

CNCC OFFICER REPORTS - JUNE 2024

CHAIR'S REPORT

(Andrew Hinde)

Dales Countryside Museum

The museum in Hawes has an exhibition on the heritage of commons in the Dales which runs until September. This features a sample of cave archaeology from some of the Dales caves which have been collected and curated by Northern Cavers.

[https://www.dalescountrysidemuseum.org.uk/
category/current-upcoming-exhibitions/](https://www.dalescountrysidemuseum.org.uk/category/current-upcoming-exhibitions/)

I did the best I could to display the large mammal bones with the cabinets provided. This was followed up with a seminar on Cave Archaeology on Saturday 1 June which was attended by some of the original cave explorers along with academics from UCLAN.

CNCC Photo Exhibition

The stunning collection of photos by Northern Cavers is returning to The Folly in Settle this summer. The collection aroused much interest from the public last year. The exhibition was due to go to the Saw Mill at Clapham in the spring but this fell through due to security problems that we could not overcome in a commercial premises.

YDNP Management Plan Forum

I attended this forum to represent CNCC and caving interests. Caving is still a central theme of recreation with the National Park. Caving was cited as an important feature by a significant number of respondents to the Management Plan consultation. Cave access is also cited in the draft of the Management Plan. Caving is well respected by the Park Authority and Officers.

TREASURER'S REPORT

(Pete Bann)

See separate document

SECRETARY'S REPORT

(Jill Bolton)

Shortly after the last meeting, I circulated a couple of online consultations.

The request from Sam Allshorn (and others) to anchor various caves was approved by all fifteen committee members, with several clubs expressing thanks for the work of the Anchor Team. Red Rose highlighted the warning for the entrance dig to the Aardvark series, and urged everyone to stay safe.

An application for an Exploration Grant was also circulated, and received approval from thirteen out of fifteen committee members. Whilst supportive of the project itself, two clubs voted against the application. Craven felt it should be funded by the club involved (Red Rose), and YSS felt it didn't fall into the current categories. The committee might wish to consider whether the guidance needs to be more explicit, to avoid unsuccessful applications.

Please note that online consultations are not necessarily a quick process. Some larger clubs are not able to give an immediate response, as they need to discuss the issue at their next committee meeting.

On March 31, I issued a warning about phishing emails:

Our Chairman has asked me to remind you that we occasionally receive dodgy emails, often purporting to come from Andrew himself. In some cases, it's obvious they're not genuine, such as asking you to purchase gift cards to thank his fellow officers.

By a bizarre co-incidence, the very next day I received an email from our chairman about a gift voucher - but this was genuine, and not an April Fool!

Our new name emphasises that we work to support all northern cavers, and not just club members. With this in mind, we've set up an email group for individuals to receive direct notice of meetings and agendas. Please let me know of anyone who might like to be added to this list.

York University held its first session on the new SRT ropes on June 4, attended by Matt, Gary and myself. Last month, we were delighted to finally receive the promised reimbursement of £1000 from the BCA. So whilst the CNCC has no longer contributed financially to this project, we have carried out a lot of lobbying to ensure a successful outcome.

Looking ahead to the next AGM, our Chair, Treasurer and Access Officer have already indicated they plan to stand down. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these roles, a period of shadowing or assisting the current officer might be worthwhile. Plus, there are lots of other opportunities to help run the CNCC.

Finally, I'll mention that I need to "declare an interest" at each committee meeting, as my husband is now the BCA Treasurer. Be assured that it's NOT a "conflict of interest" as my loyalties lie firmly with CNCC (sorry, Chris!)

CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT

(Kay Easton)

A number of projects are in various stages of preparation, including:

- removal of rubbish from Notts II
- work on the shaft top at Aquamole
- repair of stiles at Calf Holes and Low Birkwith
- repair of lid at Oddmire Pot
- stock proofing and attention to scaffolding at Swan Dike Pot

CNCC has continued to give support to individual groups carrying out conservation work, for example, the replacement of the entrance tube at Stream Passage Pot, a new gate at Bull Pot Farm, and Pete Bann's repair of the stile at Lost Johns

Andrew Hinde's proposal that we should be able to carry out small projects up to £3000 (increased from £750) without prior authorisation has been accepted by the BCA, and this should ease the bureaucracy considerably.

A list of equipment available for CNCC members to borrow for conservation projects is on the CNCC website:

<https://cncc.org.uk/resources/assets/>

The list also includes publicity and anchor items, in addition to conservation assets.

Those who are planning conservation works are reminded that 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.

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

(Ian Patrick)

The Spring/Summer training workshops have been ticking along nicely, all the training workshops are "Full" and we have received some really nice feedback. We are now starting to think about the Autumn/Winter programme.

We have put on a couple of "New to Caving" events using the same format as our training workshops. (ie using paid trainers). If we manage to fill all the places then the fees will cover the cost of the trainer and kit hire.

We have run a couple of underground workshops (Rescues and Rigging) in the new format of two students to one instructor, which have proved really successful and provided an extremely productive learning environment.

Thanks as always to everyone involved for their help and support, it is very much appreciated.

Please do contact me if you have any suggestions or ideas for any type of training.

ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT (Kai Trusson)

Black Moss Pot - I was contacted about incorrect information, so redirected them to the online "Report a Problem" form.

Braida Garth Farm - I have not been directly involved in the recent incident, as Adele was already dealing with it. The Heron Pot page on the website has been updated with an alternative route from Yordas Wood, to avoid further problems.

Langcliffe Estate - I sent a final email chasing them, in the hope of a response, before sending a letter to withdraw from the Memorandum of Understanding. I have not heard anything back as of yet

Hudgill Burn Mine - I have contacted Pete of the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society to enquire about access to this cavern, which is currently only available for scientific and survey work. However, radon levels are very high, so sporting trips would be inadvisable.

Robinsons Pot - I have been looped into the goings-on, and that the current agreement needs to be updated. Discussions with the National Trust are relatively advanced, so Matt is continuing to deal with it.

Gatekirk Cave - I was emailed by a caver wishing to visit this cave. He rang the farmer (as advised on the CNCC website), but Mr Brennand wants to stop visits due to concerns around being sued. He was reported to be pleasant, but not aware of the CNCC. I plan to visit the farm in the near future and discuss the issue with Mr Brennand.

ANCHOR TEAM REPORT

(Alan Speight)

As always, the installers are steadily working their way through the list of approved projects.

We would be interested to talk to anyone thinking of volunteering to join the Anchor Team - but please be aware this role is hard work and very committing.

<https://cncc.org.uk/equipment/installers/>

Vince Allkins of Caving Wales recently requested some of our stock of BCA-funded IC anchors, so a batch of 77 are currently on their way to South Wales via "Caver Post".

TRAINING & EQUIPMENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

(Mark Richards)

There has been no meeting (or anything raised by email) of the BCA Training & Equipment group since my last report.

YOUTH & DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

(Aila Taylor)

No meetings of the BCA Y&D Working Group have been held yet this year.

The Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC) is planning a national event in South Wales in November.

I am also assisting with a training weekend for student clubs in the Dales before then, which is non-CHECC affiliated.

I am organising a British Cave Research Association (BCRA) Humanities Weekend in the Dales this autumn, alongside Jono and a current student in a university club.

In April, I successfully applied to be a member of the "Living Landscapes" drafting group for the YDNPA new Management Plan. Though I am sitting on this independently, I can of course support any cave-related targets related to this role.

BCA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

(Andrew Hinde)

BCA Council Meeting 14 May 2024

- 1 Zac Woodford appointed by BCA Council as P&I Working Group Convener
- 2 Alan Richardson was appointed by BCA Council as FSE Representative
- 3 Simon Mullins was appointed by BCA Council as IT officer
- 4 A comprehensive report from the newly appointed Treasurer was accepted
- 5 BCA Financial Statements were accepted by Council

BCA Annual General Meeting 3 June 2024

- 1 All Officer reports were accepted by the membership
- 2 Andy Eavis has retired as the BCA rep to UCI after 38 years service.
He remains an Honorary Life President of UCI.
- 3 Ged Campion has taken over as BCA Rep to UCI
- 4 Russell Myers has stood down after 6 years on BCA Exec and received a vote of thanks for his dedicated work to British Caving
- 5 Two nominations for posts as reps on BCA Council came from the floor
Jess Brock NPC (Individual rep) and Aodhain o Gabhann SUI (Group rep)
These will go to online voting, with other contested posts such as BCA Secretary
- 6 Jenny Pots and Andy Eavis are re-standing as members reps

ACCESS CO-ORDINATORS' REPORTS

Bowland (Tony Brown)

Once again, nothing to report.

Excalibur (Matt Ewles)

No permits have been requested for Excalibur Pot yet this year - a real shame. I'd like to remind everyone that a weekend in the North York Moors should be a fixture on all summer meets list, with one day to visit Excalibur/Jenga and Bogg Hall Rising, and one day walking.

There is also very good climbing available just a few hundred metres away from Excalibur at Ravenswick Quarry. Cheap and basic camping is available behind The New Inn at Cropton (a pub and microbrewery), only a short drive from Excalibur/Jenga.

Alternatively, The Crown at Hutton-le-Hole (our cavers' pub, muddy faces welcome, superb food) has hookups for camper vans and some fancier accommodation. Excalibur permits are available easily and usually at very short notice, and descriptions for the caves are on the CNCC website.

Robinsons & Fairy Holes (Dinny Davies)

The YSS and Kendal have both made bookings for Robinsons and/or Fairy Hole, all others are reminded that permits are still available.

PR & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER'S REPORT

(Matt Ewles)

At the time of writing this report, Gary and I are just putting the finishing touches to the next CNCC newsletter, for June 2024. By the meeting this will be published and hopefully copies delivered to all the usual addresses. Copies should be available at the meeting to take away if you want one. This is another bumper issue showcasing the best of the CNCC, from conservation, to training, access, safety and anchors.

I'm very pleased to have two bespoke articles, one excellent piece from our new Inclusivity Coordinator, Josh White, and one from Tim Allen on the breakthrough at North-by-North End Pot.

I'm also pleased that we just managed to hold the publication long enough to include a report of the reopened YUCPC training facility. Gary, Jill and I attended the opening event to get some photos.

Articles for the newsletter are very welcome. I am happy to include pieces that are of general interest to northern cavers, providing there is some CNCC-related link. Of course, this should not be considered an alternative to submitting something to Descent magazine.

I have continued to put our news stories across all forms of media, with stories covering our AGM and our new name, our recent approval of a load of new caves for anchor installation, various new and updated topos, training workshops and some safety warnings.

Our mailing list now has 702 subscribers, up by about 50 since January, and I continue to send monthly mailshots.

It became apparent to me that we have no way of recording or publicising caves which are approved for anchor installation. Working with Gary, this has been added to the 'anchor locations' page of the equipment section of the website. Doing this involved trawling through our minutes from the last several years, including identifying some caves approved for anchoring that we may have even forgotten about. Note that several projects are not displayed on the public website as one installer has requested their ongoing projects are not publicised, but they are present in the website admin area for our records. Gary and I are happy to manage keeping this up to date.

As always, you are reminded that I have a stock of Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales books for landowner relations, and a large stock of new-to-caving 'Venture Underground' leaflets which I'd appreciate your help in circulating.

I'd also like to remind you that I am keen to hear from anyone who would like to take on some PR duties. We have opportunities to work with other organisations such as the National Park to promote caving, and I have a contact who is keen to work with us. However, to take this on alongside the more day-to-day PR/Comms duties is more time than I can currently offer. There is huge scope for CNCC to work with several like-minded organisations if we can find additional volunteers to help.

At request of Kai and Andrew, I have taken on discussions with National Trust about Robinson's Pot, to try to get the wording of the access agreement modernised. The best we can hope for here (and the main aim) is to enable permits to be granted to individual BCA members as well as clubs. A series of proposed revisions are currently with National Trust lawyers, where I expect they may reside for some time.

Hidden Earth has been announced for 20-22 September. I am hoping to have a stall at this, as we had in 2023 and 2019. I had planned originally to recycle the stall and contents from 2023, however, with our name change, all our PR materials need a refresh. This includes our pull-up banners, display posters, tablecloth and a few other bits and pieces. This is going to come at a moderate but unexpected cost. We will hopefully calculate an estimate by the time of the meeting to see whether Committee feel this is a justifiable expense.

WEB ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

(Gary Douthwaite)

Please see separate document for full report with analytics

Following the March AGM, the CNCC name has been changed across the website, social media and UK Caving to Council for the Northern Caving Community. New logos created for future publications.

New anchor locations section added to the equipment area of the website. This lists details of caves that have been approved for installation but not yet completed. Some have been hidden with a generic "plus x more projects" as requested by Sam Allshorn. These pending updates also show in the fixed aids section of the individual cave details page.

New inclusivity section added to the resources area. There is more content to add here in future but for now it contains basic contact information and a form to allow reporting of issues / concerns.

Reporting of cave / topo / conservation issues now displays in the admin area to make sure any reports requiring action are visible to everyone. A status is shown, and notes can be added. The reports are also emailed to the relevant person as before.

More recently I've been working with Matt Ewles to produce Issue 15 of the newsletter which should be published by the time of the next committee meeting. The style has been modernised further and is the largest one yet. In addition to the digital PDF version, the aim is to also publish via Hayzine allowing a more readable, page turning, on-screen experience.

In the last few days we have just topped 2000 followers on Facebook!

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ANCHORING PROJECTS

The list of approved projects awaiting completion by the CNCC volunteer Anchor Team is now available online:

<https://cncc.org.uk/equipment/anchor-locations/>

We have also received requests for approval of the following projects:

Yockenthwaite Pot, Langstrothdale (Huw Goodall)

Old spits “seen better days” and require replacing with resin anchors

Jingling Pot, Kingsdale (?? and Aidan Lumb)

Pitch head of the final 20m pitch - excessive wiggle in a resin anchor

Plus request for new anchors in the rift below the 20m pitch

OBJ Hole, Gaping Gill (Ian Cross)

Old spits in poor condition and require replacing with modern hangers

Gaping Gill (Sam Allshorn)

Lost River Series, SE Pot

Stream Passage Pot, last pitch (aka mud pitch?)

OTHER PROJECTS

North End Pot (Tim Allen)

Advance notice of a possible project to re-establish access to St Georges Hall in the original part of the cave, first opened up by Earby Pothole Club.

HIDDEN EARTH

Update by Matt Ewles

Hidden Earth is the British Cave Research Association’s annual conference.

The 2024 event will be held on 20-22 September in Llangollen

BCA YOUTH & DEVELOPMENT

Introduction to the new Development Plan by Jonathan Lester, the BCA Y&D Working Group Convenor

Development Plan available to download on the UK Caving forum:

<https://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?threads/bca-youth-development-plan.31911/>