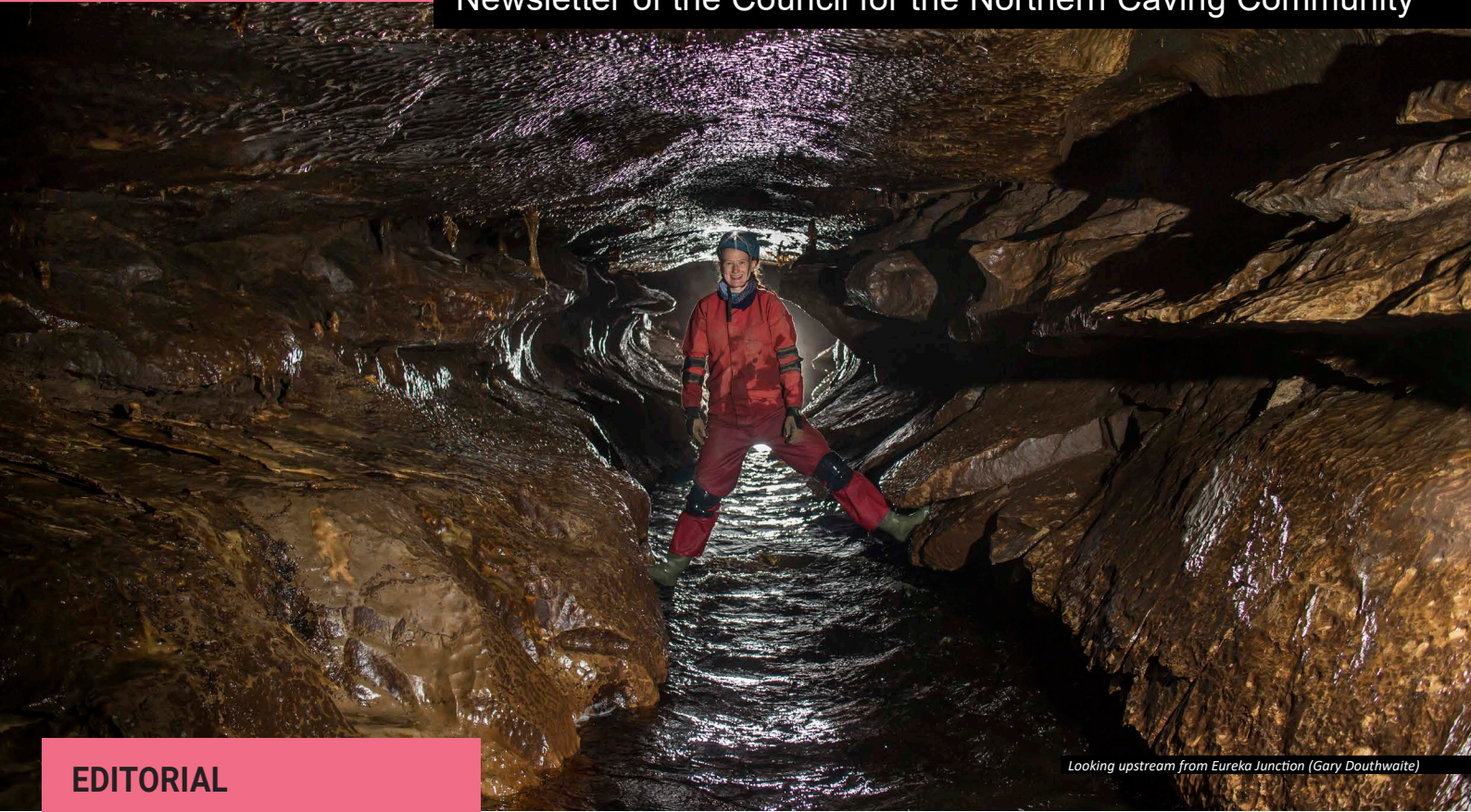


# NORTHERN CAVING

Newsletter of the Council for the Northern Caving Community



Looking upstream from Eureka Junction (Gary Douthwaite)

## EDITORIAL

by Matt Ewles (Editor)

Caving in our region, and across the UK, seems to be thriving. Hidden Earth enjoyed record attendance with lots of new faces. RRCCPC's 'Ease Gill Open House' brought cavers together in June-July, and next year NAMHO will shine a spotlight on the northern Dales. This is very timely given some of the recent big northern Dales and Pennines discoveries at New Level, Draughting Hole, Missed Pot and Fairy Holes, all with their mining connections.

Since our June newsletter we have grown our portfolio of conservation projects thanks to our securing of Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust funding. We've also brought you new training workshops, anchors, topos and descriptions. This is all covered herein as a compilation of our efforts to support northern caving.

This work is only possible thanks to cavers coming to our meetings and volunteers staffing roles and actually performing the work. Thank you to everyone who supports us.

## CNCC RESPONSE TO APPG GROUP ON OUTDOOR RECREATION

In May the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Outdoor Recreation held its inaugural meeting.

This group is chaired by Andy MacNae MP and involves BMC, Paddle UK and the Ramblers. This was established to review access to outdoor recreation. One of the group's first actions was to launch an inquiry to explore ideas for changes in policy and legislation that would enable more people to access green spaces and bodies of water.

As part of this inquiry, the APPG welcomed written submissions from individuals and groups, but were particularly interested in hearing from organisations representing a diverse range of outdoor activities.

The CNCC team was proactive in submitting a response ahead of the 20th July deadline. We introduced caving, our organisation and background, and the access issues we have faced, both historically and today.

Our message was clear, that access to caves is confused at governmental levels, and although the BCA and CNCC believe, backed by legal opinion, that CRoW does apply to caving, this is not an opinion that is shared by DEFRA. We emphasize the benefits of governmental bodies taking a wider interpretation of the legislation.

We highlighted the efforts of CNCC volunteers to preserve access agreements, both formal and informal, with landowners. Nonetheless, access to hundreds of sites across our region on CRoW land is still, in the opinion of DEFRA, entirely at the will of the landowners. This presents barriers to participation, poses risks to future access if attitudes or landowners change, creates work for volunteers, and undermines the original purpose of the CRoW Act.

We presented the need to see access to caves on non-CRoW land made a condition of landowners receiving public subsidy, citing the situation at High Birkwith where access is refused to several major caves, including some which have played a major part for introducing novices, despite the landowner receiving significant public money to maintain the land.

The benefits caving offer to those who get involved were highlighted, the community it creates, as well as the benefits of this community to the local economy.

The outcome was a firm recognition and callout for improved caving access in the recommendations document. What will come of this is unclear, but we encourage you to write to your local MP and urge them to back these recommendations.

# BOULDER MOVEMENT BETWEEN EUREKA JUNCTION AND STOP POT

For many years, cavers have taken a route known as The Sluice between Eureka Junction and Stop Pot in Ease Gill Caverns, as part of most trips to or from County Pot or Wretched Rabbit. This involves following the water along the wall at the downstream end and crawling along a shelf above the water at the upstream end.

We have seen reports that the 2m climb transitioning between the shelf and the water is now blocked by a large boulder, allowing only very thin cavers through.

All except the thinnest cavers may now need to consider some alternatives to pass through this area:

- Remaining at water level (requires extremely low water).
- Up the boulders on the right as you approach the choke from Eureka Junction, into a low bedding crawl which emerges at stream level below Stop Pot.
- The flood bypass route, 60m upstream from Eureka Junction in Wretched Rabbit Passage. Just before the passage changes from walking to crawling, there are a choice of 4m climbs up into Fourways Chamber. From the downstream end of this chamber, a crawl on the right emerges into Stop Pot.

These routes are mentioned in our descriptions, but over the coming months we will be adapting the text to reflect these changes and better emphasise these alternative routes through this area.

## DATES FOR YOUR 2026 CALENDAR

### 21 MARCH

CNCC AGM, Clapham Village Hall, 10am

Our annual general meeting and your chance to help shape our future. Come along and say hello and see what we do.

### 5 - 14 JUNE

Ease Gill Open House at Bull Pot Farm

Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club will host their second 'Open House'. This is a week-long event at Ease Gill, with the most popular entrances rigged for the entire week. Accommodation, beer and catering at Bull Pot Farm. You can see a report from this year's inaugural event inside for some inspiration.

### 19 - 22 JUNE

NAMHO at Grinton Church in Swaledale

The annual conference of the National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) is coming to our region with lectures, onsite camping and bar, plus guided trips to nearby mines and caves.

### 25 - 27 SEPTEMBER

Hidden Earth at Llangollen Pavilion

The UK's national caving conference, with lectures, stalls, competitions, onsite camping and bar. You can see a report from this year's event below, which was a superb weekend.

## CNCC AT HIDDEN EARTH 2025

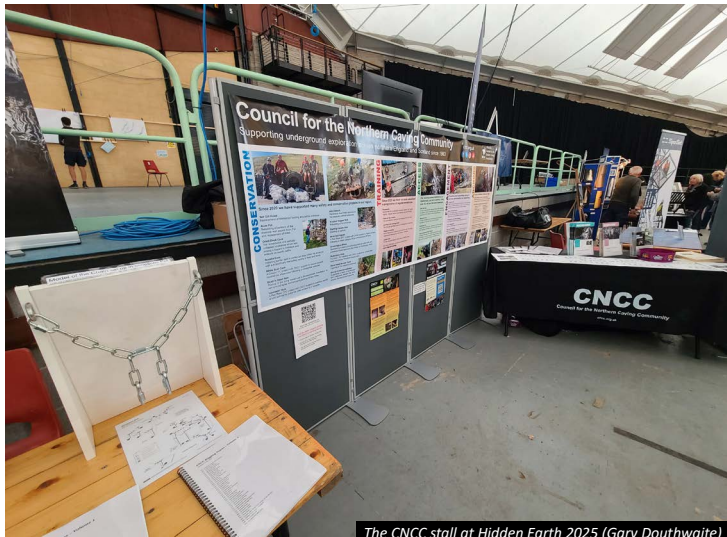
Hidden Earth 2025 at Llangollen Pavilion was a record breaking year for attendance, with a full lecture program leaving delegates struggling to decide which of the three parallel rooms to be in!

The trade hall boasted plenty of vendors and stalls, including the popular video salon which received some excellent submissions. We were there, and our stall provided an opportunity for cavers to read about what we do, and to chat to some of our team.

Our training team, Ian Patrick and Mark Richards, and others were on-hand both days and brought along a selection of anchor kit including two types of anchor puller and an anchor in a block

for people to practice on. This was also a great opportunity to showcase the chain design recently implemented in Simpson Pot, and to talk about current techniques and approaches.

We will be back at Llangollen in 2026, with plans for an even more interactive stall. We'd love to see you there!



The CNCC stall at Hidden Earth 2025 (Gary Douthwaite)



Our Training Officer demonstrates various anchor equipment (Andrew Hinde)



## EASE GILL OPEN HOUSE

The team setting off to rig for Ease Gill Open House (Alice Shackley)

This year, we were pleased to promote Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club's (RRCPC) inaugural 'Ease Gill Open House' event. We'd like to introduce you to one of the organisers, Rachel Turnbull, who has sent us a report of how things went.

*"If you like your festivals muddy, dark, and 200m underground, Ease Gill Open House is your kind of party. June this year saw cavers gather at RRCPC's cosy Bull Pot Farm for 10 days of muddy crawls, beautiful pitches and splashy streamways.*

*Ease Gill, one of Britain's most iconic cave systems, proved the perfect setting for this new gathering. RRCPC rigged all the major entrances (Top Sink, Pool Sink, County Pot, Lancaster Hole, Cow Pot, Link Pot, and Pippikin Pot).*

*For many people, the main draw was the opportunity to do an unlimited number of through-trips between the entrances, without the need for their own rigging. Over 10 days, cavers of all experience levels came together to explore, share knowledge, and enjoy a truly social side of the sport.*

*The festival celebrated everything great about caving and welcomed over 100 visitors from 21 clubs and communities across the UK (and surprisingly USA).*

*Yes, it rained, but that didn't dampen the mood. Above ground, the club put on the excellent Rosey Bar with beer and cider, and tasty communal meals for after a long day's caving.*

*What made the Open House special was its openness - seeing cavers from so many clubs, backgrounds, and regions coming together was a reminder of how strong and welcoming this community can be. As the event wrapped up and the ropes were coiled, there was a clear feeling of hope that this first Ease Gill Open House won't be the last.*

*The dates are already set for next year: 5-14th June. Keep your eyes open for more info in the new year!"*

We'd like to thank Rachel, Alice Shackley and RRCPC for their efforts to bring this event together. It sounds like a great success, and we'd encourage cavers to support this next year by getting the dates in your caving diary and joining for a few nights at The Farm.



The Open House bar (Alice Shackley)

## NAMHO 2026 COMES TO OUR REGION

The National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) will be holding their annual conference for 2026 at Grinton Church near Reeth, 19-22 June.

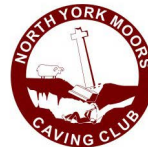
Much like Hidden Earth, this will be a weekend-long event with onsite camping and bar, talks throughout Saturday and Sunday, and unlike Hidden Earth there will also be a variety of guided trips.

The event is hosted by the North York Moors Caving Club and the Moldywarps Speleological Group, two clubs with an established history of cave and mine exploration in the area (this is an area where caves and mines often go hand-in-hand).

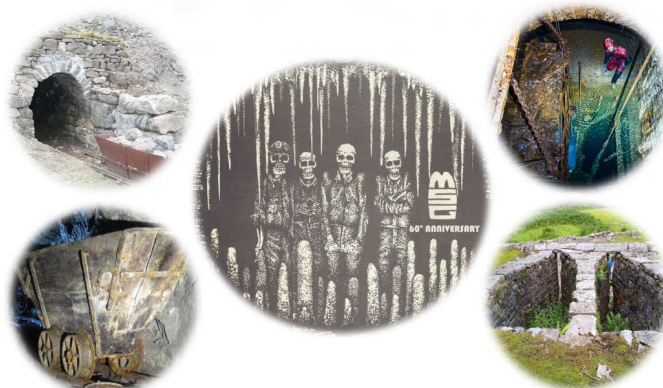
There may be opportunity for trips on the Friday and Monday too, for early arrivals or late departers. Sites such as nearby Devis Hole and the Gunnerside mines may feature, but there may be options for caving trips including Crackpot Cave, and the newly explored New Level Cave and Draughting Hole/Missed Pot system, each of which have associated mining connections.

Watch the NAMHO website for more announcements and booking information closer to the time - [namho.org](http://namho.org)

**NAMHO**  
National Association  
of Mining History  
Organisations



**19-22 June 2026, Yorkshire Dales**



# CHANGES TO YOUR CNCC TEAM

In June we were pleased to co-opted Mike Appleton as our Assistant Access Officer, supporting James Alderson. We also welcomed Ian Walker as our Anchor Coordinator, taking over the role from Alan Speight (who will continue to support anchoring by providing a Dales-based store for our anchor kit).

We were also very pleased to welcome Andrew Hinde to the newly created Projects Officer role, where he will support our Conservation Officer in delivering on projects across our region.

Finally, Tony Brown takes the new role of Archaeology Coordinator, and you will see his inaugural newsletter contribution herein.

Unfortunately, we are also saying farewell to Aila Taylor, who is stepping down as our Youth Development representative. We'd welcome a new volunteer to come forward.

The role involves providing a voice for youth caving within CNCC, representing CNCC within the BCA's Youth Development group, and telling us what we could be doing to support student caving, so a volunteer with close links to CHECC would be ideal.



Mike Appleton

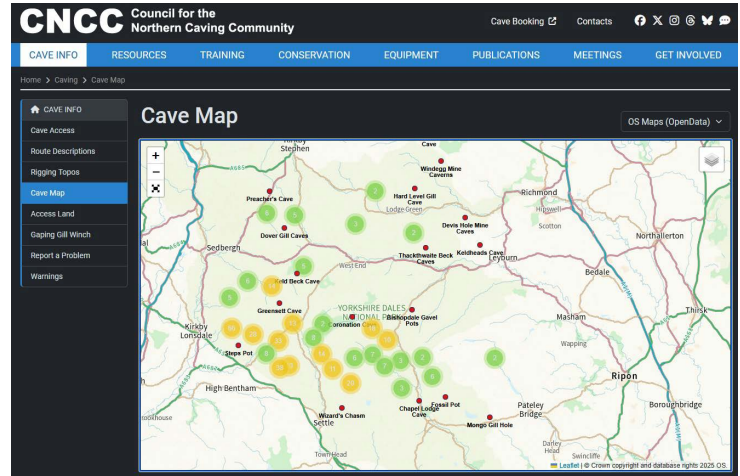


Andrew Hinde



Tony Brown

# CNCC CAVE MAP



For several years, our website has hosted an area map showing the locations of most of the significant caves in our region. This was powered by Microsoft's Bing maps, but following some recent changes to their service offerings, the map went offline.

We were rather taken aback by the number of people who contacted us about this, as we didn't know it was so popular!

We're pleased to say that the map is back online with the option to switch between viewing using Ordnance Survey Openmaps or Google Maps for satellite view. This is under the 'Cave Info' tab on our homepage or use the QR code here.



# SECRETARY NEEDED

At our AGM in March, our Secretary Jill Bolton, will be stepping down after delivering three years of superb, enthusiastic administration and leadership. This means we are looking for a new volunteer to come forward to take on this important position.

Our Secretary brings together all resources, documents and people needed to ensure meetings are productive, and is responsible for maintaining communications within our teams and provides a friendly and proactive front-of-house service.

Requirements:

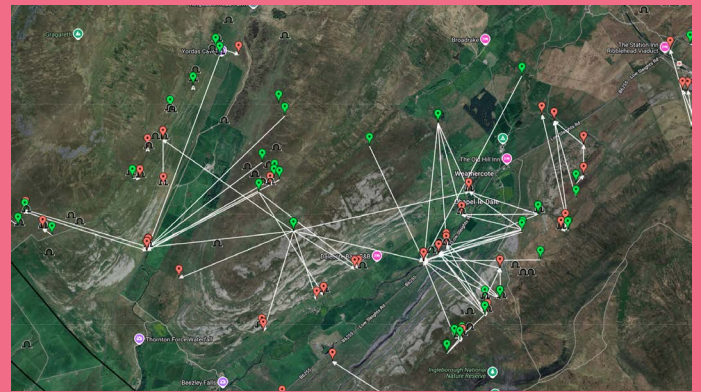
- Highly organised with good standard of written English.
- Attendance at four meetings per year (Saturday mornings).
- Computer confidence (Word, PDF creation, email systems).
- Attention to detail and pride in the quality of documentation.
- Regular checking of and responding to emails.
- Typically three-four hours per week.

This is probably one of the most critical roles in CNCC, and so requires a volunteer who is excited and motivated. If this role interests you, please get in touch - [secretary@cncc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@cncc.org.uk)

This is also a useful opportunity to mention that if any of our other Officer roles interest you, if your club would like to become a CNCC member or Committee representative, please also get in touch ahead of the AGM agenda deadline of 24th January.

Finally if you think you have something you can bring to CNCC, we are always happy to co-opt volunteers into new roles. We want to ensure we are serving the widest possible number of northern cavers and we can only do that with a diverse and varied team bringing different skills, ideas and contributions.

# NORTHERN CAVE AND KARST HYDROLOGY DATABASE



Our December 2024 newsletter headlined on the launch of this excellent online database containing over 500 entries for water tracing experiments performed across our region. These are searchable by area, detection method, tracer, injection or detection point and is extremely user-friendly.

There's also a really useful map showing the directions of water flow from sinks to resurgences, which any caver who knows our region can easily loose an hour just browsing.

Cavers are encouraged to record their own water tracing results in the database, and to enter any historic data.

We're keen to ensure this amazing resource isn't forgotten, so you'll be seeing occasional reminders in future newsletters.

[watertracing.cncc.org.uk](http://watertracing.cncc.org.uk)



## SCOSKA AND BOWN SCAR CAVES, LITTONDALE

The sheltered entrance to Scoska Cave has been proclaimed by some experts to be the richest cave in Britain for mosses and liverworts and one of the richest in Europe.

The entrance passage demonstrates a great variety of cave flora and fauna. In particular, it provides an excellent example of how plant species vary in response to diminishing light as one progresses further into the passage away from daylight. This starts with woodland species and gradually progresses down to just algae as the light diminishes and the moisture increases.

One side of the passage was taped several years ago, to protect the plants from being damaged by visiting cavers. The plants can be dislodged and destroyed by trampling or dumping of rucksacks. Since the original taping, the flora has flourished here.

In 2022, and again this year we have replaced the tape after it had mysteriously gone missing.

In November, we were contacted by the landowners, Patrick and Anita Walker, who own large amounts of Littondale, to express their frustration about the taping. They have had the tape removed and have ended a long-standing situation of access to Scoska Cave requiring no specific landowner consent.

Scoska Cave is approached from Arncliffe or Litton almost entirely by public footpath, however the final 200m of approach is across a remote area which is not access land.

The landowners have provided the following statement:

*"The current owners recognise the importance of Scoska cave to cavers, other visitors and as a site of enormous environmental importance. There is increased pressure on the site and for the moment they are operating a permission system which will monitor the numbers of cavers and help exclude the small minority who cause damage. Applications for permission should be made to Anita Walker at [sundial@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:sundial@globalnet.co.uk) giving name and contact details and proof of insurance."*

Scoska Cave is well worth visiting, and a route description can be found on our website. We would be delighted to host one for Bown Scar Cave too (which we have been informed is also subject to the same access requirements) if anyone submits one.

We would like to urge visiting cavers to keep to the left wall of the entrance passage as you enter the cave and depart from daylight, to preserve the plants and mosses along the right side (and of course please remember to do the opposite and keep right on exiting). Our tape previously achieved this but is no longer permitted.



The previously taped area in Scoska Cave entrance (Andrew Hinde)

## STRANS GILL POT



Strans Gill Pot

Strans Gill Pot is one of the few popular caves in Langstrothdale which is not on access land (although it lies only 100m off a public footpath).

Cavers wishing to gain landowner consent to visit

this formidable pothole have previously needed to write (by post) to the National Trust warden to request permission.

Thanks to some enquiries by our access team, this permission can now be achieved by phone call (details on our website). We advise phoning a few days in advance or more if possible.

We have been advised that the entrance has been blocked by fencing wire and posts as a measure to prevent livestock falling in, and you may need to allow some time to pull this out before being able to gain access. Please ensure the entrance is suitably stock-proofed again after your visit using these materials.

Strans Gill Pot is a serious undertaking, requiring dry weather and a very experienced team. The wet 49m Charity Pitch, and stunningly decorated Passage of Time will reward visitors with enough skill and determination.

## KELDHEADS CAVE SAVED

Early this year, as reported in our last newsletter, Tarmac applied to reopen Wensley quarry in Wensleydale. This would have limited access to Keldheads Cave, and at worst, it could have destroyed a significant proportion of the cave. We submitted these concerns as part of an objection. Several other groups and individuals also voiced their concern, and Tarmac have now withdrawn their plans, thus saving Keldheads Cave for future visitors to enjoy.

## SKIRWITH CAVE

Our Assistant Access Officer has negotiated an improvement to the terms of access to Skirwith Cave. Access to this site has been a sensitive subject for the landowners for many years, and the previous requirement was to contact the owner by post.

The new arrangement requires cavers to email our Access Officer ([access@cncc.org.uk](mailto:access@cncc.org.uk)) and we will arrange access on your behalf. It is expected that access will always be granted to BCA-member cavers any months except March and April (due to lambing).

We appreciate that this is still an inconvenience, but it does represent an improvement to the previous arrangement.

## LONG CHURN STILE AND FENCE

On 4th September, CNCC conservation volunteers Ged Benn and Andrew Hinde made repairs to the stile into the fenced enclosure of Lower Long Churn Cave. Anyone who has visited over the last several years will have seen this deteriorate to a hazardous state.

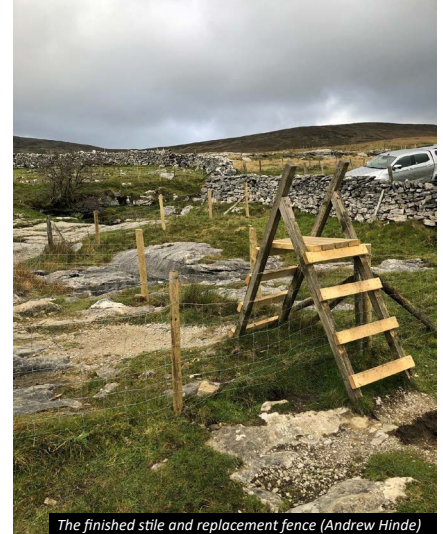
Andrew Hinde returned on 8th and 23rd October to replace the collapsed fencing, finishing off an excellent job.

The reason for this work was to ensure cavers could safely cross the fence, and to avoid livestock entering the cave, where if they perished could pose a hazard to visiting cavers, including many on their first ever trip underground. Nobody wants their first caving experience to involve perished livestock!

Thanks to the landowner for allowing this work, Stu Coxan for reporting the issue and Ged and Andrew for their superb efforts, and YDMT for the funding.



Building the new stile (Andrew Hinde)



The finished stile and replacement fence (Andrew Hinde)

## PASTURE GILL POT FENCING



The team working at Pasture Gill Pot (John Helm)

The small entrance to Pasture Gill Pot in Langstrothdale isn't usually too busy... but it is more well-visited than it used to be, since inclusion in Mike Cooper's book, *Not For The Faint Hearted*. More recently, our anchoring of the cave and publication of the topo has reinvigorated interest amongst seekers short, challenging trips.

The original fencing was in a very bad way, rotten and broken, leaving the entrance pitch open to livestock.

In early October, members of the Craven Pothole Club (CPC) and Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association (UWFRA) with assistance from CNCC's new Projects Officer, Andrew Hinde, installed new fencing around the entrance.

Pasture Gill Pot is quite a trek up the side of Langstrothdale, so it was logistically quite challenging to get all the materials up there (and the old rotten materials away).



The finished fencing (John Helm)

As you can perhaps see from the photos, the team were treated to good weather and have done an outstanding job. The new fencing includes a stile in one corner to allow caver access.

The materials and funding for volunteer travel were supplied by CNCC (with contribution from YDMT), but we'd like to thank CPC, UWFRA and Andrew for their work, which will benefit good landowner relations, and make the entrance safe to livestock.

Thank you also to John Helm, one of the team involved, for writing this story up and providing the photos.

## YORKSHIRE DALES MILLENNIUM TRUST FUNDING

In July, CNCC successfully finalised a £2000 grant from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust to support our conservation work over a 12 month period. This funding has so far been used for the three conservation projects shown here, at Yordas, Pasture Gill Pot and Long Churn, with more projects planned over the coming several months. Thank you to YDMT for this funding, and our Projects Officer, Andrew Hinde for taking the lead in arranging this.



# YORDAS CAVE

## GRAFFITI CLEANUP

Yordas Cave entrance (Chris Scaife)

In April, cavers reported an outbreak of graffiti at Yordas Cave, mentioned in our last newsletter.

This easily accessed cave in West Kingsdale is very often the first venture underground for novice cavers and the wider general public. It is important that first time visitors realise that graffiti is not acceptable in the cave environment, and that this kind of damage detracts from the experience of those seeking their first underground adventure.

The extensive damage consisted of lettering engraved on the walls with a sharp instrument. This cut through the surface patina of the cave wall in many places. The cavers reporting the incident smeared mud on the graffiti in an attempt to hide the damage and prevent any further attacks by others who might feel the need to contribute to the unwelcome 'artwork'.

An initial assessment was made by Jenny Hack, a professional conservator from Ingleton. Cleaning tests were then undertaken to find the best method of treatment to disguise the lettering but without removal of the rock patina.

A note of the location of 19th century inscriptions was made in order to protect their heritage value.

A team of five CNCC conservation volunteers tackled the job on Saturday 26th July armed with our cave cleaning kit. The surface mud was washed and brushed away using 25 litre knapsack sprayers filled with cave stream water. The graffiti was disrupted using stiff-bristle hand brushes and finished with a light sponging of muddy water to even-out run-off marks and streaks. The idea was to disguise the graffiti rather than completely erase it and avoid leaving a ghosted imprint of white rock where the graffiti had been.



Cleaning graffiti at Yordas (Andrew Hinde)

There are several techniques for dealing with graffiti depending on the type of instrument used (marker pen, spray paint, engraving, soot etc). A wire brush is rarely the best option due to the risks of causing more damage than it fixes.

A light cleaning exposed what is probably a 200 year history of visitor abuse, but no matter how carelessly treated a cave has been in the past, all caves deserve respect, particularly in this era where there is little excuse for not being aware of the need for cave and countryside conservation.

Thanks to Andy Hall, Rowan Worsman, Jeff Keating and Pete Bann for working so patiently, and YDMT for their funding which contributed to the costs of this work.

## TRAINING

### FIRST AID COURSE

The CNCC has arranged a two day certified outdoor first aid course on 21-22 February at Fraser Hall, Cowan Bridge. This course differs from our usual workshops in being a certified course, run by an external provider.

Although not CNCC-subsidised in the way our other workshop are, we felt the cost of £95 still represents great value.

This is a practical and hands-on course with indoor and outdoor learning (no caving) and gives attendees the skills to manage casualties particularly in outdoor and underground

environments. It meets the prerequisites for many National Governing Body awards (Mountain Training, BCA, Paddle UK, DofE, etc.) and provides a three-year first aid certificate.

This is suitable for cavers who want to learn valuable first aid skills specifically in an outdoor context, or outdoor instructors who need to revalidate their first aid certificates.

Spaces on this course sold out to our mailing list subscribers within hours of being announced. We are looking to add another date. If you would be interested, subscribe to our mailing list to receive a one day heads-up on this, and all other workshops before we advertise them more widely via social media.

# WINTER 2025-2026 WORKSHOPS

In September we were pleased to launch our winter CNCC/BCA subsidised training workshop program, covering beginner SRT, refreshers for those wanting a confidence-boost, pull-through techniques, rigging and rescue training. Some are two-day events typically providing one day indoors and one day underground. We also have more sessions of our popular geology tours with John Helm and our 2:1 intensive workshops for more personalised training.

The demand for these has been so strong that space on nearly all have now sold out. We are showing these dates as an example of what we offer. If you want to be first to know about the next batch of workshops when they are announced (before we announce them anywhere else), sign up to our mailing list.



Scan to sign-up to our mailing list.

<b>20 SEP</b> SRT rigging underground (2:1 intensive)	<b>22 NOV</b> New to caving - 'Venture Underground'	<b>17 JAN</b> SRT underground refresher (easy cave)
<b>21 SEP</b> SRT rescue underground (2:1 intensive)	<b>29 NOV</b> SRT rescue underground (2:1 intensive)	<b>18 JAN</b> SRT underground refresher (technical cave)
<b>4 OCT</b> New to rigging / rigging refresher (indoors)	<b>29 NOV</b> New to rigging / rigging refresher (indoors)	<b>18 JAN</b> SRT rescue foundations (indoors)
<b>4 - 5 OCT</b> New to SRT / basics refresher (two days)	<b>29 NOV</b> Underground geology tour with John Helm	<b>18 JAN</b> SRT underground refresher (2:1 intensive)
<b>5 OCT</b> SRT rescue foundations (indoors)	<b>30 NOV</b> SRT rigging underground (2:1 intensive)	<b>8 FEB</b> SRT rescue intermediate (indoors)
<b>11 OCT</b> SRT rigging underground (2:1 intensive)	<b>30 NOV</b> SRT rescue intermediate (indoors)	<b>8 FEB</b> SRT rigging underground (2:1 intensive)
<b>25 - 26 OCT</b> New to SRT / basics refresher (two days)	<b>13 - 14 DEC</b> New to SRT / basics refresher (two days)	<b>14 FEB</b> SRT underground refresher (easy cave)
<b>1 NOV</b> SRT underground refresher (easy cave)	<b>13 DEC</b> SRT rigging underground (2:1 intensive)	<b>15 FEB</b> Pull through techniques (underground)
<b>2 NOV</b> Pull through techniques (underground)	<b>13 DEC</b> Underground geology tour with John Helm	<b>28 FEB - 1 MAR</b> New to basics refresher (two days)
<b>8 NOV</b> SRT underground refresher (technical cave)	<b>14 DEC</b> SRT rescue foundations (indoors)	<b>7 MAR</b> New to caving - 'Venture Underground'
<b>22 - 23 NOV</b> New to SRT / basics refresher (two days)	<b>17 JAN</b> New to rigging / rigging refresher (indoors)	<b>21 MAR</b> New to SRT / basics refresher (two days)

## NEW CNCC KIT STORE

Since starting with the current format of training in 2020 we have stored our SRT training kit in a small corner at the Yorkshire Dales Guides barn. We are very grateful for this, and it has served us well. We will still be storing some kit here that is specific to workshops we run at their barn using their excellent facilities.

Over the last five years we have grown to five CNCC trainers and we now use more venues and do more underground workshops where kit can get wet. Drying kit was becoming problematic. On some days we are running multiple workshops at multiple venues.

A new storage solution was needed to make the kit more accessible, better able to dry and with more space to accommodate our expanding inventory, including the new ropes generously donated by SpanSet.

The cost and availability of commercial storage was briefly examined but was prohibitive.

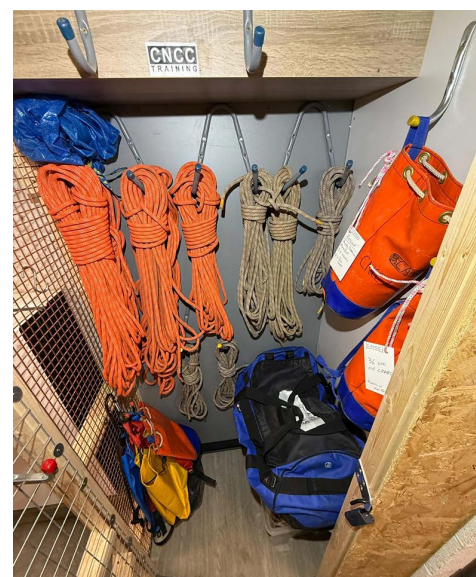
Our Training Officer, Ian Patrick, approached the Yorkshire Subterranean Society (YSS) and asked if there was anywhere we could have a small storage space. They were extremely helpful and were able to offer us a space in their cellar alongside their own equipment. As their cellar houses the boilers and Tesla electric storage batteries it is a warm and dry place.

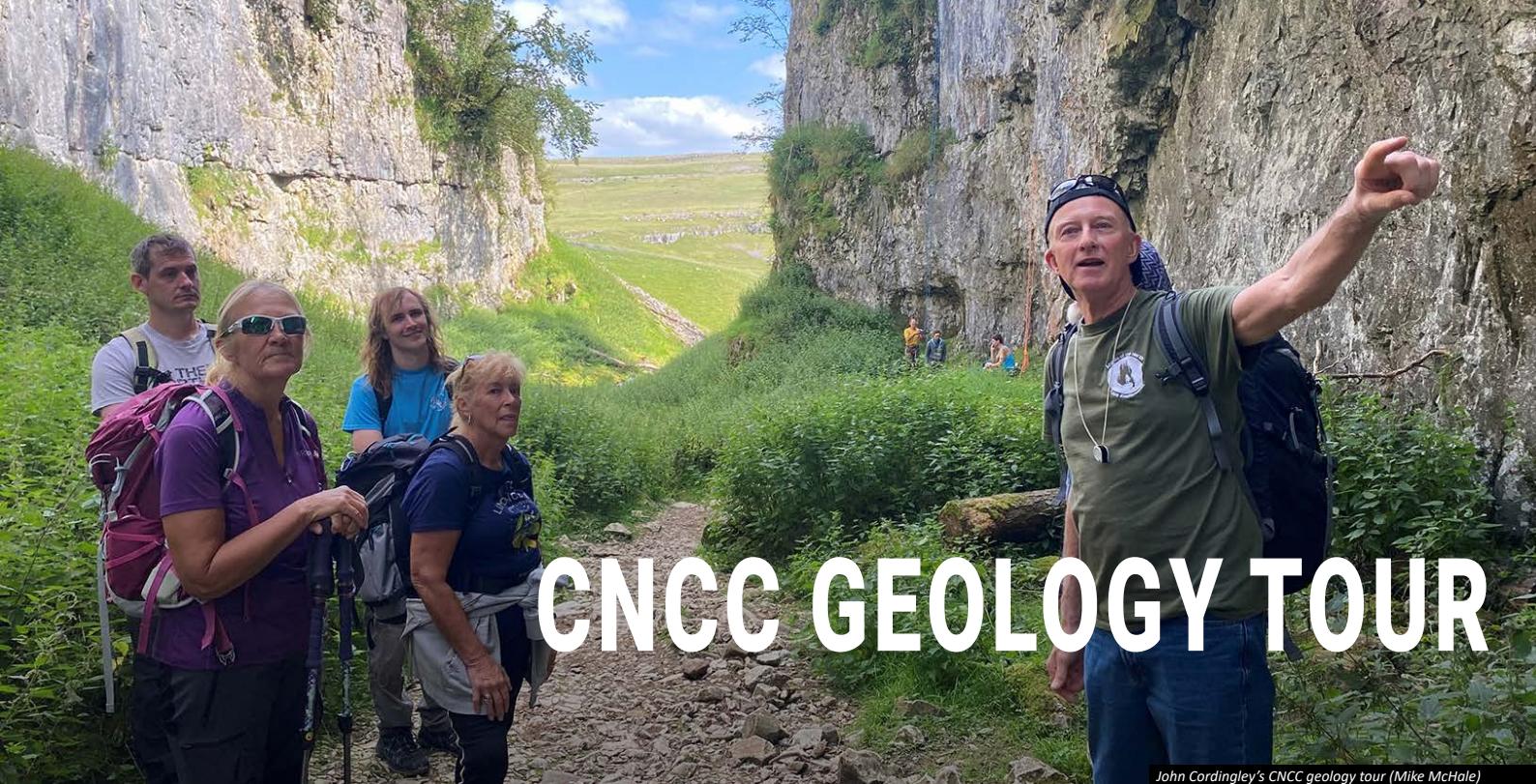
Alan Speight (YSS) met up with Ian and showed him our new corner, where Ian took some measurements and came up with a plan. Being a skilled carpenter, Ian was able to get the new space finished off to perfectly meet our needs.

We'd like to express our thanks to Yorkshire Dales Guides for the use of their barn and to the YSS for this very generous offer of using their cellar. This really does make a big difference to our ability to run our training program, which continues to remain in extremely high demand with cavers from all across the country.



Both photos - the CNCC's storage space at the YSS (Ian Patrick)





John Cordingley's CNCC geology tour (Mike McHale)

# CNCC GEOLOGY TOUR

For four years we have been running a popular geology workshops delivered by John 'Rock Doctor' Helm. For 2025 however we were pleased to also provide a second offering, courtesy of John Cordingley, using Ingleborough Cave as an example to demonstrate and explain cave geology.

The event was a sellout and we're pleased to receive a review and report of the day from Mike McHale:

*"A lucky group of budding geologists were treated to a day out with caver, diver and explorer extraordinaire John Cordingley on the CNCC Geology Day, August 10th at Clapham.*

*A wonderfully wide mix of ages and experiences had signed up for the event, ranging from a youngster aspiring to take up caving, to some regular club cavers. We were also fortunate to have other cave divers in the group, leading to some intriguing discussions on passages yet to be explored.*

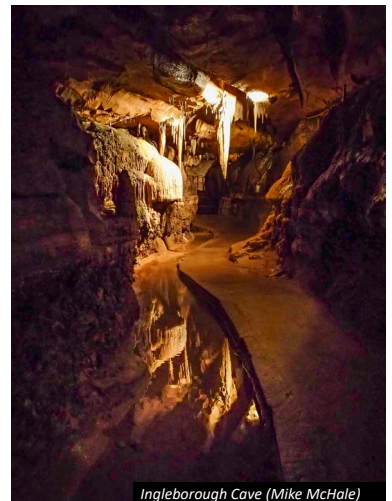
*The day was blessed by warm sunshine and consisted of a walk from Clapham along the Ingleborough Estate Nature Trail, into Ingleborough Show Cave, and reaching Gaping Gill via Trow Gill. Our descent was via Clapham Bottoms to Long Lane and back down to our start point in Clapham.*



The geology tour at Marilyn entrance (Mike McHale)

*The walk was punctuated throughout with frequent stops where John explained the underlying geology in layman's terms and the significance to the formation of known and currently unexplored cave drainage routes. Throw into this a spice of the histories of both the Ingleborough Estate and the exploration of the Gaping Gill system and the audience was given a banquet of knowledge and insight.*

*Perhaps the highlight of the day was a guided tour through Ingleborough Show Cave. John explained how the cave was formed and its significance in the history of exploration of the Gaping Gill system, punctuated with anecdotes about John's experience of guiding the public in the Show Cave over the years.*



Ingleborough Cave (Mike McHale)

*John has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Dales geology, speleology and the history of the area both above and below ground. His natural teaching style, born out of experience, combined with humour and anecdotes, made for easy but highly informative listening throughout the day.*

*This event had been timed to coincide with the Craven Pothole Club winch meet, so upon arriving at Gaping Gill we were welcomed with cups of tea and biscuits and cheerful conversation.*

*Our thanks go to the Ingleborough Estate and Sawmill Cafe for facilitating the start of the day and allowing entry to the Show Cave, the Craven Pothole Club for refreshments, the CNCC for sponsoring the event, and above all to John for his excellent organisation, instruction and inspiration!"*

# CNCC AND SPANSET

SpanSet, based in Cheshire, provide facilities for industry rope access training, as well as design, manufacture, and supply of equipment for working at height and lifting/load control.

Their name has become linked to caving in the UK, not only because of the number of cavers who are also employed in the industry that SpanSet covers, but also because they have been prolific supporters of recreational caving over the last decade.



Handing over the rope. Left to right: Pete Ward, Ian Patrick and Mark Richards

This has included donating 6km of rope for EuroSpeleo in 2026, supporting BCA with use of their venue for meetings, sponsoring UKCaving including at Hidden Earth and more recently, NAMHO.

Their managing director, Pete Ward, is also an enthusiastic caver and was at Hidden Earth. This led to a discussion at our stall with Pete about how SpanSet could help support our work.

To follow up on this, our Training team of Ian Patrick and Mark Richards, visited their site in Cheshire on 26th November...

*"We had a tour of both the manufacturing and training facilities by Pete Ward. We were there for five hours and enjoyed excellent hospitality and good coffee."*

*We were presented with 350m of new rope to use within CNCC training and were generously offered the use of their top-quality training facility for running our workshops. The use of their industry leading testing facilities could also be made available to the CNCC for any testing we wished to carry out.*

*As well as these incredibly practical offers of support, it was made very clear that SpanSet have a very positive attitude to cavers and are keen to provide support and assistance to the caving community."*

We're really grateful to Pete, and SpanSet for their generosity and continued support of British caving.

## ARCHAEOLOGY



Martin Stables sifting through excavated earth from Heaning Wood Bone Cave (Lis Redshaw)

### By Tony Brown, CNCC Archaeology Coordinator:

The plateaus surrounding Ingleborough continue to yield archaeology from Mesolithic to Medieval times with some very interesting material unearthed initially by cavers and supervised by professional archaeology. Rick Peterson (UCLAN) covers Elaphus Pot and Norber Pot in his report (see link below/right\*).

Elaphus was explored by Earby Pothole Club with archaeological input from John Thorp. Chert and flint lithics and cattle and deer remains date from the early Bronze Age.

Norber Cave, another EPC and John Thorp project, has produced faunal and artefactual evidence ranging in date from the Early Mesolithic to the Bronze Age.

In both cases these are likely to have been deliberate human actions and provide another indicator of Early Bronze Age human activity in this part of the study area. Elaphus Pot is close to lithic scatters and funerary cairns identified in previous landscape investigations.



Our archaeology coordinator, Tony Brown

These two sites will feature in a later CNCC newsletter in the context of a wider survey of cave archaeology in the north of England.

Fume Pot gets a reference in Rick Peterson's report but much more has come out beyond the report's coverage to the end of 2023. Early and infrequent digging by the Bradford Pothole Club led to the discovery of faunal material and the site became a serious archaeological investigation in the late summer of 2024 when a team comprising cavers from a number of caving clubs, led by John Thorp, got to work with a tripod and shoring. Work ceased for the winter of 2024/2025 and has once again ceased until the New Year. However, most of the faunal material, comprising aurochs, deer and wild boar, has probably now surfaced. We expect carbon dating to go back to the Mesolithic.



Carol Makin and an auroch bone at Fume Pot (Pete Monk)

Heaning Wood Bone Cave featured in Descent 294 and this article reported the news that the cave had yielded human remains, dated to around 11,200 years old and the oldest so far found in the north of England. The work by Martin Stables, an enthusiastic non-caver and non-archaeologist, was supervised by UCLAN's Rick Peterson. Martin's work ended at a point beyond which he wisely left it to cavers to determine if anything more lay below. The last visit was in July 2022 when Richard Mercer descended the cave to its limit and determined that there was no further archaeology.

\*Download the report here (or scan the QR code):

<https://foundationforcommonland.org.uk/library/overground-underground-ingleborough-caving-project-report>



# INCLUSIVITY

## VISIBLE REPRESENTATION FOR IMPROVING DIVERSITY OUTDOORS

by Josh White, CNCC Inclusivity Coordinator

For any questions or more information: [inclusivity@cncc.org.uk](mailto:inclusivity@cncc.org.uk)



When we talk about caving, climbing, or any adventure sport, we often picture rugged landscapes, technical challenges, and the thrill of exploration. Who feels welcome in these activities can be driven both by the physical and psychological demands (discussed in previous newsletters), but also by the less considered matter of visible representation, which we will focus on in this article.

### THE POWER OF SEEING YOURSELF

Representation isn't just about optics; it's about identity and a feeling of belonging. When someone sees people thriving in outdoor spaces who look like them, share their cultural background, or with similar lived experiences, this sends a powerful message: You belong here too.

For many under-represented groups - people of colour, women, disabled or LGBTQ+ individuals - the outdoors has historically been portrayed as a "white, male space." This perception isn't accidental; it's firmly rooted in decades of imagery, marketing, and leadership dominated by a narrow demographic. The consequence is entire communities feeling disconnected from nature and adventure sports, even when the desire to participate is strong.

### COUNTERING THE "THEY'RE NOT INTERESTED" MYTH

A persistent myth is that people from minority backgrounds aren't interested in outdoor activities. This is obviously nonsense and surveys consistently confirm that. However, barriers such as cost, transport, safety concerns, and cultural perceptions, can limit this from translating into actual participation.

When these barriers are addressed, interest quickly translates into action. Community-led initiatives such as Black Girls Hike, Muslim Hikers, and Peaks of Colour prove this point. When representation and outreach are prioritized, participation rises dramatically. It's not about lack of interest; it's about lack of visibility, and an unclear message of whether people from a minority background will be welcomed, and able to feel part of the community.

Are groups specifically aimed at different communities the right way to promote diversity and inclusivity? On the face of it, you might think not. However, such groups help break barriers to participating in outdoor pursuits. For example, some LGBTQ+ individuals wanting to try caving might prefer to join a LGBTQ+ club (e.g. Out on Rock) as they provide a way into caving knowing you will share something in common with others and homophobia/transphobia is not a risk. The initial barrier of learning how to cave is separated from the concern of fitting in, making getting involved much easier. Cavers in community-specific groups might later participate in the wider community. If these groups encourage more people into outdoor activity who wouldn't otherwise have done so, this can only be a good thing, and over time this will undoubtedly lead to greater diversity across the entire wider community.

### WHY IT MATTERS FOR CAVING

Caving is often seen as niche, technical, and intimidating. For newcomers, especially those from under-represented backgrounds, the absence of visible role models, or the lack of visibly diverse participation can amplify that intimidation. If every photo in a newsletter or on social media show the same demographic, the message is clear: This isn't for you. That's not what we want!

Visible representation in caving isn't about tokenism or ticking boxes. It's about reflecting the truth - that adventure belongs to everyone. Our caves don't discriminate, but social structures sometimes do. By showcasing diversity through imagery, stories, and leadership we can actively dismantle those barriers.

### BEYOND THE SURFACE: PRACTICAL IMPACT

Representation does more than inspire; it changes behaviour. When people feel welcome, they're more likely to join clubs, attend meets, and invest in training. This strengthens our community, brings fresh perspectives, and ensures the sustainability of our sport. This is especially important for caving as most people who help organise our groups, clubs and national bodies are volunteers.

Diversity improves safety and problem-solving. Different lived experiences foster creativity and resilience, qualities every caver values underground. A more inclusive caving community isn't just fair; it's stronger, and a more enjoyable and exciting place.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

Improving representation starts with intentional action:

- **Showcase diverse voices:** Feature stories from cavers of more varied backgrounds in newsletters, social media, and events.
- **Inclusive imagery:** Do your photos reflect the diversity we aspire to? If not, change that.
- **Mentorship and outreach:** Partner with community groups to offer taster sessions and build confidence for newcomers.
- **Leadership opportunities:** Encourage members from under-represented groups to take on visible roles, for example, club officers or trip leaders.

Representation isn't a one-off campaign; it's a cultural shift. For many clubs and groups where membership, and photos or reports from events, are lacking diversity, it may seem impossible to be part of the solution. However, if we all keep the above recommendations in mind and apply them when we can, even through small changes and actions, this cultural shift can and will happen.

### A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Every member of our community has a role to play. Whether you're a seasoned caver or a beginner, think about how your actions contribute to inclusion. Invite someone new. Share your story. Challenge stereotypes when you hear them. Small gestures accumulate into big change.

### LOOKING AHEAD

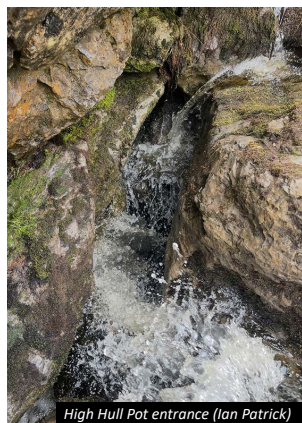
The outdoors (and caving in particular) offers something profound: connection to the earth, adventure, and each other. That connection only thrives when everyone feels they have a place. Ensuring visible representation can start to build a bridge between exclusion and belonging. It tells the world: This is for you, come and explore.

As we head into a new year, let's commit to making our community as diverse as the landscapes we love. Because when more people feel welcome underground, the whole caving world becomes richer, safer, and more vibrant.

# ANCHORS & DESCRIPTIONS

## HIGH HULL POT

This is a splendid and short wet pothole offering plenty of sporting action. One of our installers fell in love with this little gem and decided to take it on as a new project to get others to enjoy it too. Anchor installation was complete in August, and we are pleased to now offer a topo on our website. This is perfect to combine with nearby Hunt Pot (and a potter around the Hull Pot shakehole) for a day out in low water conditions.



## NORTH END POT

This shakehole has been the focus of much attention over the last few years. In 2024, North by North End Pot (a separate dig in the North End Pot shakehole) was connected to the Eastern Front via Llean Bean Aven. We have published a topo and route description for this excellent trip. In the months following, the digging team performed work to stabilise the original North End Pot dig, to maintain access to the impressive St. George's Hall. This was covered in detail in our last newsletter.

The newly stabilised North End Pot now benefits from CNCC anchors and the North by North End Pot topo and description are currently being updated to include both pots.

## MARBLE CAKE HOLE

This newly dug entrance to Marble Steps Pot is found as you descend the entrance slope towards the usual routes. After a scaffolded section, a series of short pitches provide a route into the Lost Inlet Series and down Branch Aven to reach the Upper Main Chamber, where the classic Gully route joins.

Our anchor installer found that most of the route was able to be rigged from existing drilled threads, but three anchors were placed for the final pitch. These drilled threads are challenging to locate so this will provide a unique rigging experience.

Our Marble Steps topo is currently being updated to show this alternative route, and we hope to add this to our description.

## NEW DESCRIPTIONS

We have recently added route descriptions to our website for:

- High Hull Pot
- Illusion Pot
- Scoska Cave
- Sleets Gill Cave (to The Ramp via Hydrophobia)
- Devis Hole Mine Cave (to the East Cave Series)
- Hammer Pot

We have also updated several of our topos following error reports, so please remember to always download the latest version of any of our documents before planning your trip.

## YOUR CNCC

**Chair:** Todd Rye - [chair@cncc.org.uk](mailto:chair@cncc.org.uk)

**Secretary:** Jill Bolton - [secretary@cncc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@cncc.org.uk)

**Treasurer:** Kath Davis - [treasurer@cncc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@cncc.org.uk)

**Conservation:** Kay Easton - [conservation@cncc.org.uk](mailto:conservation@cncc.org.uk)

**Access:** James Alderson - [access@cncc.org.uk](mailto:access@cncc.org.uk)

**Training:** Ian Patrick - [training@cncc.org.uk](mailto:training@cncc.org.uk)

**Equipment Rep:** Mark Richards - [equipment@cncc.org.uk](mailto:equipment@cncc.org.uk)

**Individual Caver Rep:** Tim Allen - [icrep@cncc.org.uk](mailto:icrep@cncc.org.uk)

**PR and Communications:** Matt Ewles - [pr@cncc.org.uk](mailto:pr@cncc.org.uk)

**Youth Development Rep:** Position vacant - [ydrep@cncc.org.uk](mailto:ydrep@cncc.org.uk)

**Web Administrator:** Gary Douthwaite - [web@cncc.org.uk](mailto:web@cncc.org.uk)

**Anchor Coordinator:** Ian Walker - [anchors@cncc.org.uk](mailto:anchors@cncc.org.uk)

**Inclusivity Coordinator:** Josh White - [inclusivity@cncc.org.uk](mailto:inclusivity@cncc.org.uk)

Cave info, rigging topos, descriptions & more at : [cncc.org.uk](http://cncc.org.uk)

Find CNCC on social media...



Facebook



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Bluesky



Threads



X



YouTube



Follow the CNCC board on UK Caving: [cncc.org.uk/ukcaving](http://cncc.org.uk/ukcaving)

## WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Being involved in the CNCC can take many forms:

### FULL MEMBERSHIP

Our full member clubs can vote at our AGM and will be called upon for input on any serious matters that arise through the year. If your club is not already a full member (you can find a list on our website), why not consider joining?

### OFFICERS AND CO-OPTED VOLUNTEERS

Our officers and volunteers 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.

### COMMITTEE

Each year up to fourteen of our full member clubs and a representative for individual 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.

### INDIVIDUALS

We welcome any enthusiastic individuals or groups to come along to our meetings and participate, or just to see what goes on. The more formal matter of voting is limited to our committee and members, but input from all participants is embraced.

For more information on getting involved, contact our Secretary or visit: [cncc.org.uk/getinvolved](http://cncc.org.uk/getinvolved)