

# **COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS**

## **British Caving Association**

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### **Officers and Meet's Secretary Reports for 8<sup>th</sup> October 2016 Committee Meeting**

#### **Chairman's Report**

As another year draws to a close I must reflect on the changing weather patterns that the Dales has been experiencing. On the whole not too much bad weather but in some areas where the fell tops are still saturated from last winter's deluges and the topping up of occasional thunder storms the rivers that normally become a mere trickle or dry up completely have just kept on running.

On a brighter note the Euro Speleo Fest was by all accounts a great success thanks to the many organisers and helpers. Unfortunately I could not personally attend due to a previously arranged and paid for holiday.

It is really good to know that small organisations as the B.C.A. and C.N.C.C. are capable of organising such an important international festival. I must also sincerely thank all the sponsors that supported the week-long festival complete with before and after camps and hope their businesses have benefited from the experience.

**Roy Holmes – CNCC Chairman**

## Secretary's Report

In August, our region played host to one of the biggest events in British Caving's history. The planning for this had been several years in the making, and I am proud to say this involved several members of the CNCC team and several of our regular representatives. I was lucky enough to be at the event for the entire week. Of course, in true Yorkshire fashion, it rained on the first day... and boy did it rain on the last two days; but the five days in between we were treated to stunning dry and warm sunny weather. Suddenly the decision to have Meregill and Diccan rigged paid off; a trip down the latter followed by a cool lager (or two) sat outside the site bar was a major highlight!

The event was fantastic; the entire thing went without a hitch, with excellent talks, trade hall, catering, and bar with an outstanding list of about ten real ales, evening entertainment, SRT tower, a great congress dinner with speaker, and lots of lots of caving. In fact, there was so much caving the total distance prussiked by Eurospeleo delegates is calculated to exceed 400km!

Many of our regions caves took temporarily increased number of visitors during that week; the most popular trips reported were Lost John's, Lancaster Hole, Dihedral, Notts Pot, Diccan, Alum and most of Kingsdale. On average ~100 groups were underground on each day, and despite this, there were no rescues, no serious queues, and, so far, no reports of conservation issues arising.

It was fantastic to see so many overseas visitors enthusing about our cave and saying what an excellent time they were having here. Many of them were really making the most of their time in the UK (before they may need a visa to return!) visiting several caves a day and doing some of the longer walks that had been suggested. The event did the area, and British caving, truly proud.

As discussed at the last meeting, I sourced a prize from the CNCC for the event; three copies of the book 'The Yorkshire Dales Landscape and Geology' by Tony Waltham and two of 'the Yorkshire Dales National Park, a celebration of 60 years (Colin Speakman). These seemed to be of general interest to local and non-local cavers alike. These five books were split across five different prizes at Eurospeleo sponsored by the CNCC. My expenditure was £67 which will be claimed back soon.

One of the duties our webmaster and I had hoped to perform was the production of a CNCC conservation stand to feature prominently at Eurospeleo. I am grateful to Pete Monk for sending through material for this, and highly apologetic that in the month before event, other commitments got in the way of bringing this to fruition. Saying that, it is now firmly back on our agenda, and I hope to work with the CNCC conservation team to put this together in time for the next northern Hidden Earth. The more we promote the good work of the CNCC, the more people will feel inspired to get involved, and the more good work we can do.

The Eurospeleo cave descriptions which I wrote for the congress have now all been modified to be non-specific to the event and I am keen to publish these somewhere online for everyone to enjoy. I am also planning to explore all means to include rigging information or topos. I appreciate that this rather digresses from my secretarial role, but it is more a personal project which I feel could be integrated into the CNCC if the Committee believe it is appropriate.

I would like to pass on my thanks to those who have managed the matter of Skirwith Cave, including the conservation team and Bernie Bond for his assistance in helping to maintain access.

The main agenda item for this meeting is fixed aids. I hope that all Committee clubs have had a chance to discuss whether fixed aids are something the CNCC should be taking an active role in. Over the past month or so I have had a couple of calls with Nick Williams and Bob Mehew to help clarify what our realistic options are. It is clear that we either have to do this properly or not at all, and so this will be the first decision to make. To do this properly will also require the buy-in from several clubs, so we will need to see if there is the manpower commitment to make a policy work.

One concern is liability. I have received reassurance that any work done under a fixed aid policy developed in collaboration with the BCA E&T would incur a negligible risk of liability for any clubs or individuals involved (it is impossible to ever say 'zero liability', but I am satisfied that it is not worthy of any concern). It may even be possible to get a statement from the insurers to this extent. But this would assume any actions we take are done in accordance with a policy. Without this, the CNCC will have to accept maintaining a distance from all things fixed aid. I am not sure whether this is the wish of the caving community. It is therefore a decision worthy of the time we are dedicating to discussing it, and I am looking forward to hearing everyone's thoughts.

I have been in discussions with a few candidates for the Training Officer position and am feeling very positive that we will have a very enthusiastic new Training Officer (or Training Officers) in place after the AGM next year. I am really keen to see this side of the CNCC grown and developed.

I have been working with our Webmaster and Conservation Officer to put together a new 'conservation' section on the CNCC website (which will go live hopefully just before the meeting). The aim of this is to provide the reporting tool as suggested a few meetings ago for areas in need of surface/cave entrance conservation, but also to provide information and details for anyone looking to register as a conservation volunteer. In time, this will hopefully evolve to include a list of all ongoing projects, photos, reports etc. The section also includes the excellent Natural England Minimal Impact Caving guidelines, which Andrew mentioned earlier in the year.

Much of the other website content is out of date and I will start reviewing this in due course. This is in combination with a complete overhaul of the website to make it more modern and compatible with mobile devices, which our webmaster has been working on over the last month.

Hopefully in December/January we will be in a position to issue our fifth newsletter, in keeping with their roughly six month frequency. As always, please send through any items as soon as possible.

Finally with the deadline for AGM agenda items just over three months away, I urge all Committee clubs to start considering proposals and ideas for agenda items that we should be putting to our full members in March. I would also like to remind everyone of the opportunity for an individual to stand for the new IC representative role; I will be re-broadcasting this more thoroughly as we approach the application deadline to try to encourage an applicant to come forward.

**Matt Ewles – CNCC Secretary**

### Treasurer's Report

Financial Status as of 28th September 2016:

Business Current Account: £2553.90

Business Saver Account: £18398.40

Since the July meeting, the following payments/receipts made:

£30.00 paid to the Hellifield Institute for the hire of the meeting hall.

£75.00 from Inglesport for the sale of 25 Shuttleworth publications.

£840.15 received from Natural England on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 re travel expense claims for Skirwith and Slab Caves. This is being distributed.

**Pete Bann CNCC Treasurer 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

### **Conservation Officer's Report**

Refresher abrasive wheels training has been arranged for CNCC volunteers.

A team of CNCC volunteers removed more than 3 tons of assorted rubbish from Gauber Pot on Park Fell, thus re-establishing after many years of closure access to the fine flowstone decorated pitch. A second pot nearby was also cleared. A temporary stock fence was erected round the open pot, and a further two days work saw the pot securely lidded. The work was carried out with the aid of funding from the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership (Stories in Stone).

New volunteers are always welcome, for weekend or weekday working parties. No specific skills are necessary, but if you have them, we will do our best to make use of them. On the job training is given as needed. Occasionally there may be the opportunity to attend a training course. Tools will be provided, but you are responsible for providing your own protective clothing - stout footwear, preferably with steel toe caps, stout gloves, weatherproof clothing, helmet. You will also need to provide your own packed lunch and hot drinks. If you'd like to be placed on the mailing list to be informed of future projects, please contact Kay Easton on [conservation@cncc.org.uk](mailto:conservation@cncc.org.uk)

**Kay Easton – CNCC Conservation Officer**

### **Access Officer**

The EuroSpeleo 2016 event took precedence over most matters regarding access in the last 6 months. Although I wasn't able to attend in person I'm told that everything ran smoothly. Post event I've had no negative feedback regarding cave access.

I'd like the Committee to discuss the Langcliffe Hall Estate issue. Tim has been speaking to the National Park about the situation so may be able to add more detail.

Tim has also been making good progress with his recent negotiations with the three Estates, including a proposal for an online permit system but his report will cover this in more detail.

Over the last few months I've found it increasingly difficult to find enough time to commit to my role within CNCC. With a young family & work taking much of my time I'm considering stepping down at the next AGM allowing somebody new to keep cave access moving in the right direction.

**Johnny Latimer – CNCC Access Officer**

### **Training Officer**

**There is no serving Training Officer following the former Officer standing down in September.**

## Meet's Secretary Reports (optional)

### Casterton Fell

There are no issues to report.

Between March 2016 and August 2016 (inclusive), 105 permits were issued to 39 clubs.

Number of Casterton Fell permits issued to clubs between March 2016 and August 2016 February 2016.

Month	Number of CNCC permits	Number of clubs
March	32	16
April	27	12
May	18	10
June	7	5
July	12	7
August	9	6

Number of permits issued for entrances on Casterton Fell between January 2015 and February 2016. A single permit can be issued for multiple entrances, so the total number of entrances exceeds the total number of permits.

	March	April	May	June	July	August	Subtotal
Lancaster Hole	13	17	7	4	5	6	52
County Pot	14	6	10	3	6	2	41
Wr. Rabbit	4	11	1	1	1	0	18
Cow Pot	1	3	1	0	1	1	7
Top Sink	8	9	5	0	0	1	23
Pool Sink	4	6	3	1	0	0	14
Sylvester Pot	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	44	52	28	9	13	10	<b>Total</b> 156

Hannah Walker

casterton.permits@cncc.org.uk

26/09/2016

**Penyghent:** Sam Allshorn reports that the scaffolding in the Penyghent Pot entrance is degrading and could benefit from some attention.

**Bowland:** One permit for Whitewell Pot, Cave and Hell Hole. Both keepers are both interested and cooperative and no problems to report.

**All other areas: Nothing to report**