

NEWSLETTER

Issue 8 August 2018

Editorial

Caving is more in the public eye than ever before, with articles in national and regional press, an increased social media presence from numerous clubs and organisations, and of course unexpected events such as the Thailand rescue. We are also seeing gradually increasing interest from younger cavers in both the CNCC and the BCA, which can only be a good thing. The CNCC is working hard to play our part in this movement by pushing for more participation, greater freedom of access; modern online resources to make northern caving easier to get involved with, and an anchor and conservation scheme to support our region for the immediate future. This is the eighth in this series of newsletters charting our progress towards these ambitions; and as shown below progress is being made. But this can only continue if matched by the commitment of other northern cavers to come to our meetings and contribute ideas.

Matt Ewles (Editor)

**Next AGM: 9th March 2019, 10am
Hellifield Village Institute, Hellifield.**

Your CNCC

www.cncc.org.uk

 /CouncilOfNorthernCavingClubs

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CNCC AGM 2018

Thank you to everyone who came along to our AGM on the 10th March in Hellifield. We had a presentation of the new online cave booking system and some decisive moves towards changing our interpretation of access for caves on CRoW land. We have even heard the meeting described as enjoyable; who'd have thought?

The meeting was attended by 31 people including 17 voting representatives. The 14 committee positions were contested (there were 15 applicants) and we welcomed SUSS to the Committee for the first time.

All our meetings are friendly, informative, a good networking opportunity and a chance to put forward your ideas for what we can be doing to enhance northern caving. The number of new clubs that have got involved over the past decade has been relatively small. Our meeting quorum isn't under any threat thanks to the commitment of about 15-20 of our long-standing members, but we urge more northern clubs and individuals to come along and get involved. All of our meetings are open to everyone.

Northern Explorers' Forum

A new event is planned for our region in 2019, organised by northern cavers. The Northern Explorers' Forum is a one-day event intended to bring together diggers, divers and interested cavers to present and discuss their work. This will enable those interested in exploration to discuss their understanding of what has been done and where things might go in the future.

Talks are already confirmed covering Dentdale, the new Gaping Gill survey, maze caves of the Northern Dales, advances in the North York Moors, the Fountains Fell Master Cave plus many others.

It sounds like a fantastic event, and while only being considered a one-off for now, if it is well attended there may be the option to make this a more regular thing.

The date is 7th April 2019 and the event will be at Clapham Village Hall. Tickets and more information will be available in due course. Keep an eye on the CNCC news via the homepage of our website or follow us on Facebook to receive the latest details.

Cave descriptions and topos

Our online route description covering the Lost Johns', Boxhead and Death's Head Hole entrances to the Leck Fell Master Cave is our fifth most downloaded description. Since it was written however, the route from Notts II to the passages above Lyle Cavern have popularised a number of additional trip options. Furthermore, entrances such as It's a Cracker and Cupcake (which were opened in 2011-2012) are gaining traffic. The Leck Fell Master Cave System description has therefore been updated to include Cupcake, Notts II and Cracker and the main sporting routes for all of these entrances to Lyle Cavern.

Sunset Hole near Chapel-le-Dale now has an online description to accompany the existing topo. This had until now been a surprise omission from our catalogue of cave descriptions. Furthermore, the Aygill Caverns topo and description has been updated in light of some feedback.



Sunset Hole. Photo: John Radburn.

Anchoring of Marble Sink, Roaring Hole and Hall of the Mountain King in Ease Gill Caverns are now complete (see the separate reports for each of these elsewhere in this newsletter) and the topos are now available on our website.

One of the joys of having these descriptions and topos online is that any errors can be easily corrected. If anyone spots any errors in any CNCC description or topo, please report them via the online reporting form or just email the Secretary: Secretary@cncc.org.uk

Three Counties interpretation boards

As somewhat of a pet project for our Access Officer, this is best explained by Tim directly:

This probably started years ago whilst getting changed on Leck Fell. A group of walkers passed by and asked if there were any caves around. When I replied that they were stood over Britain's longest cave system, the 90 km long Three Counties System, they were astounded and asked where information on this great geological feature could be found. That was the start of a lengthy endeavour to get some interpretation boards positioned close to the system.

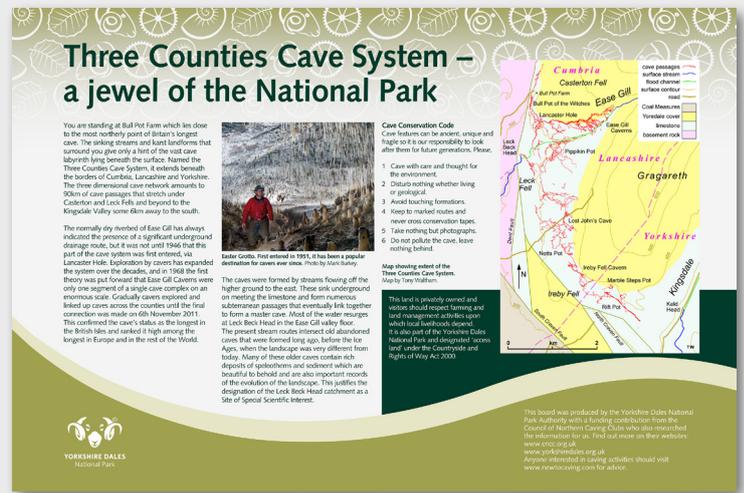
At first the National Park was cold on the idea. However, when the park extension was inaugurated it encompassed the whole of the cave system and they became much more supportive. The CNCC too were supportive, and offered to share the cost of making the boards (more expensive than you might think). It was then down to me to co-ordinate landowner permission and come up with suitable content. Tony Waltham offered some advice on text and redrew one of the maps from the Caves and Karst book specially for this. Mark Burkey gave permission to use one of his photographs taken in Ease Gill Caverns and CNCC Officers offered advice too.

The obvious place for one of the boards was at Bull Pot Farm as not only does this area attract cavers but lots of walkers too. Another location, on Leck Fell, where a view of the majority of the landscape can be seen was also considered as well as locations around Kingsdale.

Due to some difficulties it was decided to focus on getting approval for a board at Bull Pot Farm first. Mr Henry Bowring, landowner of the Whelprigg Estate (Casterton Fell) took considerable interest in the board. Nearly two years went by while I negotiated the exact text and look of the board between the interested parties. Eventually patience won through and approval was given. Many thanks to the RRCPC, who as tenants of Bull Pot Farm, were very helpful. The National Park is now having the board made in its standard design and soon it will be fixed on the north east corner of the farm just where the two footpaths diverge. Make sure to look out for it next time you are up there!

I will now look to completing a second board for the Kingsdale end of the system. Provisional landowner approval has already been given so once the content is designed this should not take as long to put together. For the future we have plans for wider cave interpretation for the area.

Tim Allen; CNCC Access Officer



CNCC history

In January, the CNCC Secretary was handed two large boxes of historic CNCC documents. This included thousands of letters written to and from Officers dating back to the 1960s!

We also found AGM documents dating back to the very first CNCC AGM in 1964, which have now all been digitised and made available on our website, helping to chronicle our history.

We also located original letters written between the first Officers (particularly the late Tom Sykes, our first Secretary) and the landowners of Fountains Fell, Leck Fell and Casterton Fell in the early 1960s; the very letters that led to the establishment of the first access agreement and the formation of the CNCC. Later letters chart the important role of the CNCC in establishing the first national body (the NCA), and how our role later evolved into conservation, training and anchor installation.

Work is ongoing to filter through these documents and identify those of historical significance to be packaged up and sent to the British Caving Library.

GDPR guidance for clubs

Yes, it's those four letters that we have all come to dread. But like it or not, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is here and is something clubs who hold member data (name, address, email, phone etc) need to think about. The CNCC has put together a document, downloadable from the publications page of our website, to help clubs interpret GDPR and what it means for them.

Developing good relations

Earlier this year a local benefactor generously donated some money to the CNCC, suggesting that it could be used to help enhance our public relations. It was interesting to note that the benefactor had once been a critic of CNCC but has been so impressed with recent changes to our outlook and attitude that he felt compelled to contribute in some way.

After careful thought we decided to purchase a number of the BCRA publication, Cave and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales vol.2 by Tony Waltham and David Lowe, and present them to some of our caving

landowners. Cave and Karst is a tremendous volume of work with hundreds of fantastic photographs and maps showing the caves beneath our feet; ideal as an informative gift for the caving landowner. A number of these books have already been presented and some very positive feedback received. We hope to extend this initiative to cover even more landowners in the future.

A huge thanks to our local benefactor and to the many chapter authors who make the book such an excellent resource. Anyone with an interest in the caves of the Yorkshire Dales really should own a copy.

Hidden Earth 2018

Despite best efforts, no suitable northern venue could be found, and so Hidden Earth, the UK's annual caving conference, will be held 21-23rd September at Churchill Academy on Mendip. It's sure to be a great weekend. Come on northern cavers; it's not that far to drive! Lecture submission and more details available at www.hidden.earth (yes, that is the correct address).



The Northern Dales

Our Chairman, Andrew Hinde recently met with the North Pennines UNESCO Geoparks Partners Group. He attended armed with lots of information and photos, kindly provided by Tony Harrison and John Dale, on Northern Dales caves including Fairy Holes, Knock Fell Caverns, The Angel's Drainpipe, God's Bridge, Moking Hurth, Tutman's Hole, Smelmill Beck, and of course the recently explored Hudgill Burn Mine Cave. The group had previously no knowledge of the caves in their boundary, but as a result of the meeting are now keen to support a joint field meeting with the BCRA and CNCC in 2019. An exhibition at the Bowlees Visitor Centre is also being considered; Another fine effort to build relations and develop public understanding of the caves in our area.



BCA news

The CNCC follows the BCA closely and will always seek to represent northern cavers. Tim Allen, our representative to the BCA, reports on recent activities.

There are some new faces at the BCA following the AGM in June. Les Williams replaces Andy Eavis as Chairman. Jane Allen steps in as Publications and Information Officer and Chris Boardman takes on the role of Safeguarding Officer. If any club is concerned about issues relating to taking under 18s caving, then speaking to Chris would be a very good place to start.

A Youth and Development Standing Committee was formally established with Rostram Namaghi as the convenor. Together with two new Individual Caver reps there is a healthy smattering of youth, which is really encouraging to see.

After three difficult years in the job I have stepped down as BCA CRoW Liaison Officer. My replacement is David Rose who will be convening a small CRoW group of which I will remain a part.

Following the campaign ballot and votes to change the constitution in previous years, the BCA AGM also formally ratified a new BCA policy on CRoW the first line of which

clearly states "The British Caving Association holds the opinion that the CRoW Act already permits access for recreational caving". The focus now for the CRoW group will be to lobby government to see them also adopt this opinion.

There were a number of motions passed with a view to modernising the BCA; Setting up a vision and reform group, looking into video conferencing for council meetings and electronic voting at the AGM. It was also announced that the 2019 AGM would be held in the north.

A most fascinating fact was revealed by the BCA Treasurer. Not only is BCA holding £235,000 in reserve but across all caving organisations over £1 million is held in below-inflation accounts. It seems that we have plenty of money but not the will or means to spend it!

Tim Allen; CNCC representative to the BCA

BCA AGM 2019

The next BCA AGM will be June 9th 2019; and it's going to be in our region! Please put this in your 2019 diary now and let's try to get northern cavers more represented within our national body.

Access

Live testing of the online booking system on Ingleborough



Beta testing of the online cave booking system for Ingleborough Estate is now in full swing. See the last three newsletters for some background information. The system is not yet in the public domain, however, if you have applied for a permit in recent months to Geoff Whittaker via the usual means, and with more than a day or two advanced notice, you will probably have been asked to try out the new system. Reports back have all been positive.

In light of matters surrounding CRoW and the new BCA policy (see BCA news above) it is important to recognise this as a compromise system which is of benefit to cavers but at the same time offers the estate

a certain level of the management they desire. Thanks are due to our webmaster, Gary Douthwaite, for the original design and continuing to work through system improvements and upgrades. Thanks also to Geoff Whittaker who has volunteered to be the system administrator, a role which we hope will grow in the future.

As we move into the autumn we expect to gain approval to fully adopt this system and do away with paper permits for good. We shall then be looking to negotiate with the owners of Leck and Casterton Fells to seek to introduce the system there too.

Caves on access land

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 set into law public rights of access to the countryside. As most cavers will now know, there is a difference in opinion between Natural England /DEFRA and the majority of the caving community (including the BCA/CNCC) as to whether this covers caving as an activity.

The BCA has taken a progressive approach by issuing a policy at their 2018 AGM stating clearly their opinion on the matter (see the BCA News article above).

Most of the caves in our area are on access land. So what does this mean?

While the impasse exists between the government bodies and the caving community, many landowners (particularly the larger estates with current permit systems) have indicated that they are not yet willing to grant completely open access to the caves on their land. In these situations, the CNCC has remained clear that we cannot control access to caves. Instead, we aim to facilitate access by providing a compromise solution (for example, the online booking system) which maintains good relations with the landowner while also providing the most flexible access possible for cavers.

So what about other caves on access land,

specifically those where we have no information about landowner requirements? Do you need to seek permission?

In the past the CNCC has often taken the cautious stance that permission should always be sought. This stance existed from the early days of the CNCC and was very much 'of the time' and predated the CROW Act. However, in light of the BCA's ongoing campaign and progressive new policy, the CNCC feel that our historic stance is no longer appropriate.

The CNCC now takes a more progressive stance by assuming that permission for caves on access land need not be sought unless we specifically know otherwise. Therefore, on our website, the CNCC has introduced the use of the recognisable 'access land' symbol - see photo below - with or without a strikethrough, to indicate whether a cave entrance is, or is not located on access land. Where we are aware of any restrictions or requirements for access land caves these will be presented.

Presenting cavers with this information will



make it much easier to understand whether we believe or advise that permission needs to be sought for caves all across our region (even in some of the more remote and less well visited areas).

Of course, not every situation is clear-cut. A cave entrance may be on access land, but the route of approach may not be. Common sense and a little research with a map are always recommended. Calling in at a nearby farm to ask permission before crossing their non-access land can help avoid many issues. We urge cavers to continue to be respectful to landowners who refuse or make specific requests on access and to report this to the CNCC who can investigate on behalf of the caving community and hopefully establish a diplomatic solution.

Langcliffe update

We have had several discussions at our meetings in recent years over access to the caves on Langcliffe Estate. Changes to the land designation and poor communications with the owners led to the CNCC Committee opting out of the long-standing permit system in January.

Since then we have been in touch with representatives of the estate to discuss caving related issues. They are now much better informed about the nature of the caves on their land, caver expectations and how the CNCC can help. All our correspondence and meetings have been entirely amicable, and

we hope to have established a mutually beneficial longer-term relationship. We are still finalising our discussions, but it looks increasingly likely that the following outcomes will be agreed.

There will be effectively free access to those caves located on 'access land' as designated under the CROW Act, including the famous Penyghent Pot and Dale Head Pot.

For caves on private land, such as Snatcher



Pot and Swan Dike Pot we are checking with the tenant whether a courtesy call at the farm is required. In addition, as part of this agreement, we will ensure continuation of the landowner indemnity insurance through the BCA and the anchor scheme for these caves where appropriate. We will advise on the safety of fixed aids, and encourage cavers to abide by the cave conservation and countryside codes. This is an outcome we hope is beneficial to all involved and we urge cavers to cave responsibly and with consideration across all the caves of the estate and wider Dales area.

Conservation

Clearing up old digs

To the average member of the public, landowner or tenant farmer, cavers are rarely seen. Occasionally we may be seen wandering across the fell and disappearing down a hole in the ground. However, the majority of our activity is out of sight and out of mind, and in many ways this is beneficial to us. Often the only visible sign of our activity is at the entrance to a cave, especially if it is a surface dig.

Imagine you are a keen rambler and stumble across a moorland shakehole strewn with plastic buckets, rubbish sacks, rotten planks and strange 'out of place' paraphernalia. Imagine you are a farmer and come across a dug hole or one where old covering has rotted and collapsed. To all intents and purpose these are going to look like a sheep trap. It is usually obvious when this is the work of cavers, and it can cause annoyance and makes us look like dirty pigs! This can damage relations and risk our otherwise good reputation.

It is time we did something about this!

First, we need to clear up and make safe various old digs across our region. Secondly, we need to change the culture that allows digs to be left in such a disappointing state in the first place.

The CNCC encourages cavers to keep a safe and tidy surface dig. Most cavers do. There are however historic problems where digs have been left in a mess and in some cases caused problems with landowners and local authorities. We recognise that it is so easy to start a dig with all the enthu-





The things covers abandon!

siasm in the world, but as prospects fade people can lose interest and the point may come where diggers decide to take a break. Despite the best intentions of returning, often time moves on, other things distract, and no one returns to clear things up.

In the last few months our Access Officer

has come across three old digs left in a very poor state. Enquiries suggested that the diggers had every intention of returning but have not done so for years. One has already killed a sheep which got its horn tangled up in the hauling ropes. Another has a full sized Calor gas bottle and burner just rusting away. The third had more plastic strewn about than the Indian Ocean. Steps have been taken to remedy this situation and one club has already taken action. Our own CNCC conservation volunteers have been active clearing up surface shakeholes which have been used as a dump in the past, often by the local community, as well as capping old digs on Ingleborough.

We'd like to appeal to everyone to think about any old digs that you may have been involved in and to consider whether they need remedial work. In any case we urge everyone to keep all digs tidy and secure.

FOUL Pot fencing

CNCC volunteers have installed a fence around FOUL Pot on Fountains Fell to make it safer for livestock. The previous coverings had degraded and become loose.

This is the final part of a series of projects at FOUL Pot which has included full IC resin anchoring and addition of a rigging topo and route description to our website.



New fencing at FOUL Pot. Photo: Andrew Hinde

Roaring Hole cleanup



NPC members with the pile of rubbish removed from Roaring Hole. Photo: Gary Douthwaite

As a by-product of the trip to remove the PECO anchors from Roaring Hole in April (see separate article), Gary Douthwaite and I found ourselves surprised by the amount of rubbish down there, ranging from rotten wood, rusty metalwork, tatty ropes, plastic bags, buckets and other such nasties.

Certainly, Roaring Hole has seen its fair share of digging over the years to pass the various chokes; however, cleanup of the remnants of these efforts post-break-through was now decades overdue.

We decided that poor Roaring Hole, as well as new IC anchors, could also do with a cleanup. We recruited the assistance of our own club, the NPC, and a date was set for Sunday 5th August. A nine-strong team turned out on a fine warm day despite the abundance of red wine and cheese polished off in Greenclose the night before.

Gary, John Dale and I made a head-start

and arrived at Chapel-le-Dale just in time to meet Andrew Hinde of Natural England (and CNCC Chair), who was able to take us and our several bags of hauling and anchor installing equipment most of the way up the hill; much appreciated!

Gary and I headed directly to the lower reaches of the cave to install anchors on The Rift traverse and The Slab climb. In doing so, we collected up a few abandoned



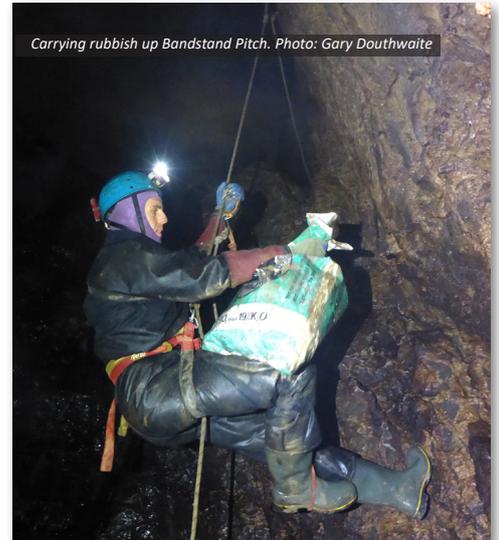
Photo: Gary Douthwaite

scaffold poles, sections of broken pipe, three very tatty and badly frayed ropes and numerous industrial fertiliser plastic bags. These bags were everywhere; every corner we looked in there was an empty bag.

Meanwhile John tackled some of the rubbish abandoned in the stream passage below Bandstand Pitch, and the remaining six volunteers soon arrived and focussed on the upper reaches of the cave. The lion's share of the rubbish was located in the large chamber just below the entrance and at the bottom of Bandstand Pitch. Using various hauling setups and sheer brute force they moved hundreds of kilograms of debris to the bottom of the entrance shaft.

On returning to the entrance after spending four hours further down the cave, we were reunited with the rest of the team who had now finished moving all the rubbish to the entrance chamber.

What then followed was a considerable group effort to pass everything up the shaft to the surface. The rubbish was then piled



Carrying rubbish up Bandstand Pitch. Photo: Gary Douthwaite

up by the side of the main Ingleborough footpath. The following day Andrew Hinde collected it for disposal and recycling.

The job took nine people around 6-7 hours each; an excellent ~55 hours of combined



conservation work and a substantial contribution to the CNCC's commitment to Stories in Stone.

The job was successfully completed, and Roaring Hole is now a much more pleasing place; not to mention a rather fine trip too.

Report by Matt Ewles

Ideas for conservation projects

Of course, we encourage all clubs and individuals to organise your own conservation initiatives. If however the conservation job

is a bit more than you can safely handle, please report it through the conservation section of our website or email:

conservation@cncc.org.uk

This might include cleanup works inside caves, at entrances, or surface works such as shakehole cleanup, stock-proofing, fence, footpath and walling repairs.

We can either undertake the work through our conservation volunteers or provide materials and funds for your own group to tackle the project. Write a report with a few pictures and we will publish it in an upcoming issue of this newsletter.

Training

Paperless surveying

Over the Spring of 2018 the CNCC worked with the BCRA Cave Surveying Group to run a 3-day paperless surveying course. The course was put together with the aim of getting people completely new to cave surveying to be able to use the equipment and software to enable them to produce a basic plan survey of a cave and other output such as files to view in Survex and Google Earth. The following is an extract from a report by course organisers Nick Bairstow and Chris Fox, who the CNCC are extremely grateful to for running this.

We decided to try a different format for this paperless course as we thought the previous course lengths of just one weekend was a little short due to the amount of information to be absorbed.

We chose How Stean Gorge in Nidderdale as a venue due to it having an excellent training cave on site which meant no walk up and down a hill, saving an hour or so of valuable time. Also, How Stean has an excellent café and we were able to set up in part of their new extension which is spectacularly cantilevered out over the gorge complete with sections of glass floor. There is easy access to local pubs and camping.

We set up a small display to inform the public what we were up to. This seemed to go down well. The challenge was at breaks and lunch times we ended up having to do lots of explaining to people milling around the display. It was difficult to get away on some occasions!

We did have 8 people signed up but due to work commitments changing, injury and other personal matters we ended up with only 5 people. However, as this was the first course we have attempted to organize and run we were quite happy with that number of attendees as a starter.

The first day was spent running through the kit such as distos and PDAs, and how they

are used. The afternoon was taken up with actual surveying in the very nearby (30m) Tom Taylors cave which has a surprising number of features of all types for a short cave. The cave proved perfect for training. Back inside we reviewed each of the surveys and discussed what had been done.

Day two started with an introduction to Therion, our chosen cave mapping software. The trainees imported and ran their survey data through Therion and began the process of actual map creation. The rest of the day was spent learning to use the Therion tools and drawing the maps. This bit always gets people excited as suddenly they find they can make the software do things and little by little maps start to appear on the screens.

Day three was a continuation with the Therion software, looking at common problems encountered with drawing and compiling data. We looked at different project file structures and how to organize

the data we were producing. By the end of the day people were outputting maps in PDF format, files to view in Survex, files to view with Google Earth and files in several other formats.

All in all, three very good and very enjoyable days with new friends made. We have had some very positive feedback from people which is encouraging. We have more ideas on how to improve further courses which, now we have got this first one under our belt, we have decided to continue with. Other venues such as the YSS hut are under consideration for the future to try and capture interest in different areas of the Dales. We are happy to continue as the BCRA Cave Surveying Group and to continue running the courses under the CNCC banner. With CNCC's promotion and support, I think we are onto a winner. Thanks very much for that support.



The paperless surveying course

Marble Sink



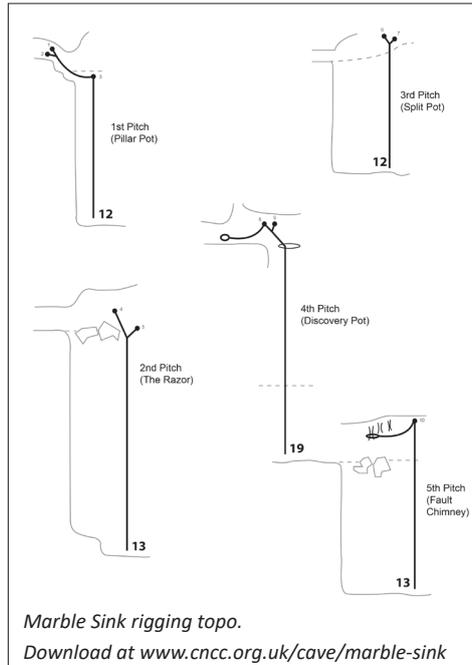
Entrance to Marble Sink. Photo: Andrew Lewington

Those of you familiar with Marble Sink, either from hands-on experience or via its formidable reputation will be surprised to hear that over winter, an enthusiastic duo made a couple of visits to install IC stainless steel resin anchors throughout under the CNCC anchor scheme, to replace the failing spits. The following report, by Mark Sims, provides some inspirational reading.

I think it was with some trepidation that Adam (Walmsley) and I joined Toby (Buxton) to visit Marble Sink on 23rd September 2017 (chronicled on the York CC website) but we all had a marvellous trip down a cave that offers plenty in the way of challenges. However, the rigging was somewhat minimalist and unorthodox, with several anchors of unknown type, and several spits that had certainly seen better days. It was immediately added to our list of projects.

The first anchoring trip just warranted a team of two. Toby and I popped down on a snowy day over new year, initially removing the spits on the second pitch and replacing them with IC anchors, before returning to tackle the first pitch. Anyone who has visited Marble Sink will recognise that this will have presented a significant challenge. For those who haven't, it is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the entrance crawl to the pitch-head must be tackled feet first for the large majority of people because it is impossible for most to turn around at the pitch head! Tackling the pitch head-first would be pretty committing.

Handily Toby was capable of the turning manoeuvre, so he headed up and turned around while I followed him up the rope. Drilling the holes was far from straightforward; the rock was generally good, but the constricted nature of the passage made it impossible for one person to both direct and provide some pressure to the drill in a suitable location. Our solution was for Toby to hold the drill in the right orientation, whilst I (with my body in the crawl and my legs over the pitch) provided the pressure to drill the hole. This surprisingly effective solution made the anchors fairly straightforward to place, although cramp became an increasing issue due to a prolonged stance on tiny ledges at the pitch head.



Our second trip would need to be to the bottom and back, certainly warranting three people. Unfortunately no volunteers were forthcoming, so it was with a very large bag each that Toby and I walked up to the entrance on Easter Sunday 2018. Large, heavy bags and Marble Sink are not a happy combination. The first pitch was very much improved by the new anchoring, and the second certainly felt more reassuring than on our previous descent. We rigged down to the bottom on the existing anchors and hangers before placing the new ones on our way out. This was our second trip to the bottom, and Toby once again had little or no difficulties passing the various obstacles. The same unfortunately could not be said for me, with the combination of my dimensions and a large heavy bag causing real issues in David's Traverse.

The anchoring on the return was fairly straightforward. A slightly worrying moment was encountered at the head of the fourth pitch since the entirety of the right hand wall (in which half the current rigging was attached) yielded a hollow thud when hit with a hammer. Thankfully an alternative solution was readily found and the anchoring was soon complete, but, unlike on our last visit, the anchoring was the easiest part of this trip. Speaker's Corner came next, which without Toby I think I'd have found impossible with the bag. As it was, I suffered from bruised ribs for the next few days.

The elephant in the room at this point was the entrance crawl. On our first trip we'd had two small bags between three of us, and bags getting caught had caused an issue. On our second (much shorter) trip we'd had two average bags between two of us, and the entrance needed quite a bit of strength to get the bags through. On this,

our longest trip, we had our two very big bags between the two of us, and navigation of the lower part of the cave with the bags had required no small amount of effort.

I elected to head out first and paused in the crawl at the point I could turn my head, procrastinating for a short while before setting off on my side, shuffling forward on my right arm while reaching forward with my left to guide the bag. Bags have to be lifted above a narrow slot at the corner in the crawl, and on this occasion the weight of the bag meant the only solution was to assist its progress with my head. With the bag finally round, it was time for me to negotiate the corner, but being our third trip down in the last few months, this manoeuvre was becoming easier each time. The flat out section to the exit now felt like plain sailing. Toby suffered similar problems in the crawl, but it was with a great deal of satisfaction that we walked back down to the car.

Marble Sink is undoubtedly a challenging trip, presumably impossible for the very tall or very wide, but it also offers plenty of variation, each of the small sections being split by a larger section, and some nicely decorated passage at the bottom. Furthermore there is nothing especially unpleasant encountered on the trip: no grovels through grit, wallows in mud, and no complete submersions. For anyone wanting a challenge I strongly recommend it. Having said that, it's certainly not a novice-friendly destination, and owing to the challenges, it's a cave that warrants plenty of respect!

Mark Sims, IC anchor installer

Roaring Hole

Roaring Hole in Chapel-le-Dale drops to a depth of more than 130m, as deep as neighbouring Meregill, but with relatively few pitches; it is mostly descended due to the dip of the limestone and an assortment of free climbs and descending boulder slopes. There are however a few larger pitches (Bandstand and The Rift) that, until 2010, lacked resin anchors to provide a safe and reliable belay or sound naturals; much of the rock in Roaring is quite loose.



Entrance to Roaring Hole. Photo: Gary Douthwaite

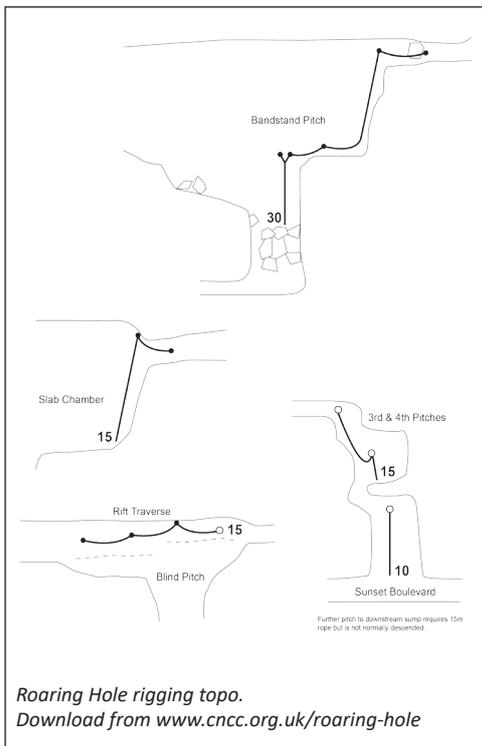


Installing anchors in Roaring Hole. Photo: Matt Ewles

In 2010 Roaring was fitted with new prototype PECO P-anchors to replace failing spits. Unfortunately, not long after these anchors were fitted, it was found that the manufacturer had made them from the wrong grade of stainless steel. While this did not present an immediate concern to the safety of the anchors, they were potentially vulnerable in the long term to pitting corrosion. It was decided that they should be scheduled for replacement as a precautionary measure.

PECO anchors in Rowten Pot Big Gully route and Stream Passage Pot had already been decommissioned and replaced with Bolt Product anchors. Roaring Hole was still an outstanding project. On Sunday 8th April, a team comprising Gary Douthwaite, Matt Ewles and our anchor coordinator, Simon Wilson, headed down Roaring with the intention of replacing the PECO anchors with IC-anchors.

We planned to start from the bottom up, but unfortunately on arrival at the first boulder choke just below Bandstand Pitch, the amount of water pouring through it was going to mean a total drenching. We left the inadequately waterproofed drill behind and continued with the puller alone. We got absolutely soaked to the skin, but successfully got to the bottom of the cave and extracted all the PECO anchors throughout.



Roaring Hole rigging topo.
Download from www.cncc.org.uk/roaring-hole

Replacement of these with IC-anchors needed to wait for drier conditions. On the 29th April, Gary and Matt returned and installed anchors on Bandstand Pitch, but once again high water prevented anchors being installed further down.

As part of the conservation day on 5th August (see the separate report), Gary and Matt completed the anchor installation in the lower reaches of the cave at The Rift Traverse, also adding two for The Slab climb where all the usual natural belays were rather loose and fractured rock.

With the cave now fully anchored and cleaned up of digging rubbish, all that was left to do was to publish the new topo and write a description for the CNCC website.

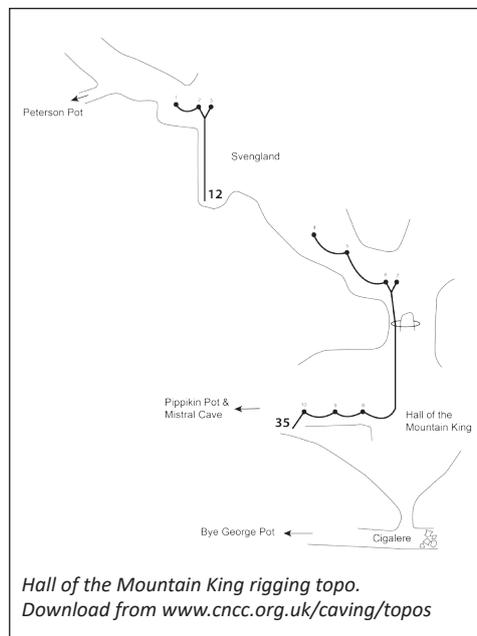
Many cavers will have walked 30m from the entrance of Roaring Hole on several occasions (either on-route to Meregill, Sunset or Black Shiver, or just on a walk up Ingleborough) but will barely have given this cave it any thought. It is a quirky cave, dropping to a considerable depth requiring minimal tackle, and with a unique nature and charm.

Hall of the Mountain King

No, not the one in Ogof Craig A Ffynnon in South Wales! Our very own Hall of the Mountain King in Ease Gill Caverns marks the vertical connection between Peterson Pot and Pippikin Pot/Mistral/Bye George. This is a splendid route for those looking for a trip well off the beaten track.

These two slippery pitches now benefit from IC Resin anchors courtesy of the CNCC anchor scheme.

The description of Peterson Pot from Mike Cooper's excellent book 'Not for the Faint Hearted' includes this route and should be considered the ultimate guide to these backwaters of Ease Gill Caverns.



Hall of the Mountain King rigging topo.
Download from www.cncc.org.uk/caving/topos

Interested in becoming an anchor installer?

Our anchors must be installed by approved and trained installers, in accordance with BCA anchor policy.

At present, installers are expected to provide their own tools (drill and resin gun), although as the anchor scheme develops we hope to be able to loan these out instead. You will be provided with the anchors and refunded for resin and consumables.

We ask that before any training is scheduled, all potential installers share with us a proposal for what projects they wish to undertake.

If becoming an installer is something that interests you, please do get in touch with the Secretary (secretary@cncc.org.uk) who can connect you to our Anchor Coordinator.

Want to get involved?

Being involved in the CNCC can take many forms.

Full membership:

Full member clubs of the CNCC can vote at our AGM, and receive email notifications of any matters that the CNCC becomes aware of that may affect northern caving (and log into the CNCC website). If your club is not already a full member (you can find a list on our website), you can contact our Secretary for information on how to apply.

Officer:

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

Committee:

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

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

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