

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Reports for 7th March 2020 Annual General Meeting

Chairman's Report

Living Uplands Project

This is a joint project between Durham Wildlife Trust and the Landowner of Fairy Holes Cave. It is an outreach project to engage local school children with their natural environment. Mark Tellwright has asked the CNCC to help him with the production of digital teaching modules on the underlying geology of the region, in particular, the formation of the hypogenic caves such as Fairy Holes. I will be asking our talented videographers to help with the production of some one-minute film facts about the underground world. <http://www.livinguplands.com>

Crackpot Cave Cleanup

Well done to Rowan Worsman and all involved with this project. It has transformed the cave into a site which everyone would agree is worth protecting. It has produced some interesting new prototype equipment to commission for future projects. Would visitors to the cave please report back to me with any information about the condition of the conservation tape and whether it is being respected?

SABIC Ethylene Pipeline

Can I remind cave explorers to check that their digs do not stray within 50 metres of the pipeline route (particularly in the eastern region of the CNCC area). The route can be found on the CNCC website.

Providence Pot Landslide

The recently reported landslide adjacent to Providence pot requires a pick and shovel team to re-establish the flow of the stream past the cave entrance shaft. An ideal one-day job for a club active in Wharfedale.

Ingleborough Estate

I have had further meetings with Philip Farrer (family member trustee of Ingleborough Estate) to keep him informed of the progress of the old dig capping projects. Another 2 digs were capped by members of the BPC during the pre-winch season. The capping of the "Time" dig on Hurnell Moss has begun with some innovative engineering / fabrication works. Philip Farrer likes to be kept informed of caver activity. It is worth getting in touch with the Estate Office if you are going to be carrying unusual items of equipment up to the caves for whatever purpose.

Stories in Stone Project

The Stories in Stone cave conservation Project has been extended in duration and funding for another 12 months until Dec 2020. This is a recognition of the fantastic work done by CNCC conservation volunteers and the value for lottery players' money that they provide.

Future projects will include some major stal cleaning in the Caves of GG area and some more shake-hole clearing on the Ingleborough Estate. A few old dig sites remain to be capped too.

CNCC Secretary

I am sure that everyone in Northern Caving and beyond will join me in thanking Matt Ewles for his enormous positive contribution to CNCC over the last 6 years. Matt took over as CNCC Secretary at a very turbulent time in its history and made an immediate impact with his honest brokering and negotiating skills. He managed to develop an ethos of open and transparent communication and near faultless administration which is a fantastic legacy for us. His infectious enthusiasm was, and remains, a huge asset to CNCC. We now have an Assistant Secretary (Josh) under Matt's tutelage and I am confident that Matt's legacy is in safe hands. However, we all have a responsibility to protect and carry forward this hard won legacy that Matt has worked tirelessly to develop over so many years. At the heart of Matt's success within CNCC is his boundless enthusiasm for caving and the special environment in which it takes place. I hope that he can bring similar rewards to the BCA membership in his future role as BCA Secretary.

New Online Booking System for Leck Fell

This will be covered elsewhere in the reports but I want to record my personal thanks to Tim Allen and acknowledge the gratitude due from all cavers who will benefit from this really significant and incredibly hard won new development in access for Dales Cavers to some of the finest caves in the UK.

Meetings

I have attended a couple of external meetings and conferences on behalf of CNCC. This is to make sure that we are acknowledged by policy and decision makers in areas where caves and caving may be affected.

The first conference was hosted by the BMC in central Manchester. It was entitled "Changing behaviours: caring for the places we love". This workshop event had 51 delegates representing environmental NGOs, National Parks, Sporting Governing Bodies etc. A couple of take home messages:

- a) Codes of Conduct must be regionally and nationally consistent (rarely happens).
- b) Good behaviour requires various forms of psychological coercion to be successful. Provided by role models and cleverly thought out signage on site.
- c) The British public have few redeeming features when it comes to engagement with the outdoors (personal observation).
- d) There are only 3 sources of wildfires in the UK. They are: Men, Women, and Children.
- e) The corporate sector are better at partnering the voluntary sector than the public sector. If you want to start a successful campaign with your caving club, the Co-op is probably a better bet than NE.
- f) Check out hubbub.com for inspiring environmental projects that change entrenched attitudes.

The other meeting was a YDNP Management Plan Forum meeting in December. Just there to let YDNP know that there is more to recreation in the Dales than rambling.

Check out YDNP website for some startling statistics on socioeconomic trends in the Dales:

<https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/powerful-message-revealed-by-park-wide-studies/>

We need to continue to make the case for the economic value that caving brings to the Dales. I am currently awaiting the renewal of the Fairy Holes Cave access agreement. Bookings can go ahead in the meantime.

Andrew Hinde - CNCC Chairman

Secretary's Report

Since the last AGM, we have published two further newsletters, and another is due soon, and we have ample content for this; a testament to the amount of great work that is being done for northern caving.

The headline for this year has of course been the success of our Access Officer, Tim, in getting Leck Fell and Casterton Fell onto the online booking system, meaning the only permit systems we currently operate are for individual caves (most of which have unique access issues, being in a private quarry, a shooting estate, land owned by a show cave, or under a farmhouse). This has been a tremendous achievement.

My own minor contribution to access was the renegotiation of the Excalibur Pot access agreement to remove the club-only restriction, which was in place due to standard CNCC practices at the time this agreement was first established.

Following years of saying the CNCC would have a stall at Hidden Earth, we finally managed to achieve it last year. The stall boasted a couple of very professional roll-up banners, a table with all our newsletters, a timeline, a working offline demo of the online booking system, some anchors for people to play with (the IC anchor generated a lot of interest), chocolates, and a 2x1m poster showcasing some of our work from the last decade. This poster and the banners are available for anyone attending any conferences or events, just drop me a message. My thanks to Andrew Hinde, Goon, and several others for helping to look after the stall so I was able to enjoy some lectures.

Conservation has continued like a well-oiled machine and I'll let Kay summarise everything that has gone on. To accompany the Crackpot Cave cleanup work in April last year, Gary and I produced a short conservation video. This is available online (just search Youtube for Crackpot Cave cleanup), and is a great video to showcase the efforts of cavers in conservation.

My personal mission for the last year has been anchors, including trying to get someone to replace Simon as Anchor Coordinator, and trying to get anchor installation to be less of a closed shop. I'm extremely grateful to Alan for stepping in as Anchor Coordinator, a job he has taken ownership of and is doing extremely well. I put forward a revised anchor policy document in October, which was accepted. This requires individual projects to receive CNCC Committee approval before anchors are handed out. The aim of course is to ensure anchors are being used for appropriate projects, but also to ensure that we are able to get lots more people trained in anchor installation, while maintaining a sensible level of control of what projects are being conducted under the CNCC name and using CNCC resources.

I have asked the BCA Equipment and Techniques Committee to approve Gary Douthwaite and Graham Coates as anchor trainers, which has been accepted. This means we technically have four trainers (Gary, Graham, Damian Weare and Simon Wilson) meaning we can hopefully arrange a training session later this year to get more installers on board. We also have a good catalogue of approved projects ready to go for these installers.

The matter of CNCC future funding has been addressed this year. Previous restrictions about what expenses we can and cannot claim back from BCA have been lifted, meaning that pretty much everything we now do can be claimed back from the BCA. There no need for us to limit our work due to finances.

This has been my final year as CNCC Secretary; six years is quite enough and it is no good for an organisation for individuals to be staying in roles for longer than this, particularly when others are keen to get involved. I am extremely grateful to Josh for coming forward to be our Assistant Secretary, and dealing with all meeting-related matters over the last year. He has my full support in taking on the full Secretary role for 2020 onwards.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as CNCC Secretary for the last six years. Thanks to some extremely dedicated fellow Officers and a supportive and guiding Committee, we have achieved so much, and I think northern cavers now see the CNCC as a valuable organisation and resource.

Matt Ewles - CNCC Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Following the agreement by the CNCC committee that the accounts should be verified by a volunteer CNCC member club, rather than pay the cost of an accountant, Craven PC have once again volunteered to verify the 2019 accounts for the 2020 AGM. The attached letter from Pat and Ric Halliwell verifies this report as accurate. The process is a little different from that of an auditors' report, in that it verifies, by inspection of bank statements, invoices, receipts and working spreadsheet that this report for the 2019 financial year is correct.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME

Balance from 2018	£2064.81
Transfer from Business Premium Account	£5600.00
Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust SIS Payment 212502	£4224.77
BCA Regional Grant for 2018	£507.14
Donation	£205.00
Training 1 st Aid Course 2018	£175.00

TOTAL INCOME **£10711.91**

EXPENSES

Meetings (Room Hire) (BCA)	£120.00
CNCC Secretarial inc. web costs (BCA)	£385.56
A&C Access Fees (BCA)	£9.20
A&C Low Birkwith Box (BCA)	£35.00
A&C Purchase of Anchor Resin (BCA)	£110.27

A&C Purchase of copies of Caves & Karst of Yorkshire Dales re donation	£200.00
A&C P5 Mileage (SIS)	£246.24
A&C P5 Scrap removal (SIS)	£809.02
A&C Crackpot Mileage (SIS)	£442.48
A&C Crackpot Equipment (SIS)	£609.47
A&C Christmas Cracker (SIS)	£420.51
A&C GG Track Repair (SIS)	£324.00
A&C New Rift Entrance Shoring	£218.46
A&C Southerscales Mileage (SIS 2018)	£41.40
A&C YDNPA – Interpretation Board Contribution	£250.00
A&C Trailer Purchase (SIS)	£3600.00
Training 1 st Aid Course (BCA)	£325.00
Training Paperless Surveying (BCA)	£328.90
Petrol Winch Purchase (SIS)	£1579.24
Training for petrol winch operation (SIS)	£720.00
Hidden Earth Support (BCA)	£77.89
Replacement Tackle Bag (Quaking work)	£53.50

TOTAL EXPENSES **£10906.14**

Balance to 2020 **£1870.58**

CNCC BUSINESS CURRENT (COMMUNITY) ACCOUNT:

Balance 1st January 2019 **£2064.81**
Interest received: £0
Balance 30th December 2019 **£1870.58**

CNCC BUSINESS PREMIUM ACCOUNT

Balance 31st December 2018 **£18533.26**
Interest received: £34.16
Transfer to Community Account £5600.00
Balance 30th December 2019 **£12967.42**

ASSETS:	Makita DPC6430 12” cutter, value new (2013)	£576.00
	Cave Cleaning kit (purchase value)	£596.19
	Trailer (2 nd hand purchase value)	£3600.00
	Petrol Winch	£1579.24

Treasurer’s Update for 2020 transactions to 1st March

Craven Pothole Club

23 Hull Road
Cottingham
East Yorkshire
HU16 4PN
Tel: 01482 876544
Email: R.A.Halliwell@hull.ac.uk
25 January 2020

CNCC Accounts 2019

Dear Pete

We have checked the bank statements, claims and receipts, summaries of cheques issued and payments received and after raising a small number of minor queries, which you have resolved entirely to our satisfaction, we are happy to state that all monies expended have been accurately accounted for and detailed in your report. Similarly all income has been correctly recorded and the bank statements are in full agreement with the records of all transactions.

With all best wishes

Dr RA Halliwell *PC Halliwell*

Dr RA Halliwell, Craven Pothole Club
Mrs PC Halliwell, Hon Librarian Craven Pothole Club

Financial Status as of 1st March 2020:

Business Community Account: £669.34

Business Saver Account: £12967.42

Since the January 2020 meeting, the following payments/receipts made:

£3600.00 Received from YDMT (SIS) re trailer purchase.

£160.80 Volunteer mileage expenses re: Sell Gill Fencing. (SIS)

£88.20 Sell Gill Fencing materials.(SIS)

£891.18 Ingleborough Estate dig stabilisation.(SIS)

£20 to Starless River re CHECC prize 2019 (Northern Caves Guide).

£41.00 Inprint Colour re Newsletter

Awaiting confirmation before paying:

£100.00 to I Lloyd re contribution towards CDG gate replacement

£18 for Room Hire – January Meeting

Pete Bann - CNCC Treasurer

BCA Grant to Regional Councils: CNCC Claim 2019

- 1) The CNCC Treasurer will be submitting a claim to BCA for a total of **£1153.49**, comprised of the following budget heads:

Meetings/Running the Organisation

- 1) Payable on the scrutinised accounts.
- 2) Allowable: Photocopying, Postage, Room hire, Stationary, Phone bills, Officer Travel expenses to meetings.
- 3) Not Allowable: anything that is NOT for the benefit of BCA members.

Meetings: Room Hire £120, Postage £22.70.

2) C&A

- 1) Up to £750 per Regional Council per year is paid for C&A according to the accounts.
- 2) C&A expenditure above £750 should be presented as projects (see above).
- 3) Allowable: Negotiating access to caves and mines, Gating of entrances, Stabilising entrances, Working with landowner to maintain access, Payment of "peppercorn" rents for access, Other liaison and public relations work related to maintaining access and promoting conservation.
- 4) Not Allowable: Digging as part of a new exploration.

C&A: Access Expenses £9.20, New Rift Entrance Shoring £218.46, Parking Fee Box (Low Birkwith) £35.00, Anchor Bonding Resin £110.27

3) Publications & Information

- 1) Payable on the scrutinised accounts.
- 2) Allowable: Publications for all BCA Members. Access Information (Handbook/Guides or Newsletters), Cave Registry, Publications primarily for the Regional Council Members (Newsletter, Handbook), Participation in events to promote caving, Publicity
- 3) Newsletters if are of general interest and participation in events to promote caving would be funded via the P&I committee or Training committee if eligible under their criteria and would not come under the remit of Finance Committee.

Publications: Newsletter £256.10.

4) Insurance

- 1) BCA provides Public Liability cover for all persons (including officers, members, *key holders*, volunteers and land owners & their employees) involved in activities on behalf of the Regional Council and Funded Access Body activities, public liability cover for land owner access agreements

Insurance: No claim for 2019.

5) Website

- 1) Payable on the scrutinised accounts.

Allowable: BCA provides basic webs services (Domain, Hosting). Regional Web services, other than those provided by BCA. General web services not linked to BCA or Regional websites.

Website: £106.76

6) Training

- 1) Grants are available for all types of training events for "recreational" cavers from Training Committee.

Training: Paperless Survey Training @6x£25 = £150, Cavers 1st Aid @£5x25=£125

7) Equipment

- 1) Allowable:
 - a) Eco Anchors and Resin will be provided for free by the Equipment Committee for sites where all BCA Member Clubs have access.
 - b) Grants are available to cover the costs of the instructor and consumables for training (including refresher training) in the placement of eco anchors from the Equipment Committee.

Conservation Officer's Report

Teams of CNCC Volunteers have been active during the year, with support from Natural England and from the Lottery Heritage-funded Stories in Stone project.

At the end of March, a group of volunteers cleared mud from formations in Crackpot Cave. A second visit was arranged, when volunteers used a pump from in the streamway to supply water to the Turnip Field and clear mud from formations. The improvement was so dramatic that conservation tape was used to delineate a pathway, in the hope that future damage would be reduced. A CNCC film of the clean-up can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lvauNQge64>

In January, CNCC volunteers helped replace the fencing around Sell Gill Holes. It is good to see the amount of independent conservation works being carried out by cavers in the region, for example the joint effort by Craven Pothole Club and Bradford Pothole Club using CNCC equipment to clear lampenflora at Stump Cross.

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 – this year volunteers were able to participate in a First Aid 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, or use the link on the CNCC website.

Kay Easton - CNCC Conservation Officer

Access Officer's Report

Greetings to all at CNCC, northern cavers and beyond. It has been a very good year for access in our region with some major developments. I have finalised negotiations with both the Leck Fell and Casterton Fell landowners, which brings some of the dales most spectacular and popular caves into the on-line booking system. This is consensual access that we are expected to negotiate as a responsible representative organisation. It makes a leap forward by opening up official access to all cavers who care to register on the system. It demonstrates the least restrictive managed access that landowners require and also benefits cavers in self-regulating traffic to cave systems and the advantage that has for conservation. However, let's be clear, we recognise that this is a compromise position and very much support our own and BCA's policy that holds the opinion that the CRoW Act does apply to caving. We fully recognise that many cavers believe that they already have, by right, a freedom of access and will continue to work towards achieving higher recognition and confirmation of that right.

This year's achievement sees the last of the 'entire fell' restrictive paper permit systems come to an end. We do still have individual caves which have permit restrictions and I intend to look at these over the next year. Some restrictions are, of course, necessary but I hope we can make some progress on caves such as Birks Fell.

While it is important to support a legal right of access where we can, just under 30% of cave entrances in the Northern Caves Guide books are on private land. Here we must deal with access on a case by case basis as all access arrangements are vulnerable to events, particularly changes in ownership. Weathercote cave and the caves of Birkwith are a good case in point which have been highlighted this year. For a very long time access to Weathercote has been severely restricted by the owner. A change in ownership and a more welcoming attitude has resulted in access here being made available on request. Conversely, although essential access has been maintained at the Birkwith caves, a change of ownership has meant that parking and getting to the caves is now much more difficult. There are a few caves in our area where we cannot arrange any official access, Dale Barn being one and, despite considerable effort by the CDG, unfortunately the Joint Hole field is another.

One aspect that helps access immeasurably is improving how landowners perceive our sport. We all need to do what we can to improve the image of caving in the public eye. We should take every opportunity to extol the special qualities of the caves of our region and promote ourselves and our sport in a favourable light. Towards that aim we have continued this year to present copies of the wonderfully informative book, Caves & Karst of the Yorkshire Dales to our cave landowners. See the letter below for the positive effect this initiative has. There is more we could probably do, both via our clubs and as individuals, please make it your priority.

Finally I have kept in touch with the National Park and with other organisations where appropriate. I've attended BCA council and C&A meetings when I can and pushed forward improvements in regional funding which should now secure our financial future spending especially on C&A work. There has also been the usual trickle of access type requests and issues which I have responded to as best I can.

I'm up for another year, but share the view that a regular turnover of officers is probably good for any organisation.

Good caving
Tim Allen

Tim Allen - CNCC Access Officer

An Extra Christmas Present for The Farmers of Upper Nidderdale

It has been the custom for many years for the Black Sheep Diggers to give the tenants who farm over the major caves of Nidderdale a small gift at Christmas as a small thank you for all the help they give us throughout the year.

As long as we are sensible and keep the farmers aware of what we are up to we have seen no restrictions placed on our digging activities and to some extent our good relationship helps all cavers who visit the area.

At the end of 2019 we were made aware that the CNCC had a small supply of Caves & Kast of the Yorkshire Dales books with which to present to land owners and tenant farmers with a view to making them more aware of what was beneath their land and to raise the profile of caving and the discoveries that have been made over the years and indeed the discoveries still to be made.

The BSD approached Tim Allen who agreed that we could have 4 copies which we would present along with our normal Christmas gifts.

We gave the books to the tenants of Limley and Thorpe farms under which lie most of the Manchester hole, Goyden and New Goyden systems. We also presented a book to the tenant of Hazel Close who has the very nicely decorated and very under visited Low Eglin's Hole on his land.

The last book we presented to the landlord of Crown Hotel in Lofthouse who for many years has supported the BSD in many ways such as allowing us to camp behind the hotel and even on occasions keeping the kitchen going until we arrive back from digging covered in mud and starving hungry.

All the books have gone down very well especially the one given to the hotel which seems to have made its way around several of the locals. These are the people we see in the bar on a regular basis and are always interested in what we are up to, although a little mystified why we do it. Many thanks to the CNCC for the donation of the books, it seems our presenting them as a Christmas gift has been a perfect example of their intended use.

BSD

Anchor Coordinator's Report - Alan Speight

Since Simon Wilson relinquished the job I have been given all the anchors for storage and handing out to installers.

I have so far handed out 35 anchors for installation. I have also purchased resin so that this can be handed out at the same time making it a one stop shop.

Additionally I have purchased two anchor extractors for the CNCC at a cost of £150

It is hoped that an anchor installation course can be arranged in the next few months, s if you are interested contact the CNCC secretary.

Any questions then let me know

Webmaster's Report - Gary Douthwaite

Apologies the stats in this report are only up until January; it's been a busy few months!

Website:

The CNCC website has continued to function trouble-free for the last year and continues to be a very popular resource for northern cavers, in terms of providing access information, topos, cave descriptions and news of all the latest goings on in the CNCC world.

From January 2019 to January 2020: **118,012 page views** (41% increase on previous year).

There remains a strong correlation between publishing of major news stories and page views; the update on the Birkwith parking situation, Leck Fell and Casterton Fell access changes, and newsletter publications all achieving a 'spike' in website usage.

Facebook:

As of 7th January 2020, there were 1036 page likes on Facebook, having steadily increased by about 200 through 2019.

Twitter:

We have 412 follows as of 7th January 2020.

Cave descriptions and topos download stats (correct up to 7th January 2020):

- Publications (since 16/09/2018) **4,965** (3,409 unique)
- Topos (since 20/11/2018) **33,473** (22,052 unique)
- Cave descriptions (since 20/11/2018) **24,484** (16,834 unique)

It is now extremely common to see fellow cavers turning up for a weekend armed with topos and descriptions printed from the CNCC website. Matt continues to manage the cave descriptions and I look after the topos, helping to ensure standardised presentation/formatting.

Online booking system:

By the time of the AGM I expect the Online Booking System to have exceeded 500 registered users and 1000 bookings. Some interesting statistics:

- On average two bookings per day since launch (1st November 2018)
- Of the users who specified gender there are **61 female users** and **335 male users**.
- 395 users have given their birth year; **Average 43.6, youngest 17, oldest 78**

Verbal feedback on the booking system has been positive, with a surprising number of cavers saying they value it for managing caver traffic and avoiding congestion (not its primary purpose).

The amount of use the online booking system now receives may necessitate some upgrades over the coming year to deal with the traffic.

BCA Youth & Development Representative's Report - David Botcherby

Things with the Y&D group have been going well. We recently helped a new caving club in Bangor set themselves up, so prepare for some Welsh students exploring some Dales caving in the near future. Discussions with a certain uncooperative university guild have been stepped up, with myself and Josh White attending a meeting with their staff last December. As they are regular Dales cavers you should be pleased to hear we're trying to get them caving more regularly and safely.

The main thing that is likely of particular interest is a new group facilitating youth caving in the Dales. At Y&D's recommendation, the BCA has joined Stories in Stone to back a youth caving project called the Adventure Academy, which will take 14 young (12-21) people out caving weekly over the March-November period. The project is run by Yorkshire Dales Guides and will be open to people within a commutable distance of the Ingleborough Dales. More information can be found here: <https://www.yorkshiredalesguides.co.uk/adventure-academy>

The plans for regional youth caving teams are still being developed. The Dales will likely be the first region to have a team, and you will be kept posted on progress. The first order of business will be a kit store, for which some plans are in motion.

Meets Secretary's Reports - Geoff Whittaker (Aygill, Ingleborough, Leck, Casterton)

Conventional and online permits issued per month 2019/2020 as at 16/02/2020

Aygill Caverns

There has been just one permit request for Aygill Caverns since last March.

Casterton Fell.

Conventional Permit requests for Casterton Fell per month have relaxed slightly since last March possibly since Leck Fell went onto the online booking system - see table below for a monthly breakdown permits issued per month. A new column is now added for the recently online bookings.

Leck Fell

Since last October, bookings for Leck Fell have increased rapidly, this increase is mainly due to Leck Fell being added to the online booking system. There has also been an increase in mid week bookings compared to when the original permit system was in place - see table below for a monthly breakdown permits issued per month.

There have been no issues raised from the Estate as far as I'm aware.

Ingleborough Estate/Allotment and Newby Moss

The online system bookings continue to operate smoothly, although there has been a slight decrease in bookings compared to previous months - see table below for a monthly breakdown permits issued per month.

There have been no issues raised from the Estate as far as I'm aware.

2019/20	Aygill Caverns	Casterton Fell	Leck Fell	Ingleborough	
March		34		31	38
April		43		21	0
May		23		12	0
June		26		37	0
July	1	17		19	3
August		36		12	24
September		30		26	50
October		36		28	70
November		42		28	73
December		47		42	76
2020					
January	1	20		19	72
February		22	14	17	62
Totals	2	299	14	292	468

Meets Secretary's Reports - Matt Ewles (Excalibur)

As per my Secretary report, I have managed to get the Excalibur access agreement revised this year. The landowner continues to want some levels of restriction to access as it is a commercial shooting estate, and the parking area is on the driveway to his house, but was happy to take my recommendations in line with current practise that access is made available for all, not just BCA member clubs. Therefore, we are still one permit per week (Sunday only during shooting season), which is ample for the current demand. I usually issue permits for a full weekend to give flexibility. The entrance is locked at the request of the landowner, but the key is in a nearby keysafe so a code is issued with the permit so no inconvenience to cavers. Jenga Pot, which connects to Excalibur now, is not part of the permit (it lies across a land boundary so has a different owner), but access to Excalibur permit holders has so far been perfectly accepted. The gamekeepers are very friendly with cavers, and as long as common sense with parking and good countryside etiquette by visiting groups is continued, I don't foresee any access issues in the near future. Excalibur typically receives 3-5 visiting groups each year; understandable given the out-the-way location, but a shame as the main streamway really is superb.

Meets Secretary's Reports - Ric Halliwell (Birks Fell, Robinson's, Fairy Holes, Mongo Gill)

General

This is my 31st year as permit issuer and there have been no changes this year regarding access agreements relating to Birks Fell, Robinsons Pot, Ludwell Fairy Holes and Mongo Gill.

Birks Fell

I received only 4 requests for permits for 2019 and I have received 2 so far for 2020. This is either a real shame as this is a great trip, or does it mean more people are going down without requesting 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 (See CNCC website for details). 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 which I negotiated on the basis that there was a far larger demand than the 5 previously available.

Ludwell Fairy Holes

This is the 7th year of access to this cave. I issued a total of 10 out of the available 12 permits last year taken up by 9 clubs. I have received only 3 requests for the available 2020 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 is up for renewal and I am discussing the removal of the need for a permit. I hope to achieve this later in the year. I received only 3 requests for a permit in 2019 (compared with 38 thirty years ago) and have so far received only 1 for 2020. .

Stump Cross

There is no agreement regarding access to Stump Cross Caverns because the entrance to the cave is within the showcave/café building. I have however negotiated access for three groups this year and hope that eventually we will be able to gain access for a small number on a regular basis. However I envisage this being a long term process which could easily be derailed if there are any problems with any of the groups who are allowed access.