



The Council of Northern Caving Clubs; meeting of Saturday 11th January 2014

This document contains the following reports;

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the above meeting
- Chairman's Report
- Secretary's Report
- Conservation Officer's report
- Leck Fell Meet Secretary's report
- Birks Fell/Mongo Gill Report
- YDNP Caves and Crag AAG Report

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Committee meeting

To be held at Hellifield Village hall on Saturday 11th January 2014
Starting at 09.30

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Officers reports
 - Chairman's report
 - Secretary's report
 - Treasurer's report
 - Access Officer's report
 - Conservation officer's report
 - Training officer's report
 - Technical group report
5. Meets secretaries reports
 - Leck Fell
 - Casterton
 - Fell Birks Fell
 - Penyghent & Fountains Fell
 - Other areas
6. Cave digging Guidelines (Jim Sloane)
 - DCA/Natural England in 2008 produced a leaflet (available on DCA website) on cave digging in SSSIs, specific to the Peak district.
 - Should CNCC produce something similar, specific to exploration in the Dales?
7. BCA report
8. 2016 International Caving Symposium
9. Any other business

10. Date and place of next meeting

**MINUTES of the CNCC COMMITTEE MEETING held on
11th Jan. 2014 at HELLIFIELD VILLAGE INSTITUTE**

The Meeting commenced at 09.30.

PRESENT: R. Holmes (Chairperson/ DHSS), Les Sykes (Secretary/Elysium), Johnny Latimer (Earby), Simon Wilson (Earby), S. Lieberman (RRCPC), Ray Duffy (RRCPC), Bernie Bond (Burnley CC), Andrew Hoyle (Burnley), Paul Whittaker (Burnley CC), Ben Blackburn (Burnley CC), Jim Sloane (LUG), Ian Lloyd (NSG), Harvey Lomas (YRC), Pete Monk (Northern Boggarts, Minutes Secretary), Tony Brown (Northern Boggarts), Pete Allwright (DHSS), Pat Halliwell (CPC), Ric Halliwell (CPC), Matt Ewles (YCC), Alan Speight (YSS), Malcolm Hughes (BPC), Fay Hartley (Burnley CC), Ian Cross (BPC), Mick Ellerton (Over and Under Club), Tim Allen (NCC) invited observer.

1. APOLOGIES: Glenn Jones (Treasurer/CNCC), Andrew Hinde¹ (Gritstone Club/Natural England), Kay Easton (Minutes Secretary), Victor Wain, Graham Mollard², Gary Douthwaite (website manager).

¹Andrew Hinde was attending the BCA meeting on behalf of CNCC

²Graham Mollard (Over and Under Club) was attending BCA meeting representing Les Sykes.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: Minutes of the 21st September 2013 meeting were accepted and signed as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES:

Tim Allen briefly raised the issue of permits for DIMs and individual cavers a subject which was discussed at the last meeting and mentioned in the minutes. After a brief discussion it was agreed that this item would be returned to later in the meeting under AOB.

The re-printing of the Shuttleworth document has been delayed. It is hoped that this can be carried out before the next meeting.

4. OFFICERS' REPORTS:

Chairman's report

A written report has been appended to the minutes. The chairman mentioned that CNCC had received correspondence about an Ethylene pipeline which crosses the Yorkshire Dales National Park just to the south of Grassington. It was agreed that although this is unlikely to cause any problems for cavers who might be digging in that area nevertheless it would be a good idea to publish the map on the CNCC website.

Secretary's Report

A written report has been appended to the minutes and there were no questions.

Treasurer's Report

A written report has been appended to the minutes and there were no questions.

Access Officer's Report

A written report has been appended to the minutes. The secretary went through the report to clarify a number of issues including recent problems with access to Aygill Caverns. CNCC is now authorised to issue permits for Aygill (see website for details). Ray Duffy reminded everyone that no permits will be issued for Lancaster Hole during the month of May 2014 when remedial work on the entrance will be carried out.

Pat Halliwell CPC submitted a report, a copy of which has been appended to the minutes, regarding a meeting she recently attended of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Caves and Crags Advisory Group. This took place on 27th November 2013. It was commented that some of the access problems currently being experienced by rock climbers have been avoided for cavers because of the sterling work done by CNCC.

Conservation Officer's Report

A written report has been appended to the minutes. Unfortunately because of the clash of dates between CNCC and BCA meetings Andrew sent his apologies to this meeting. A brief discussion took place regarding the access to Dale Barn Cave. It appears that at present despite persistent efforts by Andrew hopes of access to this cave have come to nothing.

Training Officer's Report

A brief written report has been appended to the minutes. Graham Mollard attended the last technical meeting at BCA. The minutes of this meeting are on the BCA website.

Technical Group Report

A brief written report has been appended. The report was accepted. A number of caves including the Gully Route Rowten and Stream Passage would have their 304 bolts replaced with 316 bolts. Although tests had shown little difference between the 304 and 316 the possible corrosive effects of nitrates and chlorine indicate that there is a small chance of problems arising so it was agreed that it was a wise decision to replace the 304s.

5. Meets Secretaries Reports

Leck Fell - A short written report has been appended to these minutes. Les said that the Leck Fell Access agreement was currently being re-negotiated although at the time of the meeting the secretary pointed out that he had not received any written communication from the estate office. CNCC is now authorised by the estate to issue permits for Aygill Caverns. Please see website for contact information.

Casterton Fell – a verbal report was given and a reminder that Lancaster Hole will be closed for remedial work during May 2014.

Birks Fell – a verbal report was given. There has been some delay in renewing the permit arrangements for Fairy Holes, Weardale, but good relationships have been built up with the owners La Farge and no problems are expected. There are still permits available for Robinsons Pot.

Penyghent & Fountains Fell – A short verbal report was given

Other Areas – A short verbal report was given by Tony Brown about the outcome of negotiations re access to the caves of Bowland. Currently only access to Whitewell Pot had been devolved to CNCC. Following recent developments access to all caves in the area has been devolved to CNCC subject to details of the final negotiations.

6. Cave Digging Guidelines (Jim Sloane)

Jim Sloane outlined the guidance available on the BCA website which pertains only to the Derbyshire area. He felt it would be useful to provide guidance for cavers in the area covered by CNCC. It was agreed that a small working party would produce some brief guidelines or at least a feasibility paper following on from the work done by BCA and including the guidance by Andrew Hinde in the back of the Shuttleworth Publication. The guidance would include a map showing the extent of SSSIs in our area. A short report to be prepared for the next meeting. Working party to consist of Kay Easton (if willing), Jim Sloane and Pete Monk with assistance from Andrew Hinde.

7. BCA report

A comment was made on the clash of dates between the current CNCC meeting and the BCA meeting. Les commented that CNCC dates were set 12 months ago at our AGM in March 2013. BCA set their meeting dates at their AGM in June 2013. CNCCs meeting dates were available on the BCA website.

A meeting is being arranged between CNCC and BCA Chairman to resolve some of the difficulties that have occurred over the last two years and see how the two organisations can work more closely with each other. Les extended an invitation to anyone present at the meeting to accompany him to this forthcoming meeting when the date is known.

8. 2016 International Caving Symposium

Ian Lloyd is the CNCCs rep. for this event. He outlined some of the plans and the likelihood that there could be over a thousand cavers attending from around the world. Ric Halliwell mentioned that they have permission to move the dates of their winch meet to coincide with the planned dates of the symposium. It is anticipated that all visiting cavers will be invited to sign up for trips down numerous caves most of which or all of which will be rigged throughout the symposium. Undoubtedly CNCC will play a leading part in ensuring access to caves for all symposium delegates and that this will be offered as part of this package. The secretary reminded the meeting that in March 2013 the Access Officer contacted the main Estate/Land Agents regarding the 2016 event and he does not envisage any problems with access during the event.

9. Any other business

- The recent death of Dr Farrer was mentioned and Bernie Bond said that a memorial service is being organised in Clapham in the near future.
- The issuing of 'digging' permits on Leck Fell. This subject generated a lively debate. A proposal was put forward and seconded to withdraw the use of 'digging' permits. It was put to the vote and it was agreed overwhelmingly that no 'digging' permits would be issued forthwith. Cavers wishing to go

digging in the caves on Leck Fell or any other area would apply for a regular trip permit in the same way that currently pertains for all member clubs of BCA. Comments made from the floor suggested that some clubs and individual cavers may not have been fully complying with the permit system on both Leck and Casterton Fells for a considerable number of years

- A question was raised on who is entitled to vote at committee meetings. This item was discussed at the September 2013 meeting and the secretary agreed at that meeting to put this issue up for discussion at the AGM in March 2014. It was pointed out that currently a working committee of fourteen clubs was re-elected at each AGM. When asked who these fourteen clubs were the secretary did begin to read out the list but abandoned this as noise levels became unacceptable. During the ensuing discussion mention was made from the floor about views expressed on the UK Caving Forum. It was pointed out that, interesting as they might be, views expressed on the UK Caving forum remain just that, individual's views. Committee meetings of the CNCC offer all member clubs and their members the opportunity to participate in the informed discussion and decision-making process in pursuance of the aims of the CNCC.
- A statement was made from the floor that the officers of CNCC had not been supportive of York University Cave and Pothole Club when they were censured by BCA over a misunderstanding about permits on Casterton Fell. This was an item that had been addressed previously (see minutes of June 1st meeting). This allegation that CNCC were anything other than supportive of YUCPC was strongly refuted by the CNCC secretary. The supportive action taken by the CNCC secretary at the time was strongly endorsed by Matt Ewles now of York Caving Club.
- Tony Brown (Northern Boggarts) submitted a paper (copy attached) requesting funding from CNCC to carbon date a finger bone found last year in Scoska Cave. It was decided that in the first instance Tony should approach BCRA. CNCC were not unsympathetic and asked that in the meantime he should obtain an estimate of the costs involved and re-present this information at the next meeting.
- A request was made for information on the access to Spital Croft Cave Littondale. Information was provided that permission lay with the owners of West Farm, Litton.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is the AGM and will be at 10.00am on Saturday 1st March 2014

**Council of Northern caving clubs
Chairman's report 11th January 2014**

There has been a lot of Emails circulating after the last meeting regarding commercial caving and also obtaining permits for digging projects. The officers concerned have had a very daunting task to try and keep everyone happy. Please understand that CNCC don't make the rules but try to carry out the wishes of the landowners to make sure that the caves are reasonably accessible to club cavers with the appropriate insurance cover.

I have been contacted by SABIC UK Petrochemicals Limited regarding their pipeline network. The company distributes Ethylene throughout the country via a network of buried pipes with diameters of 6, 8, 10 and 12 inches working at a pressure of 1500 psi and do not want anyone digging to disturb them. There are aerial and field boundary markers to indicate the position of the pipes but anyone digging within 50m of any Ethylene pipe is required to inform SABIC via a free phone number 0800 318105 or use e-mail <Ethylene.Pipelines@SABIC-Europe.com> or go to the web site www.LineSearchBeforeDig.co.uk

One of the pipes runs between Skipton and Bedale via Grassington where there could be a problem. I will have maps of the pipeline and photo's of the field and aerial markers at the meeting if you think this could affect you.

Roy Holmes

**Council of Northern Caving Clubs
Committee meeting 11 January 2014**

Secretary's report

In the last period there has been a considerable amount of effort put in, however it has not been rewarded with the progress that I anticipated, see below.

Access Officer's report

Access for Commercial cavers, there has been no meetings between any of the parties so the situation is as it was after the last meeting. However, after two months of asking and being given an email run-around I have received a reply from the BCA Chairman who stated; 'As far as I am concerned BCA will definitely support CNCC. We will also definitely discuss it at the BCA Council meeting'.

I will be speaking with Andy Eavis early in the New Year with a view to having a meeting to discuss access and CNCC's relationship with the BCA. If anyone has anything they would like me to discuss they can submit it to me or they can attend the meeting.

Despite constant writing and asking I still have not gained access to the closed season on Leck Fell but I am hopeful that we will get access for cavers during April through to June.

After some lengthy delays in permit issuing for Ayegill Caverns and Barbondale by the Estate Office, the CNCC has issued permits on behalf of the Estate with their consent. I am trying to bring these areas under the Leck Fell agreement currently I have verbal agreement that we can administer the access but I am waiting for it in writing. If the written consent does not get sent I will suggest the CNCC administers the access as I do have verbal agreement and see what happens. It is clear the current system is not working as effectively as it should.

Although we have agreement to lay stone (for cavers parking) on the North side of the cattle grid on Leck Fell there has not been a meeting with the Estate manager on the Fell to define the area that the stone will cover.

The entrance to Lancaster Hole will be getting stripped back to bed rock and lined during May 2014. Ray Duffy RRCPC has volunteered to coordinate the reconstruction of the entrance. Please note that NO permits for Lancaster Hole will be issued for the period 30 April 2014 to 01 June 2014 to ensure that the reconstruction work is unhindered and completed on time.

There is now a sign warning on the approach to the caves of Nidderdale (Manchester Hole etc) the water authority will bolt on a warning notice on the days of scouring.

CNCC Technical Group

The CNCC Technical Group at the request of BCA tested 5 anchors from the new batch of A4 (316) stainless steel anchors, the test results are on the CNCC web site, but briefly the tests went very well and the mode of failure was consistent with that of 304 stainless steel anchors. The next set of tests will be to test BP anchors (316 stainless steel) in shear. The BCA has ordered more 316 stainless steel anchors from the manufacturer.

The CNCC will be holding an anchor revalidation course on 01 February 2014 invitations for revalidation will be sent out soon.

BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee

I have received a draft of the BCA fixed aids policy, if any one wants a copy please let me know and I will forward the document, at this moment in time I have not commented on the document.

Training Officers report

Graham Mollard attended the last Training Committee as my representative, there was nothing contentious and the draft minutes are on the BCA web site or available from me.

Les Sykes

CNCC secretary, CNCC Training Officer, CNCC Access Officer

CNCC Conservation Officers Report
Jan 2014-01-03

The restoration of Barbon Pot is now complete. The waste removed from the shaft by Ray Duffy and Sam Leiberman, over several years of effort, has been packed and dragged down to the road by CNCC vols. This was recycled wherever possible and £130 banked (by me for now) which came from the sale of the scrap metal.

The following persons have undertaken training in the safe use of abrasive wheels and are competent to use the CNCC purchased 12" Makita saw.

Andrew Hinde. Edward Easton. Mick Hale. Ged Benn. Ray Duffy. John Thorpe. Terry Whitaker. Andrew Farrow.

The saw is stored at Ingleborough NNR base at Colt Park and is available for use by any CNCC club for conservation works.

Ric Halliwell has written a CNCC response to the Government's consultation on the possible introduction of Biodiversity Offsetting. This was a difficult and complex subject. Ric managed to produce a very concise response which has been used as a template by most of the other Regional Caving Councils and the BCA.

NB. Since CNCC responded to a consultation on the future structures of Forestry Commission, Natural England and Environment Agency – the DEFRA minister has concluded that these organisations should remain independent institutions, but should work together in partnership to provide more efficient process and better outcomes for the natural environment.

CNCC has provided a valuable lead in the oversight of political manoeuvrings which could affect the future of Caves and Caving, both locally and nationally.

I have assisted on the BCA project, lead by Jenny Potts, on the gathering of information relevant to Caves on CROW access land.

Since the last meeting I have advised cavers on NE consent for 2 cave digs on SSSI land in the Dales region and one in NY Moors.

Despite several reminders to Lafarge there is still no sign of a renewal of the License Agreement for access to Fairy Holes –Weardale. I will continue to pursue this with urgency. In the meantime, Ric can take provisional bookings only for 2014.

Plans and permissions are agreed with the landowner for the removal of scrap from Daimler Hole and Homeshaw Cave. Dry ground will be required to operate successfully.

Investigations have begun on the feasibility of replacing the deteriorating entrance to Lancaster Hole. Access restrictions would have to be used during construction work. It is proposed that the works be done in one week with volunteers staying at Bull Pot Farm to reduce travel expenses.

I have informed the CNCC access officer that my Natural England communications with the landowners of Dale Barn Cave have not resulted in a change of status. The

owner stated that the cave will remain closed to all cavers and no further communication on the matter was welcome.

Andrew Hinde Jan 2014.

Report to CNCC CCTTEE 11th January 2014 – Leck Fell Access Agreement

Since the AGM a total of 55 BCA member clubs have now been issued with permits for the year 2013/14. The figure for the same time last year was 56 clubs, so demand appears to have been steady since the last committee meeting. Over the Xmas/New Year period the fell was almost fully booked from 27th Dec to 2nd January 2014, which is often the case for the time of year. Going forward to the start of the closed season on 31st March 2014, weekend dates 4th Jan, 18th Jan, 19th Jan, 8th Feb, 15th Feb and 16th Feb 2014 are now fully booked. There is currently availability during all of the weekends in March 2014. After the fell opens again on 1st July 2014, there is plenty of availability. So far 10 clubs have been issued with permits for 2013/14.

Jim Sloane – CNCC Meets Secretary Leck Fell.

Birks Fell/Mongo Gill

Nothing to report on Birks Fell or Mongo. We are awaiting confirmation (via Andrew Hinde?) that the access agreement for Ludwell Fairy Holes has been renewed for 2014 but on the assumption it will be I have issued 6 of the 12 available permits already.

Ric Halliwell

Yorkshire Dales National Park Caves and Crag Access Advisory Group

Notes on meeting held on 27 November 2013 at Colvend, Grassington.

It was explained that this group meets once a year and advises the YDNP Access Committee on matters relating to Caves and Crag. It was obvious that the BMC attendees had a well established relationship with the YDNP staff at the meeting. It was obvious that this meeting was the largest yet held by the group which supports the belief that the Committee has had little input from cavers in the past.

The meeting was chaired by Jon Beaven (of Dalesbridge) although it appeared that this is not always the case. Most of the reports dealt with the breeding of birds and the resultant restrictions on access to crags for climbing. Dave Hodgson (CPC) and Phil Murphy (Leeds University) had prepared a detailed report on the Geology, geomorphology and speleogenesis of Boreham Cave, Littondale. The fact that new exploration and consequential scientific work could tell us so much about past climates and landscapes appeared to amaze the non-cavers present. Andrew Hinde was at the meeting representing Natural England. We drew the attention of the meeting to the good work being done by the Cave Conservation Volunteers under Andrew's direction and the positive impact this has on landowner relations.

A BMC representative reported that he had been contacted by John Thorpe (Lugger) concerning an archaeological site on Giggleswick Scar. An ancient wall/fireplace had been damaged at a time when climbers were putting up new routes on the Scar. The BMC rep. had followed this up and reported that on one occasion the climbers had seen non-climber/cavers collecting scrap metal along the scar and this may have been the cause of the damage. He said that he would put a warning on the guide to the climbs that the site was of archaeological importance and he believed that this would not impact on the climbing. The meeting seemed quite amazed when Andrew Hinde volunteered to arrange repair of the damage as far as was possible, at no cost to YDNP.

BMC sought help from the YDNP rangers in negotiating in a small number of access problems. It was pointed out that in the majority of cases where there were access problems relating to caving, the Council of Northern Caving Clubs attempted to resolve the problems.

We mentioned that BCA had set up a working group on Access to caves on CRoW land but it was noted there was a divergence of views on whether open access would be advantageous especially in the case of SSSIs.

The meeting closed with a discussion of the YDNP view of temporary displays by BMC during the period when the Tour de France is in the Dales in 2014. It appears that as long as they are temporary, the Park would raise no major objections.

Pat Halliwell, CNCC Representative