

CNCC Anchor Coordinator Report To Committee Meeting 21st June 2025

Version 2 (11th June) by IW on behalf of AS

Anchors installed since last meeting

Summary of anchors in the database with an installed date of 01/01/25 to 31/05/25 inclusive

Cave	Number of anchors	Notes
AKA Hole	13	Escalator Rift (in connecton with new cave)
Bye George	5	Grand Cascade (to replace old non-CNCC anchors)
Illusion Pot	7	Brunel Rift (to replace old non-CNCC anchors)
Rumbling Hole	4	Replacements/additions following user report

Anchors known to be installed but not yet logged in the database

On 26th May, one anchor was installed in County Pot (Brown and Smelly Chamber, Manchester Bypass) to replace the single Spit-type anchor above the slippery climb. The Spit occupied a good location for the alignment of a handline so was removed to re-use the same hole. Upon removal the Spit was found to be sheared off between threads and cone. A reminder that in-situ gear may not be as good as it appears. IC anchor installed in the same hole, with backup to chockstones above.

Defect reports

Summary of anchor user reports received and action taken

- User reports continue to be submitted, with 5 reports so far in 2025.
 - 2 of the 5 relate to Rumbling Hole and have been closed out
- There are 18 outstanding reports – same as January meeting. The majority of reports relate to popular/classic/frequented caves. These are spread across the western Dales area:
 - Easegill = 3 reports
 - Leck Fell = 4 reports
 - West Kinsdale = 6 reports
 - Ingleborough/Penygent = 5 reports
- The oldest report not closed out is Notts Pot, from 2021 (4 years).

Comment:- It is conceivable that a number of older reports have already been dealt with but not recorded. However Notts Pot does not have any anchors recorded as installed relating to this query. In fact, rather than it being closed out, installers have confirmed the loose anchor and added 3 more to the log.

The scheme requires us to investigate reports in a “reasonable time period” and take action to deal with “any designated anchors which are found to be unsafe”. Whether confirmed loose anchors are in fact “unsafe” is debatable, but we have no procedure for confirming they are safe. Relying on no-one being hurt yet is not a good practice. It is my understanding that currently, any anchor with movement is deemed failed.

A review of the unresolved issues is needed. It may be that greater focus is needed on maintenance.

Special report – Jinglyng Pot

On 31st May 2024 a report was received of a loose CNCC anchor on the final pitch in Jinglyng Pot. On 8th June 2025 I visited with SA to investigate. We descended the Little Gully and Lateral Cleft Route, including the final pitch. Six DMM eco-anchors were found to be loose, all on the Lateral Cleft route and Final Pitch (not Little Gully). For clarity these are obviously loose under finger pressure (no tools). The reported anchor at the final pitch head [ref 28] was confirmed to be loose and removed by drilling and pulling.

Based on a subsequent paper review of the historical data and old rigging guides, the working assumption is that the affected routes were bolted in 1992/1993 using a batch of anchors made in 1992 and marked 92A or A92. The route shown to be installed then was Surface anchor > tree > Lateral Cleft > Final Pitch.

Little Gully is understood to have been added afterward. Additional changes were made with the addition of surface IC anchors (not in database), and one later DMM and two IC anchors on the affected route.)

Comment:- it appears there may be a systemic problem with the early anchors on this route. One third (or more) of the remaining anchors are loose. It is not known whether this is a stable or worsening situation. Consideration should be given to

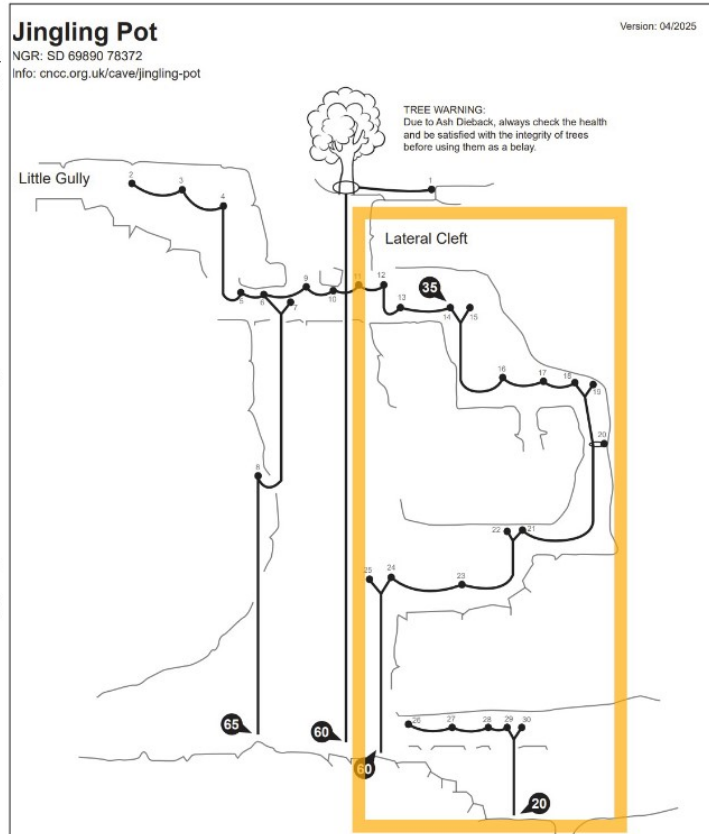
- spot replacement of affected anchors only (6 or more) coupled with ongoing monitoring;
- wholesale replacement of the affected installation (perhaps 16), accepting that this may not be strictly necessary and comes with its own risks, and;
- inspecting other anchors from that time period, targetting by paperwork records.

Anchors decommissioned

One anchor removed from Jinglyng Pot, Final Pitch, pitch head Y-hang. See report above.

A verbal report was received of a loose anchor in Lancaster Hole entrance pitch. Upon inspection two DMM anchors had excessive rotation, one with cracked resin. Both were removed in the now-usual way by drilling alongside and pulling. Not being on the regular route, these were not reinstated. NB Council committed to providing a report to BCA on each investigation; I do not think that has been happening.

> See also appended report on removal of non-CNCC anchors at Bull Pot of the Witches.



Proposed new installations for Committee consideration

I am aware that the following may be requested (by others)

- Bull Pot of the Witches, entrance approach
- North End Pot
- Wizards Chasm
- Dowbergill Passage

For reference – list of approved projects as shown on website 5/6/25 – but due an update as some are done eg: Grand Cascade; Illusion Pot.

Upcoming Installations

Caves that have been approved for installation of resin bonded anchors. Work will be completed by our volunteers as soon as possible.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Get Down) Shep Pot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jingling Pot Final pitch
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bye George Pot Grand Cascade	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link Pot Traverse to reach Tiger's Inlet
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Car Pot Climb into Craven Passage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marble Pot To be confirmed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• County Pot Numerous handlines including Brown and Smelly Chamber, Cadbury Traverse, Clough Passage, Mancunian Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayday Hole Lungs Pitch (an alternative route to the currently anchored route)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Craftsman's Pot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OBJ Hole
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Death's Head Hole Bottom pitch down to the streamway	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Old Ing Waterfall anchors on route to Dismal Hill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flood Entrance (Wades) Lost River Series (South East Pot)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay Sank
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaping Gill (Main Hang) Far Country ladder replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simpson Pot Anchor replacement works
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greenwood Pot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stream Passage Pot Final pitch (Mud Pitch)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Hull Pot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sylvester Pot First pitch and climb
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illusion Pot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turbary Pot
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ireby Fell Cavern Ireby II Escalator Rift around Jupiter Cavern and Cripple Creek pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plus 6 more projects.

Topo updates

Notwithstanding changes made following anchor works, topos recently checked/updated include

- Aygill Caverns
- Bull Pot (Kingsdale)
- Tatham Wife Hole
- Roaring Hole
- Juniper Gulf entrance

Techniques

Research and development is ongoing to see if resin consistency could be improved. Currently the low viscosity and long setting times can cause difficulty with large and upward-sloping holes, such as are sometimes left when old anchors are removed. The intention is to explore whether pre-warmed resin – within the manufacturer's usage limits – is a practicable approach in the cave environment.

PR video

The CNCC released a Youtube video and news item regarding anchor maintenance, filmed at Rumbling Hole. Titled “Defective Anchor Reporting & Maintenance”, the video was intended to demonstrate the inspection process following receipt of a User Report.

The video shows an installer demonstrating the loose anchor – which is visibly loose – but despite the title did not show any attempt at maintenance/replacement. Instead, the video ends with a failed and aborted attempt at installation of an additional new anchor placement alongside. It is noted here that a new additional placement would need prior Committee approval, as it was not a replacement.

4. Location and use of designated anchors

Regional Councils shall establish a procedure to consider and approve the choice of locations for the placing of designated anchors within their regions.

The CNCC Committee will approve all anchor placements under the CNCC anchor scheme (except for anchors being replaced on safety grounds) prior to the work being carried out. This should ideally be via a Committee meeting but in the event the timing doesn't work then this can be achieved by email correspondence.

It is debatable whether this video release shows the anchor scheme (and CNCC generally) at its best. The video is well shot, nicely edited, and clearly narrated, and could – if the content is corrected – truly support the work of the CNCC and promote confidence in the anchor scheme.

> <https://cncc.org.uk/article/how-do-we-deal-with-defective-anchors-20250511>

> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYcESkrPG68>

Installers

The anchor scheme requires a yearly review of the installer list to verify recent relevant experience and appropriate BCA insurance cover of the installers. It is not clear when the last review was undertaken and it is assumed to now be due.

The BCA mandates three-yearly workshop and re-validation for all installers, for which funding is provided. It is not known when this was last undertaken for CNCC installers. Additionally it is not clear to me what is required for the workshop, or validation, or who is considered suitable for leading and assessing.

I suggest, in the absence of evidence, that we simply invite all CNCC installers to a workshop and revalidation day. I assume CNCC funding (and BCA reimbursement) is acceptable. With a large number of projects approved, a list of outstanding maintenance jobs and potentially a standalone project in Jingling Pot, it would be good to re-engage with any installers that have been inactive recently.

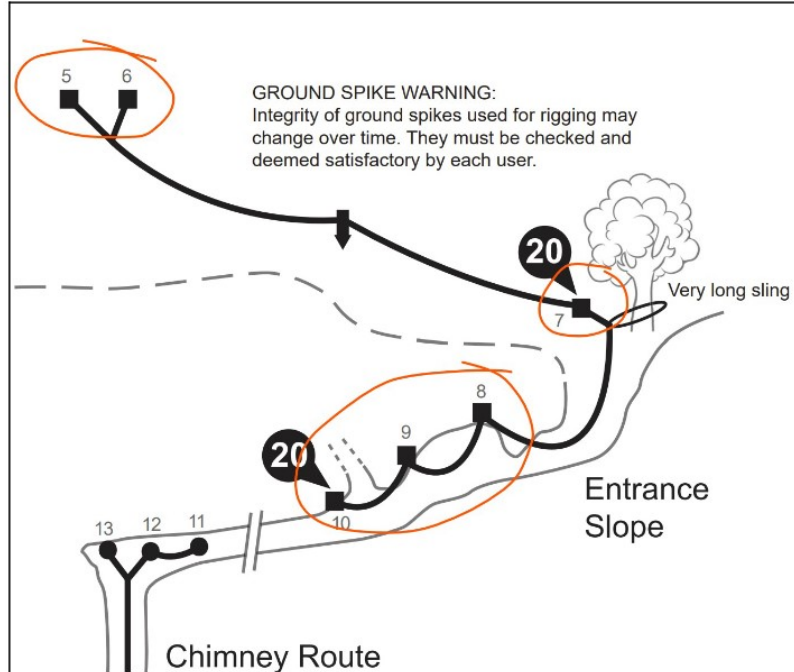
Anchor Scheme review

It is suggested that the Anchor Scheme is due a review; see separate document for suggestions. (Note also that Matt Ewles has independently submitted a related agenda item for discussion.)

Appendix:- Loose non-CNCC anchor, Bull Pot of the Witches

This is appended for information – with emphasis that these were non-CNCC anchors

User reports had been received for a loose non-CNCC Petzl anchor at Bull Pot of the Witches entrance; the 3rd of 6 such anchors on the approach path/scramble down the shakehole.



Upon inspection, this was finger-loose and could be rotated round and round with a short (29cm) bar. Since the shank of these anchors is threaded, this caused the anchor to come fully out of the rock. The ease with which this occurred, and the lack of any resin adhering to the anchor, gave cause to inspect the 5 other similar anchors. The first 2, in the outcrop in the field, although not finger loose, did spin out with the short bar. The last 3 (of 6) were thoroughly tested with the bar and pulled with the puller. Two pulled out and the last one snapped off below the surface. The anchor puller does not have a load indicator so failure loads are not known.

- 6no Petzl 25kN stainless resin-bonded anchors, apparently 10x70 Collinox. Resin, if any, unknown.
- Anchors 1&2 ("05/2", in fissured outcrop) – rotated out with chalky/moonmilky substance attached
- Anchor 3 ("05/2" at bend in path near big tree) – rotated out cleanly quite easily
- Anchors 4&5 ("04/4", on right wall, on slippery scramble) – could be rotated with effort; pulled.
- Anchor 6 ("04/4", above tunnel entrance) – could be rotated with effort; snapped below surface.

Comment:- these six non-CNCC anchors were in a popular location, regularly used, and had recently been added to the CNCC rigging topo (at my own suggestion). Half failed easily when tested with a short bar. A reminder that all anchors should be treated with caution, even if passing user inspection, especially so for non-CNCC anchors with unknown history.

(A request has been made to anchor this route with CNCC anchors, see above)