

# COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

## British Caving Association

### Reports for 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022 Annual General Meeting

#### Chairman's Report

The following reports have been submitted since the 2021 AGM

#### CNCC Chairman's Report June 2021

##### **Covid 19 recovery plan**

We have just learned that the much -anticipated release from remaining restrictions on 21st June has been put back by one month. This will be very disappointing for clubs with huts. Hopefully the financial backing they have had from Government will see them through. A relaunch of caving activity is very difficult without this facility. It has revealed their real value to caving. The CNCC is here to support these clubs in whatever way they need to transition back to their former level of service.

##### **Cave entrance condition**

Several cave entrances have been reported to be in a dangerous condition in the last 12 months. Some have been dealt with by clubs, individuals or CNCC volunteers with a quick turn around. However, Ayegill Caverns and Wretched Rabbit are going to be long term projects. We could do with some pro bono advice from professional civil or highway engineers. Please ask around your clubs.

##### **BCA Council Meeting**

I am sorry to have to report that I missed the last BCA council meeting due to my personal incompetence in diary keeping. The main item on this agenda was the proposal to have Council look again at the proposal to pay qualified trainers a reasonable payment for their professional services at regional SRT training courses etc. This was raised by CNCC and approved unanimously by Council.

##### **SSSI Cave Monitoring**

A new round of SSSI cave monitoring has been requested by Natural England. CNCC may want to consider if it wants to charge for this service in the same way as previous rounds ie receiving funds for conservation works in lieu of payment for monitoring data. I clearly have a conflict of interest in this matter – being a Natural England employee.

## CNCC Chairman's Report October 2021

### **Three Counties Traverse**

Great to start with news of the first 3 Counties Traverse from Large Pot to Top Sink. A remarkable undertaking planned and executed by the Cave Diving Group with assistance from many northern cavers. Many weeks of preparation dives resulted in a near faultless execution on a day of perfect diving conditions. Congratulations to Chris and Jason and all those who helped over the decades to make this a reality. Watch out for the film at Kendal MFF and lectures to come.

I like to think I did my bit for the project by calming down the Ingleton residents that could not drop off their jumble sale donations at the community centre because of the massed ranks of cavers with kit spread out on the carpark.

### **Aygill Cavern**

The RRCPC have completed their epic engineering works at Aygill Cavern. Thank you on behalf of all cavers who can now enjoy access to this cave which will no doubt become the focus of the next Grand Traverse.

### **Wretched Rabbit**

This continues to be closed due to rock fall at the entrance/exit. A plan is slowly emerging on the way forward.

### **Birkwith Caves Access**

I have had a site visit with Mr Hallam and he is not yet ready to restore caving access post Covid. He did not say "never". I am coordinating with the YDNP and the landowners to look at a multi activity access plan for High Birkwith which would involve some advice signage for various user groups. This may take some of the pressure off the current situation and allow further cave access negotiations down the line.

## CNCC Chairman's Report Jan 2022

I have nothing new to report that will not be covered by other officer reports.

I would just like to thank all the groups and individuals who have volunteered for CNCC over the last 12 months. Some particularly notable achievements have taken place in cave entrance reconstructions and damaged tree clearances. The training opportunities provided by CNCC have been well attended and the positive feed- back is rewarding for those who plan and deliver the workshops.

The excellent work of the Conservation volunteers is always well covered by the Publicity and Communications team across all media platforms. It is crucial that people understand that this work is not something that others will do for you. We all have a duty of care to the caves, no matter how poorly treated they may have been in the past, and it is a privilege to contribute to their up -keep.

Many cavers beyond the committee and CNCC member clubs have offered their time and expertise to improve caving for all who cave in the North of England and Scotland. I thank all of them on your behalf.

**Andrew Hinde - CNCC Chairman**

## **Secretary's Report**

With Pete Bann standing to become our official Treasurer, and Adele Ward standing for access officer, I look forward to a year ahead with a full cohort of CNCC officers to facilitate all the excellent work being done on behalf of cavers in our area.

The last year has seen our programme of training workshops take off, and demand for these shows no signs of slowing; there seems to be an almost constant conveyor belt of conservation projects big and small, and the mailing list of volunteers continues to grow; we continue to chisel away at the last few cave entrances with more restrictive permit systems, making access easier for all; and it is easier than ever for individuals to keep up to date with everything we are doing, whether through social media or via a mailing list. I am looking forward to seeing what can be achieved in the next 12 months!

I continue to complete the usual secretarial duties. Of particular note recently was the committee's decision to adopt a conflict of interest policy. After discussion with the officers it is clear there is more to discuss, and it will be discussed at the June committee meeting.

I am re-standing as secretary for another year, but I'm not sure if I will stand again in 2023. I would be happy to hear from anyone interested in the role.

**Josh Young - CNCC Secretary**

## **Treasurer's Report**

2021 has seen the continuation of a slow return to normality for life and caving.

The funding from Stories in Stone was completed with a final payment to CNCC relating to Nov/Dec2020.

Conservation projects were funded regarding, Knackertrapper Hole, Starting Handle Hole, Aygill Caverns and Long Drop.

A one-off payment was made to the Grassington Mines Appreciation Society, for the part-funding of fencing materials for uncapped mineshafts on Grassington Moor, as agreed CNCC Meeting October 2020.

Bolting equipment (2x bolt pullers, 2 x drill bits & 60 x stainless pig tails) and materials were purchased.

One change for 2021 has been the 24 Training Courses run covering SRT, Photography, Geology and Paperless Surveying. These were and continue to be, well attended.

The participants seem happy enough to pay using PayPal.

In the current format, the cost of the courses to CNCC/BCA is £947.43 for 2021.

Overall, for 2021 the CNCC accounts show a deficit of £845.69.

Ric and Pat Halliwell of the CPC have once again agreed to scrutinize the accounts.

## **Income and Expenditure**

Balance (Savings and current accounts) on 01/01/2021: £16,363.82

### **Income**

Interest on savings:	£1.58
Training Course 2021 fees via PayPal:	£4,148.14
Training Course 2022 fees via PayPal	£480.74
BCA funding from 2020:	£1,237.87
Stories in Stone Funding from Nov/Dec 2020:	£2,089.98

**Total Income (not including transfers from savings account):** **£7958.31**

### **Expenditure**

Training Course Costs:	£5095.57
Knackertrapper Hole mileage:	£170.10
Starting Handle Hole mileage:	£97.20
Aygill Cavern Mileage:	£53.70
Long Drop Mileage:	£56.25
Bolting Equipment/Materials:	£877.45
IT/Admin:	£363.73
Grassington Mines Appreciation Society:	£2000.00
Paypal Refund:	£90.00

**Total Expenditure:** **£8804.00**

Profit/Loss -£845.69

Balance (Savings and current accounts) on 31/12/2021: £15,518.13

### **BCA Claim for 2021**

The intention is to put a claim of £4565.86 for 2021

This to be made up as follows:

C&A	£377.25
C&A Grassington Mines Appreciation Society	£2000.00 (part funding for securing shaft tops, agreed Oct 2020)
Bolting Equipment/Materials	£877.45
IT/Admin	£363.73
Training Costs	£947.43
Total	£4565.86

**Pete Bann - Acting CNCC Treasurer**

## **Conservation Officer's Report**

This year has been notable for the number of CNCC supported (as opposed to CNCC arranged) conservation work, a welcome development.

Martin Holroyd, assisted by Ged Benn, has removed the tree that fell across Jingling Pot, and Martin returned to plant some replacement saplings on ledges out of reach of grazing sheep. Ged Benn led a team to remove rubbish from Starting Handle Hole that Tony Credland had collected from throughout the cave and moved to the base of the first pitch. CNCC provided Tim Allen with conservation tape and pins for use in his latest discovery, Fing Hopeless Pot. Chris Scaife has put a team together for work on Chanterelle Pot and Greenwood Pot once the necessary. A report of a loose boulder at Fossil Pot led to a warning on the CNCC page. Jenny Brindle, an instructor at the Brendrigg Trust reported more graffiti at Yordas, which she has cleaned off. Permissions are in place. My apologies to anyone I have missed out!

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.

A list of equipment available for CNCC members to borrow for conservation projects has been placed 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.)

We have welcomed several new volunteers this year, but further 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 the Conservation Officer on [conservation@cncc.org.uk](mailto:conservation@cncc.org.uk), or use the link on the CNCC website.

**Kay Easton - CNCC Conservation Officer**

## **Training Officer's Report**

We have had what I can only describe as an overwhelming successful first full year running CNCC training workshops. The demand for them has been amazing and currently showing no sign of letting up, although at some point I am expecting this demand to level off.

The most popular ones (and which I currently have a waiting list for people wanting to get on the next ones) have been the Geology workshop and SRT rescue.

I am starting to put together a "Spring and Summer" programme of workshops, however due to trainer availability and higher cost of venue hire this will be on a smaller scale than the recent number of workshops.

New dates will be initially announced via the CNCC mailing list so please pass this message onto people if they want to hear about workshops first.

Feedback has been really positive about all the workshops, one particular nice bit of feedback was from someone who attended an SRT rescue workshop and shortly afterwards used the confidence and skills learned to assist a fellow caver having a bit of trouble during a trip.

### **Appointment of 2 new trainers**

After a National advert open to ANYONE to join us to help deliver future workshops we have had 2 applications, it is a real pleasure to welcome Sam and Helen onboard. Along with myself and Mark Richards this makes 4 SRT trainers, this should be sufficient numbers to manage the current "workload" whilst also allowing us to keep the content "moderated" and consistent. (Please see the "Bios" below. )

### **"Conflict of interest policy"**

The issue of a conflict of interest has been brought up at a recent committee meeting. This "issue" will be addressed in due course by the open and fair democratic process which is a credit to the CNCC. To hopefully help this situation I intend to put forward a "standards and behaviour" document to give concise guidelines for all trainers to agree to.

### **Equipment**

We have built up a reasonable amount of equipment for use on the workshops, however this still requires trainers to provide equipment from their personal supplies. Moving forward I am looking to make some more equipment purchases to alleviate this situation.

### **BCA Training & Equipment Group**

At a recent BCA AGM it was voted on to merge the "Training Committee" and "Equipments and Techniques" committee into one body and also make them a "Working Group". Personally I am in agreement with this outcome, we have currently had one "Zoom" meeting and the main focus is to agree on our "terms of reference" and the best way to move forward. The new name for this group is to be the "Training and Equipment Group".

The CNCC is represented on this working group by myself as training officer and Mark Richards as he was the CNCC rep to the old "Equipment and Techniques committee". Steve Gray of the RRPC is the convenor, so northern caving has a good presence on this new working group.

## **Other regions**

There has obviously been a “spotlight” on the “framework” that the CNCC has used to deliver caver training recently. It has caused some healthy discussion, but this framework has now been adopted by some of the other regions.

## **Summary**

As long as the committee are willing to support me, I am happy to continue as CNCC Training Officer for another term.

Ian Patrick  
CNCC Training Officer

## New Trainers Bios:

### **Sam Litten**

I am a caving instructor with over 20yrs caving experience, working full time in Outdoor Education and with a real love for all things outdoors.

Although I have been involved in outdoor sports such as kayaking from a very young age, paddling my first river sat on my dad’s lap at 2yrs old, my first caving experience wasn’t until college. I remember crawling up the cold river of Great Douk Cave and squeezing out to the surface, I was instantly hooked.

I really love the big vertical trips and can often be found heading out into the Dales in the evenings whilst everyone else is heading home for the day.

My drive for caving comes from discovering exciting new places and meeting enthusiastic people who share my passion. I relish the opportunity to coach and guide others to aid in their progression into the sport.

I hope to see you underground or in the training room very soon

Sam

### **Helen Hooper**

I am an educator by trade and a caver by passion. I work 4 days a week for the University of Central Lancashire helping to train healthcare educators and supervisors, filling the rest of my time with a bit of freelance outdoor instructor work, a technical advisory role and, of course, caving. I spent almost 10 years as an outdoor education lecturer and also owned an outdoor activity business—both roles incorporating the provision of caver training in SRT, rigging and group leadership/basic rescue techniques.

Helping develop the skills needed for people to be able to independently enjoy all that’s great about the outdoors, and the confidence to seize opportunities for adventure, are my main drivers, and I am looking forward to being part of a team of experienced cave instructors with a remit to do just that”.

**Ian Patrick - CNCC Training Officer**

## **PR and Communications Officer's Report - Matt Ewles**

This has been the second year of the CNCC having a PR/Communications Officer.

The role is intended to support the core CNCC Officers, by ensuring their work, and that of various other volunteers is communicated to the caving community. To that end, I have been mainly using the CNCC website, Facebook (~1500 followers), Twitter, UKCaving, the newsletter (the last of which was published in May, and I plan to compile another soon after this AGM), and our mailing list.

The CNCC's mailing list of individuals has grown to 349 people, about 150 more than last AGM, gaining a new signup every 2-3 days. Some of the email addresses are club-associated, so the actual number of people reached via this mailing list may be significantly higher. I have been sending out a mini-newsletter to our subscribers roughly every two months, with additional emails as required, for example to alert people to access changes, safety issues, or new training workshops.

If you wish to sign up, the location to do so is: <https://cncc.org.uk/mailling-list/index.php>

It would be great if our member clubs could promote this mailing list; We don't spam anyone, we don't ask for any personal details, and you can unsubscribe at any time.

There has been a good balance of news stories to keep people updated on, spanning conservation (Starting Handle Hole, Scoska Cave), safety notices (Great Douk shakehole collapse), training (various workshops with great feedback), anchors (Mayday Hole and Diccan Pot) and several new cave descriptions and rigging topos being published.

I have also promoted some great CNCC initiatives over the last year, such as the online equipment list, the purchasing of SRT kits for training, and the advert to recruit more trainers to the CNCC team.

The full news archive can be found here: <https://cncc.org.uk/news/archive>

I would like to thank our Officers and volunteers who make all this good news possible; They do the proper hard work that helps the CNCC to thrive.

In addition, it has been a pleasure to promote the work of groups other than the CNCC to help restore or sustain access, for example at Aygill Caverns, Wretched Rabbit, and White Scar, where loss of access due to collapses has been, or is being, dealt with by local cavers. We would like to remind everyone that the CNCC is not only happy to provide funding or resources to support your project, but also to help ensure your work is publicised and recognised.

Finally, a key role for the PR/Communications Officer is to see CNCC promoting caving.

This has included the production and distribution of framed caving photos, which, of the original 20, only six remain in my possession; photos have gone to the YSS Schoolhouse, High Borrans Outdoor Education Centre, Settle Tourist Information, and some are with Tim Allen for local distribution. If anyone has a good use for the remaining six, please let me know.

We also still have several copies of Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales Volume Two, available to hand out for improving relations and access. If you have links to any keepers, farmers, landowners or tenants where a nice book about caves could help improve relations with the caving community, or generate greater understanding of caving on their land, let me know.

We managed to get a short piece published in last year's Visitor Magazine (p59):

<https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2021/04/The-Visitor-2021.pdf>

As well as a few pieces in the magazine of the North York Moors Association (Voice of the Moors), which straddle my CNCC role and my own personal digging interests:

Part One:

[https://www.nyma.org.uk/\\_webedit/uploaded-files/All%20Files/Voice%20of%20the%20Moors/VOICE-144%20Summer%202021.pdf](https://www.nyma.org.uk/_webedit/uploaded-files/All%20Files/Voice%20of%20the%20Moors/VOICE-144%20Summer%202021.pdf)

Part Two:

[https://www.nyma.org.uk/\\_webedit/uploaded-files/All%20Files/Voice%20of%20the%20Moors/VOICE-146%20Winter%202021.pdf](https://www.nyma.org.uk/_webedit/uploaded-files/All%20Files/Voice%20of%20the%20Moors/VOICE-146%20Winter%202021.pdf)

There is lots of positive news coming. The Grassington Mines Appreciation Society, who we granted £2000 to last year, are preparing an update on their work and how the money has been spent, which will be a great story of CNCC helping an enthusiastic and extremely worthwhile project. We hope for good news on access to White Scar and Wretched Rabbit this year. I believe Ian will soon be putting together a package of workshops to see us through summer. Birks Fell should become open access. A brand new, modern CNCC website is almost ready for launch.

Happy caving for 2022 and fingers crossed for a more 'normal' year ahead.

## **Birks Fell, Robinsons Pot, Ludwell Fairy Holes and Mongo Gil Access Coordinator's Report - Ric Halliwell**

### **General**

This is my 33rd year as permit issuer but there are changes coming in this year regarding access agreement relating to Birks Fell. Robinsons Pot and Ludwell Fairy Holes are remaining the same but the owner of Stump Cross has not signed the Mongo Gill agreement.

### **Birks Fell**

I issued only 6 permits for 2021 and I have received only 1 request for 2022 but I have informed them that CNCC is to close down the access agreement and argue that access should be open without needing a permit.

### **Robinson's Pot**

The new access agreement which commenced in 2015 raised the number of available permits from 5 to 8 permits per year on fixed dates in response to the increased demand I had stressed to National Trust. (See CNCC website for details). I only had requests for 5 out of the 8 potential permits in 2021. At the time of writing this report I have so far issued only 3 of the available 8 permits. I urge clubs to apply for the 5 remaining permits in order to ensure that National Trust cannot say we no longer need as many permits per year.

### **Ludwell Fairy Holes**

This is the 9th year of access to this cave. I issued a total of 6 out of the available 12 permits last year taken up by 5 clubs. I have already issued 3 of the available 2022 permits. Permit holders are now asked to confirm with the gamekeeper, 2 days before the date that they will be using their permit so that he remembers to open the bottom gate on the track. I have also asked each permit holder to pass the keys on to the next permit holder to save postage costs for CNCC. Thanks to Andrew Hinde for all his efforts in continuing to negotiate this agreement.

### **Mongo Gill**

The access agreement was up for renewal in 2020, however discussion was refused last year because of other pressures on the Stump Cross company and I suspect the same will be true this year. They have said they are happy to continue with the current outdated agreement.

## Webmaster's Report - Gary Douthwaite

There have been not significant changes in the last 12 months, just the usual housekeeping on the website. A complete rebuild of the website has taken longer than expected due to other commitments however the public side is now complete, and I am just working on the back end.

A new website for promoting the Gaping Gill winch meet is also almost ready and my aim is to get it online soon in time for the 2022 winch meets.

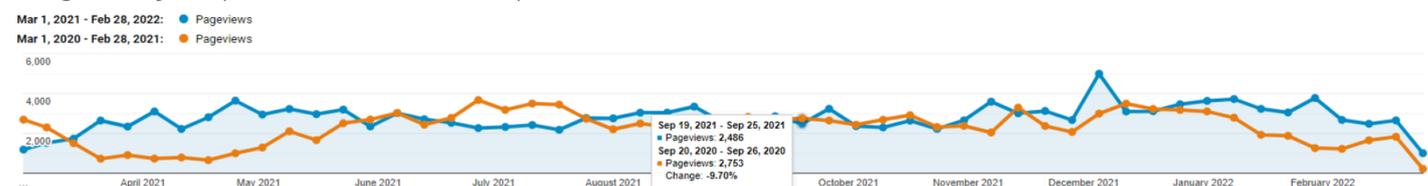
Several new topos and descriptions have been added over the past year which have receive a lot of positive feedback.

The online booking system has been maintaining it's use steadily over the past year with no sign of decline.

The mailing list is still well used and now has around 350 members. A PR email is sent out usually around once per month.

Publication downloads are still strong with some record monthly totals and total topo downloads now reaching well over 10,000 since they began in early 2018.

### Google Analytics (12 months to 28 Feb 2022)



#### Gender:

Male Female

This period 66.26% 33.74%

Previous 12 months 68.72% 31.28%

#### Age:

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

This period 14.73% 24.17% 19.04% 18.45% 13.22% 10.39%

Previous 12 months 12.10% 25.78% 17.29% 18.39% 14.11% 12.34%

### Facebook

As of 15 Mar 2022 we have 1387 page likes (+203 since last AGM) and 1538 followers (+244 since last AGM). In the last 28 days we had a people reach of 3230 (up 93%) and post engagements of 649 (up 89%).

### Twitter

As of 15 Mar 2022 we have 513 followers (+54 since last AGM). 297 tweets have been made by CNCC.

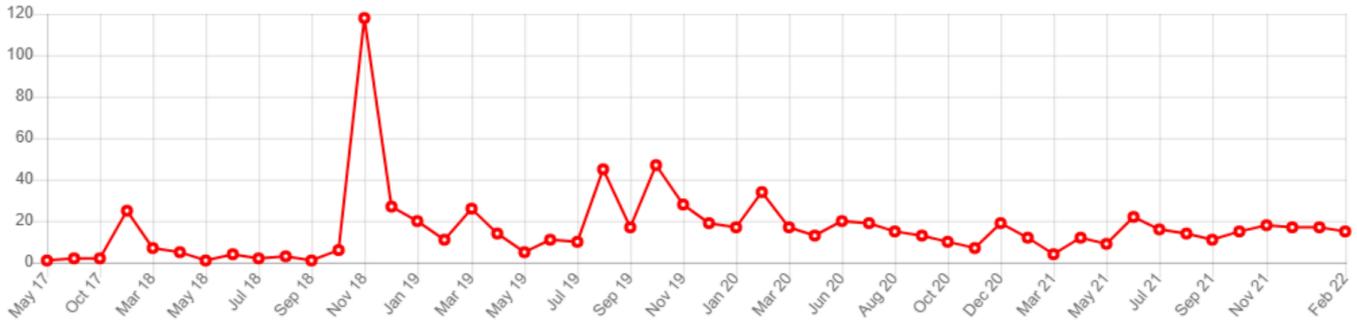
### Instagram

As of 15 Mar 2022 we have 398 followers (+110 since last AGM).

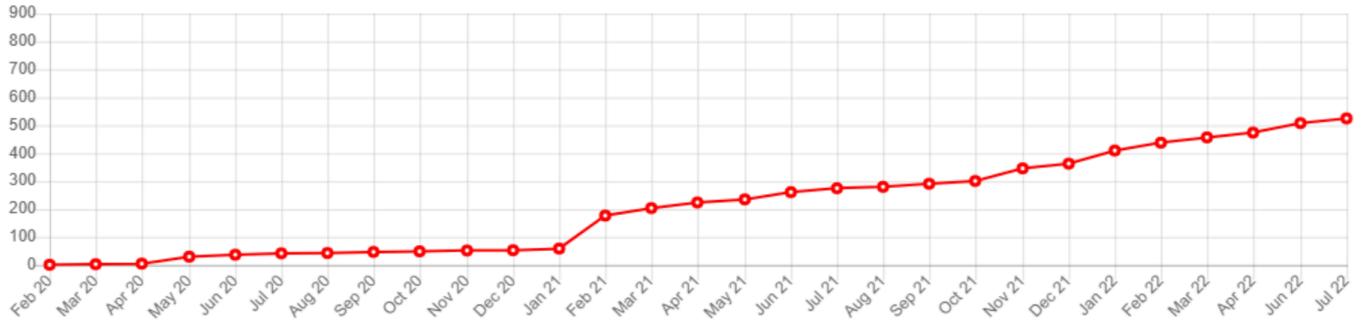
### Online Booking System

- 830 registered users (+175 since last AGM).
- 3225 individual bookings have been made. This number includes 2763 approved bookings and 461 cancelled bookings.
- 161 (19%) made a positive statement that they are NOT BCA members.
- 575 (69%) said they are members of a club.
- Of the users who specified gender there are 129 female (15.9%), 602 male (74%) and 0 other (0%).
- The average age is 49 with the youngest 19 and oldest 81.

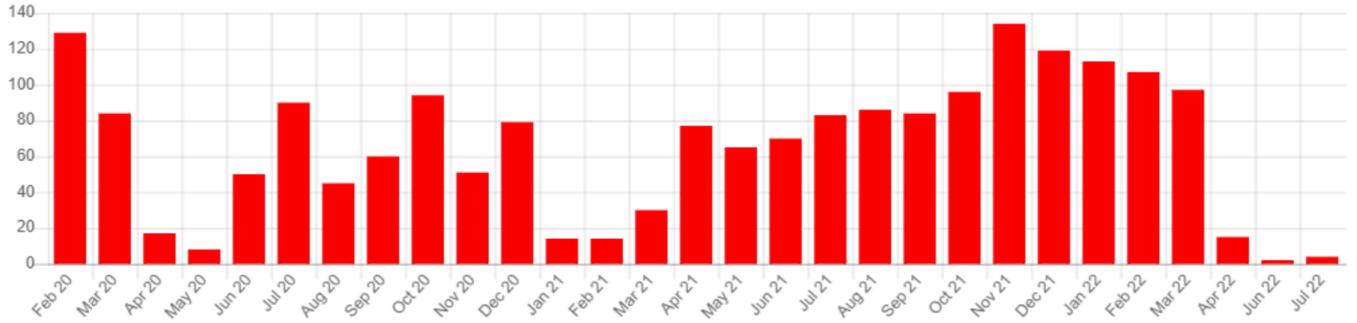
**New registrations:**



**Total bookings:**



**Bookings count by month:**



**Mailing List**

The mailing list contains **349** people (**1** have requested to be unsubscribed).

**Media Download Statistics (to 28 Feb 2022)**

	Total	Average / month	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22
<b>Publications</b>	12032	273	295	173	182	298	169	148
<b>Topos</b>	101926	2486	2495	3011	3070	3904	3187	2358
<b>Cave descriptions</b>	84833	2069	2503	2432	2581	3415	2606	2064

**Top 5 media downloads (six months to 28 Feb 2022)**

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Topos</b>                   | <b>Descriptions</b>                           |
| Alum Pot - 634 (3.4%)          | The Leck Fell Master Cave System - 981 (6.1%) |
| Scanty Lardos Pot - 614 (3.3%) | Ease Gill Cavern - 923 (5.7%)                 |
| Lost Johns' Cave - 574 (3.1%)  | Caves of Scotland - 733 (4.5%)                |
| Mayday Hole - 535 (2.9%)       | Alum Pot and Long Churn Caves - 624 (3.9%)    |
| Notts Pot - 521 (2.8%)         | Gaping Gill - 599 (3.7%)                      |