

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Reports for 11th March 2023 Annual General Meeting

Chairman's Report

CNCC Chair Report to June meeting 2022

Long Service to CNCC

Ric Halliwell has announced that he is retiring as a Meets Secretary after 40 year's service, in this and other capacities, for CNCC. Ric has lived through some turbulent times at CNCC but his work output has never wavered. He has been a doer, always providing a first -class service to Northern Cavers and visitors. He is anxious that his current health issues are preventing him from maintaining this high standard that he has set.

Ric has been an ambassador for northern caving at a national and international level for a generation. He is a member of a caving club in most BCA regions and well known to European clubs and cavers. These personal links are incredibly important for CNCC.

On a personal note, I owe Ric a debt of gratitude for all the advice he has offered freely to me in the areas of Cave Science and Cave Conservation over the years. It has been invaluable to me. I hope we will still see him at CNCC meetings and events. A well -deserved retirement awaits.

CNCC Chair Report October 2022

Roy Holmes

A personal appreciation.

Roy died recently after holding off serious illness for many years, during which he carried on contributing to caving organisations such as CNCC and CRO. I always enjoyed his company on the tours of the caves of Dentedale where he spent half a lifetime of exploration. He was encouraging, patient, mischievous, learned and dependable. I owe him a personal debt of gratitude for all the help and guidance he freely offered.

Horner Collection

The Horner Photographic Collection of Settle includes some of the earliest known caving photographs. The collection is now with the Museum at the Folly in Settle. They would like to digitise the collection to make it more widely available. They have asked if the CNCC could co fund the cost of digitisation of the caving photos. These photos of GG and Alum Pot date to no later than 1893. I am awaiting an estimate of costs. There are a few prints on show at the Folly. The quality of the negatives must be incredible as the prints look remarkable.

YDNP Management Plan Forum

I will attend this forum on 4th November (representing CNCC) and ensure that caving is recognised as a significant economic benefit to the YDNP.

YDNP Cave and Crag Access Advisory Committee

I have asked the secretariat of the group to convene a meeting to discuss latest developments regarding cave access issues.

Settle Coal Builders Merchant Credit Account

CNCC now has a credit account at Settle Coal Builders Merchants for purchase of conservation equipment, materials and waste disposal. Anyone wanting to book out products must get a reference id from the Treasurer in advance.

Manual of Operations

A Manual of Operations is under construction thanks to our Secretary Josh. It will help CNCC Officers, new and old, keep to established and effective organisational procedures.

SSSI General Consent – Exploratory Digs on Ingleborough Estate

A General Consent for exploratory digs on Ingleborough Estate land has been granted by Natural England for 5 years from October 2022. This means that if you wish to undertake a dig on this land you only need landowner permission. You do not have to apply for an individual Consent from Natural England. The Estate Office will let you know the terms for digs on application.

Pot black funding application

This meeting is asked to consider the application for CNCC funding from a multi club group of diggers who are currently reopening this pot on Leck Fell. Committee members are asked to consider if we wish to spend our cash assisting this on-going project with scaffold and shoring timbers. It is not a project where we would ask BCA for reimbursement. It would be a way of spending some of our historic earnings from partnership projects with Natural England and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. We do not support speculative digs but we have supported similar work at Deaths Head in the recent past. (although this was a direct payment from a Partner held budget). We need to decide if Pot Black is sufficiently advanced as a documented cave to consider this application to be conservation and reopening of a significant cave. As this pot is already at 20m depth and known to be open ended when first descended I am inclined to think it worthy of 50% co funding from CNCC.

Other CNCC officers hold different views on this subject. As chairman I do not have a vote. I look forward to a healthy discussion on the matter.

CNCC Chairmans Report January 2023

Horner Photo Collection

This historic collection of photographic prints is scheduled for digitisation by The Folly in Settle. They asked CNCC for a financial contribution to help with costs on 19 century caving images. Since reporting this at the last meeting the Folly has secured a large grant for the project and so far as I am aware, they no longer need our support.

YDNP Management Plan Forum 2022

I attended this forum representing CNCC. There was very little discussion of the MP other than to say that most of the key targets had been met except in affordable housing. Most of the meeting involved project presentations by partner groups such as Rivers Trust etc. However, it did provide an opportunity for me to alert the Park's CEO about the cave access loss at High Birkwith. This proved to be a useful tea break encounter which has produced some forward momentum at the right levels in recent weeks.

YDNP Cave and Crag Advisory Group

This specialist wing of the Local Access Forum of YDNP has convened a special meeting on 9th Feb 2023 to discuss the cave access situation at High Birkwith. The case was raised at the December meeting of the full Local Access Forum and was discussed briefly before agreeing to forward the case to C&C Advisory Group. Thanks to Tim Allen for his swift intervention to get this on the LAF agenda.

All correspondence from YDNP on this matter has made it clear that "As there is currently no statutory access to caving, access needs to be through voluntary agreement and we are happy to work with the Council of Northern Caving Clubs in trying to achieve this".

YDNP Nature Recovery Plan

It was encouraging to see that Caving was highlighted in this plan on page 37 under the heading of "Our Vision for 2040". It stated that:

"The extensive cave systems beneath the Dales will continue to provide important hibernation sites for moths and bats with responsible cavers ensuring that the accessible systems are carefully conserved."

This is a testament to how far CNCC has come in its ability to influence statutory bodies on the positive contribution of caving to protected sites, well being and local economies.

CNCC Chair Report to AGM 2023

High Birkwith Permissive Access

I attended the YDNP Cave & Crag Advisory Group meeting 9th February. Most of the discussion was around Birkwith permissive access issues. A senior delegation of YDNP officers are intending to raise the issues with the Landowner. It is hoped that a modest permissive access agreement may be negotiated for Browgill Cave. This would involve around 2 metres of incursion onto High Birkwith land.

Cave Archaeology Project

I am due to have a meeting with an archaeologist from UCLAN shortly. This is a project to gather information on Dales cave archaeology into a database. It centred around Ingleborough Common and is funded by the Our Common Cause Project. A review of the Cupcake and Shuttleworth Pot assemblage will be a core part of the project. This material was gathered by CNCC member clubs in 2010 during an exemplary conservation and exploration exercise. It has gone on to inform the baseline of expectation for virtually all Dales cave conservation and exploration subsequently.

Horner Collection

The digitisation of this historic photo collection is progressing. I have secured match funding from BCA and hopefully BCRA. This will allow us access to the large file images due to being a funder of the project.

CNCC Rep to BCA Council Reports

June 6th 2022

- 1 None of the BCA Council vacancies filled.
- 2 BCA is joining the Ukraine Association for a fee of £100 as a show of solidarity with Ukrainian cavers.
- 3 CRoW legal case ends with no result and no legal fees paid to other side.

September 27th

- 1 No vacancies filled on BCA Council or Working Groups.
- 2 BCA membership is back to pre Covid levels. No change in membership fees.
- 3 Hidden Earth is to return in September 2023
- 4 BCA treasurer reminded Council that he will retire from the post after the AGM in June23.

November 22nd 2022

- 1 No vacancies on Working Groups filled.
- 2 Rope test rig moving from Brackenbottom to Matlock.
- 3 Steve Gray is going to look after the BCA IC anchor stock.

February 8th 2023

- 1 Richard Vooght has volunteered to be convenor of Conservation and Access Working Group.
- 2 Badass Caving Club adopted as members of BCA
- 3 The treasurer advised that membership fees should go up next financial year. This will be a decision for the next treasurer and Council
- 4 Insurance has been secured for the next 3 years
- 5 Digitisation of the Horner Collection was explained to Council and a financial contribution will be sought to match CNCC contribution.

Andrew Hinde - CNCC Chairman

Secretary's Report

This AGM brings me to the end of my 4 year stint as secretary. I will not be disappearing, but plan to stick around for now writing minutes as assistant secretary and as a regular representative for YUCPC. I wish all the best to my successor and hope they enjoy being able to give back to the caving community.

Josh Young - CNCC Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Conservation projects were carried out on Great Douk Cave, Alum Pot, Bull Pot of the Witches, Barbon Pot. Materials were purchased for work on White Scar, Lancaster Hole and Wretched Rabbit.

Training courses continue to be well attended and paying by PayPal seems to be working. A number of refunds were made due to Trainer illness and one double payment. Kath Davies has once again agreed to scrutinise the accounts.

Income and Expenditure

Balance (Savings and current accounts) on 01/01/2022: £15518.13

Income

Interest on savings:	£9.87
Training Course 2022 fees via PayPal:	£3897.31
Training Course 2023 fees via PayPal	£923.90
Training Course Fees Direct	£50.00
BCA Grant from 2021:	£4565.86

Total Income (not including transfers from savings account): **£9446.94**

Expenditure

Training Course Tuition 2021:	£870.00
Training Course Tuition 2022:	£4920.00
Training Course Venue Hire	£1200.00
Great Douk mileage:	£107.10
Alum Pot Stiles mileage:	£123.75
BPOW & Barbon Pot Tree Work mileage:	£194.85
Caving Photographs for Display at YDNP Offices	£933.00
C&A Materials (includes pipe for White Scar and Wretched Rabbit):	£1528.03
IT/Admin:	£509.67
Course Refunds:	£75.00

Total Expenditure: **£10461.40**

Profit/Loss -£1014.46

Balance (Savings and current accounts) on 31/12/2022: £14503.67

BCA Claim for 2022

The intention is to put a claim of £4520.35 for 2022

This to be made up as follows:

IT/Admin	£509.67
C&A Mileage	£425.70
C&A Materials	£1528.03
Training Costs	£2056.95
Total	£4520.35

Pete Bann - CNCC Treasurer

Conservation Officer's Report

This year has seen a continuation of the trend away from people reporting problems and asking for a team of CNCC volunteers to come and sort it, to people reporting problems. Saying "I can get a groups together to sort it, and can you support us?" So it's been a quiet year for the CNCC volunteers but a busy year for conservation.

Work has included removing old signal wire from Meregill, providing tape and pins for use in F'ing Hopeless Pot, clearing and stabilising the entrance to Chanterelle Pot, stabilising a collapse at Great Douk, replacing three stiles in the Alum Pot area, lending equipment to support KCC in their clean-up of Glassfurd's Chamber in Gavel Pot, supporting Red Rose in major work at Wretched Rabbit, removing fallen trees at Bull Pot of the Witches and Barbon Pot, and supporting CPC in dealing with a dangerous boulder in White Scar. An increasing problem is the effect of Ash Dieback on trees surrounding potholes. Our thanks to Martin Holroyd for his work dealing with fallen trees. We are attempting to identify volunteers holding the relevant chain saw and tree work certificates in order to spread the load.

For the coming year we shall change the mechanism for volunteers to reclaim mileage. Instead of the Conservation Officer collating all claims, the Conservation Office will forward a list to the Treasurer of the volunteers involved, and the volunteers will email their claim directly to the Treasurer (rather than to the Conservation Officer as present). This will streamline the process but more importantly it will reduce the number of people with access to personal data such as bank details.

A list of equipment available for CNCC members to borrow for conservation projects is on the CNCC website <https://cncc.org.uk/about/> (It's under the "about" heading rather than "conservation" because the list also includes publicity and anchor placement items.) Those who are planning conservation works are reminded that Sam Allshorn has money donated by Mike Cooper from sales of "Not for the Faint Hearted" which is available for conservation work on caves featured in the book.

Kay Easton - CNCC Conservation Officer

Access Officer's Report

The first year in the role of CNCC access officer has been an eye opener as to how much work the CNCC actually does in the background for caving. In terms of access, Birks Fell no longer requires a permit giving easier access for cavers. Work remains ongoing regarding the Langcliffe estate memorandum of understanding, a clear position has been set out regarding Birkwith. More flexibility for permits at Fairy holes is moving forward and the advice sheet that is given to cavers has been updated to reflect minor changes and make it look a bit more modern. I've enjoyed signposting cavers seeking information, and we recently helped with a surface overlay of the cave at Robinson Pot for ground works that was taken place near the cave. I look forward to seeing what 2023 brings.

Adele Ward - CNCC Access Officer

Training Officer's Report

The CNCC training workshops have continued to be well received, well attended and with lots of good feedback. A full list of all 2022 workshops are listed below. As well as the participants, most workshops had a "shadower", either an instructor or experienced caver looking to expand their own personal coaching skill set. We have just published our "Spring / Summer" training program and take up has been very positive to date.

Trainers Day

We recently had a day with the four SRT trainers getting together to look at all aspects of the training we deliver. We had a really productive day with healthy discussions and general agreements on content delivery to ensure consistency between trainers.

New Workshops

We have developed a couple of new workshops focusing on "Leadership" skills. These have proved popular in their take up and would be useful to a wide range of cavers including club cavers and student cavers alike. We have "tweaked" some of the existing ones and plan to utilise the YSS training facility for some of them.

New equipment

A couple more ("New") Petzl Stops and Frenio Carabiners have been added to the existing kit. This is the descender and Carabiner that all the trainers prefer to issue to someone who is "New to SRT" and don't have any equipment themselves.

Acknowledgments

The overall success of the workshops is down to a combination of peoples efforts. I would like to put my gratitude on record.

Gary Douthwaite - Top IT provision ensuring a simple booking process

Matt Ewles - Thoughtful PR and providing guidance.

Peter Bann - Processing a lot of payments!

SRT Trainers - Providing, enthusiastic and professional training workshops.

Mark Richards

Helen Hooper

Sam Litten

John Helm for providing the extremely popular Geology Workshops.

YSS, Craven Pothole Club and Yorkshire Dales Guides for use of their premises.

71	17/12/2022	New to SRT / skills refresher (2 days)	4	4 ●
70	10/12/2022	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop (2 days)	4	4 ●
69	13/11/2022	SRT rescue workshop	6	6 ●
67	12/11/2022	SRT underground refresher	4	4 ●
68	05/11/2022	SRT improver and refresher workshop (Indoors)	6	6 ●
77	05/11/2022	An underground geology tour with The Rock Doctor	8	5
58	24/09/2022	New to SRT one day workshop (Indoors)	4	4 ●
61	11/09/2022	Caving "Pull Through" workshop (Cave Based)	4	4 ●
54	03/09/2022	SRT rescue workshop (2 Day)	6	6 ●
57	28/08/2022	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	6	6 ●
56	27/08/2022	SRT improver and refresher workshop (Indoors)	6	6 ●
55	21/08/2022	New to SRT one day workshop (Indoors)	4	4 ●
60	24/07/2022	Caving "Pull Through" workshop (Cave Based)	4	4 ●
66	17/07/2022	New to SRT one day workshop (Indoors)	6	4
65	16/07/2022	Caving "Pull Through" workshop (Cave Based)	4	4 ●
64	03/07/2022	SRT rescue workshop (1 day)	6	6 ●
53	02/07/2022	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	6	6 ●
62	11/06/2022	An underground geology tour with the "Rock Doctor"	8	8 ●
52	27/03/2022	SRT rescue workshop	6	6 ●
51	26/03/2022	New to SRT one day workshop (Indoors)	6	6 ●
45	13/03/2022	SRT improver and refresher workshop (Indoors)	6	6 ●
50	12/03/2022	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	6	6 ●
46	05/03/2022	An Introduction to cave photography workshop with Mark Burkey (2 day)	8	6
49	20/02/2022	SRT rescue workshop	6	6 ●
48	19/02/2022	New to SRT one day workshop (Indoors)	5	5 ●
44	13/02/2022	Caving Club "Meet Leaders" - Practical skills	6	6 ●
40	12/02/2022	Advanced SRT rescue	7	7 ●
42	09/01/2022	SRT rescue workshop	6	6 ●
43	08/01/2022	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	6	6 ●

Ian Patrick - CNCC Training Officer

Anchor Coordinator's Report - Alan Speight

During 2022 the Anchor team has managed to complete 2 new full installations. Fossil Pot and F'ing Hopeless Pot. Most reports of loose anchors have been attended to very quickly and at the moment there are only 3 loose anchors to sort out. If anyone wants to take over as anchor coordinator I am happy to stand down otherwise I am happy to continue.

PR and Communications Officer's Report - Matt Ewles

It's been another positive year for CNCC's relations with the caving community.

Rather than repeat all of the various stories here (of which there have been many), I refer everyone to my three Committee meeting reports over the last year and of course all of the news stories on the CNCC website.

News stories have been circulated to cavers via UKCaving, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, our website, and importantly, our own mailing list, which at the time of writing this report 519 subscribers (up from 349 at the last AGM). This is a phenomenal number of subscribers for a fairly niche mailing list. In combination with our high reach via all other social media platforms, we are really well positioned to communicate with and serve northern cavers.

The mailing list provides a great tool to issue warnings (e.g. the sudden issues at Lancaster Hole), to advertise our training workshops, promote conservation initiatives, any topo/description updates, and to keep northern cavers generally informed of current situations (e.g. High Birkwith). I aim to send an e-newsletter roughly monthly, or more often if necessary.

Since the last AGM I have issued two proper newsletters (May and October 2022) with another due in April this year. Thank you to Gary who does all the layout and printing for these and posts hard copies out all over the country. These serve as a permanent, concise and aesthetically pleasing record of the excellent work of our organisation.

My role continues to involve responding to reports of underground hazards, broadcasting these by whatever means appropriate to their severity, and also to reports of topo errors. Reports of rope lengths being too short are frequent despite many topo having stated the former rope length for the best part of 20-30 years! This can be attributed to more people being aware to report such things (or acid rain rapidly deepening our potholes).

I also continue to manage CNCC's cave descriptions, improving them where possible or publishing new ones.

I still have copies of Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales Volume Two, available for anyone who has a situation where a caving literature gift to a landowner could help promote goodwill or general awareness of caving. These are gathering a lot of dust in my house and so if anyone has a use for them to benefit northern caving please let me know.

I'd like to thank Tim for his efforts this year with the photographic display at the Yorkshire Dales National Park HQ at Bainbridge. As well as identifying this opportunity, Tim has liaised with the National Park, had the prints produced with CNCC funding, installed them, and has only recently

removed them after a long innings. They have been on show to the great and the good of the National Park (including the CEO) and various visitors over several months, raising awareness of the importance of caving in our area.

I'd also like to thank Andrew who put up with my nagging for us to put together a statement on the situation at High Birkwith. Andrew put in a huge amount of effort to research the content on this, feeding comments back on my dodgy first draft, and also to arrange the current parking at Low Birkwith Farm that we currently enjoy. I have updated the website information and route descriptions to reflect the current situation. This is one of the biggest issues in northern caving at the moment and I think that CNCC have shown ourselves to be taking a leading role in keeping cavers informed.

Our thriving program of training workshops continues to inspire engagement with CNCC from cavers across our region. Our conservation news stories continue to receive lots of positive feedback and reactions.

The CNCC website remains our front-of-house tool for communicating with cavers. I'd like to acknowledge the effort Gary has put in over the last year to revamp the website, redesigning the content management systems, while giving the public website a facelift and making it fully mobile-device compatible.

The website fixed aids section now has a statement on CNCC's position about leaving ropes rigged in caves. This was agreed by the Committee and is a good reference point for anyone considering leaving a cave rigged for longer than the duration of their single visit.

Happy caving for 2023!

Webmaster's Report - Gary Douthwaite

Webmaster AGM Report – March 2023

A new CNCC website was launched in October 2022 after several months of development and saw several practical improvements as well as security updates behind the scenes. The site continues to develop with some significant improvements to the training area following its huge popularity in recent months.

A new, stand-alone site was also created with info for the Gaping Gill winch meet aimed at the non-caving public. Some confusion has been seen between the cavers booking system and the public winch descent, so this has been an attempt to clarify the difference as well as publicise the event for the respective clubs.

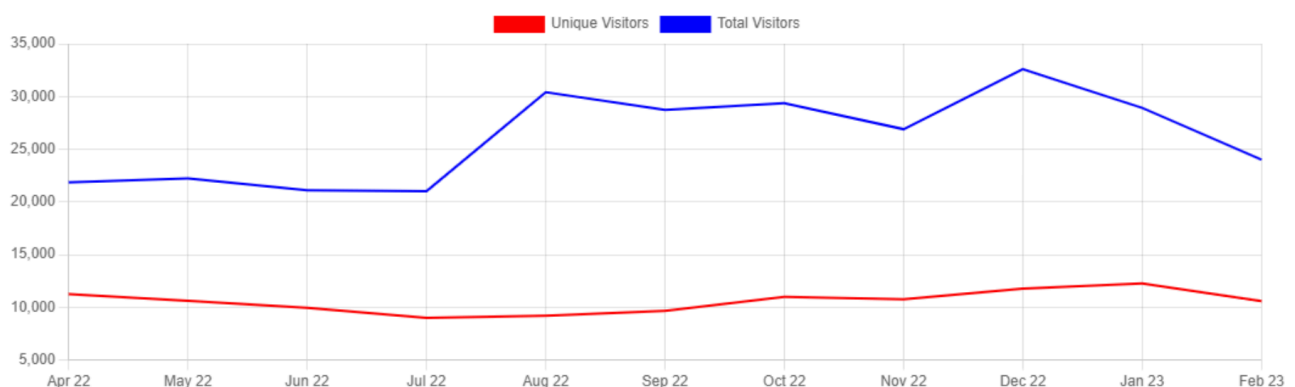
More recently, at the start of this year I created a New to Caving section on the site with the aim of encouraging novices to get involved in club-driven training activities.

As always, I welcome any ideas people may have about improving the site.

Analytics

Site visitors

	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23
Unique	11,243	10,619	9,965	8,994	9,192	9,676	10,991	10,752	11,760	12,258	10,589
Total	21,864	22,229	21,111	21,004	30,404	28,730	29,370	26,902	32,602	28,910	24,014



Social Media

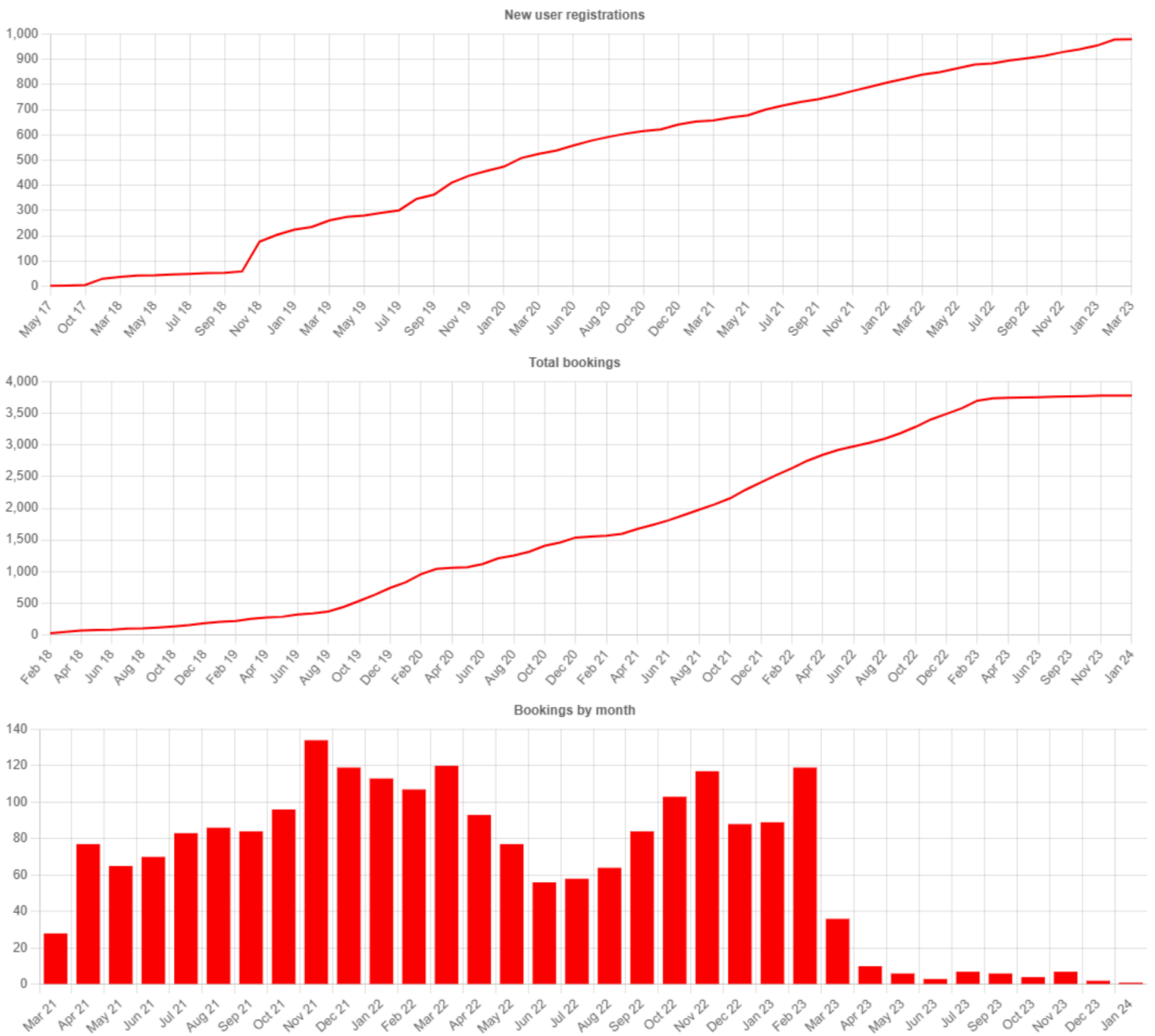
- Facebook: 1586 page likes (+199 since last AGM) and 1770 followers (+232 since last AGM).
- Twitter: 532 followers (+19 since last AGM). 334 tweets have been made by CNCC.
- Instagram: 440 followers (+42 since last AGM). 37 posts have been made by CNCC.

Mailing List

- The mailing list contains 522 people (+173 since last AGM).

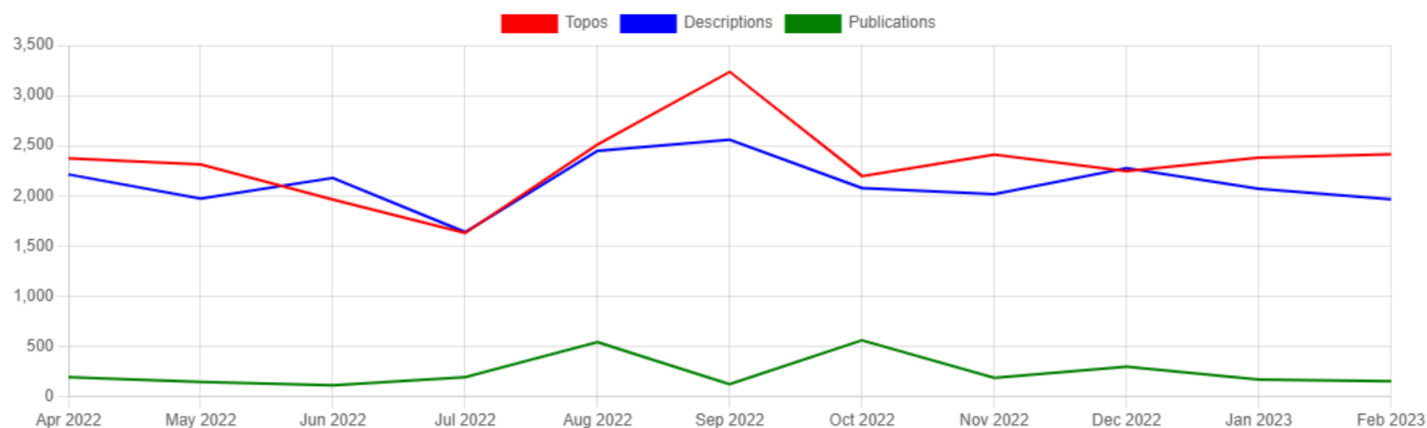
Online Booking System

- 979 registered users
- 4357 individual bookings have been made. This number includes 3781 approved bookings and 575 cancelled bookings.
- 193 (20%) made a positive statement that they are NOT BCA members.
- 683 (70%) said they are members of a club.
- Of the users who specified gender there are 159 female (16.7%), 704 male (73.9%) and 1 other (0.1%).
- The average age is 49.5 with the youngest 19 and oldest 82.



Media Downloads

.	Topos	Descriptions	Publications
Feb 2023	2416	1966	153
Jan 2023	2381	2070	169
Dec 2022	2245	2277	298
Nov 2022	2412	2017	186
Oct 2022	2197	2078	561
Sep 2022	3236	2560	123
Aug 2022	2510	2450	544
Jul 2022	1629	1639	195
Jun 2022	1964	2177	112
May 2022	2313	1972	147
Apr 2022	2375	2214	195
12 Month Average	2140	1952	224



Top 10 media downloads (12 months to 05 Mar 2023)

Topos	Descriptions	Publications
1269 - Alum Pot	1417 - Ease Gill Caverns	577 - Shuttleworth Pot Conservation Guide
854 - F'ing Hopeless Pot rigging topo	1395 - The Leck Fell Master Cave System	515 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 12 - Oct 2022
830 - Lost Johns' Cave	1155 - Alum Pot and Long Churn Caves	264 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 11 - May 2021
756 - Lancaster Hole and Cow Pot	1029 - Gaping Gill	226 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 8 - Aug 2018
744 - Bull Pot of the Witches	998 - Caves of Scotland	217 - Great Douk Cave - Guide to Hidden Gems
699 - Sell Gill Holes	677 - F'ing Hopeless Pot route description	203 - Witches Cave Conservation Plan
691 - Yordas Pot and Cave	599 - Great Douk and Middle Washfold	197 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 9 - Mar 2019
664 - Gaping Gill and Dihedral	583 - Scanty Lardos Pot	190 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 10 - Sep 2019
611 - Bull Pot	581 - Yordas Cave and Pot	136 - GDPR for Caving Clubs - April 2018
599 - Rowten Pot	567 - Valley Entrance	122 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 6 - Aug 2017

Report data snapshots taken 5 Mar 2023.