full member clubs will be getting communications about this event via the CNCC and BCA over the coming year.

One of the aspects of my role I have not been able to fulfil this year has been my role as CNCC representative to the BCA. This would have involved sacrifice of yet another four weekends of the year, and with the workload of CNCC Secretary being higher than I expected (typically around 5-10 hours of work per week, at peak times significantly more) this is something I could not fulfil in combination with other commitments. I have explained to the BCA Secretary that my lack of attendance was for this reason only.

I have tried this year to get student cavers more involved in the CNCC through CHECC, but unfortunately, with most of the CHECC committee being based down south, this has not been as successful as I had hoped. Nonetheless, last year saw ULSA join the committee and SUSS being granted full membership, and this year sees YUCPC apply to join the committee, so this is very encouraging that student cavers are keen to get more involved.

This year we are losing some long-standing officers from their roles:

Les Sykes, after standing down from two roles last year (Access Officer and Secretary), will also be standing down as Training Officer this year. How Les managed to juggle all three roles is beyond me. My first involvement was when we were looking to establish caver access for Excalibur Pot, and it was Les' dedication to helping us get an agreement together that best balanced caver's access with landowner wishes that inspired me to take a greater involvement in the CNCC myself (although I did not quite intend to take an Officer role, but Les was rather persuasive). The CNCC at the time was in a catch-22 situation, with one person having performed three officer roles for many years, leaving negligible time to drive the kind of reform needed to get more people interested. Since I became Secretary, Les' (and Glenn's) support behind the scenes with many of the recent positive changes has been invaluable and has dispelled any myths that pre-2014 the CNCC was an organisation that did not want change; it just needed some renewed interest to get it started.

Glenn Jones is handing over the CNCC's treasury. For years Glenn has diligently dealt with our finances. This last year has seen some quite aggressive questioning, which Glenn has dealt with very admirably, demonstrating his capabilities as our Treasurer and reassuring our members that our finances have been in very good hands.

Andrew Hinde is also leaving the officer team, and Kay Easton has provided notification of her willingness to stand for the role. A quick read through Andrew's report makes you realise how much work he does for the CNCC, and so I would like to thank him on behalf of all cavers for this. Kay's

dedication is also considerable, as shown by her roles as Minutes' Secretary, committee club representative, and most recently as Assistant Conservation Officer.

We have also lost three meets secretaries from their roles; Jim Sloane, Malcolm Hughes and Alan Speight. Our thanks must go to them for administering permits for our access agreements for many years. This is often a thankless job taking several hours each week at peak times. Thank you to Andy Farrow, Sam Allshorn and Hannah Walker who have stepped in with an offer to continue these roles, and Geoff Whittaker who has taken on the new role of Ingleborough Estate meets secretary.

Last year, and this year, we are seeing several changes of the CNCC Officers, although if the notifications are anything to go by, only a small change in the Committee: However it is excellent to see that the one new club that has come forward is a very active university club (York). Maintaining continuity and momentum is the reason I have indicated that I am willing to restand as Secretary. Much has been done, but there is still much to do, including further exploitation of the various roles of the CNCC, while continuing to work for greater access across the North of England. An interesting question I have been asked by two separate people now is 'if we get open access everywhere, what role will the CNCC have'. Clearly our role in conservation, bolting, training, and access (where CRoW does not apply) will be critical, and so expanding these roles over the coming year is essential.

**Matt Ewles – CNCC Secretary**

## Treasurer's Report

### TREASURERS REPORT

Following the agreement by the CNCC committee that the accounts should be verified by a volunteer CNCC member club, rather than pay the increasingly expensive costs of an accountant, Craven PC have volunteered to verify the 2014 accounts for the 2015 AGM. The attached letter from Pat and Ric Halliwell verifies this report as accurate. The process is a little different from that of an auditors report, in that it verifies, by scrutinisation of bank statements, invoices, receipts and working spreadsheet that this report for the 2014 financial year is correct.

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

#### INCOME

<b>Balance c/f from 2014</b>		<b>£4,508.27</b>
Bank Transfer	£1,500.00	
BCA 2013 Grant Payment	£553.59	
BCA Resin Payment	£580.80	
Donation (in)	£50.00	
NECMP Payment	£2,240.00	
Resin & Nozzles	£65.52	
Rigging Guides	£2,104.80	
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b>£7,094.71</b>	

#### EXPENSES

Access & Conservation	£128.75
Conservation Work	£623.33
Donation (out)	£1,500.00
HMRC	£308.80
Meetings	£194.20
NECMP Volunteer Expenses	£1,474.50
Publications	£1,533.00
Resin & Nozzles	£455.76
Secretarial & Postage	£67.24
Tax Audit (2013)	£240.00
Training*	£1,986.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:</b>	<b>£8,511.58</b>

\*50% grant for survey course from Training Committee deposited in January 2015

**Balance c/f to 2015** **£3,091.40**

I have closed the Everyday Saver account that was mistakenly created in my name (rather than CNCC) and transferred the balance (£1.00) to the High Interest Account. Whilst on the phone to the bank, I asked about the best options for interest on the two high interest accounts and was advised that the Business Saver Account was the best option for earning interest in the future (currently both accounts have similar interest rates) so to take advantage of any future improvements in interest rates, and also to steam line the accounts for the next Treasurer,

I have closed the CNCC Everyday Saver account and transferred the balance (£187.13) to the CNCC Business Saver Account.

**CNCC Everyday Saver Account**

Balance 1st January 2014 **£20,168.35**

Donation to CDG; £1,500.00

Interest received; £40.24

Closing/transfer balance; **£18,691.69**

**CNCC Business Saver Account**

Balance 1st January 2014 **£186.09**

Transfer from closed account £1.00

Transfer from Saver Acc; £18,691.69

Interest received; £3.24

Closing balance; **£18,882.02**

**ASSETS:** Makita DPC6430 12" cutter, value new (2013) **£576.00**

Glenn Jones

**BCA Grant to Regional Councils: CNCC Claim 2014**

The CNCC Treasurer will be submitting a claim to BCA for a total of **£390.19** comprised of the following budget heads:

Sub Budget Head - **Meetings** (Covers - photocopy, postage, room hire, stationary, phone bills, travel expenses of officers to meetings. Does not cover - travel expenses of members)

**Meetings: £261.44:** comprising:

Room Hire: £194.20

Photocopying, Postage and 'phone calls: £67.24

CNCC officers do not claim mileage.

Sub Budget Head - **Conservation & Access** (Covers - Negotiating access to caves and mines, gating of entrances, stabilising (and opening up of alternative safer) of entrances, working with landowner to maintain access, payment of "peppercorn" rents for access, other liaison and public relations work related to maintaining access and promoting conservation, travel expenses for meetings, photocopy, postage, stationary, phone bills. Does not cover - digging as part of new exploration)

**Conservation & Access: £128.75:** comprising:

£128.75 access agreement/payments for Kay Shuttleworth Estate, Stump Cross/Mongo Gill, Birks Fell, Robinsons Pot and Fountains Fell

(The majority of 2014 work under this heading has been funded by Natural England)

Sub Budget Head - **Insurance** (Covers - Provision of Public Liability cover for all persons (including officers, members, volunteers and land owners & their employees)

**No expenditure in 2014 under this budget head**

Sub Budget Head - **Provision of Information** (Covers - Production of "Regional" Circulars (regular or spasmodic))

No expenditure in 2014 under this budget head

Glenn Jones

CNCC Treasurer

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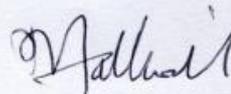
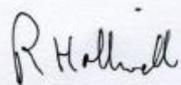
10 February 2015

### CNCC Accounts 2014-15

Dear Glenn

We have checked the bank statements, claims and receipts, summaries of cheques issued and payments received and after raising a small number of minor queries, which you have resolved entirely to our satisfaction, we are happy to state that all monies expended have been accurately accounted for. Similarly all income has been correctly recorded and the bank statements are in full agreement with the records of all transaction.

With all best wishes



Dr RA Halliwell, Committee Member Craven Pothole Club  
Mrs PC Halliwell, Hon Librarian & President Craven Pothole Club

## Conservation Officer's Report

Since the last meeting I have assisted in providing Natural England consent to a cave dig and a BBC film unit trip to GG.

I have responded to a complaint from Austwick Parish Council about a consented cave dig on a SSSI. This has now been sorted out and the diggers have made a presentation of their project to a meeting of the PC. This is a noteworthy development in community relations which helps to dispel the myth of diggers as 'outlaws'.

Ray Duffy has lead a team of Red Rose and other club members on the restoration of Lancaster Hole entrance. Several weeks of unseasonable weather were selected for the excavation which uncovered half a century of BSA treasures and icons such as bomb damaged steel work, and several generations of lids. Watch out for BSA memorabilia appearing on eBay. I understand that costs for this project are being met by Mike Cooper with funds raised from the sale of his book- NFTFH.

A group of CNCC volunteers (mostly Little Green Men) have removed the rotten fencing around Hardawkin Pot and replaced it with new post and stock netting. The old wooden sleeper stile was also removed and replaced with a stone through stile. This land is NNR and is managed by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. They are extremely grateful for our assistance.

The Cupcake Pot archaeology/palaeontology collection has been displayed at AV presentations given by John Lugg Thorp in Settle and at the BCA Party Weekend.

A Cave Conservation Plan for Fairy Holes Cave –Weardale is being edited by Ian Cummings. A first draft should be available soon for consultation.

John Gardner and team have done a fantastic job of hauling out a ton of scrap metal and wood from Bull Pot Kingsdale and Jingling Pot.

The next job on the list for conservation volunteers is the casting of a new concrete rim on Aquamole Pot. The 100mm conc blocks on the top of the shaft are frost shattered.

Since the last meeting the CNCC conservation volunteers have reopened Low Eglins Hole- Nidderdale at the request of the landowner. Access to this site had been denied to all for the last 5 years due to a local businesses dispute. After some careful approaches from Chris Fox, a negotiated access agreement for all recreational cavers was established. The cave will be locked but a key will be made available to any recreational caver who calls at the farm. Details of access will be circulated by the CNCC access officer via the website .The upper and lower cave entrances were fenced off at the landowners request to make them safe to the public and livestock .It is hoped that wider access can be negotiated in the future if things go smoothly.

I have secured funding from Natural England s "Innovation and Partnership fund" totalling £2500.00. This is to support the Northern Caves Monitoring Project (NCMP) and associated conservation projects.

The Assistant Conservation Officer has made a valuable contribution to all areas of Cave Conservation and has successfully taken over supervision of some work parties to gain wider experience. Kay's organisational and administrative skills are also a huge asset to CNCC's work in this area. Work continues to establish wider contacts with potential volunteers. The regulars are amazingly enthusiastic and skilled in most areas we tackle, but some further training opportunities will be lined up- e.g. motorised and static winch operation.

I attended the Eurospeleo Cave Protection Symposium in Western Romania where I delivered a presentation on the work of the NCMP. This joint project between CNCC and NE was well received by an international audience of cave conservation specialist (most of whom are employed by their government department – who also own **all** the caves and administer access, or not). Hope fully we can take this audience to see some of our sites when they come to the Dales for the 2016 Congress. I have assisted in the notification and consent of 1 cave dig on SSSI land since the last meeting. I also have a first draft of "Guidelines for Cave Digging on SSSI's which I will circulate for any comments. Since the last meeting I have assisted in the SSSI consenting of one surface dig.

I have delegated the design and development of an Access Database to hold SSSI Cave Monitoring data to Kay Easton and Jane Ransom. This has been an enormous task and the database is now undergoing trials. It is hoped that the database can be hosted on the CNCC website in a secure area. This is a vital long term resource for cave conservation in our region.

The conservation Volunteers have been very busy. The CNCC newsletter carried reports on the cave clearances at Homeshaw Cave and Daimler Hole. There was also coverage of the enormous logistical battle to repair Providence Pot. This was one of the biggest jobs undertaken by CNCC vols. It may have looked like a simple job to the passing caver, but was fraught with difficulties on closer examination.

This year there is the opportunity to clear refuse from some of the biggest shakeholes on Ingleborough in partnership with the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership (HLF). They may also be able to help in projects that have, so far, been too big or technical for our team of volunteers.

A team consisting of Andy Walsh, Luggier and myself had a day in Illusion Pot cleaning stal and taping in the Steak Bacon area. Hopefully the tape will be respected in this area much loved (to destruction).

In November I gave an illustrated talk to Cumbria Wildlife Trust members on the work of CNCC cave conservation volunteers.

A new cave discovery from a surface dig has yielded a very important archaeological site with a possible Mesolithic assemblage of animal bones in excellent condition. The combined efforts of the diggers, archaeologists and NE staff working in unison have ensured the protection/ recovery/ recording of the site and contents without holding up further exploration of the cave. This was a textbook example of conservation in action and should be widely publicised within caving and statutory body communities.

**Andrew Hinde – CNCC Conservation Officer**

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

No specific report submitted to AGM however, full member clubs are referred to the various Access Officers reports submitted to Committee meetings over the last year which provide a full summary of all work performed (all of which are available to view on the CNCC website).

Further to the most recent Committee meeting report (January 2015), Johnny Latimer would like to add that the Langcliffe Hall issue is now being sensibly discussed with the land agents.

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

No specific report submitted to AGM however, full member clubs are referred to the various Training Officers reports submitted to Committee meetings over the last year which provide a full summary of all work performed (all of which are available to view on the CNCC website).

### **Technical Group Report**

Note: The Technical Group is not an officer role, but is a separate full member club of the CNCC who undertake a number of technical projects to the benefit of the CNCC and all cavers. As such, reports are often included for CNCC meetings.

Readers are referred to previous meeting minutes, and also the CNCC December newsletter.

Les Sykes has provided the following statement in addition to this:

The Technical Group has not produced a report for the AGM because there has been very limited work since the last Committee meeting (January) and all the work during 2014 has been reported at those meetings. The main thing that has been on-going is the routine testing/inspection of Eco anchors that were installed with the Hilti HITC50 resin (the original anchors that were installed at the beginning of the program from 1990-1996). The main testing that TG are undertaking in 2015 is the Maillon Rapides; when we were testing anchors in 2013 a new Maillon broke well below its SWL, so we have been asked to undertake a random test of 32 new Maillons purchased from various caving outlets. When these tests are complete we will produce a report for the website.

**Les Sykes – CNCC Technical Group**