

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Reports for 23rd October 2021 Committee Meeting

Chairman's Report

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 RRCP 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.

Andrew Hinde - CNCC Chairman

Secretary's Report

Very little of note to report for this meeting. There was an email vote held to seek approval for an anchoring project on Notts Pot, which would help with the Three Counties Traverse attempt. I received "yes" votes from the following 10 clubs, in order of when they responded: YUCPC, WRPC, RRCPC, BPC, EPC, KCC, NB, CPC, YCC, and NPC. There were no concerns raised.

I have continued organising meeting documents and made arrangements for the current hybrid meeting, many thanks to Gary for his support with the technical side of this. I have also continued to manage the various email communications and questions we receive on a regular basis.

Josh Young - CNCC Secretary

Conservation Officer's Report

It has been a quiet summer. 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, and wonders whether we had any ideas for prevention in the future, other than education, and prompt removal to give the message "we don't do that here". Several volunteers have introduced themselves via the link on the CNCC website, including, most recently, Oxford University Caving Club.

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. If you'd like to be placed on the mailing list to be informed of future projects, please contact Kay Easton on conservation@cncc.org.uk, or use the link on the CNCC website.

Kay Easton - CNCC Conservation Officer

Training Officer's Report



2nd October 2021

Training officer report

CNCC training workshops have been going extremely well and have been received positively. (See attached document for details of current and past workshops.)

It has been a steep learning curve, developing suitable syllabuses, and working out which workshops were in most demand. (The most popular ones were Rescue, Rigging and Geology.)

IT

The website and booking systems have worked well. There is an occasional issue with confirmation emails going into people's Junk folder or not receiving them at all. The confirmation emails have attachments, which I have now been told can cause issues. Moving forward I am going to avoid attachments and try "Google Drive" links and see if that helps. My thanks to Gary for all his assistance with the IT. (He is quite good at this, maybe he should think about doing it for a living !)

SRT Kits

I was handed 4 "BCA" SRT kits for use by the CNCC (including 2 brand new Stops). The harnesses were unfortunately "out of date" and some of the carabiners were not particularly user friendly. £500.00 was spent on "upgrades", this now gives us a reasonable selection of SRT equipment for participants to try out. (Full list here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12k9voEmIUZ6DDzBdunYUbiMgUYdlLR8dlZQCxB78glU/edit>)

We also hire out full kits at £10.00 per day or £15.00 for 2 day workshops. I would like to increase the variety of kit we have to give participants a greater selection of kit to try. I have had a very brief conversation with Tony Seddon about an arrangement where we can have some "demo" harnesses for people to try, I will keep on with this in due course.



Shadowing opportunities

We have offered “shadowing” opportunities on the technical workshops. Primarily aimed at club training officers who want to develop their own training knowledge (and pass on their own knowledge) but also to trainee instructors working towards a qualification.

Opportunities here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11pL2xYE4gRUUxq2dqRBG8PMgRJ_U0IYDtZP2H4nNL1g/edit

Future plans

We will continue to offer the “standard” workshops as previously, trying to match demand with supply as we are aware the demand will start to diminish.

We are also looking into different options for workshops:

- First Aid
- Mid week “senior citizen” sessions
- Underground Rigging workshop (Ratio 2:1 with obviously a larger cost to participants)
- Expedition skills
- Introduction to cave photography (Mark Burkey has agreed to run this)
- Overground and underground navigation.
- Underground refresher days.

Bringing more trainers “onboard” and working out a suitable “system” to ensure consistency between workshops.

Ratios: We need to reconsider suitable ratios for some of the workshops. The “New to SRT” ones can require extremely focused supervision that would be problematic at the current 6:1. We have managed so far due to coercing “volunteers”. This solution is not sustainable moving forward.

Current Trainers:

Mark Richards (SRT and First Aid)
Ian Patrick (SRT)
Dr John Helm (Geology)
Mark Burkey (Photography)
Nick Bairstow (Cave Survey workshop coordinator)
Lin Patrick (FOC assistant)
Laura Patrick (FOC assistant)

Other Training

If anyone has any other topics they would like to see any training provided for then please let me know, we now have a “framework” in place and the IT infrastructure in place to allow workshops to run on pretty much any subject that would be useful to cavers.

Thanks to all the trainers for their efforts and support during the setting up of the workshops.

Ian Patrick

CNCC Training Officer

ID	Date	Course Title	Total Places	Places Booked
40	December 11th	Advanced SRT rescue	6	0
35	December 5th	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	6	6
36	December 4th	SRT rescue workshop	6	6
39	November 21st	SRT improver and refresher workshop (Indoors)	6	6
38	November 20th	New to SRT one day workshop (Indoors)	4	4
31	November 7th	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	6	6
28	November 6th	SRT rescue workshop	6	6
34	October 23rd - 24th	Introduction to paperless surveying	12	5
37	October 9th - 10th	New to SRT a 2 day indoor workshop	6	5
8	September 26th	Caving Club "Meet Leaders" - Practical skills	8	6
4	September 25th	New to SRT / Skills refresher workshop (Indoors)	6	6
25	September 18th	An underground geology tour with the "Rock Doctor"	8	8
6	September 5th	SRT rescue workshop	6	6
7	September 4th	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	8	5
24	August 14th - 15th	A 2 Day Photography workshop with Mark Buckley	8	6
13	August 7th - 8th	New to SRT / skills refresher 2 day weekend workshop	8	7
23	July 18th	SRT rescue workshop	6	6
26	July 2nd	SRT kit hire for New to SRT workshop 26th June	3	3

16	June 26th - 27th	New to SRT / skills refresher 2 day weekend workshop	6	6
2	June 19th	An underground geology tour with the "Rock Doctor"	9	9
1	June 12th	New to caving: An introduction day	8	0
17	June 6th	SRT rescue workshop	6	6
18	June 5th	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	8	8
21	May 30th	SRT rescue workshop	6	6
14	May 29th	CNCC Return to SRT / refresher Workshop (Indoors)	6	6

Feedback from Training workshops

“Today's srt refresher course was spot on. Mark and Laura tailored the course to exactly to what I was after. It was a pleasure to meet them both.”

*“All done, whoop whoop.
That's a nice and easy system to use. Great stuff
Many thanks Ian, you have been amazing.”*

*“Morning Ian
Apologies for not getting this to you sooner.
Just to say, that I had a great time at the Rock Doctor Geology day.
John is so informative and has a great way to deliver his knowledge. A double thumbs up from me.
It was also good to meet old & new people from in and out of the area.
I hope all the other workshops are going down a treat too. I shall keep an eye out for more.”*

“Thanks for an excellent session today. As I mentioned, I'm taking a non-caving mate down Sell Gill tomorrow and I feel like I've now got an arsenal of tools and techniques that I can pull out if the need arises and resolve what could otherwise be a CRO callout, or worse. I learned a lot, the hands-on practice was great, and I enjoyed the day. I'd highly recommend the rescue workshop to anyone who is SRT competent and gets out caving with any regularity. Thanks again for coming up here and putting on two really useful workshops.

“Thanks very much for the session today.

I got exactly what I hoped to get out of the session: a MOT on my SRT skills that confirmed that I was generally doing most things

fairly well, and some useful tips and techniques that I can incorporate and use to improve (setting up and using cowstails, prussiking without a Pantin, standing up in footloops at the pitchhead, assisted prussiking, to name just a few). It was a day well spent.

You had a range of skill and experience levels among the attendees, and I think you did an excellent job of setting all of us different activities suitable to our skills and experience. It made the day really productive, with virtually no standing around and waiting. There's really nothing I would suggest that you do differently.

It was a thoroughly worthwhile and enjoyable day. Thanks to you for instructing, and to CNCC for arranging it.”

“Dear Ian,

Just wanted to say a huge Thank You for putting on the above workshop last Sunday. It was a really good refresher for myself, the content and delivery was excellent and it was good to brush up once again with various scenarios using the kit available.”

“Been today on SRT improver workshop. It was brilliant. Thank you so much for organising, Mark was really knowledgeable and efficient. Ian please pass him a big thank you.”

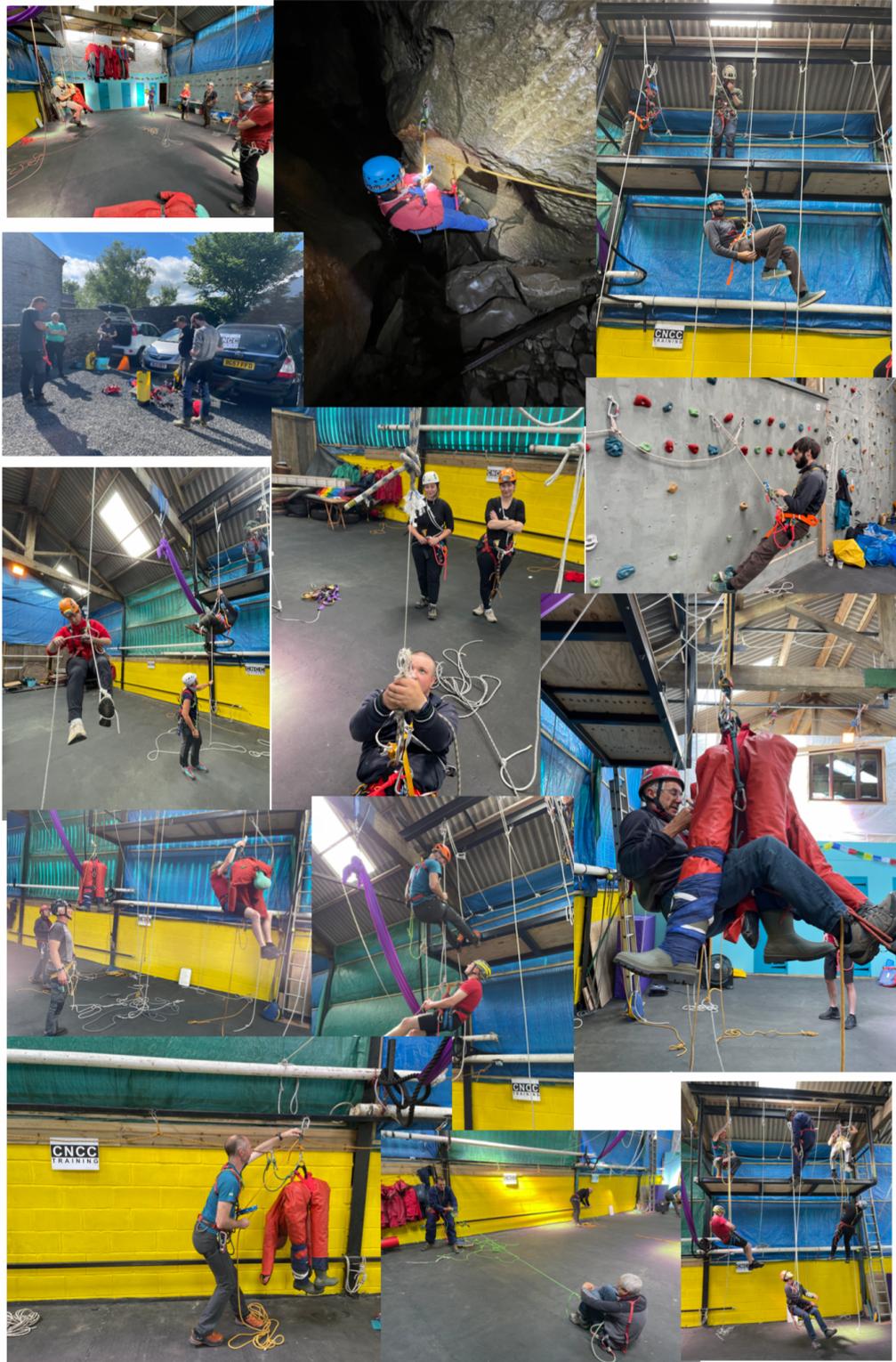
“Just wanted to say thank you for the superb training courses you've been running.

Was fortunate enough to go on the Geology and SRT workshops. Both John and Mark were fantastic, pitching the material at just the right level and answering every question thrown at them. Hope they're something that you continue in the future”

“Hi Ian,

Another fantastic course deliver by Mark. Thanks for coordinating Ian. Very much appreciated - mark made sure everyone's

expectations were met, making sure everyone's tick list of rigging problems was resolved. Thank you again - these courses have really helped me feel a lot more comfortable with my heights issue."



Ian Patrick - CNCC Training Officer

Acting BCA Representative's Report - Andrew Hinde

CRoW

Welsh Government accepted that it had acted illegally in denying caving a place on the Access Forum. WG must pay costs to BCA . WG must publish a statement (consent order) by November 30th 2021.

Recent update – Oct 2021 - The BCA have appointed a QC to move the substantive case to a judgement on caving being covered by the CRoW act (since the WG forum we were banned from has now completed its work).

BCA AGM

There was a discussion on the procedures for an on line AGM. It was decided to follow the same procedure as the 2020 AGM

BCA AGM Sunday 10th October 2021

This AGM featured one of the first contested elections for an officer post. Apart from that there was a raft of constitutional and housekeeping amendments brought forward by a BCA constitution working group. The complexity of the order paper and voting arrangements was beyond my comprehension on the day. However, the subsequent online assistance from the P&I team on motions/amendments and voting procedure was excellent. Also some excellent work by Andrew McCloud to get this hideous package of necessary work prepared for the AGM.

BCA E&T Representative's Report - Mark Richards

There is nothing to report from last meeting. The chair of the group has stood down and currently no one has come forward to take up this position.

However, one of the proposals put forward at the the recent BCA AGM and for members to vote on is the following

Merge the Training Committee and Equipment and Techniques Standing Committee into a Working Group

PR and Communications Officer's Report - Matt Ewles

News items since the last meeting that have been circulated via all the usual platforms (website, mailing list, Facebook and UKCaving) include:

- SRT Kit purchase for CNCC Training Course.
- Aygill Caverns reopening (with thanks to the team involved).
- A piece promoting the success of the cave photography workshop.
- A general return-to-caving piece, with mention of Bowland caves (thus closing that action item)
- White Scar cave closure due to collapse beyond the showcave.

I put together a snippet about the success of the Three Counties Traverse; in fact, this has been one of our most shared Facebook posts ever, and hopefully the first of plenty of positive PR for caving resulting from this achievement. It was a shame that some of those involved put out a negative message about the CNCC, stating that we had refused to support the project, which is an unfortunate misunderstanding. We expressed our reservations about the BCA-organised jamboree, in the absence of any information about whether this was even wanted by the divers; but at no point have we refused, or even been asked for support for the traverse event itself. I was keen the misunderstanding was rectified.

I have completed the framing of the 20x A3 cave photos; they look superb, and I have done publicity on these to try to recruit volunteers to identify placements. So far, Tim Allen and Jon Beavan have said they can find a good home for some, and knowing their credentials, I have every confidence they will do a great job. On their request, I have offered three to High Borrans Outdoor Education Centre, who regularly take people caving, and this seems like an excellent place.

A reminder that I still have several copies of Caves and Karst Volume Two to hand out for PR/ good relations with landowners as we see fit. Contact me if you have a good use.

I've also used the CNCC's mailing list (281 people; up 47 since June) to keep cavers up to date. This has included advertising the additional training sessions that I organised for October to December, and general news/updates in July and September covering the various items above.

As mentioned in my last report, I have written an article for the Voice of the Moors (the magazine of the North York Moors Association), which is now published (p12-13):

<https://www.nyma.org.uk/webedit/uploaded-files/All%20Files/Voice%20of%20the%20Moors/VOICE-144%20Summer%202021.pdf>

This will be a three-part feature, with a second article this Winter, and a third next Summer.

The short piece in The Visitor Magazine was published (p59):

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

The Dalesman, who expressed interest, and who I submitted an article to, have gone quiet.

Finally, although outside of my remit as PR/Communications, at the last meeting I agreed to make contact with the National Trust to discuss the permit situation at Birks Fell, with an ultimate aim to have this Access Land cave freed from the current restrictions. After some initial challenges finding the right person, I have been pleasantly surprised by how communicative National Trust have been. During an hour-long call, the lady had done plenty of research, and was informed, friendly, understanding and helpful. Faith in large organisations has been restored! I have followed up with them to address concerns about liability, and sensing their wish for some kind of document, I drafted a memorandum of understanding, similar to that of Langcliffe Hall Estate, as an example of the kind of documented arrangement that we could come to. They are currently discussing the matter internally and with the tenant farmer. Unfortunately, it has been a few months now, and other than an email apologising for the delay (back in August), I've heard nothing. This matter is therefore on-hold but I hope it is still progressing within National Trust, albeit slowly. Concerningly, I believe they are consulting some of their colleagues in Cheddar Gorge, which may well end up backfiring! I have asked for an agenda item to enable some discussion, perhaps on what our course of action should be if the outcome is not positive, and whether we should take a similar course of action to Langcliffe Hall Estate (i.e. politely decline to continue to administer access).

I may not be able to make this meeting as it clashes with a student weekend at Bull Pot Farm which I am helping with. I have no intentions of being below the drink-drive limit by [9:30am on Saturday](#).

Happy caving everyone!

Webmaster's Report - Gary Douthwaite

Webmaster Report – October 2021

Due to personal commitments, I have not had much time to work on the new website but have been performing the usual house keeping as well as helping Matt with PR on social media. Nothing specific to report.

Google Analytics (1 Oct 2020 to 3 Sep 2021)

Pageviews



Gender: 68% male ↑, 32% female ↑

Age:

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+
 13.2% ↑ 24.7% ↑ 17.9% ↑ 19.1% ↑ 13.5% ↑ 11.4% ↑

Facebook

As of 15 Oct 2021 we have 1287 page likes (+51 since June report) and 1417 followers (+56 since June report).

Performance of recent Facebook posts (original content only, not shared posts, some omitted)...

Published	Subject	Reach (people)	Clicks	Reactions, Comments & Shares
01/10/2021	Alum Pot filming notice	1.7k	299	1652
29/09/2021	Framed caving prints	1.1k	57	1056
28/09/2021	Three Counties traverse	9.2k	1044	875
14/09/2021	Return to caving	816	43	43
02/09/2021	More training spaces	389	18	21
21/08/2021	Mayday Hole topo update	893	46	10
20/08/2021	Another excellent training workshop	359	9	14
04/08/2021	SRT kits available for training	454	44	17
07/06/2021	Mayday Hole anchors	609	109	59

Twitter

As at 15 Oct 2021 we have 481 followers (+15 since June report). 279 tweets have been made by CNCC.

Instagram

As at 15 Oct 2021 we have 360 followers (+19 since June report).

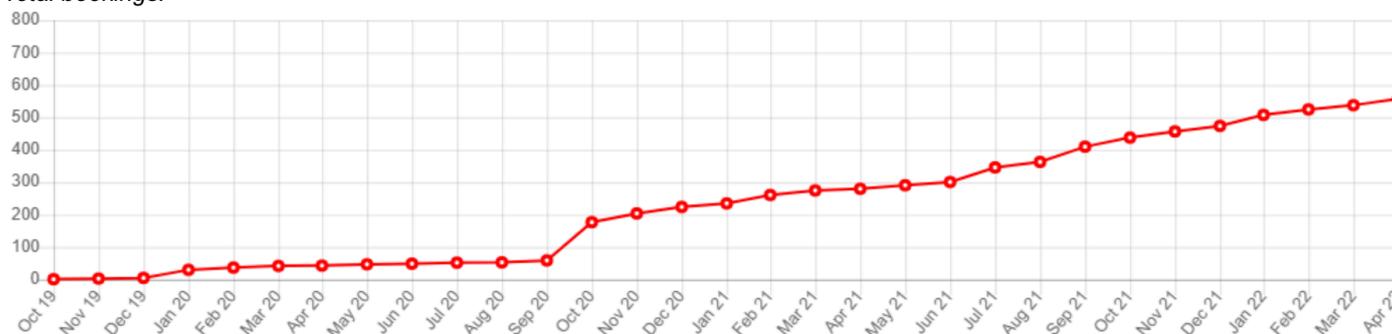
Online Booking System

- 747 registered users
- 2555 individual bookings have been made. This number includes 2169 approved bookings and 385 cancelled bookings.
- 142 (19%) made a positive statement that they are NOT BCA members.
- 521 (70%) said they are members of a club.
- Of the users who specified gender there are 111 female (15.1%), 545 male (73.9%) and 0 other (0%).
- The average age is 48 with the youngest 18 and oldest 80.

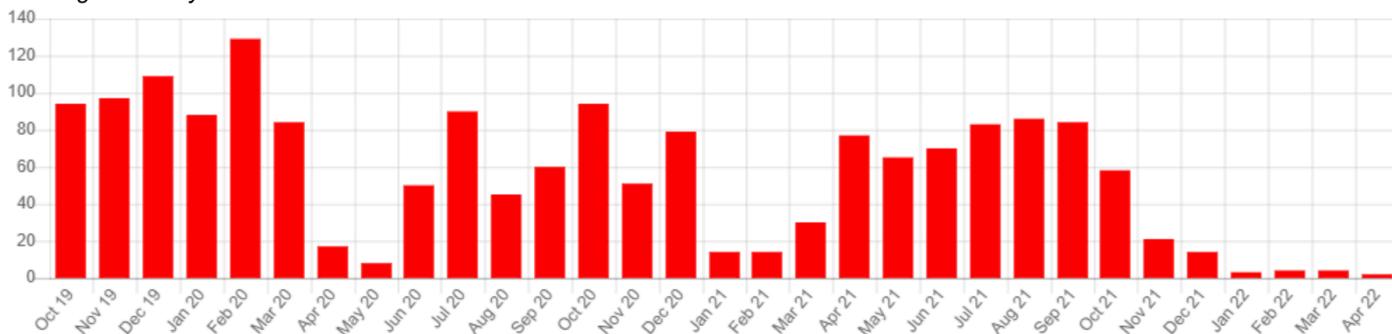
New registrations:



Total bookings:



Bookings count by month:



Mailing List

The mailing list contains 285 people (1 have requested to be unsubscribed).

Media Download Statistics (to 30 Sep 2021)

	Total	Average / month	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21
Publications	10650	273	299	564	225	346	206	246
Topos	83331	2315	2484	2612	2485	2535	2820	2419
Cave descriptions	68825	1912	2301	2121	1630	2317	2500	2316

Top 5 media downloads (six months to 30 Sep 2021)

Topos	Descriptions
Mayday Hole - 798 (5.1%)	Alum Pot and Long Churn Caves - 723 (5.4%)
Alum Pot - 673 (4.3%)	The Leck Fell Master Cave System - 674 (5%)
Lost Johns' Cave - 413 (2.6%)	Caves of Scotland - 562 (4.2%)
Yordas Pot and Cave - 402 (2.6%)	Gaping Gill - 561 (4.2%)
Sell Gill Holes - 332 (2.1%)	Ease Gill Cavern - 536 (4%)