

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Reports for 29th October 2022 Committee Meeting

Chairman's Report

No report provided, a verbal report may be given at the meeting.

Andrew Hinde - CNCC Chairman

Secretary's Report

Unfortunately, for mental health reasons I will be standing down from my role as CNCC Secretary. Unless a willing candidate comes forward, I will honour my commitment to continue in the role until the AGM in March, but not beyond then. I would be happy to work with any interested individuals to ensure a smooth transition. I continue to enjoy attending meetings and hope to stay involved with the CNCC in the future, but without such significant responsibilities.

Josh Young - CNCC Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Financial Status as of 21st October 2022:

Business Community Account: £1479.14

Business Saver Account: £8685.91

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

Tim Allen Conservation Sign + Exhibition Photos	£990.60
Yorkshire Dales Guides Training Venue Fees	£1000.00
Sam Litten Training Inv 0722, 0822 & 1022	£870.00
Ian Patrick Training Inv 3168	£145.00
Helen Hooper Training Inv 51	£435.00
A Hinde (Myers Inv 9/262229	£75.60
Settle Coal Co. Inv 632326	£82.79
Josh Young re Zoom meeting costs	£143.90
Transfer from Business Premium Acc.	£4000.00.
Outstanding mileage payment for GT Douk work	£26.10.
Computer FX Ltd Inv 13773 & 13802	£64.21
John Helm Training Inv 4	£145.00
Alum Stiles mileage	£123.75
PayPal Balance from course bookings	£1763.77

Pete Bann - CNCC Treasurer

Conservation Officer's Report

An issue that has been generating concern in recent weeks is the amount of rope left in situ in caves. Some has an obvious purpose, for example supporting an on-going dig. For others, the purpose is less obvious. Abandoned ropes are a problem both on safety grounds and on conservation grounds. Should we take any action? Publicity to suggest people should not to leave ropes in place? Actively remove ropes (having checked first that they are not there for a purpose)? – and if so, how vigorously should we try to reunite ropes with their owners?

CNCC continues to support cavers in conservation work, including replacement/repair of three stiles in the Alum Pot area, and lending equipment to support KCC in their clean-up of Glasfurds Chamber in Gavel Pot.

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

No report provided, a verbal report may be given at the meeting.

Adele Ward - CNCC Access Officer

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Training Officer's Report



11th October 2022

Training Officer report

New training workshops added

We have had a very successful “summer program” of workshops with all of them going to “Full”.

They have once again been extremely well received and some really positive feedback has been given. (Some examples later on).

The new trainers (Sam and Helen) have provided quality training and have seamlessly fitted into the CNCC training team, they are both great assets to the CNCC.

We have just put together the “winter” programme of training workshops. After a discussion between the trainers we have put on a few more 2 day workshops. This will give people chance to “consolidate” skills which get taught on day 1.

Where day 2 is underground, we need to keep the ratios low, this obviously has an effect on the overall numbers of people we can facilitate but the trainers believe there is a great deal of value in this format. Currently the take up of these workshops is very good.

Trainers “moderation” day.

I have put a on day for all the 4 trainers to get together and spend the full day going through all the skills, Techniques etc that we are teaching to ensure we have consistency throughout our delivery.

The trainers have agreed to this day based only on basic travel expenses.

I think this day will be extremely useful and a real benefit to the delivery of the CNCC workshops.

New to caving / try caving day

I want to run these “workshops” under a completely different format.

The plan is to run “CNCC New to caving / Try Caving hosted by club”

The Craven Pothole Club have put one on for 12th February. This is a free event and at no cost to the CNCC.

Other clubs are invited to do the same, they can use the excellent CNCC website to manage “bookings” and help with publicity. Please contact me if your club would be willing to put a day on.

BCA “Training and Equipment” committee.

Nothing to report

IT

The CNCC website was recently updated /upgraded. As is always the case “glitches” appear. A few “issues” were noted in the “back end” when I tried to upload new workshops, however Gary worked his magic and they were soon sorted. Again a sincere thanks for his services, the new website looks clean and fresh.

Thanks to all the trainers, IT, PR and treasurer for helping to facilitate first class caver training to cavers from all over the UK.

Ian Patrick
CNCC Training Officer

04/03/2023	New to SRT indoor workshop (2 days)
12/02/2023	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop
12/02/2023	Ladder and lifelines underground
12/02/2023	New to caving - Try caving hosted by The Craven Pothole Club
21/01/2023	SRT rescue workshop (2 days)
14/01/2023	SRT improver and refresher (2 days)
17/12/2022	New to SRT / skills refresher (2 days)
10/12/2022	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop (2 days)
13/11/2022	SRT rescue workshop
12/11/2022	SRT underground refresher
05/11/2022	SRT improver and refresher workshop (Indoors)
05/11/2022	An underground geology tour with The Rock Doctor

I had a fantastic weekend and I feel the CNCC is fulfilling a very important role by making high quality training such as this easily available to cavers for a reasonable fee. I don't think I could've picked up the skills that I learnt over the weekend without such a well organised and run course - or at least it would've taken me several years longer to 'pick it up' informally! I've already recommended the course to several of my caving friends.

> I've often struggled with following practical based courses in the past as I'm very much a 'must write everything down a million times before it sticks' type of gal, but last weekend was paced so well and with ample enough time to ask questions and check back through processes that I really got so much out of it, so genuinely, thanks ever so much! The CNCC training programme is a really great resource to have.

Since making a return to caving at a somewhat advanced age , I have been very impressed by the role which CNCC is playing in the sport, in training, in access, in the provision and monitoring of anchors and in providing very detailed and accurate rigging information for a huge number of caves. Long may it continue to flourish!

A Report to the CNCC committee regarding “pull through” anchors in Heron Pot

At a recent CNCC committee meeting a request was received to consider the addition of a couple of anchors in Heron Pot to facilitate a better pull through solution on the first pitch.

The second pitch is suitable due to a recently installed second anchor in a good position.

The first pitch in Heron really has 2 “pitch heads”, the first goes down with the water and there are no anchors at the top of this. The CNCC description suggests using the first anchors (Start of the traverse) for a pull through here. The “second” pitch head (Dryer) is reached by a fairly technical traverse. At the second pitch head it is anchored for a “standard” Y Hang but not suitable for a 2 anchor pull through.

Options for Heron Pot.

1. Do nothing
2. Add an extra anchor at the “2nd pitch head” to use in conjunction with one of the existing ones to facilitate a 2 anchor pull through. (A dryer hang but need to negotiate the traverse)
3. Add 2 anchors at the first pitch head to provide a simple pull through solution. (Simple but potentially wet)
4. Do options 1 and 2 to give more options.



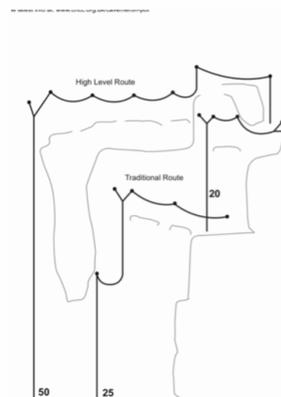
The 2nd pitch with an extra anchor for a good Pull through



The rope system on the first pitch



The 1st pitch head on the 1st pitch where a pull through could go from, missing out the technical traverse to the 2nd pitch head.



A Report to the CNCC committee regarding anchors in Simpson's pot.

At a recent CNCC committee meeting a request was received from Chris Boardman (BCA Child protection officer and cave instructor who regularly takes pupils from his school in Birmingham caving in the Yorkshire Dales including through Simpson's pot.)

The main request was for an extra anchor at the start of the traverse just after the "duck".

I agreed to go and have a look and report back. I thought it would also be useful to check all the other anchors and placements.

Results:

The request for an extra anchor can easily be achieved by a simple drilled thread in a well positioned flake of rock at the start of the traverse.

Other points to consider.

There are a few anchors which are showing some movement which would benefit from replacing.

None of the pitches except one, are anchored in a way that allows a good set up for a pull through. (The initial anchoring was obviously done for "traditional SRT).

The current Topo doesn't match with the actual cave and requires an update.

A number of pitches don't allow a traverse rope to be installed during a pull through trip as the current set up is to use the preceding pitch rope to access the next pitch when rigging for standard SRT.

The top of the Great Aven is in quite a considerable mess with a large amount of "Tat" to provide a pull through solution as the current anchors do not support this.

Slit pot has a high level bypass which appears to becoming a more used way of accessing this pitch. The anchors are variable and again consist of some "Tat" to achieve a pull through.

A committee discussion about the above and any actions thought needed would be useful.

(My personal thoughts: Simpson's Pot is one of the Dales "Jewels in the Crown" and a classic pull through trip.

The anchor placements do not currently facilitate an efficient and safe descent as a pull through trip.

This cave is used by cavers of all abilities and a CNCC anchor provision that accommodates this has got to be a good thing. Different provision for different caves seems sensible to me. Sell Gill Vs Quaking Pot ?

Of course "people have managed all this time" and if the committee decide to leave it as it is then all well and good.

A relatively small amount of work would improve the anchor situation in this cave and remove some unsightly anchors and get rid of a significant amount of "Tat".)

Some pictures below (more pictures and videos on this link : <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-FT-8lvvMZprNVqB09EMqhMM8VSnYf8D>)

Ian Patrick
September 2022

Ian Patrick - CNCC Training Officer

PR and Communications Officer's Report - Matt Ewles

The last three months has seen a pleasing selection of news stories to help keep the work of CNCC at the forefront of minds:

Conservation:

The work at Alum Pot to replace three stiles; Thank you to all our volunteers.

Safety:

Warnings about ash dieback, and a loose rock in Lancaster Hole entrance.

Access:

Re-opening of White Scar Cave; Great effort by the Craven Pothole Club.

Website:

The overhaul of the CNCC website and publishing of new topos/descriptions for F'ing Hopeless Pot.

Training:

Winter 2022-2023 program published, and a nice article with pictures from a recent training session (thanks Adele for the photos).

Promoting caving:

The current display at the Yorkshire Dales National Park headquarters in Bainbridge, which now looks likely to remain in place for the rest of this year at least. Thanks to Tim Allen for taking the lead on this one, identifying the opportunity, producing the prints and putting the display up. If anyone is passing through Wensleydale midweek (during office hours) and can call in, please do and sign the visitor book.

Communication:

Newsletter 12 has been published in the last week and paper copies currently being distributed. These newsletters are less frequent than they used to be, but now that we have such a strong following on social media and via our mailing list, they serve more as a compilation of news and our work, rather than a frontline means of communication. Nevertheless I have left this issue a little longer than I should since the last (18 months) so am going to try to do one annually from now on.

All of the above have been communicated to the caving community through UKCaving, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and of course via our own mailing list which now standard at 424 subscribers. I provide a roughly monthly summary of news to the mailing list, including an update on any major ongoing situations (for example, during the closure of White Scar, and the ongoing issues at High Birkwith and Wretched Rabbit). The mailing list also get one-day advanced notice on training workshops before their publication is announced more widely.

In other work, I have continued to manage our cave descriptions and topos, updating several in response to caver feedback (thanks to Gary who actually draws and uploads the topos).

I would like to pay personal tribute to Roy Holmes, who passed away in September. Roy was Chairman when I became CNCC Secretary back in 2014, at a time of turbulence. Roy gave a stoic and authoritative presence throughout these meetings without pushing any particular agenda and even maintaining a good wit and humour. In doing this, somehow, out of all turbulence, a revitalised CNCC emerged in no small part thanks to his efforts to moderate the meetings. Northern caving has lost a great character, not to mention an enthusiastic CRO volunteer and prolific explorer.

There are a few things to discuss at this meeting that are not on the agenda. Firstly, the anchors in Heron Pot, which Ian has (I believe) raised in his report. I have initiated a discussion on UKCaving about this to try to gather some opinions (link below). I was surprised by the diversity of opinions, which ranged from people being dead against additional anchors in a currently safe to descend cave, to those who greatly support additional anchors to cater for pull-through situations or to reflect caver abilities at this particular location. Whatever the outcome, I think it is really important to get the widest possible engagement on situations like this so CNCC can keep a sanity check that what we are doing really is widely supported, particularly when it comes to drilling holes into caves.

<https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?threads/heron-pot-anchors-your-thoughts.29964/>

Secondly, there is a separate discussion on UKCaving (link below) about the appearance of new fixed ropes particularly in Simpson/Swinsto on the traverses which are currently blocking people from rigging their own ropes for pull-through. Clearly, it is poor etiquette for any fixed rigging to be monopolising anchors in this way without very good reason. Does the CNCC wish to take any action in respect to this, not necessarily hands-on, but perhaps advisory or some kind of good-practice guidance?

<https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?threads/swinsto-warning.29943/#post-366110>

Happy caving!

Webmaster's Report - Gary Douthwaite

New CNCC website

Since the last report, the new website has finally been finished. This year-long project has completely re-written the underlying code to keep up to date with modern security standards. The old site was the same underlying structure as the original created in 2014 and had had many additions over the years making it rather hard to handle. The front UI has also been re-designed to meet the latest standards with a more consistent look, better user experience and much better mobile usability. The site is now built on the well documented Bootstrap framework which will make it easier for anyone to take it on in the future.

Some of the new features include:

1. New layout and more filter options for cave access page and cave details pages.
2. News articles make better use of images with a scrolling carousel with touch functionality for mobile devices. Better sharing and visibility across social media platforms.
3. A dedicated page for warnings, bringing them all together in one place (as well as on individual cave info pages).
4. A new reporting system to report a range of issues. Defective anchor reports are now automatically added to the anchor installers website and all installers are notified by email that something needs attention. An installer can then assign themselves to the job if they are able to.
5. The training section has been redesigned and the booking system simplified. A payment information report is also available for the treasurer showing incoming payments and card fees.
6. A streamlined admin area with much simpler interface to upload files and update content.
7. Gaping Gill info page aimed at cavers explaining how access works on winch days and showing the upcoming winch meets. This information has been lacking on the site and many people did not know the procedure, particularly those visiting from outside the area.
8. A new file structure keeping all the uploaded documents and images in the same place. Download statistics and charts are available for all files. The download process for the end user is also now more reliable.

Gaping Gill website: gaping-gill.info

As discussed, and agreed at a previous meeting, a new Gaping Gill website has been created aimed at the non-caving public. A number of people had mistaken the cave booking system as a method of booking for the Gaping Gill winch, so this site aims to clarify things. The idea is to have a central point of information to give publicly to direct people to the right information for the relevant winch meet. The site also shows the upcoming dates already in use on the main CNCC site. It is fairly simple now but will expand over the coming months – any ideas welcome.

Analytics

Report data snapshots taken 24 Oct 2022.

Google

Google Analytics has changed its analytics service to v4 and data is no longer shown in the way it used to be. The new system does not show past data and has only been in place on the site for about three months. The way the new data is represented is not practical for a CNCC report as it is meant to be viewed live.

Social Media

- Facebook: 1539 page likes (+101 since last report) and 1710 followers (+114 since last report).
- Twitter: 535 followers (+12 since last report). 318 tweets have been made by CNCC.
- Instagram: 418 followers (+16 since Jun report).

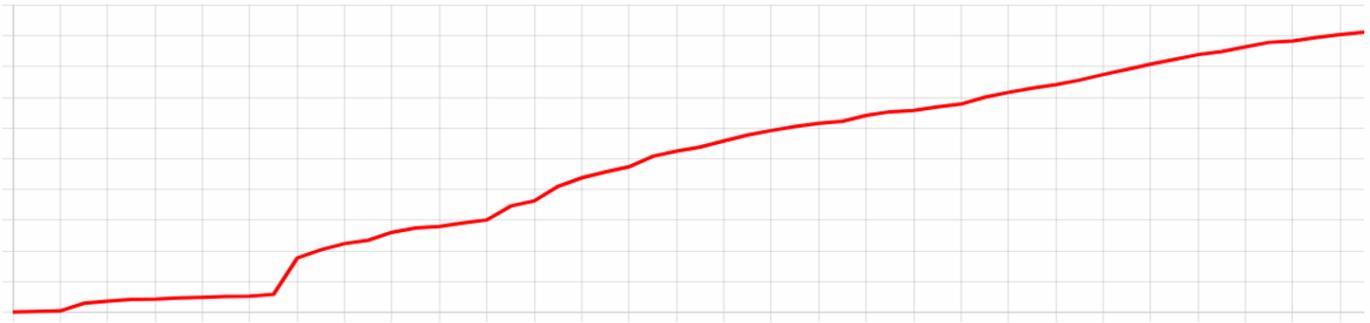
Mailing List

- The mailing list contains **424** people (**1** have requested to be unsubscribed).

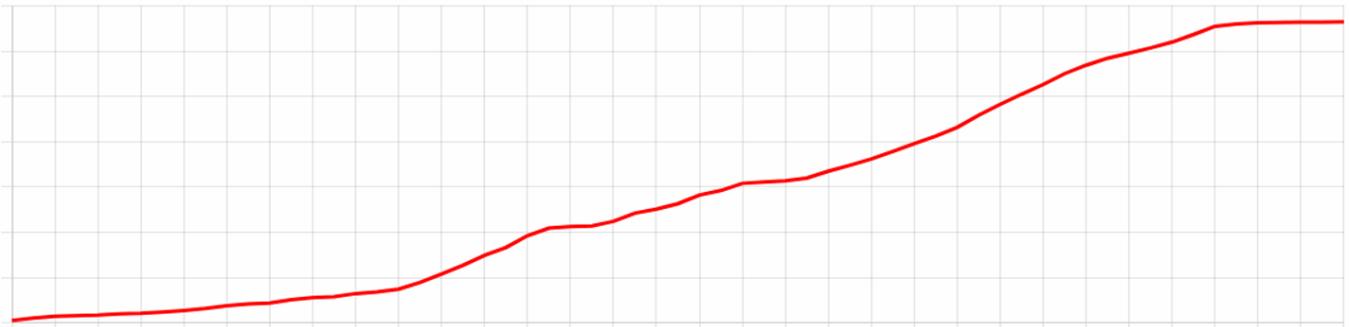
Online Booking System

- 912 registered users
- 3853 individual bookings have been made. This number includes 3321 approved bookings and 531 cancelled bookings.
- 182 (20%) made a positive statement that they are NOT BCA members.
- 632 (69%) said they are members of a club.
- Of the users who specified gender there are 146 female (16.5%), 655 male (73.8%) and 1 other (0.1%).
- The average age is 49 with the youngest 19 and oldest 81.

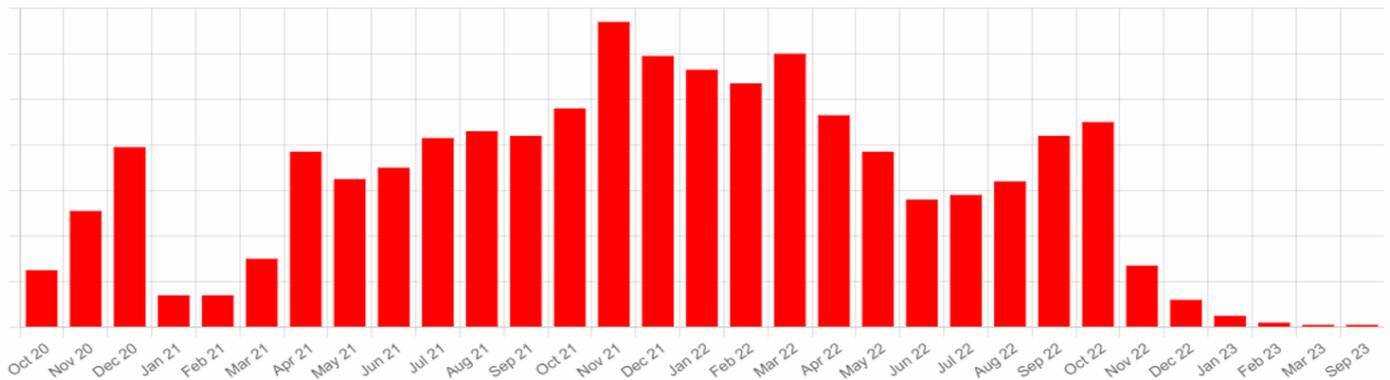
New booking system registrations:



Total bookings:



Bookings count by month:



Media Downloads

	Topos	Descriptions	Publications
Sep 2022	2757	2247	110
Aug 2022	2181	2133	387
Jul 2022	1610	1617	192
12 Month Average	2563	2274	195

Top 5 media downloads (last 3 month period)

Topos	Descriptions	Publications
509 - F'ing Hopeless Pot	362 - F'ing Hopeless Pot	365 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 12
274 - Alum Pot	337 - Gaping Gill	90 - Witches Cave Conservation Plan
190 - Lost Johns' Cave	325 - Ease Gill Caverns	74 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 11
185 - Bull Pot of the Witches	310 - The Leck Fell Master Cave System	63 - Great Douk Cave
172 - Yordas Pot and Cave	307 - Alum Pot and Long Churn Caves	46 - CNCC Newsletter Issue 9