

COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN CAVING COMMUNITY

Reports for Committee Meeting 24th October 2026, Clapham Village Hall, 9:30am

Chair – Todd Rye

A quiet start to the Autumn, though the usual fun of Hidden Earth is always a highlight. Plenty of cavers to chat to, with efforts made to recruit people into the secretary and chair roles, and just generally into helping with making the usual northern caving things happen. I must thank Ian, Matt, Gary and co for setting up the CNCC stand and manning it too. I attended the BCA council meeting on the 15/9, where there was some further discussion of the Organised Fun report, incorporation of the BCA, and other little bits, though nothing dramatic. The representation working group is presenting its proposal this meeting.

Secretary – Matt Ewles

Summer is always a quieter time for CNCC, and this year has been no exception. The Secretary mailbox has also been quieter than usual, and most of my CNCC work over the last three months has related to my PR/Comms role.

I'm pleased to see a draft constitution for presentation at this meeting, which is the culmination of discussions from a small handful of people plus useful consultations at recent Committee Meetings to steer us towards solutions that are likely to achieve democratic acceptance. I've helped bring this together into some constitutional wording that achieves what we want, but with the minimal amount of constitutional baggage.

Each core aspect of CNCC is proceeding well, and I shan't steal the thunder of the individual Officer reports.

Something that has played on my mind for a little while, but which has been brought to the forefront following an informal chat with Tim Allen at Hidden Earth, is that CNCC meetings can feel a little formal and sometimes 'dry'. The unique agenda items often build into some interesting and very useful discussions – and I have no doubt about the value our meetings have - but the first 10-20 minutes (housekeeping items - minutes and actions of last meeting, declaration of conflicts) can sometimes feel a little stale. As important as these formalities are, they may be rather demotivational to any new attendees who have been over-promised (usually by me) an 'exciting' meeting.

Should we do anything about this, and if so, what?

If time allows in AOB, I'd welcome any thoughts. Possibilities include dealing with more matters online ahead of the meeting or reordering the typical meeting agendas. However, one interesting option suggested by Tim was including some short 'presentations' to open the meeting. This could be as simple as a slideshow of recent projects around the area... digging, new exploration or simply CNCC work, or a few short (2-3 minute) presentations, i.e. a mini 'northern roundup' of active projects. Of course, this would require a 'correspondent' to collect this all together, but it could help open the meeting in a slightly livelier way than firing straight into the current usual housekeeping.

This is just a thought at the moment. It may go nowhere, but I'd welcome feedback, including from our regular 'stalwarts' who are very accustomed to our usual format, as well as any relative newcomers who have been to their first CNCC meeting in the last few years, and whether you feel it could have been made more engaging.

I'm pleased to say that a potential new Chair has come forward for 2027, who will be perfect for the role (and you will hopefully get to meet her at the meeting). However, the call for a new Secretary has not yet succeeded. Without one, our new Chair won't have any meetings to Chair, so please consider the role carefully. It is a moderate amount of work... I'm not going to pretend otherwise... and it does require someone with decent communication skills. IT-savvy, who is motivated to do a good job. Fingers crossed for the coming months.

Treasurer – Jill Bolton

A fairly uneventful six months, except for the Tarmac donation and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust grant (see below). I continue to prepare Quarterly Accounts for the committee which reflect CNCC activity during the period, rather than merely summarising the bank accounts.

The period April to June shows an overall deficit of £916, and the period July to September shows £759. Combined with the deficit of £1,868 in the first quarter, that gives a total of £3,543, only 70% of this year's agreed budget of £5,100.

Bank balances at 30 September are:

Current account: £762

Deposit account: £16 978

So far this year, the minimum balance in the Deposit account was £9,406 in April. This leaves a substantial amount available for any non-BCA projects or expenses. Having said that, it's quite difficult to think of any worthwhile projects which could not be reimbursed by the BCA. Serious suggestions are very welcome!

In particular, we need suggestions for the £1000 donation from Tarmac for the surveying work in Keldheads Cave (see Agenda Item 5). As often mentioned in Committee Meetings, cash sitting in the bank loses value due to inflation. Compare the Barclays Deposit account interest rate of 1.05% with the current inflation rate of 3.1%.

Thanks to Andrew Hinde's successful application, we have also received another grant of £2,000 from the YDMT, to be spent on conservation work (see Project Officer's report for details).

Our excellent Training Team continues to offer a superb range of Workshops, attended by cavers from throughout the whole country.

CNCC officers (Matt, Gary, Andrew, Ian and Mark) manned a very busy and informative stand at Hidden Earth. (I just pinched toffees to keep my blood sugar up...)

Another online meeting of the BCA Finance Working Group is due shortly, which I hope to attend. The BCA Treasurer has requested details of our planned expenditure in 2027, so I have asked our officers for their estimates. This more formal process is to ensure the BCA has sufficient funds to reimburse all the Regional Councils and Working Groups.

HMRC have increased the official mileage rate from 45p to 55p, and I have asked the BCA Treasurer to confirm we can reclaim this higher amount.

Again, I'd like to remind volunteers that they are entitled to claim mileage for travel exclusively on CNCC business. This applies to the Anchor Team, as well as Officers (elected or co-opted) and Conservation volunteers. We appreciate you devoting your time to the CNCC, without ending up out-of-pocket as well.

ACCOUNTS FOR QUARTERS 2 & 3

		Q2 April - June 2026			Q3 July - September 2026		
		£	£	£	£	£	£
TRAINING							
Student fees - gross		2 340			1 715		
Less: Paypal fees		81			57		
			2 259			1 658	
Less: Trainers fees		2 720			1 920		
Venue hire		---			---		
Kit hire		40			---		
			2 760			1 920	
				501			262
CONSERVATION & ACCESS							
General	Pigtail risers		284				
Kail Pot	Materials	309					
	YDMT grant	(241)					
	Mileage	50					
			118				
Fume Pot (ongoing)	Materials				141		
	Mileage				---		
				402			141
ADMINISTRATION				44			219
MISCELLANEOUS							
Non-reclaimable		57			16		
Anchors - Drill bits		---			45		
Hidden Earth		---			114		
Bank interest		---			(38)		
				57			137
TOTAL DEFICIT FOR Q2 /Q3			£ 916			£ 759	

Conservation Officer – Kay Easton

No report submitted; suggest seeing Project Coordinator's report

Access Officer – Mike Appleton

Apologies, I can't be at the meeting in person due to childcare, but I will be available via Teams online.

Please continue to pass access issues to me, and I will endeavour to investigate.

Access Progress

New access agreement at Whitewell (Forest of Bowland):

Over the last few months, Tony Brown and I have had fruitful conversations with a representative of the Duchy of Lancaster about the agreement to access caves on their land. We now have a new access agreement in place which supersedes the latter in terms of how it is managed and includes all the caves in the area. I have no doubt Tony will update more in his report, but cavers should continue to contact him for a permit.

The new agreement has opened dialogue about conservation of these special places, and further exploration.

I'd like to thank Tony for his patience in putting the new agreement together.

West Kingsdale :

We've been told that the land which contains Simpson Pot etc. has been bought by the Handley's of Thornton Hall Farm. We believe, as they own the adjoining land, there is little to worry about regarding cave access in the future. I know the landowners, having worked with their daughter-in-law, and have been in touch to see if a meeting is necessary.

Work in Progress

Due to personal circumstances, I have not been able to dedicate as much time to the role since the last meeting. Therefore, I hope to progress any issues over the next few months.

Skirwith Cave:

As you may recall, I noted that the landowner at Skirwith had contacted me to say they were '*having more problems since you took over.*'

I have received no further explanation about this comment from the landowner and consider that matter closed.

For the record, from December 2025 to date, we have had 17 cavers visit the cave through this agreement, through four requests.

Fairy Holes:

With great apologies to Adele, I have been unable to catch up with her after she indicated she would contact Mark Tellwright of Weardale Quarry Ltd to talk about an MOU similar to Whitewell. I will be in touch with her in due course.

Wizard's Chasm :

As you may recall, I received a message a while back saying a caver to Wizards' Chasm couldn't enter the cave because 'a large quantity of rancid sheep wool and fleeces had been dumped on the entrance'. It is still my intention to follow this up, but if anyone is in the vicinity of the cave at any point, I would appreciate a sit-rep of what is there, as it may be that the fleeces have degraded or been removed.

Scoska Cave:

The rather awkward access agreement has been in place since January 26. I will be returning to the landowners shortly to discuss whether we could return to the previous agreement. If anyone has had any issues with the new agreement and gaining access, I would appreciate it if they could get in touch.

Yorkshire Dales Cave and Crag Access Advisory Group:

Sadly, due to a last-minute hitch, I was unable to attend this meeting on behalf of the CNCC in September. Andrew Hinde and Tim Allen were both at the meeting and will be able to update further.

Training Officer – Ian Patrick

Funding:

The BCA recently advised that the current financial arrangements supporting CNCC training do not comply with its rules. To continue with our established funding model, used successfully for the past seven years, we therefore needed to apply to the BCA T&E Working Group (Training and Equipment) for a grant.

With valuable input from Matt, I prepared an application for £2,500. This was unanimously approved at a recent T&E Working Group meeting and now requires ratification by BCA Council. I am reliably informed that this should present no difficulties.

We are now moving forward with plans for workshops from January to April. My thanks to everyone who assisted with this process.

Hidden Earth:

The CNCC was very well represented at the recent Hidden Earth conference. Alongside other CNCC representatives, Assistant Training Officer Mark Richards and I helped staff the stand throughout the weekend.

Mark put together an excellent display of SRT equipment that had failed safety inspections for a variety of reasons. This generated considerable interest and positive engagement from cavers keen to identify the issues with the equipment. Particularly rewarding was the level of engagement from student cavers. Many thanks to Mark for putting the display together.

Current SRT Trainers:

Helen Hooper, one of our excellent SRT trainers, is taking a short “sabbatical” to concentrate on her upcoming knee operation. We wish her all the very best and hope to see her return to active duty in due course. Helen has provided outstanding service to CNCC training over the past six years, and we owe her a huge debt of gratitude for her contribution.

Future Workshops:

The introduction of a fixed annual grant provides greater flexibility in planning and delivering CNCC training. If anyone has ideas or suggestions for future training provision, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are keen to ensure that the programme continues to meet the needs of the caving community.

Thanks:

As always, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone involved in supporting and delivering caver training through the CNCC. The continued commitment of our trainers and volunteers is greatly appreciated.

Individual Caver Rep – Tim Allen

Apologies for absence but I am away in the Middle East. Most of my report is not strictly relevant to my IC role but are worthy of inclusion I think.

I attended the Cave and Crag Access Group meeting (on Teams). This is a sub group of the Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum a statutory body established under the CROW Act to deal with access issues. Present were NP staff, representatives from the BMC, Andrew Hinde and myself. The group now meets just once a year. There were very few areas of concern on the agenda and the meeting was brief. I did push the positive boost the CROW access campaign received from the Dartmoor Supreme Court judgement and outside of the meeting received an invite to the full LAF meeting in December. I also pushed the BCA for a legal summary of the case. I should be able to report more on this to the next meeting.

Insurance and liability of digs and entrances:

Following our last meeting where discussion raised several issues of liability and BCA insurance, I made insurance related enquiries via the BCA treasurer and secretary to try to clarify some of the issues. A lengthy discussion ensued and I was left with this understanding, which may, or may not be helpful. The question of whether volunteers who repaired degraded digs and entrances (on Leck Fell for example) would be covered by BCA insurance was the main concern. BCA Members are covered, and it would appear, all volunteers working on behalf of CNCC approved actions. However, a claimant would first need to be able to identify an insured individual, club or organisation responsible (that clearly wasn't possible in the Casterton case). The insurance would cover costs arising from defending the claim should it get that far, but the likelihood of a successful claim appears to be almost zero. In the case of incidents occurring at digs or cave entrances these are only likely to be favourably settled if they came under a very specific, legally binding access agreement and we don't generally have any of those in the Dales. There are probably no circumstances where the BCA insurance would pay out a farmer to compensate for stock that fell down old digs or cave features. My conclusion was that northern cavers or clubs should probably take advice from the BCA insurance manager and carefully consider the outcomes before directing landowners and farmers towards making any such claims.

Leck Fell (and other) cave/dig repairs:

Following on from our last meeting and in case this isn't mentioned elsewhere, an impromptu meeting at Hidden Earth led to a Whatsapp group being formed which now has nearly fifty members. There does seem to be some momentum on this issue but no firm plans have been mentioned yet AFAIK. Worth noting that the SSSI inspection and grant allocation for the estate has now all been settled so I imagine there will be little immediate pressure from that quarter. It is really just down to our own collective responsibility to ensure digs and entrances are safe and stockproof.

To put the issue into context, almost identical problems were raised by the farmer and estate when I was Access Officer. As a consequence, two active digs were tidied up but other unspecified holes were also causing concern. I did several sweeps of the fell and identified the worst offenders as Smokey Hole and the two digs next to it. Unfortunately, although bringing the issue up in several of my reports at the time nothing appears to have been done and a recent visit shows these holes are much the same as eight years ago. It is to our collective detriment that Smokey Hole was the cause of the latest kaffuffle with the estate. As I mentioned to the Whatsapp group I would strongly suggest that these be made a priority for remedial work. Perhaps the relevant club reps could try to push this forward.

Caving Hotspot information sign:

I sent a proposal to the Secretary following the request in the agenda to come up with ideas to spend some of our money, particularly the £1000 from Tarmac. If the committee support the idea I would take it to the local authority to see if it is actually feasible/possible and to gain an idea of cost. We could then consider whether to take it any further or not.

Secretary note; See final page of this document for Tim's proposal.

Anchor Coordinator – Ian Walker

Installers

Installers workshop and attracting new installers

Following the last meeting, we received five offers of help on bolting trips, by email. Further, one of our volunteers gave a five minute presentation at Bull Pot Farm to the Red Rose CPC, which led to four more offers of help. Two of our new starters have been out on bolting trips. One is engaged in testing and development regarding large anchor holes (see below). It's great that we are now attracting new people. I feel we could be better at getting them out working, however with only one regular bolter this has not been easy.

The next installer workshop has not yet been arranged. The aim of the workshop is to gather and re-validate existing installers (where required), give an opportunity for new starters to see the re-validation, and introduce the new starters to the training manual. However, the training manual is not ready yet. One of the reasons it is not ready is that the BCA working group is developing a manual for anchor removal and replacement, and the writing of our manual is running in parallel so that they are consistent, approaches and techniques are shared, and effort is not duplicated. Anchor removal and replacement techniques are still in development, so the writing of the manuals is proceeding as quickly as practical.

In my opinion, with our maintenance and conservation efforts becoming ever more significant, all installers should be able to remove and replace the anchors we use, and this needs to be part of the training.

Anchors and resin

Supply of anchors

I hold the BCA's stock of IC anchors. Recently I posted out the last of the old batch (to the Forest of Dean), so there are none left. The CNCC installers have a number of issued anchors which will have to suffice for now.

The new batch of BCA anchors was paid for and collected, however there was an issue with the finish so they will be returned to the supplier for fettling.

Resin

I have continued to manage the CNCC's stock of approved resin, including distributing tubes to installers and purchasing six new tubes. We currently have eight tubes in stock.

We have three volunteers trialling (not in cave) methods for using runny resin in large holes:

- (1) Plastic washer on shaft of anchor, inside hole. A variant of the plastic washer on surface (as was used on early DMMs like Elliot bolts). Holds anchor in hole and central, keeps most of resin from gooping out whilst supposedly allowing air bubbles/some resin to escape from the hole. Left in situ permanently and covered with resin. Downside is we can't verify that all the air is out on any given anchor.
- (2) Plastic clothes peg on eye of anchor, sized to fit snugly in hole. Acts as captive wedges on very limit of hole, centring and holding the anchor. Removed once resin has set (positive). Allows verification that the hole is filled, with exception of two (neat) divots where the peg was. Nothing left in situ. A variant of the wedge/shim suggested and sold by Fischer for ceiling holes but which is designed for round bar/studding Perhaps we should test the Fischer product.
- (3) One volunteer suggested completely filling the large hole with resin, allowing it to cure, then drilling out again at 12mm size and injecting fresh resin. In testing with Hilti epoxy resin this has achieved good results (55-60kN limit of 10mm rod, same as fresh 12mm hole).

Maintenance (removal and replacement)

New and outstanding defect reports

Summary of anchor user reports received 28th May to end of September inclusive

- 9 new reports, one of which one has been reported before but not yet dealt with
- 13 individual anchors reported and all are thought to be CNCC anchors
 - Reasons:
 - Loose anchors: 10 (including 1 IC anchor)
 - Cracked rock: 1 (IC)
 - Resin not filling hole: 1 (IC)
- Reports for loose IC anchors is unusual, but a good reminder that we need to inspect all anchors before use
- 28 outstanding reports (up from 22). 5 in progress and 23 pending*

* "Pending" means there is no installer on the case.

Anchor 63 in Rowten Pot was singled out for special mention in my previous report. Thanks to Sam for promptly inspecting and replacing this.

Anchors decommissioned

Anchors removed includes the following:

- Rowten Pot: Five anchors including BCA01 (PECO), DMM A92 (loose), DMM 94C (loose), DMM A92 (loose), DMM A92 (loose)
- Top Sink: Four anchors including four DMM (loose)
- Numerous non-CNCC anchors removed on installation trips (see table below)

PECO anchors still to be removed

Ref: <https://cncc.org.uk/equipment/documents/data-archive/files/DistributionofPrototypePECOAnchors.pdf>

- Disappointment Pot (5) – recently confirmed that 1 PECO at Pitch 3 and 4 at Pitch 5.

Anchors installed as replacements

Summary of anchors in the database with an installed date of April to September inclusive

Notable that all installations in this period were logged by just one of our installers.

Cave	Anchors (total 7)	Notes
Rowten Pot	4	Maintenance
Top Sink	3	Maintenance (Walrus pitch)

New projects

Anchors installed in new projects

Summary of anchors in the database with an installed date of April to September inclusive

Notable that all installations in this period were logged by just one of our installers.

Cave	Anchors (total 58)	Notes
County Pot	2	New installation (Easegill Aven)
Jean Pot	9	New installation
OBJ Hole	8	New installation
Scanty Lardos Pot	20	New discovery
Strans Gill Pot	8	New installation
Stream Passage Pot	3	New installation (lower pitches)
Turbary Pot	8	New installation

Special mention for the Scanty Lardos exploration team for using easily-removable concrete screws. The CNCC anchors were able to re-use their placements.

Progress of approved projects

Sam has put significant effort into finishing projects and 9 are newly completed. There are 20 projects outstanding – see table below.

Anchor projects are considered complete only when anchor records are in the database and a topo submitted (but not necessarily online).

Anchor requests received – COMMITTEE APPROVAL REQUIRED

→ Pool Sink – addition of anchors at 2nd pitch (only), to increase protection on traverse and give an additional pull through option nearer the water. Dinny from RRCPC.

Other business

Topo updates

- A revised topo for Pool Sink has been created by two volunteers at Red Rose (thank you!)
- Various small updates continue to be released, and topos submitted for completed projects.

BCA Anchors Working Group

- BCA guidance on anchor recognition and pre-use inspection has been released and is included in the following pages. The wording makes clear that any movement is a potential problem to be reported.
- I attended DCA's anchor inspection/replacement seminar in June, which was a practical day in the BMC's Horseshoe Quarry. I was able to demonstrate some of our anchor removal techniques and equipment. Experience and photos of the day is being incorporated into a BCA anchor removal and replacement training document.
- Following demonstration of our anchor puller, the BCA is considering commissioning a batch of new pullers, so that each region that installs anchors has the means to remove them too. I suggest the CNCC piggy-back any such order and gets additional anchor pullers and spares for our region. They won't last forever and we'd be stuck without them.
- I have been trialling 19mm thin-wall diamond core bits for removing cut-off stubs of resin anchors (in concrete, not in cave). This has been very effective for DMM and BP anchors, plus spits. One downside is that it leaves a smooth bore:- whilst Fischer approve the resin for diamond drilled holes, I have suggested to the BCA that we undertake some due diligence testing before deploying in cave.

CNCC anchor projects

(Maintenance replacements are tracked via anchor reports page for time being)

Revised by Ian Walker on 11/10/26

Cave	Route/pitch	Volunteer	Date approved	NOTES	Physical anchors completed	Anchor records submitted	Topo received	Topo online?
AKA Hole		SA	online vote, 21 October 2024		Done	Done	Done	Yes
County Pot	Numerous handlines including Brown and Smelly Chamber, ~~Cadbury Traverse~~ , Clough Passage, Mancunian Way	SA	January 2025	Cadbury anchors not needed	Done	Done	Recd	Yes, in SylPot
Jean Pot		SA	March 2024		Done	Done	Recd	Yes
Sylvester Pot	First pitch and climb	SA			Done	Done	Recd	Yes, includes Mancunian Way and Ease Gill Aven
Scanty Lardos		SA			Done	Done	Done	Online but correction needed
Link Pot	Traverse to reach Tiger's Inlet	SA			Done.	Done	Recd not online	No
Turbary Pot		SA		New installation for CNCC	Done	Done	Recd not online	No
Pay Sank		SA			Done	Online but dates suspect (was two dates at least)	Recd	Yes
Disappointment Pot	Far Country ladder replacement	SA			Done (anchors installed)	Done	Recd not online	No
Bull Pot of the Witches	Replacing non-CNCC anchors at the top of Chimney Route	SA/GC			Done	Done	Requested topo from GC for his additions.	No
Ireby Fell Cavern		SA	Jan 2025		Esc rift done.			No
	Escalator Rift around Jupiter Cavern (numerous short pitches and traverses) - Cripple Creek pitches							
Simpson Pot			29/10/22		Done			
(Get Down) Shep Pot	First pitch anchored 2024 - Remaining sections to do							
Car Pot	Climb into Craven Passage	SA						
Flood Entrance (Wades)	Lost River Series (South East Pot)							
Marble Pot	To be confirmed after digging work complete.							
MARBLE STEPS POT	at the Lost Inlet and Steps Pot area	Phil Parker	March 2025					
Mayday Hole	Lungs Pitch (an alternative route to the currently anchored route)		Jan 2025					
OBJ Hole		SA						
Old Ing	Waterfall anchors on route to Dismal Hill	GC						
Providence Pot	Replacing non-CNCC anchors only where absolutely required (no addition of non-essential anchors)	SA						
Stream Passage Pot	Final pitch (Mud Pitch)							
Thunder Pot	current dig likely to yield 70m pitch to Brown Hill Streamway		June 2025					
Echo Pot		SA						
P5		SA						
Strangle		SA						
Strans Gill		SA						
Swan Dike		SA						
Scanty Lardos	New pitches	SA	Email					

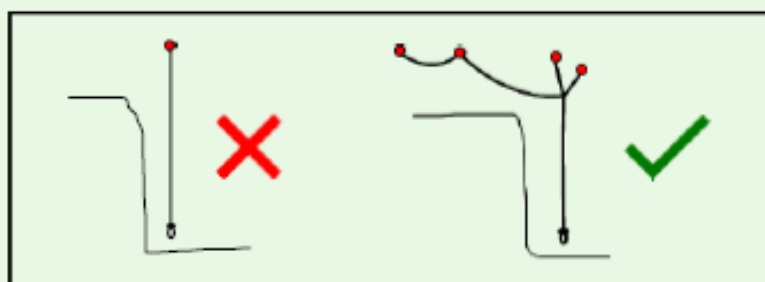
Pre-Use Inspection of Resin Bonded Anchors

Resin anchors installed under the BCA Anchor Scheme are for use by experienced cavers or mine explorers only. Make sure that you understand the pre-use inspection requirements below and rig safely with suitable redundancy. You accept responsibility when you choose to use any anchor.

An anchor's presence does not mean a safe descent is possible. It is up to you to plan your route and rig to avoid hazards such as rope rub and falling water.

Good rigging practices:

- Anchors can fail. This is rare, but possible, and so you should not rely on a single anchor point unless you deem it to be unquestionably secure
- Always protect the approach to the pitch head
- Use Y-hangs at pitch heads or rebelay where possible. They spread the load across two anchors, minimising the risk in the event of a single anchor failure



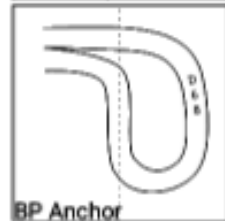
Approved BCA Anchors



DMM 'ECO' Anchor

DMM 'ECO' Anchor

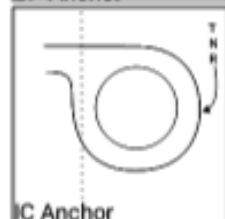
Original BCA anchor, now discontinued. 'DMM' and serial number stamped in. P-shaped, flat-ended eye. Manufactured from round bar.



BP Anchor

BP Anchor

No branding. Stamped serial number. P-shaped, curved eye. Manufactured from round bar.



IC Anchor

IC Anchor

No branding. Stamped serial number. P-shaped, circular eye. Manufactured from 8mm plate and the anchor has flat sides.

Check every anchor before you use it

Twist, then pull the anchor, watching for movement. Slight flexing of the metal eye is normal.

If you observe any of the following, then the anchor may be unsafe and should be reported:

- Anchor movement within the resin
 - Inwards or outwards
 - Rotation
- Anchor and resin movement within the rock
 - Inwards or outwards
 - Rotation

Also check:

- ☐ Loose Rock. Is this cave or mine wall around the anchor structurally secure?
- ☐ Fractures of the rock within 20cm of the anchor, including recent cracking or spalling.
- ☐ Wear grooves or thinning of the anchor eye, usually on the lower, inner part of the eye.
- ☐ Physical damage: deformation, impact marks, sharp burrs.
- ☐ Corrosion. Even stainless steel can corrode in some underground environments. Your Regional Council may publish extra guidance for anchors in such places.

Regional Caving Councils may have placed other anchor types beyond those listed here and covered by this advice. Please refer to the RCC website for details on the location and inspection of any other installations they have placed under the BCA Anchor Scheme.

Only use anchors that you are confident are safe

Reporting anchor issues

Report any anchor you have concerns about to your local Regional Caving Council. Note the exact location of the anchor and take a short video or photo if you can.

"3rd from start of traverse in pitch 2 of Example Pot"

Find your Regional Caving Council at british-caving.org.uk/about-bca/

Archaeology Coordinator – Tony Brown

Fume Pot

Archaeological work finished at the back-end of last year but speleological digging will continue and a few more bones were found during the BPC 2026 Winch Meet. The entrance site now has a pipe in place and digging will probably occur during the next Winch Meet, excavating a new area of floor. Further finds cannot be completely ruled out.

Stump Cross Caverns

There is a continuous stream of low level palaeontology finds from the Ice Age Dig which is now over for this year. Finds amount to (mainly) small bone fragments, as yet unidentified, but there has been another wolverine jaw bone (a juvenile), a possible bear tooth, small mammal teeth and pike teeth. Did wolverine eat pike during that period – 80,000 to 90,000 years ago? It was too cold for human habitation in that part of the country during that period.

Long Drop Cave

A human bone from Long Drop Cave is now being studied at the University of Lancashire as part of an undergraduate dissertation project looking at Early Medieval burial in caves. The remains were probably disturbed from their original location in the cave during excavations through the base of the first pitch in the cave in 1965. They were not recognised at the time and were stacked with waste material near the entrance to the second pitch. In early 2020 a caver recognised them as human and reported them to the National Park archaeologists who reported them to the police. Lancashire Constabulary had them radiocarbon dated with a result in the range 690-890 calAD.

Cave Archaeology Talks (Rick Peterson)

Cave Archaeology in Britain – updates and new discoveries (Hidden Earth 2026). This was the second BCRA Cave Archaeology Group's workshop at Hidden Earth aimed at showcasing new archaeological discoveries from caves. The lecture included prehistoric fauna in the Yorkshire Dales, new discoveries in South Wales, possible cave art and Iron Age activity in Cumbria and a brief report on the CAG spring field trip to Buxton.

The Ingleborough Project, October 17th, 2026, the Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire Autumn Conference in St George's Centre, Leeds.

Assistant Access Officer – James Alderson

No report provided – see Access Officer report

Assistant Training Officer – Mark Richards

No report provided – See Training Officer report

Inclusivity Coordinator – Josh White

No report provided

PR and Comms – Matt Ewles

I managed to get our 19th in the current series of newsletters published in July.

Hidden Earth beat all previous attendance records by nearly 20%, with a strong turnout from younger cavers. I took the CNCC stall down and set up the PR stuff on Friday night (banners, posters, newsletters etc) however, the stars of the show, for the second year, were our training/equipment team, Ian Patrick and Mark Richards, who set up a display of defective equipment to encourage discussions about gear safety, plus Ian's anchor display, and rope-cut demonstrations. We also had a touchscreen PC running a bespoke display version of CaveMaps for people to play with and to promote this as another one of CNCC's services. Overall, the stall was well visited, lots of engagement (thanks partly to the UKCaving stand next door who were giving away amazing prizes. I'd like to thank people who staffed the stall through the weekend, in particular Ian and Mark who barely left, Andrew, Jill, Todd and others who spent some time there engaging with the 'punters'. Next year I will be producing a new display banner; The current one cost £60 and has just done it's third year but is rather outdated and tatty.

I continue to circulate all news stories via all the usual channels and engage with our mailing list roughly monthly.

This is a polite reminder to all our team, to please let me know if you have ANY news relating to your role that can be publicised and might be of some interest to northern cavers. Even if it is just a snippet that wouldn't be enough for a dedicated news article, small snippets make excellent engagement via social media. A few sentences are often all I need, a photo is lovely, but we have a good selection of 'stock' photos spanning a range of CNCC's work.

The next newsletter will be December (if there is enough content by then).

I also continue to staff the mailbox for reported website/topo/description errors, as well as hazards in caves, and respond to all accordingly, although at the time of writing I do have a small backlog to process.

I plan to purchase several more copies of Caves and Karst Volume 2; This initiative was one of Tim Allen's from when he was Access Officer. I think we bought 20 books, the last of which has now gone. They are given out to landowners as a gift to inspire an interest in caves. At £15/copy they are inexpensive and a powerful gesture of goodwill.

I am excited about Tim's proposal to develop a caving interpretation/awareness display in Ingleton centre. This is a phenomenal opportunity, and even moreso that we have Tim as a volunteer to drive this. Ideas are great, but ideas with a volunteer to carry them out are even greater, so I strongly recommend the CNCC Committee support this, irrespective of whether the cost comes from the Tarmac money or our own funds.

As always, I would like to re-iterate that it would be amazing to find a volunteer to help me expand the PR/Comms role to engaging with National Parks, local newspapers and magazines, to see CNCC feature more heavily in local media and that of our kindred organisations. There is an 'open goal' here to promote caving, which amongst all other duties I am simply unable to take a shot at, so anyone keen please get in touch.

Thank you to our amazing team for all your hard work to make CNCC so awesome!

Projects Coordinator – Andrew Hinde

Leck Fell cave shafts project is coming together with several local cavers coming together to identify and scope remedial actions.

Fume Pot entrance work is almost complete. One further day required.

Katnot cave has been lightly cleaned again using the new battery powered spray washer.

Next up, a return to Foxholes cave for some entrance repairs.

Web Administrator – Gary Douthwaite

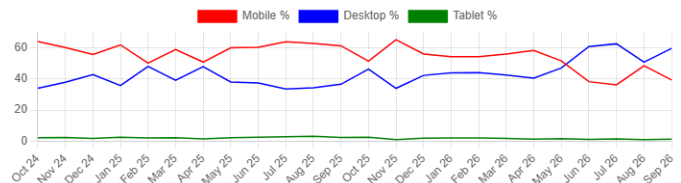
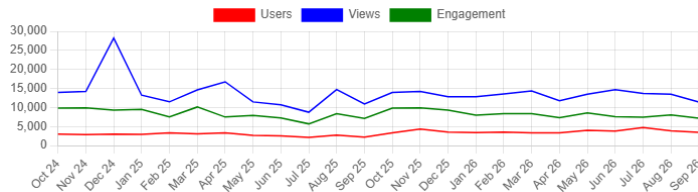
CaveMaps is now fully up and running and I have received some positive feedback. A number of people have also submitted new surveys too. There are some impressive statistics (see below)! CaveMaps was available for people to play with on the CNCC stall at Hidden Earth which generated a lot of interest.

Not much else to report on the CNCC website as my focus has been on Hidden Earth recently. However the usual housekeeping is on-going.

Analytics

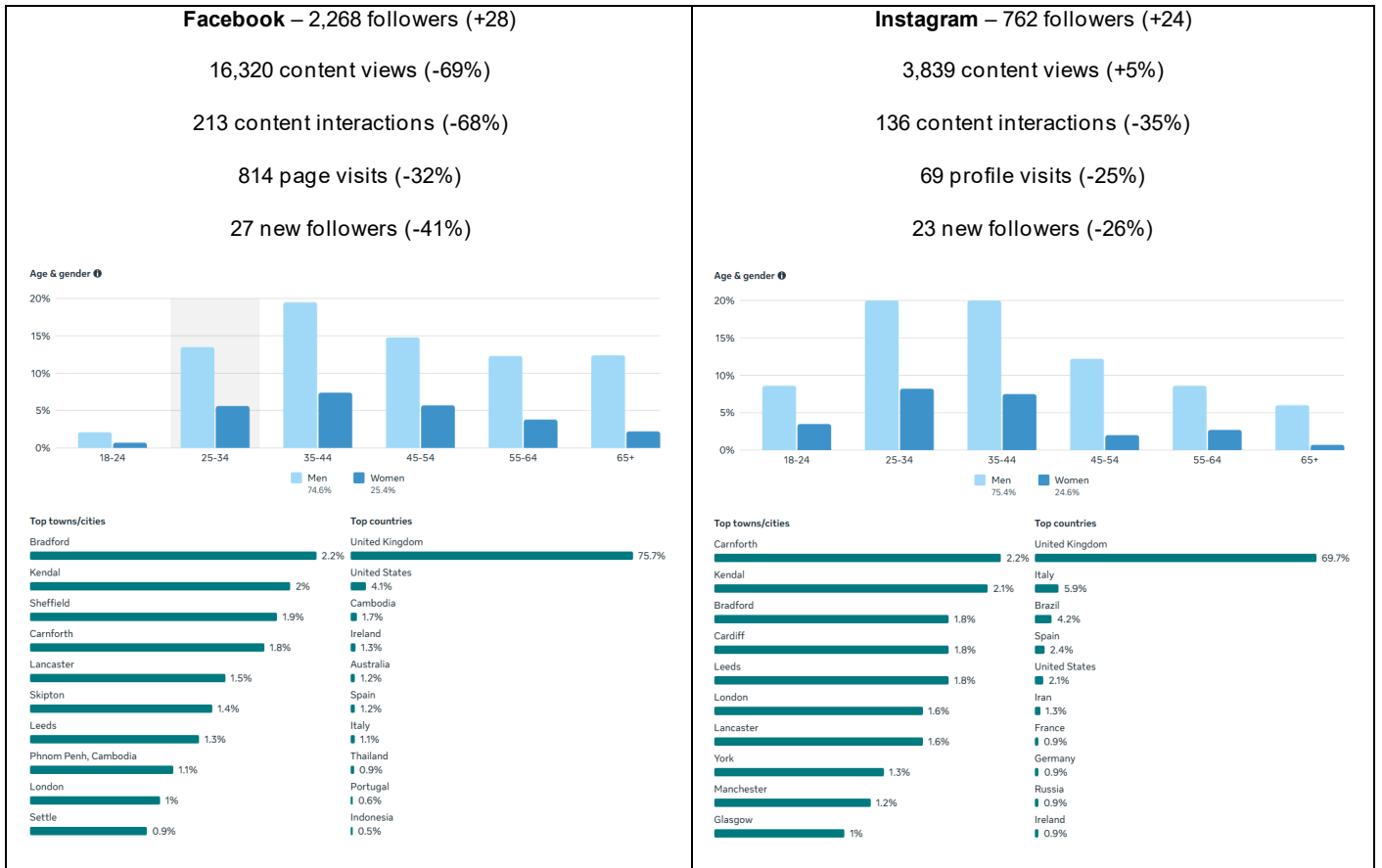
Site visitors

	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26	Jun 26	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26
Users	3,355	4,361	3,567	3,436	3,547	3,351	3,362	4,023	3,829	4,737	3,900	3,506
Views	13,940	14,219	12,803	12,841	13,533	14,342	11,779	13,495	14,686	13,697	13,476	11,451
Eng.	9,834	9,923	9,292	7,968	8,368	8,391	7,327	8,599	7,622	7,457	8,051	7,216



Social Media

Meta statistics for the last 90 days. Percentage is comparison to previous 90 days.



Top recent Facebook posts (90 days):

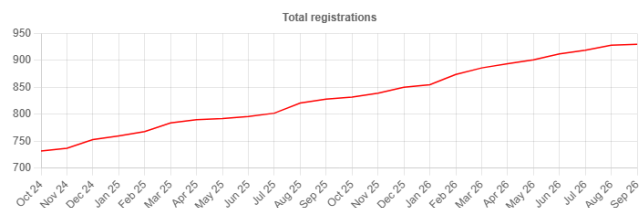
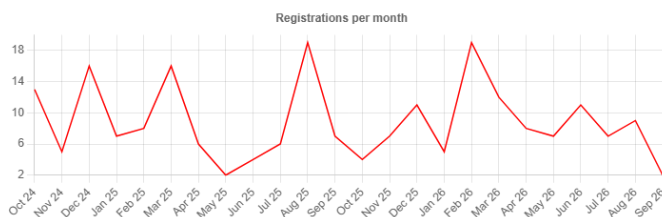


Social media followers comparison:

	CNCC	DCA	CSCC	CCC	DCUC	BCA	UK Caving
Facebook	2,268	920	731	--	--	3,800	4,600
Instagram	762	--	--	--	--	--	1,062
Bluesky	49	--	--	--	--	--	--
X	--	551	--	--	--	244	--
Threads	81	--	--	--	--	--	--
YouTube	29	--	--	--	--	--	--

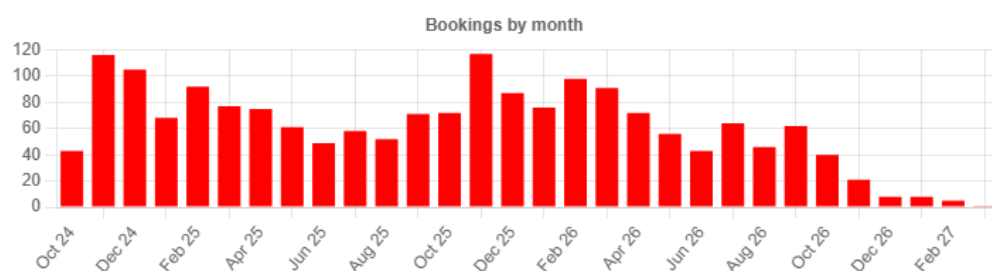
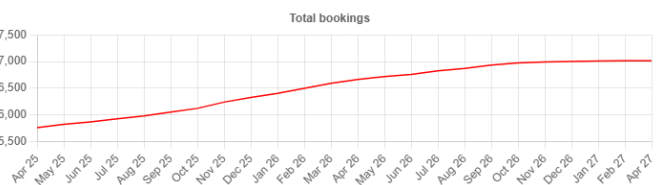
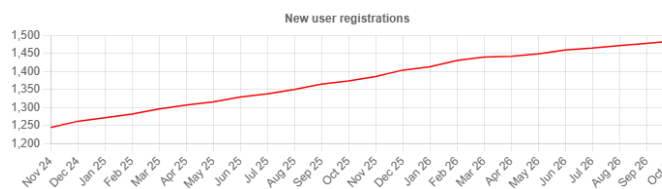
Mailing List

- The mailing list contains **935** people (**25** have requested to be unsubscribed).



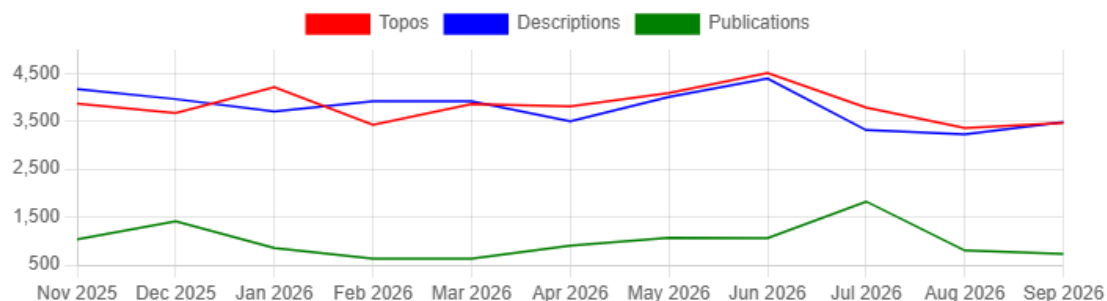
Online Booking System

- 1,485** registered users
- 7,965** individual bookings have been made.
 - This includes 7016 approved bookings and 948 cancelled bookings.
- 344** (23%) made a positive statement that they are NOT BCA members.
- 1,010** (68%) said they are members of a club.
- Of the users who specified gender there are **275 female** (19.3%), **1,054 male** (73.8%) and **4 other** (0.3%).
- The average age is **50.5** with the youngest 18 and oldest 85.



Media Downloads

	Topos	Descriptions	Publications
Sep 2026	3,466	3,485	737
Aug 2026	3,361	3,231	804
Jul 2026	3,787	3,316	1,826
12 Month Average	3,505	3,467	916

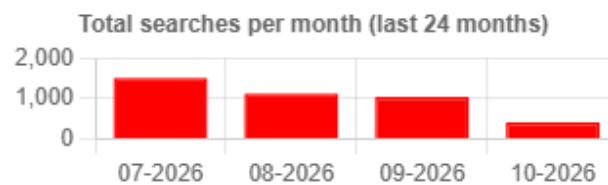
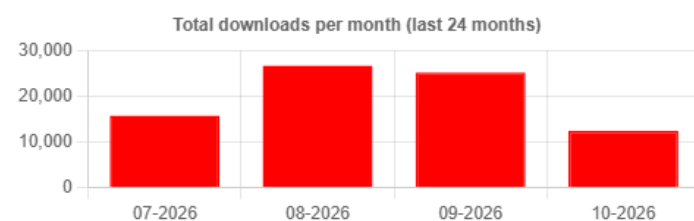
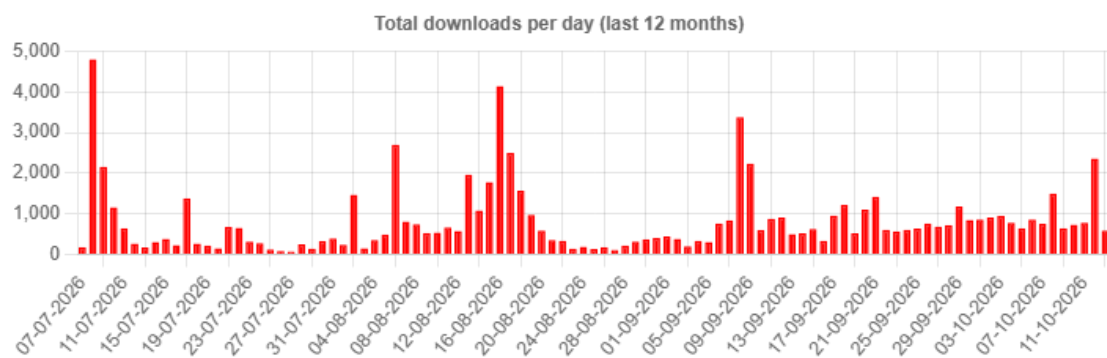


Top media downloads (last 3 months)

Topos	Descriptions	Publications
260 - Bar Pot / Small Mammal / Flood Entrance 259 - Alum Pot 254 - Lost Johns' Cave 222 - Sell Gill Holes 221 - Short Drop and Gavel	505 - The Leck Fell Master Cave System 464 - Simpson Pot 424 - Gaping Gill 394 - Ease Gill Caverns 285 - Alum Pot and Long Churn Caves	688 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 19 - July 2026 180 - Great Douk Cave - A Guide to Hidden Gems 162 - Shuttleworth Pot (Witches Cave) Conservation Guide 157 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 15 - June 2024 136 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 17 - June 2025

CaveMaps

- CaveMaps contains **1,251** full surveys.
- There have been **80,045** downloads and **4,108** searches since the site went live on 7 July 2026.
- The top 5 most common search terms (in order) are:
 - **Long Churn, Gaping Gill, Epistle, Penyghent, and Lost Johns**
- **10** searches relating to Welsh caves!
- Google Analytics since 1 Aug 2026: **10,037** views from **2,796** users.



Report data snapshots taken 13 October 2026.

Youth Development Rep – Chris Holt

No report provided

BCA Representatives - Various

See Chair report regarding general representation to BCA Council.

BCA Conservation & Access Working Group – Mike Appleton

As the current co-opted officer for this group, I attended the meeting in September where I presented some highlights from the CNCC year to date, as well as access agreements and the current fantastic conservation efforts.

Full minutes should be available via the BCA website shortly. There were several highlights from the attendees:

FoDCCAG:

Big Sink

This task was set for completion in February 2026. Unfortunately, due to the extensive Redhouse work to try to get the cave open, the group have been unable to do this. Plans are in place to complete this in autumn before it gets too wet and miserable.

Redhouse Lane Swallet

Redhouse is now open for visiting cavers, with an entrance and entrance grill which, at the time of the meeting, was 90% completed. Resin anchoring had also been completed alongside new topos and conservation taping. There is also a logbook in situ at the exit of the Stretcher Hole in NIRA, which is mandatory to complete for all visitors.

The Redhouse description, permit conditions, Logbook requirement and Topos are on the FoDCCAG website. <https://fodccag.org.uk/access/redhouse-lane-swallot/> Contact permits@fodccag.org.uk for access and details on key collection.

Seymours Swallet

Forestry England now owns the land and has insisted the cave be locked. This has now been fitted.

CSCC:

Harridge Woods Caves

The access arrangements for Harridge Woods have been finalised, including an online permit system and the fitment of CSCC padlocks to the locked caves (Harridge Wood Hole and EMMC). The CSCC Access Guide has also been updated.

Wookey Hole

All of the handlines in the rift down to Wookey 24 have been replaced, along with the associated maillons. A traverse line has been installed to guide cavers over the floor holes where a recent rescue occurred.

Reservoir Hole

The new SRT route, Ceiling Good, up to High Country has been rigged. The conservation tape at the base of the pitch has been modified to accommodate the pitch, and the Conservation and Training Guide has also been updated. A new email group for the Cheddar Wardens has been created and used to inform them of the new Ceiling Good pitch and how it should be used.

Stock Hill Woods

The entrance to Stocks House Mine is likely to be made more secure but still permit access for bona fide cavers.

Area Access Coordinators - Various

Bowland – Tony Brown

There has been more interest and permits during 2026 with visits to Whitewell Cave, Hell Hole and Whitewell Pot.

Whitewell Cave is not blocked as stated in Northern Caves, the small hole leading to the LUSS extension has escaped notice for many years. The hole is tight with a rock protruding in the floor which restricts access to larger cavers.

The water that used to flow over the edge of Hell Hole now goes down a new hole a few yards away and has done so for many years. The Pit O'Hell is about 10 feet deep and roomy and the streamway within which it lies has lowered meaning the lip of the Pit O'Hell is noticeably below the lip of Hell Hole. A large amount of material has disappeared into the ground. RRCPC have been showing an interest. The oil drums at the bottom of Hell are now in a bad state and access to the Valley Caving Club's 1970 extension is no longer safe.

The environs of Whitewell Pot have suffered trees being felled by at least one night of strong wind, destroying the fence we put around the pot in 2010 but the pipe has preserved access and the C-linked gate still works well.

Recent correspondence with the Duchy Estate Office, copied to Mike Appleton, Andrew Hinde and Kay Easton, following the new access agreement, indicates strong interest from the Estate Office in conservation projects. They have asked for a meeting to discuss. Sites I've mentioned are Whitewell Pot, Hell Hole and Tip Wood.

Robinson's Pot/Fairy Holes – Dinny Davies

We had a couple of bookings for Robinsons' Pot and a couple of bookings for Fairy Holes this year.

All are reminded that they can already book access to both caves for next year.

Excalibur Pot – Matt Ewles

No issues to report

Other areas – Matt Ewles

The Casterton Fell landowner has commented (via Dinny Davies, RRCPC) that he no longer receives reports on cave access on a regular basis. These were discontinued five years ago soon after implementation of the online booking system. The system can easily generate reports on numbers of bookings, which Dinny has kindly agreed to send to Henry Bowring on a quarterly basis, for information purposes only.

Supplementary information to agenda item #5 – Spending of Tarmac donation

Fixed Caving Information Board for Ingleton – Proposal

I've long thought this was a good idea. To have a fixed information board about caving in this area, in the centre of Ingleton. Itself a centre for caving. The request in the next meeting's agenda for a proposal on something specific to spend the Tarmac money on inspired me to reinvigorate the idea. So...

The board would be freestanding or wall mounted. The location, TBD, would need local community association/council approval but would need to be visible in a prominent position such as the Community Centre area. The content would need careful consideration. A few dramatic prints for sure, possibly a map, content text and links to useful web type addresses/QR codes. It should be non-commercial. Content should revolve around information on caves, the sport of caving, how to get involved, safety and conservation direction.

First steps would be for CNCC to support the idea. Secondly to gain local authority support. Then agree location, type, scale, format, content, etc, etc. Potentially this initiative could be expanded to other areas in the future. Photos depict possible locations and types of board.

Tim Allen, CNCC IC representative

Secretary's footnote: If accepted, Tim has agreed to take lead on checking out viability, permissions, locations and content input, but final design would need further volunteer input.

Surveying workshop – Suggestion by Jill Bolton

As the money from Tarmac was significantly in response to the resurvey of Keldheads Cave, we could use the money to subsidise a surveying workshop in our region (similar to those run previously). We are currently engaging people who might be able to run this to discuss options/availability.