COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Reports for 15th January 2022 Committee Meeting

Chairman's Report

I have nothing new to report that will not be covered by other officer reports.

I would just like to thank all the groups and individuals who have volunteered for CNCC over the last 12 months. Some particularly notable achievements have taken place in cave entrance reconstructions and damaged tree clearances. The training opportunities provided by CNCC have been well attended and the positive feed- back is rewarding for those who plan and deliver the workshops.

The excellent work of the Conservation volunteers is always well covered by the Publicity and Communications team across all media platforms. It is crucial that people understand that this work is not something that others will do for you. We all have a duty of care to the caves, no matter how poorly treated they may have been in the past, and it is a privilege to contribute to their up -keep.

Many cavers beyond the committee and CNCC member clubs have offered their time and expertise to improve caving for all who cave in the North of England and Scotland. I thank all of them on your behalf.

Andrew Hinde - CNCC Chairman

Secretary's Report

I am very pleased to welcome two new volunteers who would like to join the CNCC team. Livvy Golby-Kirk as a representative to the BCA Youth and Development working group, and Adele Ward, who will be standing for the Access Officer position at the AGM. New faces can be a rare occurrence for our voluntary organisation, so they are always greatly appreciated, along with the new ideas and perspectives they can bring. We are also fortunate to receive a continuous stream of good news surrounding the conservation and training work being done, all contributing to caving in our region. I believe we can be tremendously optimistic about the near future of the CNCC.

Josh Young - CNCC Secretary

Conservation Officer's Report

The rockfall at Wretched Rabbit is being dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda.

Martin Holroyd, assisted by Ged Benn, has removed the tree that fell across Jingling Pot, and Martin returned to plant some replacement saplings on ledges out of reach of grazing sheep.

Sam Allshorn has money donated by Mike Cooper from sales of "Not for the Faint Hearted" which is available for conservation work on caves featured in the book.

A list of equipment available for CNCC members to borrow for conservation projects has been placed on the CNCC website https://cncc.org.uk/about/ (It's under the "about" heading rather than "conservation" because the list also includes publicity and anchor placement items.)

CNCC provided Tim Allen with conservation tape and pins for use in his latest discovery, Fing Hopeless Pot.

I am arranging first aid training for regular CNCC volunteers, and would like the cost (£65 per head for perhaps 8 volunteers) to be borne by CNCC. The cost is reduced from the normal price of £85 because Andrew Hinde is making available accommodation at Colt Park at not charge. Any unfilled places could be offered to other CNCC cavers.

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



20th December 2021

Training officer report

CNCC training workshops have been going from strength to strength and the demand for them has not yet shown any sign of letting up. We have put on another batch up to the end of March, which have proved as popular as ever and all places are nearly full. We have participants coming from all over the country, Birmingham and Cornwall to name a couple of places. We have also had a number of members of CRO taking part.

We have got an "introduction to cave photography" on the program, been run by Mark Burkey and the ever popular geology workshop run by Dr John Helm the "Rock Doctor" alongside the usual SRT workshops where we have also added an "advanced SRT rescue workshop" following feedback from participants on the "standard" SRT rescue workshop, who said they would like to come again to consolidate and add further skills. This workshop filled up very quickly.

The SRT Barn we use has two different prices for use. One for "off peak" and one for "peak" times. The peak time begins again in April so I plan to "ease" off on the number of workshops based there and look to try and put some more underground ones on.

(See attached document for details of current and past workshops.)

Student caver training

We have had some participants from Durham university who really enjoyed the workshops. I have made it clear where possible that we are willing to help any student caving clubs with any aspect of training. I understand that CHECC are the main "body" for student caving but we are always willing to help out, particularly in these strange times.

Shadowing opportunities

We continue to offer "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/11pL2xYE4gRUUxq2dqRBG8PMgRJU0IYDtZP2H4nNL1g/edit

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)
Airy Pilling (FOC assistant)

Vacancy for 2 new trainers

We are now in a position to expand the "training team" to help deliver SRT workshops in the future. An advert has gone out in November via CNCC communications and also on UK caving detailing the requirements and renumeration details.

These roles are open to anyone from anywhere in the country and NO formal qualifications are required.

Whilst it can be a very rewarding role, the work required for the renumeration is considerably below the "normal" open market rate, therefore it will appeal to someone who values the type of work we are doing.

Conflict of interest

Regarding item 6 from the October meeting brought up by ULSA, which I have assumed (rightly or wrongly?) relates to training and the payment to trainers.?

I believe I have been completely transparent and upfront about the format and payment for training provision right from the beginning, it was in my initial proposals even before I was elected as Training Officer.

I have said on numerous times I will abide by any conflict of interest policy and will continue to be fully transparent.

I completely understand that any type of payment goes against some people's beliefs. However for this (currently) very popular training provision to continue, it requires payment to trainers. The BCA currently pay for lots of services.

If anyone wants any further reassurance on this, I am always happy to talk and have absolutely no problems discussing any matters relating to it.

BCA Training Committee

We have had a couple of TC Zoom meetings, the last one was taken up by the proposal to merge E & T (Equipment and Techniques) and Training Committee and then make the new group a "working group" rather than a committee with a vote.

Everyone on the training committee (except me) was against this and a statement to this effect was drafted and read out at the AGM.

Despite this, the AGM voted to merge the two groups, we are now just awaiting the "fine details" on how it is going to work. I think this is for the best, training, equipment, techniques all sit quite well together in my opinion.

There has obviously been a bit of interest and "scrutiny" from the other regions over the training format that we now use at the CNCC. I have answered all their questions as required and explained my thoughts why it is a good format. The DCA and CCC have announced that they will be implementing this format in the future.

We have discussed about "standardisation" of costs etc and hopefully we will all be broadly inline with each other.

In an ideal world, we would standardise everything, from costs, content of workshops, names of workshops etc and all workshops would be available via the BCA website and then it would become "BCA caver training " we could even have a central "administrator". In the meantime I will firmly keep this as a CNCC initiative.

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 running of the workshops.

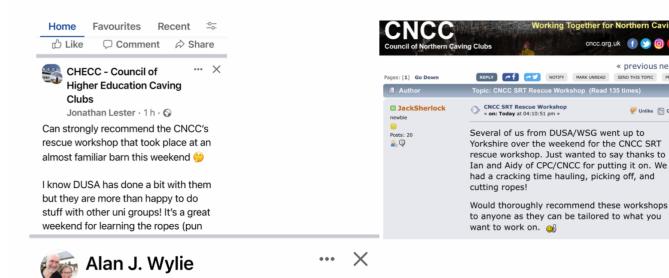
Ian Patrick

CNCC Training Officer December 2021

Date Y	Course Title	Public	Total Places	Places Booked
March 27th 2022	SRT rescue workshop	Υ	6	6
March 26th 2022	New to SRT one day workshop (Indoors)	Υ	4	2
March 13th 2022	SRT improver and refresher workshop (Indoors)	Υ	6	6
March 12th 2022	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	Υ	6	4
March 5th - 6th 2022	An Introduction to cave photography workshop with Mark Burkey (2 day)	Υ	8	4
February 20th 2022	SRT rescue workshop	Υ	6	6
February 19th 2022	New to SRT one day workshop (Indoors)	Υ	4	4
February 13th 2022	Caving Club "Meet Leaders" - Practical skills	Υ	6	6
February 12th 2022	Advanced SRT rescue	Υ	7	7
February 5th 2022	An underground geology tour with the "Rock Doctor"	Υ	8	8
January 9th 2022	SRT rescue workshop	Υ	6	6
January 8th 2022	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	Υ	6	6
December 11th	SRT underground skills refresher	Υ	6	4
December 5th	New to SRT rigging / refresher workshop	Υ	6	6
December 4th	SRT rescue workshop	Υ	7	7

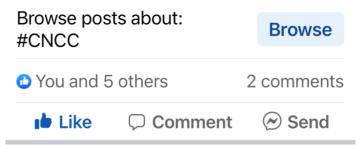
Feedback from Training workshops

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An excellent couple of days at CNCC -Council of Northern Caving Clubs

caving workshops: rescue yesterday and a refresher on rigging today. Thanks to lan for excellent advice. The rescue course was very interesting, we all had to dangle on a rope while our rescuer cut it from above (after securing us with a jammer below the cut). I only wish I had taken a video of that.



Hi Ian:

Many thanks to you and Sam for a really excellent course on Sunday. I got exactly what I'd hoped to get out of it, which was confirmation that my existing rigging technique was not too bad plus some pointers for improvement on both rigging and general SRT technique. I'm a convert to the Micro Traxion and to using the bowline on a bight for single bolt rebelays (still not going to use it on y-hangs, though), and I've replaced the maillon on my hand jammer with a krab. And there are some other points that I'll incorporate into my practice as well. It was a day well spent as far as I'm concerned.

I really don't have any suggestions for improvement. I think the two of you handled the participants' range of experience with rigging really well, and you had the right balance between group discussion and one-on-one practice.

Thanks to both of you for making the course happen, and to CNCC for making these courses available at such a ridiculously low cost. I'll keep my eye out for future options, and I'll definitely keep steering people toward the courses. I know half a dozen people already who are caving and weren't before, or hadn't for years, thanks to the SRT intro courses.

Hi Ian,

Fantastic day SRT rigging with you and Sam yesterday, many thanks! I have booked on to the SRT improvers course in March - there can be no higher praise than wanting to do a second course, eh?! I really enjoyed the workshop and left wanting to get back underground and taking a leading role, rather than as a follower, and definitely no more being a passenger!

Many thanks, all the best,

Thanks again to you and Sam for another great workshop! Usual combination of discussion, practice and more discussion works well. One thing - would a few photos showing possible rigs for various situations be useful? I can see the problem of appearing to endorse certain ways of doing things rather than encouraging flexibility based on fundamental

principles, but it could offer something for people to ponder on after the session.

Cheers,

Dear Ian,

Thanks so much to you and Sam for the training yesterday. Once again got so much out of it (bowlines on the bight for rebelays from now on, plus love the barrel knot for getting nice and tight around stal. et c.).

As mentioned yesterday, been so impressed by the whole training workshop set up (as I am by the whole CNCC set up with topos, bolting et c.). In terms of you reporting back to committees about the workshops, they've also meant I've now signed up as a conservation volunteer so hopefully can give a bit back to the CNCC in the future.

Hi Ian

I wanted to formally thank you for the great day last weekend. Although I have some experience of SRT it was good to learn a process from you and to trust it. Also to learn new skills. It was excellent to practise in a safe and comfortable environment. It definitely helped my confidence.

I also felt inspired by trying new kit, so much so that we had a trip to Inglesport and now I need a trip underground to try out my new harness and stop!

After some practise I would be keen to come along on a more advanced course if possible.

Thank you again

Hi Ian

Thank you, the training is great and this week we are off on a trip to Sell Gill to practise with my new kit . I definitely hope to see you soon however in a different cave!

Dear All,

Just a note to say how useful the Rescue and Rigging trainings were this last weekend. It was great to learn and practise the advanced rescue skills for lifting and passing a casualty on a rope, and to discuss and learn all sorts of parallel first aid and survival questions. The rigging training was incredibly valuable, going over the nuts and bolts of practice and clarifying techniques that I've been vague on. It meant that I had a very enjoyable and safe first rigging trip down Sell Gill the next day. Mark is an excellent trainer. Likewise Aidy, who was shadowing him on the Sunday. And I'm grateful to the BCA for subsidising this very important training.

Best wishes,				
The SRT rescue workshop was excellent!				
Keep them coming.				

Hi,

Thanks on behalf of Fraser Richmond for a very thorough introduction to SRT yesterday. In his words "had lots of fun!" Good pace, clear explanations, plenty quality practice. Well done.

Ian Patrick - CNCC Training Officer Acting BCA Representative's Report - Andrew Hinde

- 1. All standing committees were converted to "Working Groups". Each Group has a Convenor who makes appointments to the Group, but does not have a vote on Council. The Groups all need Terms Of Reference to be published.
- 2. All Regional Caving Council financial claims have been paid.
- 3. BCA Insurance cover for 2022. There is no Explosives cover in the policy from £5m £10m. The cover remains up to £5m only.
- 4. BCA AGM has reverted back to a date in June. Sunday 12th June 2022.
- 5. Next BCA Council Meeting is 1st Feb.

BCA E&T Representative's Report - Mark Richards

E & T (Equipment and Techniques) and Training Committee have now merged as a "working group" rather than a committee with a vote.

We are now just waiting for the "fine details" on how it is going to work and who will be part of the group. I am in agreement with Ian Patrick (CNCC training officer) as I also think training, equipment, techniques should all sit together.

PR and Communications Officer's Report - Matt Ewles

The last four months has seen plenty of positive news stories, which have been circulated by all forms of media, including:

- Publishing of a Crackpot Cave description and using this to encourage people to try out caving
- Appeal for new suppliers of CNCC training, and listing of several new workshops for the first three months of 2022
- The Jingling Pot treefall and subsequently dealing with this (showing CNCC to be extremely quick and proactive)
- Update on the Wretched Rabbit situation
- Update on our efforts at Birks Fell
- Publishing of new rigging topos for Scanty Lardos, Curtain and Pasture Gill Pots
- Publishing of new descriptions for Scanty Lardos and Curtain Pots
- Recent work to protect the flora at Scoska Cave

By the time of the meeting I hope to have done some communications about the upcoming AGM and also the recent 'CNCC Assets' section on the public website which Kay and Gary have compiled to make it more transparent what equipment we own, and is available to be used by other northern cavers on conservation, training and anchoring projects.

It has been on my 'to do' list for a while to put together a piece on the caves of Bowland, but this needs an 'angle' that involves one of our core functions, e.g. some conservation work, or improvements to access, rather than just a random article about the caves. This can be removed from the ongoing actions list but I will keep it in mind if news becomes slow at any point.

News media used has included our website, mailing list, UKCaving, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

So far I have handed out about half of the 20 framed cave photos that were produced. Two have gone to Settle Tourist Information Centre (thanks to Ged Benn), three to High Borrans Outdoor Education Centre, and five remain with Tim Allen to distribute or for more local collection. I will also be passing a few onto the YSS hut for display as they have many non-caving visitors who regularly stay. A reminder that several are still available and I would like them out of my house.

Likewise I still have several copies of Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales Volume 2 which are available for PR purposes and to improve relations with local landowners.

The rest of my efforts have been looking into Birks Fell Access, a personal pet project. Following productive discussions in August, the National Trust, who's primary concern was liability, made encouraging noises that they would accept a Memorandum of Understanding. I sent them the accompanying document as a draft example of what we could offer. Things went quiet and I have recently chased them, and the information I have, as of last week, is that they are broadly happy with the arrangement, but still need final thumbs up from their legal team and the tenants at Redmire Farm. This seems to be happening very slowly.

Unfortunately, there is a snag. At the time of writing the draft Memorandum of Understanding, I was under the impression that BCA insurance indemnified landowners against all visitors to a cave to which they have made an agreement for access to exist (something that existed for many years when Nick Williams was Insurance Manager). Sadly, this is no longer true, and BCA insurance now only offers this level of insurance where the visiting caver is a BCA member, is with a BCA member, or has two years caving experience. This means the landowner is not universally indemnified against all cavers, which has been a key weapon in our arsenal for dealing with access arrangements for many years. I am extremely frustrated that the BCA have still failed to publicise this change to their insurance, and even have the audacity to be marketing it as an improvement to their insurance, following a 1-2 year period when there was actually no landowner indemnification whatsoever as part of their policy, something we only discovered quite by chance. What this means is that the wording in this Memorandum of Understanding would need to change to say it applies only to those who meet the BCA's criterial for landowner indemnification. I do not know how well this will go down with National Trust, but hopefully it will be fine. I suggest rewording several sections to clarify that the agreement only relates to BCA member cavers.

I would appreciate Committee input on this. Do we accept this? Or do we simply discontinue discussions, withdraw from the current access agreement, and advise cavers to make their own judgement?

I am doubtful the National Trust will accept a Memorandum of Understanding that does not offer them indemnification. Liability was their primary concern.

My recommendation is the following: We set a deadline, probably around the AGM, by which we withdraw completely from the existing access arrangement, regardless of whether National Trust have accepted a Memorandum of Understanding or not. We cannot support this restricting permit system for another summer. If National Trust give the 'OK' to proceed with a Memorandum of Understanding, I finalise a document with changes to make clear that it only applies to BCA member cavers or others that meet requirements. The question to Committee is whether this is a backward step for CNCC, as it would exclude many non-BCA member cavers. Would Committee prefer we simply withdraw from all arrangements and leave it to cavers to make their own judgement (remembering that the cave is on Access land and approached via public rights of way) rather than implement a Memorandum of Understanding that has to exclude non-BCA member cavers in order to fulfil the indemnification of the landowner?

I will happily continue to pursue either options, but that needs to be reached as a Committee decision.

I will be at the meeting on 15th in person to discuss.

Happy caving for 2022!

Council of Northern Caving Clubs

Access to Birks Fell Cave, Buckden

Documentation of a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Trust (landowner for Birks Fell Cave) and the Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC) representing cavers in northern England and Scotland.

Effective from (DATE) until either party notify to withdraw.

1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the arrangement under which cavers may freely access Birks Fell Cave, subject to the conditions set out in this document which outlines expectations from both parties.

2 Background

The Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC) is a Constituent Body of the British Caving Association. Its purpose is to promote responsible caving and conservation and access to the caves of Northern England and Scotland.

Birks Fell Cave is located on Access Land and the entrance can be approached from Buckden (or elsewhere) via footpaths and access land, without any permission being required. For this reason, the CNCC supports the entry to this cave also being without restriction.

The CNCC believes that open access to caves helps to create capacity for outdoor recreation, fitness, exploration, and supports rural economies.

The CNCC wishes to see any concerns the National Trust have addressed, and for expectations of such an agreement to be clear. In this Memorandum of Understanding, we set out expectations of free access to Birks Fell Cave, which will be communicated to cavers using our website, which is generally regarded as the go-to place for northern cave access information

3 Access conditions for Birks Fell Cave

- a. Access requires no advanced permission; however, cavers will be encouraged to respect the understandings set out in this document.
- b. Routes of access to Birks Fell Cave are to be via designated public footpaths and/or Access Land. No right of way via non-access land sites is implied as part of this Memorandum of Understanding.

- c. Birks Fell Cave is on tenanted land. Cavers are urged to be respectful to the tenants of Redmire Farm and to take sensible and appropriate measures to avoid unreasonable disruption to their livelihood.
- d. The CNCC shall indemnify the National Trust against incidents arising from visitors whose objective is to visit the cave. The limit of indemnity shall be not less than £10m, provided via a suitable insurance policy.
- e. The CNCC will endeavour to use volunteer resource to maintain the entrance to Birks Fell Cave, as required, and subject to their resources and permission of the National Trust. Examples of conservation works at numerous cave entrances can be seen on our website.
- f. The CNCC will encourage all cavers to abide by the Countryside and Cave Conservation Codes.
- g. The CNCC will provide online resources for Birks Fell Cave including appropriate safety notices and advice. CNCC will use these resources to communicate this Memorandum of Understanding to cavers.

4 Signatures

[Name], on behalf of National Trust

I agree to this Memorandum of Underst withdrawn at any time subject to notification	•
Signed	Date
[Name], on behalf of the Council of Nor	thern Caving Clubs
Signed	Date

Webmaster's Report - Gary Douthwaite

Webmaster Report – January 2021

Everything running well with the website and social media, nothing specific to report. The new site is still on-going. It's getting there!

Action from last meeting: I have spoken to Simon Wilson regarding using his IC Anchor data on the CNCC website and he has given his permission to use any of his data, so I am working on adding that. Thanks again to Simon and all his anchor work.

Action from last meeting: I have spoken with Craven Pothole Club and Bradford Pothole Club about creating a winch meet page. Both welcome the idea and are happy to provide some info as required. I would like permission to purchase a new (CNCC owned) domain name for the purpose. My suggestion is gaping-gill.uk which is available at a cost of around £12 per year + VAT.

Google Analytics (1 Jan 2021 - 31 Dec 2021)



Gender:

		Male	Female
This period		66.42%	33.58%
	Previous 12 months	68.60%	31.40%

Age:

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
This period	14.28%	24.35%	18.88%	18.87%	13.09%	10.53%
Previous 12 months	11.63%	25.59%	17.24%	18.32%	14.80%	12.43%

Facebook

As of 6 Jan 2022 we have 1350 page likes (+65 since Oct report) and 1488 followers (+71 since Oct report). In the last 28 days we had a people reach of 5362 (up 165%) and post engagements of 1197 (up 194%).

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

Published	Subject	Reach	Clicks	Reactions,
		(people)		Comments & Shares
25/12/2021	Jingling tree removal complete	3.2K	169	120
24/12/2021	Merry Christmas and thanks to volunteers	875	8	35
21/12/2021	Wretched Rabbit update	674	200	49
09/12/2021	Jingling Pot tree fall warning	1.2K	234	53
20/11/2021	Crackpot Cave description	1.7K	194	49

Twitter

As at 6 Jan 2022 we have 493 followers (+12 since Oct report). 287 tweets have been made by CNCC.

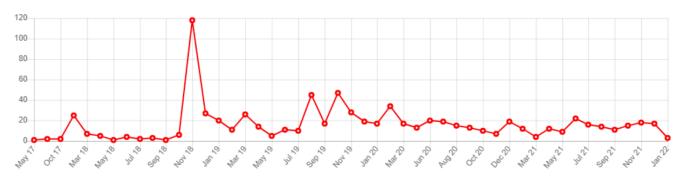
Instagram

As at 6 Jan 2022 we have 383 followers (+23 since Oct report).

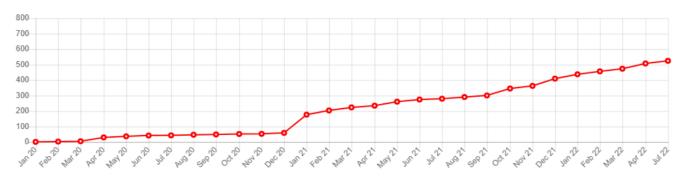
Online Booking System

- 794 registered users
- 2919 individual bookings have been made. This number includes 2496 approved bookings and 422 cancelled bookings.
- 154 (19%) made a positive statement that they are NOT BCA members.
- 553 (70%) said they are members of a club.
- Of the users who specified gender there are 121 female (15.5%), 578 male (74%) and 0 other (0%).
- The average age is 49 with the youngest 19 and oldest 81.

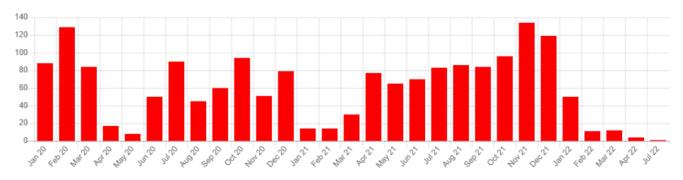
New registrations:



Total bookings:



Bookings count by month:



Mailing List

The mailing list contains 325 people (+39 since Oct report). 1 person has requested to be unsubscribed.

Media Download Statistics (to 31 Dec 2021)

	Total	Average / month	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21
Publications	11,454	273	363	206	275	167	173	271
Topos	94,190	2,415	2,655	2,867	2,465	2,871	2,995	3,511
Cave descriptions	77,909	1,998	2,412	2,515	2,431	2,288	2,497	2,963

Top 5 media downloads (six months to 31 Dec 2021)

Topos	Descriptions
Alum Pot - 642 (3.6%)	The Leck Fell Master Cave System - 942 (6.1%)
Mayday Hole - 570 (3.2%)	Ease Gill Cavern - 721 (4.6%)
Lost Johns' Cave - 514 (2.9%)	Caves of Scotland - 654 (4.2%)
Yordas Pot and Cave - 487 (2.7%)	Alum Pot and Long Churn Caves - 644 (4.1%)
Sell Gill Holes - 443 (2.5%)	Gaping Gill - 641 (4.1%)

Ric Halliwell - Birks Fell, Fairy Holes, Robinsons etc. Meets

I have issued June and July permits for Fairy Holes and May permit for Robinsons. I would very much like to issue the remaining permits for these two sites for 2022.

Tony Brown - Bowland Meets

No permits requested for Bowland caves since April 2021.