

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Agenda for Committee Meeting 8th October 2016, Hellifield Village Institute, 9:30am

Document originally issued 27th August 2016. Text in dark blue added to this updated version of agenda issued 23rd September 2016 to reflect new agenda items that have arisen recently.

(1) Apologies for absence

(2) Acceptance of minutes from the July Committee meeting

(3) Any matters arising or updates on action items (below) from the July Committee meeting?

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E.	Issue January meeting minutes as final.
Johnny L./Tim A.	Start the process of drafting new Casterton/Leck access agreements, to include access for individual cavers.
Andrew H.	Report back at next meeting on progress regarding Fairy Holes access agreement.
Ray D.	Continue work to list all fixed aids in Ease Gill Caverns.
Tim A.	Keep CNCC informed of any feedback regarding our access agreements and any related legal/insurance matters. # SEE BELOW
Pete B.	Arrange reimbursement of £120 for Fairy Holes agreement to Andrew H.
Gary D./Matt E.	Look into some website content on our initiative to clean up abandoned surface digs and create a reporting tool for people to use.
Matt E.	Write up discussions on fixed aids, schedule for next Committee meeting and try to get input from all Committee and full member clubs.
Matt E.	Look into possible suitable prizes for Eurospeleo from CNCC.

New agenda item (item 7) added specifically to discuss this

(4) Reports (will be made available approx one week before meeting)

- a. Chairman's report – Roy Holmes
- b. Secretary's report – Matt Ewles
- c. Treasurer's report – Pete Bann
- d. Conservation Officer's report – Kay Easton
- e. Training Officer's report – Dan Irving
- f. Access Officer's report – Johnny Latimer
- g. Other representative reports (optional) - Various
- h. Meets secretary reports (optional) - Various

(5) Continued discussions on the role of the CNCC in fixed aids

What role (if any) should the CNCC take in relation to fixed aids in caves? This is a continuation of the discussion started at the July 2016 meeting. Representatives are referred to the agenda and minutes from that meeting for background and initial thoughts. The decision of the July meeting was to postpone discussions to October to provide more time for discussion within clubs.

Since July, Ray Duffy has completed the list of all fixed aids in Ease Gill Caverns that are known to him. Kevin Dixon has also put together a similar list for the Gaping Gill system. These are included in **Appendix 1a** of this document as supporting information.

The CNCC Secretary spoke with Bob Mehew and Nick Williams on 15th September. This was an informal discussion and may provide additional information to support our discussions. An overview of the key points of these discussions is included in **Appendix 1b**. Following this, Bob kindly provided a copy of the BCAs working draft policy on fixed aids, **Appendix 1c**. This has not been issued but may provide some information of what might be expected from a CNCC policy on fixed aids should we decide to go down the route of adopting one.

It is hoped that all Committee representatives will have had the chance to discuss this with their clubs and will be able to put forward their thoughts, so we can have a thorough discussion.

(6) Descriptions and rigging information on CNCC website

For Eurospeleo 2016, we put together bespoke descriptions for many of the rigged caves at the event. Several people have asked what will happen to these after the event.

I would like to ask the CNCC Committee to consider my suggestion for inclusion of these (or, more specifically, an amended version of these to include rigging details) on the CNCC website. I am happy to perform the work here, and even, over time, to extend these to other popular caves not included in the Eurospeleo descriptions. Ideally in time too, I would like this to include rigging topos, either through obtaining permission from the authors of Northern Caving or other means.

An example of what I am suggesting including (for Ireby Fell Caverns) is shown in **Appendix 2**.

Having these online would be accompanied by a 'submit correction' function to enable cavers to add missing details or correct errors. This fits with my (personal) vision for the CNCC to develop its useful capacity to cavers, beyond the conservation, access and bolting work we already do, and to become the one-stop-shop for the needs of northern cavers (a perhaps slightly lofty ambition).

However, I am also conscious that this would be new territory for the CNCC, with it having never been involved with cave navigation. I am therefore asking the Committee to consider this suggestion and whether you feel we should venture down this road. I will respect the decision reached (and would intend to publish the descriptions elsewhere if not through the CNCC website).

Matt Ewles

(7) BCA guidance to Access Controlling Bodies

This matter was touched upon at the last meeting. Since then, we have received an email from Bob Mehew, Legal and Insurance person at the BCA (see **Appendix 3**). It relates to the upcoming changes requested by the BCA's insurance broker regarding risk assessments for Access Controlling Bodies (including the CNCC). Bob and/or Tim who have more knowledge of this will be at the meeting to provide more information. Although this is at early stages, this has been added to the agenda to encourage all Committee clubs to familiarise themselves with the issue, and to ensure some time is made to discuss this and potentially identify future actions that may be needed.

(8) Date and time of next meeting

Committee meeting Saturday 14th January 2017, Hellifield Village Institute, 9:30am

(9) Any other business?

Request for consideration of funding received from Tim Allen:

“You may know that I have been keen for a while to see interpretation signs for Britain's longest cave, the three counties system, perhaps similar to that at Alum Pot. Earlier this year I went to a National Park meeting ahead of the new extension in order to ensure caves and caving were kept in the minds of those tasked with overseeing the addition. At that time I suggested this might be a good time to consider interpretation signs. Following a meeting today with Mark Allum and Karen Griffiths it looks this is going to become a reality as it now has the full support of the NP.

The plan is to have two boards, one at Bull Pot Farm and the other on Leck Fell. They will both have a different emphasis, with Leck probably taking advantage of the extensive view to demonstrate the underlying caves with a schematic. As well as information on the caves it is expected to include the 6 point code, importance, reason for SSSI status, bats etc. Permission is yet to be sought and there are many other things to do.

The NP have offered to do much of the work and pay the majority of the cost which is estimated to be around £3000. Lifespan is expected to be over 20 years with the aim to inform all visitors as well as cavers. They have asked about other contributions to the cost and wondered if we, CNCC, could raise £500. CNCC logo and web contact could also feature on the boards.

This will be a winter project with the hope that the boards can be installed in the spring. I will be putting suggested content together over the next weeks but would welcome your advice and ideas. I am fortunate at the moment as I am co-author with Tony Waltham for the next chapter of Caves and Karst on Leck Fell. This is nearly complete and has a lot of relevant information.”

Training Officer

A reminder that Dan Irving has stood down as Training Officer and we are seeking someone who might be interested in standing for the role next March.

APPENDIX 1a: Fixed aids in Ease Gill and Gaping Gill systems

Ropes, Ladders and Scaffold Bars in Ease Gill, Link and Pippikin by Ray Duffy

Bold Red --- Escape Routes that I feel should be maintained not only for safe exit reasons but also to save others putting in extra gear

Bold Black --- Saves re-climbing a pitch or aven and so avoids extra bolt holes

Italics --- Probably best left in place or even improved to aid access

Ropes:

- 1. Wilf Taylor's Passage, Double Decker Pot rope in-situ on both pitches**
2. Waterfall Passage rope up to Hemingway Hall (Not checked for years)
3. Four Candle Series has rope up? (Johnny Baker)
4. Skittle Alley has traverse line to dead end.
- 5. Fall Pot rope for climb down into chamber (care at bottom needed probably needs tying off-bolted by whom?)**
6. Fall Pot rope up climb into Montagu East (Is it needed? Never used to be there!)
7. Aardvark Country pitch up from main streamway
8. 88' Pitch rope in-situ down to Wormway. (Didn't used to be permanently rigged)
9. Echo Aven Pitch rope in-situ down to Wormway (Didn't used to be permanently rigged)
10. Oche Pot to Wormway (Only rigged to get people's opinion on whether they prefer it)
11. 69' Pitch rope down to Wormway (Probably needs bolting properly but not roping)
12. Echo Echo Pot Pot rope at lower end down to Wormway (see Beardy et al)
13. Stake Pot rope up and down. (Didn't used to be permanently rigged though rope up now almost essential)
- 14. Stake Pot rope down to, or up from, main streamway**
15. Bob's Boss rope down to Magic Roundabout from Bob's Boss chain
16. Scylla and Charybdis traverse ropes in-situ. (Didn't used to be permanently rigged)
- 17. Wretched Rabbit entrance pitches rope in-situ. (Hauser laid for easy hold when climbing up)**
- 18. Trident Bypass has rope on climb near Whiteline Chamber in-situ. (Used to have chain ladder, should maybe be short stainless steel ladder fixed in place)**
19. Top Sink rope on entrance. (Not needed)
20. *Limerick Passage rope up to connection to Rock of Ages*
21. *Fukuyama rope up to passage from Nagasaki (Dubious age and fixings)*
22. Assembly Hall rope up climb. (Didn't used to be permanently rigged – Bolted by whom?)
23. Easter Grotto rope up from mid-way at Assembly Hall. (Didn't used to be permanently rigged)
- 24. Gypsum Cavern rope on awkward corner climb. (Needs looking at)**

25. Wretched Rabbit side passage in lower reaches has rope from roof
26. Trident Streamway rope for climb out of stream to Pitch Bypass, not needed as climb further up streamway is easy.
27. *Side passage to Splash Chamber rope up to bedding to Corner Sink. (Continuation to Corner Sink)*
28. *Butterfields Passage rope up first climb (always fraying as it hangs badly)*
29. *Sideline Passage has rope down to Snail Cavern. (Poorly anchored – needs proper bolts for pull-through and then rope removed)*
30. *Razor Aven rope in at present (see Johnny Baker)*
31. *Mortuary Passage rope at end, rope up to calcite blockage*
32. Mucky Ducks possible rope possibly left by first explorers. (Condition see Paul 'Beardy' Swire)
33. Maple Leaf Passage ropes on climbs at end. (see Pete Hall)
34. Woodhouse Way aven at end. (see Tom Clayton)
35. Sausage Junction rope down from Ramsden's Crawl (see Neil Pacey/Pete Hall etc.)
36. *Oxbow Corner escape route before boulder choke, rope up to high level (maybe blocked at present?)*
- 37. Arson Shaft rope up to top**
- 38. Pristine Way traverse rope**
- 39. Tigers Inlet traverse ropes**
40. Tonto's Aven rope up
41. Damnation Aven area has rope at end of passage to continuation?
42. Dinnertime Series has a rope up just before (no way on so no need for it)
- 43. Dinnertime Series rope up (needs bolting properly)**
44. *Two ropes up climbs on link from Canyon Streamway to the Frontier*
45. *Misty Mountain to Cigalere ropes*
- 46. Cigalere Pitch rope (needs better permanent bolting)**
47. Svengland to Hall of the Mountain King rope
- 48. Svengland up and down rope to Peterson**
49. Peterson Pot still roped up?
50. Pippikin Pot still has ropes on it? (Never used to be left rigged for long periods)
51. Gour Hall has rope up aven on way from Cross Hall?
52. *Bull Pot of the Witches downstream near Mini Towers has climb with rope in poor condition*
53. Downstream Bull Pot sump has climb above rope in place (see Johnny Baker)
54. *Burnett's Cavern has rope up to higher level. (Possibly needed for survey)*
55. North Chamber in BPotWitches just beyond Robert's Inlet has rope up. (no continuation to Gour Chamber wanted)
56. Ease Gill Aven sometimes has rope on for up or down (Ask Graham Coates?)

57. Brown and Smelly Chamber to Spangle Passage has short rope for Manchester Bypass

58. Broken Ladder pitch has rope to Trident Streamway.

59. *Bedstead Chamber had rope on up to higher level in Trident?*

Ladders/Scaffold Bars/Stemples and Staples/Tapes

60. Stop Pot ladder

61. Cannuck Climb ladder

62. Cellar Pot chain

63. *Montagu West little solid ladder at top of mud slope*

64. *Bob's Boss little solid ladder down to Magic Roundabout*

65. *Bob's Boss chain at slide-through below ladder*

66. Manchester Bypass ladder to Brown and Smelly Chamber

67. *Splash Chamber has scaffold bar to Trident*

68. *Wretched Rabbit scaffold bar on First Pitch*

69. Borehole has scaffold bar across the top of big pitch

70. Waterfall Passage scaffold bar in roof

71. Saturday Afternoon Series rope up aven (see Beardy)

72. Stake Pot staples on route to streamway

73. Cross Hall has electron ladder down dig

74. Cellar Pot in Pippikin has scaffold bar

75. Pippikin has stemple across small drop

76. Pippikin has tapes and ropes on lower climbs

77. Mistral entrance has a scaffold bar across climb down

78. Link Pot entrance has scaffold for ladder belay

79. Skittle Alley has rotten stemples and a broken electron ladder at end of traverse.

80. Little Lechuguilla may have rope down? (Paul Thomas)

Although probably not a definitive list I think this has the main items in the system. These are merely my ideas but I think we need to consider whether input from other clubs should be canvassed to see if we can eliminate some of the crap.

Ray Duffy (RRCPC)

Gaping Gill Fixed Aids, Courtesy of Kevin Dixon

The following I hope to do with S/S through bolts and anchors this winch meet.

- Southgate duck - Old pull through rope loose at one end
- Shallow Well pitch – Nothing
- Deep Well pitches – Nothing
- Top Passage final pitch - nothing

Others from memory:

1. Avalanche Pot - S/S hangers and through bolts installed by myself
2. Avalanche Inlet - S/S hangers and ropes installed by Gardner (?)
3. Queensbury Pot - 2 S/S hangers and through bolts installed by myself 2014
4. Centenary Way - rock spits, petzl hangers, rusty maillons and tatty insitu rope
5. Bar Pot Greasy Slab - PMI pit rope installed February 2016 by myself
6. Stile Pot - Mole Muncher - insitu rope climbing aid unknown vintage (probably CPC)
7. Sand Cavern Pulpit - insitu vintage tatty rope too short to be useful - might be removed this winch meet
8. NW Extension - 7m pitch with ladder installed - no lifeline
9. West Pot - 3 S/S through bolts and S/S hangers installed by myself plus one old spit
10. East Pot - ladder belay to natural
11. Mud Hall - heavy duty chain aid with unknown anchor, top traverse line unknown rope and anchors, lower traverse line unknown rope and anchors
12. Echo Rift - insitu rope and anchors of unknown vintage
13. Salmon's Leap - insitu rope and anchors of unknown vintage
14. Mud Pot – insitu ropes, maillons, spits and maillons of unknown vintage
15. Leakey's Caverns - 4 s/s through bolts and anchors installed May 2016 by myself
16. Disappointment Dawn Chamber - one s/s through bolt, hanger and PMI rope installed May 2016 by myself
17. Bar Pot Stearn Horrocks Crawl - in situ vintage rope not long enough and unknown anchors
18. Main Chamber top of East slope – steel ladder with aluminium ladder fastened to it of unknown vintage.

Kevin Dixon

APPENDIX 1b: Summary of 15/09/16 discussions regarding fixed aids

Last Thursday (15th September 2016) I had a very useful and enlightening Skype call with Nick Williams and Bob Mehew from the BCA Equipment and Techniques group (and who also know quite a lot about caving insurance too).

The aim of this call was to ask some questions regarding our upcoming discussions on fixed aids and to try to pre-empt some questions that may be asked by the Committee. I think the discussion was enlightening and gave considerable food for thought that I would like to share with you.

The following are my recollections from the call.

Please do not consider these accurate quotes or minutes. It was an informal discussion only and there may be some errors in my interpretation at certain points. However, the following were the messages I drew from the discussions.

Firstly, the BCA's insurance brokers have recently come out with a new initiative. While we don't have full details of exactly what this is going to entail, it has already become clear that there is going to be a greater emphasis on factors such as written risk assessments which may impact on access agreements and fixed aids, and may necessitate additional actions or care from organisations such as the CNCC.

I know already that Tim plans to update us on this at the meeting.

With regard to fixed aids, the general opinion expressed was that the CNCC could definitely benefit from having a fixed aid policy and detailed specifications (similar to the material which covered resin anchors), however, such a policy should ideally be one of 'all or nothing'... i.e. it needs to be thorough and involve considerations for maintenance or checking of the appointed fixed aids in full. There is no half-way territory from an insurance/liability perspective.

I expressed concerns here relating to manpower, and that given the size of our region (and the number of fixed aids in place that might be deemed important to maintain) it seemed unlikely that any individual would come forward to take on responsibility for this.

Nick/Bob said that there was no specific need for it to be an individual or a CNCC Officer; a system could be in place by which clubs (for example) could 'adopt' a fixed aid under the CNCCs policy. For each of these chosen fixed aids (and we would need to be very selective about which ones we do and do not wish to maintain), a short specification document would be required outlining the process by which it will be chosen, installed, inspected and replaced. The BCA E&T would be very happy indeed to help to draw up such a document and advise on the requirements in each case; Nick was extremely clear that the BCA E&T is able to support us on any such policy.

It was raised that fixed aids under any such policy may have to be limited to things which can be related back to a standard such as handlines with respect to ropes. This requires further discussion and clarification.

I asked about the status quo. In the absence of a policy, the CNCC should not fund or endorse any more fixed aids in the future. This is because without a policy, the CNCC will incur liabilities for doing so which pass onto individuals such as officers of CNCC or those who installed the fixed aid.

Therefore, if a mechanism for the CNCC to support and/or fund fixed aids in caves in the future is to be maintained/developed, it must be done via a proper policy and set of specifications plus a complete list of each fixed aid supported by CNCC.

The BCA E&T would support us to ensure the correct documentation is in place (and in line with the insurer's requirements) and, if so, the CNCC would be able to formally fund and endorse these projects.

Therefore the options are that we either withdraw from having anything to do with fixed aids altogether – never funding or endorsing them – or we come up with a policy and specifications as outlined above to enable our continued funding and support for maintenance of specific (safety/conservation critical) fixed aids across our region.

Therefore perhaps the first question for this coming meeting is which of these two routes do we wish to take? If the former, it may be a very short meeting, however, I believe it is right that the CNCC Committee give serious thought to these options.

Regards finer aspects such as 'can we report the likes of Ray/Kevin's list of known fixed ropes on our website for information/conservation purposes' we did not touch on this, and we can discuss these matters at the meeting as planned.

Bob is planning to join the meeting on the 8th October to answer any further questions.

I hope this helps clarify the options that are on the table to us, based on advice from those in the know regarding the E&T and caving insurance. I am most thankful to Nick and Bob for taking the time to speak to me and for their offers of support as we navigate this minefield.

Likewise, I am sure it probably raises as many questions as it answers.

Matt Ewles
Secretary, Council of Northern Caving Clubs

APPENDIX 1c: British Caving Association: Draft policy on fixed aids

Note: This has been provided to the CNCC for information purposes only. This document is a BCA working draft only and must not be treated as definitive or as an agreed standard.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this policy is to ensure that appropriate standards are achieved in the provision and maintenance of fixed aids within caves and mines. This policy provides the basic building blocks for an adequate system for ensuring the appropriate and safe placement of fixed aids and for their continued usage. However the choice of a suitable fixed aid is dependent upon obtaining authoritative advice on the fixed aid. BCA may develop such advice from time to time.

Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council have the right to reject a proposal to place a new fixed aid or replace or adopt an existing one. In such a case, then the person(s) who place (or have placed) a fixed aid may be held responsible for any consequences arising from that fixed aid.

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 Fixed aid means an artificial fixture(s) or fitting(s) placed in a cave or mine whose primary purpose is for the purposes of safe access, progress or egress for regular use or for rescue.

1.2 Fixed aid does not include fixtures or fittings whose primary purpose is giving structural strength to cave or mine walls, supporting roof structures or entrances, retaining structures against movement or potential movement and similar devices.

1.3 Access Controlling Body means the body generally recognised as controlling access to the cave or mine and who has registered that information with BCA. In the absence of such a body, the Regional Caving Council for that location shall be responsible.

2. CONSERVATION

2.1 Prior to placing any new fixed aid or replacing or adopting existing ones, consideration shall be given to conservation, both with regard to the immediate area of the fixed aid, and also to those areas to which it provides access.

2.2 The officer responsible for conservation of the Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council as appropriate shall be consulted prior to any new or replacement fixed aid being installed.

3. RESCUE

3.1 Fixed aids shall not hinder any potential rescue efforts. If necessary the fixed aid shall be readily removable by the rescue team.

3.2 Prior to removing or replacing any fixed aid, consideration shall be given to the potential of the absence of that fixed aid or the replaced fix aid to cause a rescue.

3.3 In cases of doubt with relevance to rescue, the local rescue team must be consulted prior to taking action.

3.4 The local rescue team shall be the final arbiters of any matter relating to rescue.

4. SELECTION

4.1 The selection of a fixed aid shall ensure it is of adequate strength to provide an adequate life time in use. Where possible, the choice of a fixed aid should be based on published standards by international, national, sporting or other authoritative body. In the absence of such a standard, the selection shall be based on the advice of competent persons.

4.2 Prior to installing, adoption of an existing or replacing a fixed aid, consideration shall be given to environmental factors such as flooding, water chemistry, rock strength e.g. where a ladder would be better than a chain or stainless steel better than aluminium.

4.3 The selection of a fixed aid shall also identify the process for its installation and maintenance, the competences deemed appropriate for a person to install and or maintain the fixed aid and the requirements of any training program required to enable persons to become competent.

4.4 The selection of a fixed aid shall be a matter for the Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council as appropriate.

5. INSTALLATION

5.1 Persons installing or replacing a fixed aid shall be competent in both the installation process and in ensuring their safety whilst installing the fixed aid.

6. PRE USE INSPECTION

6.1 Advice shall be widely published by the Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council for potential users on the appropriate pre use inspection which shall include details of a contact point to report possible defects in the fixed aid.

7. MAINTENANCE

7.1 A programme of regular maintenance, which includes inspection and, where necessary testing and replacement shall be established, including instructions on the necessary components of the maintenance, inspection, testing and replacement regime.

7.2 Persons carrying out maintenance shall be competent in both the maintenance process and in ensuring their safety whilst maintaining the fixed aid.

7.3 Any recommendations resulting from maintenance shall be carried out within the time scale given within the recommendation. Failing this, the fixed aid shall be withdrawn from use until such time as the recommendations can be fulfilled.

8. RECORDS

8.1 The Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council shall in respect of adopting a type of fixed aids, keep a record of:

- the date of the meeting of that body which adopted a type of fixed aid;
- details of the type of the fixed aid;
- details of any pre-installation testing and evaluation performed on the fixed aid;
- procedures for the installation of the fixed aid;
- the competences deemed appropriate for person to install the fixed aid;
- procedures for the maintenance of the fixed aid;
- the competences deemed appropriate for person to maintain the fixed aid;
- the requirements of any training program required to enable persons to become competent; and
- the advice provided for potential users for pre use inspection.

The Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council shall also keep records of the consultations undertaken which materially influenced the choice of the fixed aid.

8.2 The Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council shall keep a record of the name and address of persons who are deemed competent to install and / or maintain the fixed aid, including the time period during which that person is deemed to hold them.

8.3 The Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council shall for each and every installed fixed aid keep a record of:

- The date of any meeting which either agreed to the installation, adoption, or replacement;
- full details of the components of each and every installed fixed aid including any distinguishing marks or reference numbers, together with the date of installation within the cave or mine;
- the name of the person in charge of the installation;
- the date(s) upon which the fixed aid was maintained, the details of any maintenance work carried out and the names of persons carrying out the maintenance; and
- the latest date for the next maintenance to be carried out by.

8.4 The Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council shall keep and widely publish a record of the installed fixed aids so as to uniquely define and identify it, including the name of the cave or mine and their location within the cave or mine. This record shall be kept up to date. The published record of installed fixed aids shall be promptly updated where the fixed aid has been withdrawn from use.

8.5 The Access Controlling Body or Regional Caving Council shall keep details of any report suggesting a fixed aid is defective together with details of the response to that report and of any work carried out as a follow up to that report.

9. DISCLAIMER

9.1 Nothing in this policy shall be taken to absolve the responsibility of an individual using any fixed aid to check that it is fit and safe for its intended purpose or that the individual is competent to use the fixed aid.

APPENDIX 2: Ireby Fell Caverns (example description)

Wet weather: 4/5

This description covers a trip to the bottom and back of Ireby Fell Caverns, with two SRT routes on the first half of the cave.

Parking:

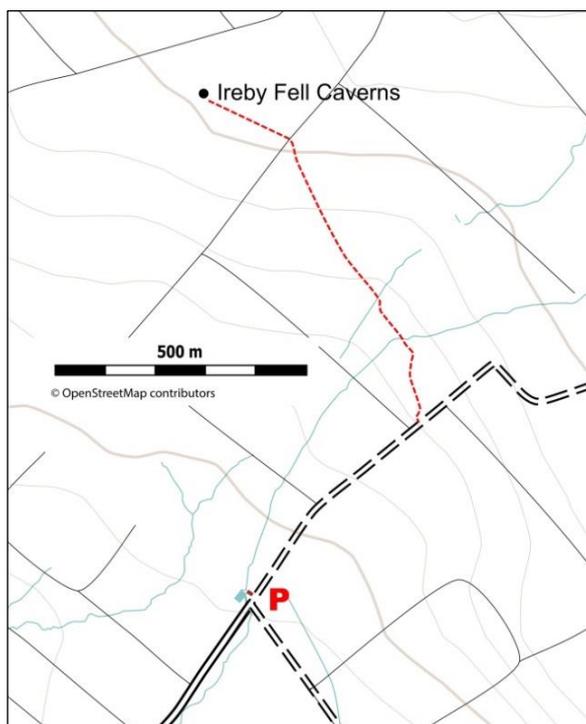
From Ingleton follow the main road (A65) for about two miles. Turn right at the signs for Masongill. Pass through Masongill village and follow the winding narrow road to the junction on the public road by the waterworks building and park there. Do not block access along any of the lanes.

Location: Grid reference SD 6737 7734

A compass or GPS are useful as finding the cave (or finding your way back in fog/dark) can be tricky. Reflective poles may help to guide the route. Follow the track heading gently uphill from the parking area. Near the top, the left wall is crossed at a stile. Follow the vague footpath for 500m across the fell to another stile over the far wall. Beyond this stile, walk directly away from the wall for 200m until the huge, deep sinkhole of Ireby Fell is located.

Navigation:

Climb down the pipe in the bottom of the shakehole and descend steep boulders to the head of Ding Pitch (which is more of a very steep climb). The rope from Ding Pitch continues onto a traverse, where a descent of Dong Pitch commences after only a few metres.



- *Rope length for Ding/Dong: 35m to cover both*

Dong Pitch is broken by a broad ledge with a wide traverse to the second section of the pitch. At the bottom of the pitch, the route then follows the water which immediately descends a chute towards Bell Pitch. A short traverse out away from the water allows a fairly dry descent of Bell Pitch; however, this pitch (along with several of the lower sections of the cave) can become impassable in wet conditions.

- *Rope length for Bell Pitch: 30m*

Shadow route: An alternative to Ding/Dong/Bell:

Shadow route starts at the same place as Ding Pitch, but instead continues the traverse beyond where Dong Pitch descends. After a short traverse, the take-off for the Shadow route is reached. Shadow route bypasses Dong and Bell pitches and descends via a few re-belays, landing near the bottom of Bell Pitch.

- *Rope length for Shadow Route (instead of Ding/Dong and Bell ropes): 65m*

Beyond Ding/Dong/Bell (or Shadow route) the stream passage is followed for a long distance. Along the way, you are treated to some varied caving including meandering streamway, a short handline pitch/climb (Pussy Pitch), some crawls, and an easy duck (a section of crawl with your chest in the water).

After some distance, you reach Well Pitch and finally Rope Pitch.

- *Rope lengths required: Pussy Pitch (10m), Well Pitch (35m), Rope Pitch (15m)*

After Rope Pitch the stream passage takes on very large proportions for a few hundred metres before the water is lost through the floor and you enter a very large fine dry passage called Duke Street. This can be followed, walking, for some distance to the sump. Many cavers turn around here and commence the outward journey.

A short distance back from the sump, a fixed rope goes up 4-5m. At the top of this rope a long crawl leads to a pitch down into the continuation of the large passages of Duke Street beyond the sump. These fixed ropes are not installed, monitored or replaced by the CNCC and therefore are used exclusively at your own risk, and must be treated with caution.

APPENDIX 3: Information from BCA to Access Controlling Bodies

Email received from BCA Legal and Insurance of relevance to all Access Controlling Bodies:

Following a request by the Broker that all ACBs should have written 'risk assessments', a document was drafted to provide advice to ACBs on producing a written statement on how reasonable steps have been taken to avoid accidents (the actual requirement within the insurance policy).

A meeting has been held with the Broker on the topic to clarify certain points. It is clear that the Broker is taking a strong position over written documentation arguing it is good practice. Experience from actual court cases has demonstrated its value by resulting in claims being rejected even though the case had weaknesses. Experience has also shown that the act of writing things down provides a much better basis for ensuring both comprehensive analysis as well as adequacy.

An analysis of cave rescue data between 1994 to 2013 (my thanks goes to the BCRC Secretary for supplying the material) indicates that there were 17 call outs for the 20 year period where members of the public entered a cave or mine, mostly of their own free will. However 5 clearly involved 'unwilling' entry (such as fell down the entrance). In addition, based on an article in Descent together with subsequent BCRC data, since 1945 there have been 7 people who fell to their death by falling through capped mine entrances and a further 6 fatalities to members of the public of which 3 may have been suicides. It is therefore clear that the risk of an ACB being sued is real and ever present.

Council is therefore asked to endorse the recommendation that BCA is of the view that ACBs should prepare written statements as part of their due diligence. (However that specifically does not mean that BCA should assess the adequacy of such statements. That is a separate matter.)

The Broker has admitted the phrase 'risk assessment' is short hand and should not be read as implying that health and safety legislation applies to all activities. They have also accepted that "willingly accepted risks" (the phrase used in the Occupiers Liability Acts) or as occasionally called, "volenti non fit injuria", is a powerful defence. However the willingly accepted risks defence does have one potentially serious weakness, namely the defence has to also show the risk was known and understood by the claimant. This does require some consideration by ACBs to identify if any such circumstances apply. The Broker also most usefully went on to emphasise that a further defence provided for in the Occupiers Liability Act could be used by ACBs namely that given the expertise of cavers, then it can be claimed that they are 'specialist' visitors who are fully aware of the risks and thus need no advice from the occupier.

The draft advice document has been shared with the Broker and comments are awaited. It is hoped to roll out the document before the end of October so ACBs can start work well before the end of the year.

According to membership records, only 27 members have ticked the box to indicate ACB status. But a check has indicated that at least two members have not ticked this box assuming that ticking the other box relating to having a caving hut was sufficient. It is not clear how many of the 20 members who have declared huts might also have ACB status. No time scale for completion can as yet be estimated if only because one ACB has well in excess of a 1000 caves to deal with. (The advice does make it clear that caves can be lumped together where appropriate.)

Bob Mehew, L&I