



Alum Pot by John Dale

NEWSLETTER

Issue 12 Oct 2022

Editorial

Welcome to the 12th in this series of CNCC newsletters. Here you will find a comprehensive record of our work and other northern caving news spanning the last 18 months. With our mailing list now 400+ people strong, and our social media following greater still, these newsletters are less about updating you with news as-it-happens, but more about compiling our stories into one place to showcase the work volunteers have been putting in to keep our caves accessible, safe and tidy, and to promote our sport. Importantly, this newsletter shows the pandemic did not dampen our enthusiasm and energy for northern caving. As always, a massive thank you to all our contributors and volunteers who make this happen.

Matt Ewles (Editor)

Your CNCC

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Showcasing northern caving



The canvas prints ready for display at the YDNP Headquarters. Photo by Tim Allen

In September 2021, we produced 20 framed photographs by Mark Burkey, Gary Douthwaite and Clive Westlake, depicting some of the most iconic scenes in northern caving. These were intended for distribution to venues across our region to help promote caving.

We are pleased to say that these photos have now been distributed to High Borrans Outdoor Education Centre, Settle Tourist Information, and the Yorkshire Subterranean Society hut, with a few remaining should any further opportunities arise. We would like to thank Mark Burkey for doing the printing and adding a border (at his own cost) to such a high standard.

Fast forward ten months to July 2022, when the opportunity arose to showcase northern caving through a display in the concourse of the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP) Yoredale headquarters in Bainbridge. This would be in pride of place for YDNP staff to see, as well

as providing a centrepiece for any visitors, including the public and representatives from other like-minded organisations.

This opportunity was realised by our former Access Officer, Tim Allen, who knew that the chance to get such a prominent showcase for caving was too good to miss.

The standard of the display needed to be very high (printed canvas rather than paper), and the available slot was only a matter of weeks away. A quick poll of the CNCC Committee showed strong support for spending around £1000 of our funds, the estimated cost, on the display and so Tim set to work selecting photos and getting these commercially printed. Thank you to Mark Burkey, Gary Douthwaite, and Tim, for contributing photos.

The theme of the display is 'Pitches, Passage, Pretties and People', with a total of 18 photos spanning these categories printed on canvas to a high standard, with caption plaques. There is also a board with information and links to online resources so that anyone wanting to learn more can easily do so; These details are also available as a printout on the reception.

Tim went up to the offices at Bainbridge on 9th August to set everything up. He even managed to chat to YDNP Chief Executive, David Butterworth, and give him a tour of the display.



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The display was originally expected to be up for three months, however, in October Tim was told it was providing a great talking point for staff and visitors alike, and that we can leave it in place for longer; Perhaps for the rest of this year or more. If you can call in (office hours only) before the end of the year, please do, and leave a note in the visitor book.

As well as raising awareness of caving and the underground environment across our region, we hope that these initiatives will bring caving to the forefront of minds when considering the National Park. Sports and activities such as climbing, walking, fell running, bird watching etc. are often cited as activities on our fells. However, only in recent times, thanks to initiatives such as this, has caving started to be specifically called out in documents from official organisations, such as the Glover review into CRoW and the recent Millennium Trust Lune Valley initiative. This can only be a good thing if we need help regarding access, funding for conservation, or other kinds of support in the future.

Once the display is over, which we expect will be early 2023 sometime, we are hoping to repurpose it elsewhere. Follow us on social media, UKCaving or via our mailing list to learn more.

We would like to thank Tim, who has put in a tremendous amount of effort into bringing this together so quickly. We would also like to thank Ali Jarrett and Wendy McDonnell from the YDNP Headquarters for their support and assistance.



Tim Allen shows YDNP Chief Executive, David Butterworth, the caving images.



The display at the YDNP Office in Bainbridge

CNCC equipment available for use

Over the years, CNCC has accumulated a large variety of kit!

This includes conservation consumables and apparatus such as barrier tape, pins, water sprayers and brushes for below-ground restorative and protection work, and landscaping tools, tarpaulins, power tools, PPE, shuttering boards, a petrol capstan winch, lengths of pipe, and even a trailer for surface works including rubbish removal and entrance restoration.

For anchor installation, we have a Makita SDS battery powered drill and selection of drill bits, resin and of course the anchors themselves.

A full catalogue can now be found on our website:

www.cncc.org.uk/about/assets

This equipment is stored in various locations in The Dales, and is available for use by cavers undertaking conservation, anchoring or other projects on behalf of the caving community. Just drop our Conservation Officer or Anchor Coordinator an email if you need to borrow any supplies:

- conservation@cncc.org.uk
- anchors@cncc.org.uk

Note that some of the kit does require basic training prior to use.



Facelift for www.cncc.org.uk

Through 2021-2022, our Web Officer, Gary Douthwaite, has given our website a facelift. Regular users will notice only cosmetic changes to bring the website up to modern design standards, however, behind the scenes, the site has been redeveloped to enable simpler content management and implement security updates.

Importantly, the entire site is now fully mobile phone friendly, whereas previously some parts did not work as they should. Our statistics tell us that 57% of all access to our website is via a mobile device, so ensuring mobile-device optimisation is essential.

For anyone not yet familiar with our website you can:

- Check access and location details for northern caves.
- Download rigging topos and cave descriptions.
- Check out our latest news stories.
- Sign up to our mailing list (see below).
- View and sign up to upcoming training workshops.
- Learn about resin bonded anchors.
- See information and documents for our meetings.
- Report any safety or conservation issues or description/topo errors.
- View conservation resources, projects or sign up as a volunteer.
- Access useful resources on caving safety.

Interesting, our website statistics show over 10000 page visits per month from over 2500 different users. Roughly two thirds of our users are based in the UK, and two thirds are male. Our users have a relatively wide age demographic. Each day there are about 150 topo and cave description downloads... that's one every 10 minutes!

Join our mailing list...

There is a link to sign up to our mailing list on our website homepage, or you can reach it using the address below:

www.cncc.org.uk/mailling-list

You only need to enter your email address (no other personal details needed). Your details will be used only to send roughly monthly emails with the latest news relating to access, training, conservation, anchoring and cave descriptions, plus any important notices we feel you may need to be aware of as they happen. So far we have over 400 people signed up and the feedback has been very positive.

Lune Valley initiative

The Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust have a new initiative surrounding the Lune Valley/Three Counties region. This scheme aims to gather funding to deliver a wide range of projects and initiatives to make the region even easier for people to access and enjoy.

The areas covered span Casterton Fell, Leck Fell, Kingsdale and western Ingleborough including Ribbleshead and Chapel-le-Dale.

Encouraging, the Three Counties System is specifically called out in their scope document, so they are already aware of participation in caving in the region and the importance of our sport.

The project is analogous to the former Stories in Stone initiative, covering the Ingleborough area, where we benefitted from considerable funding for several conservation projects. The CNCC was praised for our proactivity in spending money; something cavers are not usually known for!

Back in April this year, we circulated a survey that the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust were running to gather the widest range of views and ideas from people who live in or visit the area. What more could be done to benefit the landscape, improve access and enjoyment?

Hopefully, several cavers will have made their voices heard, and we can benefit from this project in the future.

Roy Holmes 1941-2022

We are saddened to hear that Roy Holmes passed away on 6th September.

Roy was CNCC Chair from 2008 to 2017, which encompassed an extremely turbulent time for our organisation with many changes. He skilfully led us through those times, showing authority, fairness, and impartiality. He kept meetings on-topic and when things got heated, his no-nonsense speaking, often complemented by quick wit and sense of humour, always managed to ease the atmosphere. He was the right man for the job at the right time and we are extremely thankful for his efforts.

Roy stepped down from CNCC with such heated meetings being a thing of the past, and he can be credited with helping to achieve this and so much of our subsequent work.

Roy's passion for northern caving, particularly in his home patch of Dentdale shone through, as did his desire to encourage exploration across our region. His involvement with the Cave Rescue Organisation spanned over 50 years!

Roy really was one of northern caving's great characters and he will be greatly missed.

ANCHORS

Mayday Hole, Dowlass Moss

Mayday Hole was catalogued in the old Northern Caves as being 39m deep and blocked after the third pitch. In our last newsletter, we reported on efforts which have now extended Mayday to 120m depth, via some fine pitches and varied underground situations.



Installing the final anchor at Mayday Hole. Photo by Matt Ewles

Unlike many of the neighbouring offerings on Dowlass and Newby Moss, Mayday Hole is a reasonably spacious multi-pitch pothole. It is sure to be popular, particularly as it is reported to be explorable in moderately wet conditions, and it is open access.

With permission from the team once initial exploration was complete, CNCC anchor installers Mark Sims and Toby Buxton set to work. Working from the bottom of the cave up, they completed the majority in just one day. However, at the top of the third pitch the drill batteries ran out. The following week, Gary Douthwaite and Matt Ewles finished the job.

The entrance is easier to find than others on Dowlass Moss. Park on the Ingleton to Clapham high road just 50m east of where the Cold Cotes junction joins. About 50m up the farm track there is a gate onto the fell. Follow the track uphill towards Ingleborough for 1km. The track becomes vague before reaching a fork. Keep left and after 200m the obvious double shakehole of Bridge Pot is passed on the right of the track, with a line of shakeholes on the left. Mayday Hole is 50m from the track along that left line of shakeholes, with an anchor now visible in the entrance.

A rigging topo is available on our website. We have not yet published a route description, but as the cave is mostly vertical, it is simply a matter of following the obvious route, frequently punctuated by the new anchors.

F'ing Hopeless Pot, Leck Fell

Soon after the Mayday Hole discovery, the same team turned their attention back to Leck Fell, where they discovered F'ing Hopeless Pot, just 100m beyond Notts Pot. There is a stunning writeup of this discovery in Descent issues 287 and 288, including some breathtaking photos.

Anchor installation was completed on 20th August by Gary Douthwaite and Matt Ewles. Thank you to Tim Allen for showing them around (the navigation is not as straightforward as Mayday Hole).

The three down-pitches, and the up-pitch to Eggshell Chamber and Levelling Up have been fitted with stainless steel resin bonded IC anchors. A rigging topo and route description can be found on our website.

F'ing Hopeless Pot is a very well decorated cave. Most of the formations are beyond the pitches (and quite a lot of wet and grotty crawling). This is a trip for experienced and careful cavers only. Eggshell Chamber, Speechless Grotto and beyond contain very vulnerable formations and it is essential that cavers visiting these areas do so with extreme care. Move slowly with awareness of your surroundings. Avoid taking unnecessary kit to these areas to minimise risks. Go only as a small and experienced team, one at a time near formations, but working together to protect the cave. Go with the ambition to enjoy seeing the formations and the determination that your visit will have negligible impact on them.

This is our chance to both enjoy this fine discovery, but to also set an example of conservation etiquette and good practice.



Digging at F'ing Hopeless Pot. Photo by Frank Pearson

NEW DESCRIPTIONS

F'ing Hopeless Pot has been added to the CNCC's online booking system, which we encourage use of; partly out of courtesy to the landowner and partly to avoid congestion in the cave due to multiple groups visiting on the same day which could raise conservation challenges.

If you are just looking for a clean and simple day out, there are definitely far better options on Leck Fell. F'ing Hopeless is a trip for those who don't mind some grotty and muddy crawling to see some great formations, and who fully understand the care needed to ensure their preservation.

Five Ways Pot, Dowlass Moss

As if two big discoveries weren't enough, the same team have also extended Five Ways Pot on Dowlass Moss to over 100m in depth!

Anchor installation has been approved by the CNCC Committee and work is planned for winter at some point. Follow us on social media, UKCaving or our mailing list for more news on when work is complete.

Curtain Pot, Fountains Fell



Formations in one of the excellent passages of Curtain Pot. Photo by Gary Douthwaite.

Curtain Pot on Fountains Fell is certainly a remote spot and must surely justify a high entry into the northern England top-ten list of hard-to-find potholes! Being an hour walk from Dale Head across some challenging terrain, you might wonder whether it is worth the bother.

Well... we can definitively confirm that it is worth every bit of effort!

Curtain Pot sports 12 short and mostly simple pitches, climbs, plenty of horizontal development, some good formations, impressive passages, and it isn't anywhere near as difficult as many of its nearby sibling potholes (such as Strangle Pot and Hammer Pot). Best of all, as of December 2021, Curtain Pot has been fitted with CNCC resin bonded IC anchors.

A trip down Curtain Pot is a fabulous and long adventure which is sure to become popular. We are delighted to now include a rigging topo and route description on our website to assist with your visit.

Scanty Lardos Pot, Halton Gill

Scanty Lardos Pot at the top of Penyghent Gill near Halton Gill, is proving to be an increasing popular trip.

The cave, discovered in 2014 by the White Rose Pothole Club team, sports three pitches, some good formations, and can be well-watered and dramatic (although you may wish to think twice about descending in very wet conditions, which can make the entrance impassable).

Scanty Lardos Pot benefits from being open access, right next to the road, and as of 2021 is fitted with CNCC resin bonded IC anchors. A topo and route description can be found on our website.

Pasture Gill Pot, Langstrothdale

Pasture Gill Pot was popularised by Mike Cooper's 'Not For The Faint Hearted' guidebook. This challenging pothole offers a diversity of caving situations and rewards. Anchoring started several years ago, but was only completed in 2021, and we are pleased to include a rigging topo on our website. A good route description can be found in Mike's book.

Southerscales Pot, Chapel-le-Dale

In July 2021, we published a route description for Southerscales Pot near Chapel-le-Dale. This description was submitted by Alex Ritchie, who proposed this cave as somewhat of a little gem. Those equipped with good kneepads for the long crawling will be rewarded to an interesting and quirky adventure. A good Sunday or Friday night trip perhaps?

Greensett Cave, Whernside

In March 2022 a volunteer submitted a description for Greensett Cave. This took us rather by surprise, as we didn't even have this cave listed on our database, and it required some nosing through an old copy of Northern Caves to familiarise ourselves with the site.

Greensett Cave is a seldom-visited, open-access, short cave with multiple entrances, located on the eastern slopes of Whernside about 50 minutes walk from Ribbleshead. It is a stream cave with some impressive chambers, formations, and an excellent short adventure without ropework.

On a warm summer day with a rucksack containing basic caving kit, our route description, and a picnic, this should be an excellent day out.

Crackpot Cave, Swaledale

In November 2021 we published an online route description for the magnificent Crackpot Cave in Swaledale.

This splendid short cave really shows off everything that is great about caving, including crawls, an outstanding main stream, sizable chambers and nice formations. It is a great spot for careful novices, however, even experienced cavers will be hard-pressed to deny enjoying a visit.

The CNCC has spent a lot of time over recent years cleaning up Crackpot Cave following decades of damage (see Newsletter 10), and several areas can now be enjoyed reasonably close to their original natural beauty.

Anyone visiting, particular with novices, is urged to use Crackpot Cave to explain and demonstrate the importance of conservation, to help ensure this remains a stunning place to inspire cavers and budding cavers for generations to come.



Crackpot Cave. Photo by Gary Douthwaite.

Crackpot Cave is an excellent place for novices to gain a first experience underground. We advise that any novices thinking about a trip, please remember some key messages:

- Ideally go with at least one other person.
- Tell someone else exactly where you are going.
- Agree with them the latest time by which you will report back.
- Ensure that person is aware of the need to call police and ask for cave rescue if you do not report back by your agreed time.
- Helmet and sturdy footwear (wellies or walking boots) are essential.
- Wear caving kit OR warm old clothes with boiler suit/old waterproofs.
- Take two independent water-resistant light sources per person (ideally one should be helmet-mounted for optimum enjoyment).
- During or after very wet weather, do not enter the streamway.
- Respect the cave; do not touch formations or make any marks.
- **Leave the cave exactly as you found it.**

Open access for Birks Fell Cave

For years, the CNCC has been working to remove access restrictions from caves on land covered by the Countryside Rights of Way Act.

This has been achieved across large estates such as Ingleborough, Penyghent, Fountains Fell, Leck Fell, and most recently Casterton Fell, where open access is now enjoyed, sometimes with a polite request to use our online booking system.



Adele Ward at Elbow Bend in Birks Fell Cave. Photo by Gary Douthwaite.

After the caves of Casterton Fell were removed from their historic permit arrangement in 2020, this left only a handful of CRoW access land caves with restricted access via a CNCC-facilitated permit system. One of these was Birks Fell Cave in Wharfedale.

Anyone who has ever visited Birks Fell Cave will extol the wonders of this system. The cave was originally explored by the Yorkshire Ramblers in the 1930s, extended in the 1940s by the Bradford Pothole Club, however it was to be one of the Craven Pothole Club's finest hours when in 1968 they broke through a choke and explored most of the cave we know today.

Following the water for hours downstream, the visiting caver is treated to some initial crawls and canals, then avens, stomping stream passages, pitches, cascades, and The Grand Gallery including some great flowstone. It is one of Yorkshire's finest underground offerings.

Birks Fell Cave had been subject to a CNCC Permit system for decades. It was even threatened with closure following some rescues during the 'closed season' soon after the agreement was reached. This permit system and a requirement for one-month advanced notice had persisted until this year, despite the cave being on access (CRoW-covered) land.

Birks Fell Cave suffers from serious flooding, and is not a cave to enter after or during rainfall. The advanced notice required for permits meant that trips would often get rained-off, while also preventing any last-minute trips when the weather did allow a visit. Birks Fell Cave has consequently fallen out of favour with many cavers.

During 2021, Matt Ewles volunteered to engage with the National Trust about removing restrictions at Birks Fell Cave (we didn't have an Access Officer at the time, although this has since been rectified thanks to Adele Ward). The CNCC, backed by the BCA, believe that caving is an allowable activity under CRoW, and therefore we felt that we were no longer able to facilitate access restrictions at this site.

The National Trust were extremely cooperative, knowledgeable, and friendly, and were very amenable to an open access alternative agreement. However, one requirement was that they would need indemnification from liability resulting from those visiting the cave.

This didn't seem an issue in early discussions, as for 15 years the BCA's public liability insurance had covered landowners who opt to participate in our access agreements. This reassurance has gained us access to several sites over the years. However, changes to the BCA insurance policy in 2021 meant we could no longer offer this without imposing restrictions on who could gain access. We had no intention of reversing our 2015 commitment to pursue access for all (especially for a cave on CRoW access land), and so we opted to withdraw from the access agreement and we now advise cavers that access to Birks Fell Cave requires no permission.

We continued to maintain a friendly dialogue with National Trust throughout this process. They put forward no opposition to our actions.

We continue to recommend responsible parking in Buckden (pay and display car park in the village) and an approach via the public footpath near Redmire Farm, keeping to footpaths until the access land. If we all park sensibly, change with appropriate discretion, be courteous to others (including the tenants at Redmire Farm if you meet them), this will mean cavers will maintain our excellent reputation in the local area.

This is a particularly poignant outcome, as the land around Birks Fell Cave was gifted to National Trust by the late Graham Watson, who was a caver; it seems only right that this speleological gem of Wharfedale is now able to be freely enjoyed by cavers with appropriate equipment, abilities, and of course, during dry and settled weather only.

Wretched Rabbit - News due soon!

As reported in our last newsletter, a major collapse at the entrance to Wretched Rabbit has required us to recommend against access here. The magnitude of the collapse, affecting the entire cliff above the entrance, is very extensive, and work was planned for this summer (2022) to restore a safe route back into the cave. We hope to bring news very soon; Follow us on social media, UKCaving or via our mailing list to stay informed.

Aygill Caverns unblocked

Since we reported the blockage of Aygill Caverns in our last newsletter, a team have worked through Spring and Summer 2021, regaining access in August, meaning the cave could be declared open again. The work was nicely documented on the UKCaving forum. Visitors are reminded that the hydrology of the cave is likely to have changed, so be extremely cautious about descending during or after wet conditions.

White Scar Cave reopened

In June 2021, we announced a collapse in Big Bertha boulder choke, just beyond the show-cave in White Scar Cave. Access for cavers beyond the show-cave was suspended pending remedial work.

The needs of this work turned out to be quite substantial and was hampered on occasions by Covid challenges and poor weather.

We are pleased to say however that White Scar Cave is open again for trips beyond the show cave. A large unstable boulder in the choke behind Big Bertha has been removed by members of the Craven Pothole Club, and a new route installed utilising a 600mm plastic drainpipe to protect cavers from any further rockfall.

It is imperative for your safety that cavers follow the route through the plastic pipe. There is a pull-rope through the pipe to assist in negotiating its traverse. Alternatively, if water levels allow, there is an alternative route via a duck just to the left of the pipe.

As with all boulder chokes, nearby areas still require great care when passing through, especially in the rift just behind Big Bertha itself, where boulders remain wedged just above head height. For obvious reasons, do not disturb these boulders or climb up the rift above them.

Requests for access beyond the show cave should be made in advance to the Cave Management at White Scar. See details on the CNCC website.



The new pipe in the boulder choke near Big Bertha in White Scar Cave.

Ongoing issues at High Birkwith

We reported in our last newsletter, and several times via other media since, the ongoing conflict with the new owners of High Birkwith Farm. They are now refusing all access to the caves on their land, including Calf Holes, Browgill, Birkwith Cave, Old Ing, amongst others.

We are aware what a major blow this is for northern caving, and we have done everything possible to come to an agreement, but their position is heavily entrenched. Be assured the CNCC is not giving up on this, but we must warn that the situation is not likely to change anytime soon.

Problematic trees

Since Storm Arwen in late November 2021, several fallen trees around some of our most popular potholes have been causing issues.

At Jingling Pot, Rumbling Hole and Gaping Gill, fallen trees have been reported hanging or perched across the entrance, presenting a serious hazard. For all three, CNCC have coordinated volunteers to oversee the removal. Many thanks to Martin Holroyd, Adele Ward, Jason Mallinson, Kevin Gannon and others for responding to our requests for help.

Ash Dieback continues to affect our region. So far this year, two entrances that are badly affected have been brought to our attention.

At Bull Pot of the Witches, the tree often used for rigging of the Direct Route has Dieback and dead branches are already dropping off; The whole tree may drop at some point. Cavers should identify an alternative safe route of descent (for example, Chimney Route).

At Alum Pot, several trees have been affected and are in a critical condition or completely dead. They are likely to start dropping branches and may even get uprooted and fall down the shaft. Check the status carefully before descending, consider avoiding Alum Pot altogether during particularly gusty winds until the issue is sorted, and of course, don't use these trees for rigging purposes unless you want a Darwin award.

This is a situation we are going to continue to monitor and take action where required.



Removal of the fallen tree overhanging Gaping Gill

CONSERVATION

Grassington Moor Mines

Through 2020-2021, representatives from the Grassington Mines Appreciation Group (GMAG) undertook a mammoth initiative to arrange permissions and funding to make safe many of the poorly capped mine shafts on Grassington Moor.



A completed fence around Glory Mine, previously covered only with rotten wooden sleepers and spoil. Photo by Sam Roberts

Recognising the importance of this work, and the enthusiasm and professionalism of the volunteers, the CNCC agreed to sponsor this project, and we are delighted to have received an update from Sam Roberts (GMAG Treasurer) on their progress:

"The Grassington Mines Appreciation Group (GMAG) is a voluntary organisation dedicated to preserving and documenting the historic lead mines across Grassington Moor. One of their ongoing projects sponsored by the CNCC involves fencing off the many incorrectly capped mine shafts present on the moor.

As the area is classed as common land with no known owner, it would be impossible to determine who is responsible for fencing the shafts, hence why they have remained almost untouched for at least 140 years. GMAG have taken on the project for a variety of reasons not least in an effort to make the moor safer for visitors and animals.

Many of the shafts have been capped with railway sleepers covered in mounds of spoil and any disturbance to the remains without permission is an offence under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. Until now this has rendered many of the shafts inaccessible, however as part of their work, the group has permission to remove the spoil allowing them access to record and document the mines from within.

The group began the project in May 2021 following a £2000 donation from the CNCC as well as funding from the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund, the Chatsworth Estate, Subterranea Britannica and private donations from members.

As of March 2022, GMAG members have given up 426 hours of voluntary work having completed eight fences out of fourteen in total."

Since applying for permission to undertake the project in March 2020, the group have located several additional shafts that need fencing, so moving forward the aim will be to expand the project seeking additional consent and funding to deal with these further sites.

This project beautifully showcases how members of the cave and mine exploration community take a leading role in making safe, preserving, and documenting our industrial heritage. These are funds very well spent and CNCC is proud to have sponsored this initiative.

The group have an excellent website (www.grassingtonmines.com) with more information, as well as a proactive Facebook presence.

Bull Pot of the Witches boulder

In February 2022, we publicised a report about fallen boulders poised above the climb into Burnett's Great Cavern in Bull Pot of the Witches.



On Sunday 20th February, a team went to have a look at the offending blocks. Paul Moore reported that there was a small boulder which they trundled out of the way and then reduced in size and stacked, however there was a much bigger slab which caused the greatest concern as it was at the exact point you climb over.

The team returned a few days later and were able to reduce the boulder to rubble, which was then stacked, packed, and the area generally made safe.

Our thanks to the entire team for their efforts and for reacting so quickly.

Great Douk shakehole repairs

In May 2021, we issued a warning about a shakehole which had collapsed into the Great Douk streamway. While not causing a blockage, further falls seemed likely (into a very popular and well-transited route) and of course the new hole presented a danger to livestock.



The first lintels going into the collapsed shakehole near Great Douk, by Alan Wylie

Due to Covid and several wet weekends, this took a little while to address, however, in April 2022, CNCC Conservation Volunteers Tim Sullivan, Alan Wylie, Adele Ward and Ged Benn, along with CNCC Chair, Andrew Hinde as supervisor, started work at the collapsed shakehole.

The first inspection of the hole was not very promising as there didn't seem to be much solid rock, but after clearing the area, sufficient solid ledges were found to hold some lintels. Two short lintels fitted perfectly across the hole and the long one, after cutting, went across at right angles. Large rocks were then used to lock them in place and progressively smaller materials were piled on, finishing off with a layer of grassy sods.

Meanwhile, Andrew monitored the cave entrance to warn any cavers who were likely to be passing underneath.

Thank you to our volunteers for giving their time to sort this. Our efforts have also been appreciated by the local farmer, who has been in touch to say thank you.



Meregill cleanup. Photo by Dick Gerrish.

Meregill wire removal

In April 2022, a team of keen volunteers got in touch to ask about a load of wire at the bottom of Meregill Hole entrance. After identifying that this was abandoned (possibly from a rescue long ago), the team descended on 28th April and were able to remove two tackle-sacks worth of it!

Many thanks to the volunteers who took initiative, got in touch, and then took action to remove this abandoned material. Great work!

Alum Pot stiles replaced

On 28th September 2022, CNCC volunteers Alan Wylie, Adele Ward, Tim Sullivan, Andy Hall, Steve Warren, Ian Hodge and Sally Hodge, led by Ged Benn (BPC) plus Adam Waters and Andrew Hinde from Natural England, set out to attend to three stiles in the Alum Pot area.

These stiles are mostly used by cavers, so we were keen to see them repaired. Landowner permission had been arranged.

The stile to Alum Pot itself, encountered on the track from Selside on the south east side of the enclosure, was in a sad state of repair and was replaced by a through-stone stile on the opposite side of the enclosure (nearer to the North West Route). The remains of the old wooden stile were removed from site completely.

Access to the Alum Pot is therefore now from the north west end only (around the back of the enclosure as you approach from Alum Pot Lane at Selside) using the new stone through-stile; please do not try to cross elsewhere as this is both dangerous and may damage the walling.

Once into the enclosure, a traverse around to the South East Route can be made, with care.

A new ladder stile was built at the bottom of Borrins Moor to replace the old one (at the crossing onto the limestone pavement on route to Upper Long Churn). Additionally, at the existing through-stile higher up Borrins Moor near Wilson's Cave, the top stones were mortared into place to prevent further damage to the wall from individuals crossing here.

A splendid achievement and a hard day of work from our volunteers! Many thanks to Alan Wylie and Andy Hall for taking so many excellent photos, some shown here and others on our website.



The completed new stile on the north west side of Alum Pot. Photo by Andy Hall.



The new stile onto Borrins Moor on route to Upper Long Churn. Photo by Alan Wylie.

TRAINING



The CNCC is now in the second full year of running our new-style, and increasingly popular training workshops.

These workshops span SRT skills, with sessions for beginners or those seeking to refresh their knowledge or build upon an existing background with more advanced techniques. We also have sessions for those looking to start or develop their rigging, or to learn rescue techniques.

Most of our indoor workshops are at the Yorkshire Dales Guides barn at Stainforth, however, we are now holding an increasing number of sessions underground too, with some workshops spanning two days to allow indoor and underground training elements to be covered.

Recent workshops have focused on more specific underground skills including pull-throughs and ladder and lifeline technique.

We have also run workshops covering cave geology (the popular tours by the 'Rock Doctor', John Helm) and cave photography (by Mark Burkey). We are keen to hear more ideas for workshop themes you would find useful.

The workshops so far have typically been priced at £25/day, which is extremely competitive (these rates are subsidised by CNCC) and the feedback we have been receiving has been excellent.



We have now published our winter 2022-2023 workshop catalogue. A list of all upcoming workshops with details and signup options can be found at www.cncc.org.uk/training and you can email our Training Officer with any questions (training@cncc.org.uk).

Sessions for winter 2022-2023 include:

- **5th November:** Underground geology tour
- **5th November:** SRT improver/refreshers workshop
- **12th November:** SRT underground refresher workshop
- **13th November:** SRT rescue workshop
- **10-11th December:** Two-day new to rigging/refreshers workshop
- **17-18th December:** Two-day new to SRT/refreshers workshop
- **14-15th January:** Two-day SRT improver/refreshers workshop
- **21-22nd January:** Two-day SRT rescue workshop
- **12th February:** Try caving session hosted by the Craven Pothole Club
- **12th February:** Ladder and lifeline workshop
- **12th February:** New to SRT rigging/refreshers
- **4-5th March:** Two-day new to SRT workshop

We understand that this training model is now being adopted across other regions, so we are proud to say that CNCC is leading the way nationally.

You will see that amongst our February 2023 offerings for the first time, is a free-of-charge 'Try Caving' session. In these sessions, we partner with a volunteer club who will host and run the event, to give budding cavers the chance to try caving out, and of course, the club a chance to recruit some new members! We would love to hear from other clubs who might be willing to host further sessions if this one proves popular.

Want to get involved?

Being involved in the CNCC can take many forms.

Full membership:

Our full member clubs can vote at our AGM, will be called upon for input on any serious matters that arise through the year and will receive email notifications and updates. If your club is not already a full member (you can find a list on our website), you can contact our Secretary for information on how to apply.

Officer:

Our officers work hard to perform the day to day functions of the CNCC. They advise, make recommendations, and carry out the wishes of the Committee. This is a real chance to make a big difference to northern caving, and anyone interested should contact our Secretary for more information.

Committee:

Each year up to fourteen of our full member clubs and a representative for non-club cavers can be elected to the CNCC Committee, who then meet at least three times a year to work in the best interests of our member clubs and northern cavers. If you are interested in standing for the Committee, please contact our Secretary for more information.

Find more information at:
www.cncc.org.uk/getinvolved

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